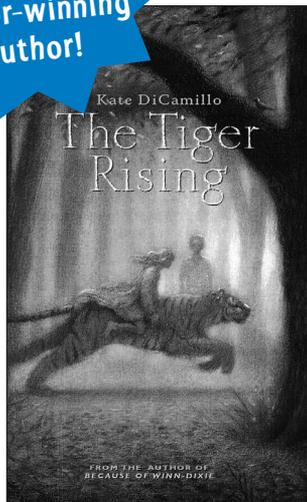


# Kate DiCamillo Unleashes *The Tiger Rising*

New from  
the Newbery  
Honor-winning  
author!



**The Tiger Rising**  
March 2001  
ISBN: 0-7636-0911-0  
\$12.99 (\$17.99 CAN)

Kate DiCamillo's first book, *Because of Winn-Dixie* (Candlewick Press, 2000), has been a huge success. Winner of a Newbery Honor award, the novel about India Opal Buloni and Winn-Dixie—a funny-looking, lovable mutt who can smile with his teeth—has left readers wanting more from the Minnesota author.

Her out-of-the-ordinary next novel about friendship is *The Tiger Rising*, (Candlewick Press, 2001). Like *Because of Winn-Dixie*, this book takes place in Florida, where Kate spent much of her childhood.

*The Tiger Rising* opens as twelve-year-old Rob Horton walks through the woods one morning and is stunned to discover a tiger—a real-life tiger—pacing back and forth in a cage. On the same day, he meets Sistine Bailey, a girl who shows her feelings as readily as Rob hides his. As they become friends, Rob and Sistine prove that some things—like memories, and heartache, and tigers—can't be locked up forever.

Candlewick had a chance to chat with Kate in Boston, where she was signing books and meeting with her many fans.



**Kate DiCamillo**

**Candlewick:** How'd you come up with the idea for *The Tiger Rising*?

**Kate:** I really don't have a clue how I came up with the book. Rob, the main character, showed up in a short story I wrote and then hung around the house driving me crazy. I finally asked him what he wanted, and he told me he knew where there was a tiger.

Concurrently, Florida got a lot of rain. One of the cages at the zoo had flooded, and I still don't understand how this could work, but it flooded to the point that a tiger got out. And I thought, "Two diametrically opposed things: a tiger and Rob, a beaten-down boy. What happens when those two things intersect?" Things just kind of progressed from there.

**Candlewick:** *The Tiger Rising* has some really strong characters. There's Willie May, the gum-chewing housecleaner who Sistine calls a "prophetess." What can you tell us about this character and where she came from?

**Kate:** When I was younger, I had a best friend named Kathy Lord—her parents had a maid named Willie May who chewed gum all the time as she vacuumed. If we were particularly good, we could have a piece. Willie May knew the answer to absolutely everything, and you felt like she was the one that knew how the world ran. Kathy and I would follow her around and wait for her to tell us stories in between vacuuming. God bless the real Willie May, wherever she is.

**Candlewick:** It's too bad that Rob and his dad can't really cook while they live in that motel. Have you had bad luck in the kitchen, too?

**Kate:** I can't cook. Macaroni and cheese from a box is about it. I also happen to love it, and I can eat an entire box of it in one sitting by myself.

**Candlewick:** What were your favorite books when you were growing up?

**Kate:** I remember loving *A Cricket in Times Square*, and I read all the Louisa May Alcott books. I didn't necessarily have a favorite one.

**Candlewick:** Is there a particular part of *The Tiger Rising* that you really love?

**Kate:** There's a wonderful story about the author E. B. White reading aloud his book *Charlotte's Web*, that when he gets to a certain part, he could never get through it without his voice cracking. Well, there's a part in *The Tiger Rising*—I won't tell you what part in case you haven't read it—that I cannot get through without crying. This heartens me because I feel like maybe I've done something right. It moves me as if I had absolutely nothing to do with it, as if I didn't write it. I feel like maybe—cross my fingers—I've connected with something good.

And speaking of E. B. White, somebody asked him once why he wrote, and he said, "All that I hope to say in books, all that I ever hope to say, is that I love the world." That's the way I feel, too.

## A sneak peek at *The Tiger Rising*

That morning, after he discovered the tiger, Rob went and stood under the Kentucky Star Motel sign and waited for the school bus just like it was any other day. The Kentucky Star sign was composed of a yellow neon star that rose and fell over a piece of blue neon in the shape of the state of Kentucky. Rob liked the sign; he harbored a dim but abiding notion that it would bring him good luck.

Finding the tiger had been luck, he knew that. He had been out in the woods behind the Kentucky Star Motel, way out in the woods, not really looking for anything, just wandering, hoping that maybe he would get lost or get eaten by a bear and not have to go to school ever again. That's when he saw the old Beauchamp gas station building, all boarded up and tumbling down; next to it, there was a cage, and inside the cage, unbelievably, there was a tiger—a real-life, very large tiger pacing back and forth. He was orange and gold and so bright, it was like staring at the sun itself, angry and trapped in a cage.

Feel free to contact Kate at  
[marketinginfo@candlewick.com](mailto:marketinginfo@candlewick.com).