



## The Tiger Rising

By Kate DiCamillo

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**The National Book Award finalist from the best-selling author of BECAUSE OF WINN-DIXIE - now in paperback**

Walking through the misty Florida woods one morning, twelve-year-old Rob Horton is stunned to encounter a tiger - a real-life, very large tiger - pacing back and forth in a cage. What's more, on the same extraordinary day, he meets Sistine Bailey, a girl who shows her feelings as readily as Rob hides his. As they learn to trust each other, and ultimately, to be friends, Rob and Sistine prove that some things - like memories, and heartaches, and tigers - can't be locked up forever.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Kate DiCamillo's first novel *Because of Winn-Dixie* won a Newbery Honor in 2000 for the no-nonsense charm and wisdom of its down-home young heroine, Opal. Also set in Florida, *The Tiger Rising* is more of a short story in scope, the tale of 12-year-old Rob Horton who finds a caged tiger in the woods behind the Kentucky Star Motel where he lives with his dad. The tiger is so incongruous in this setting, Rob views the apparition as some sort of magic trick. Indeed, the tiger triggers all sorts of magic in Rob's life--for one thing, it takes his mind off his recently deceased mother and the itchy red blisters on his legs that the wise motel housekeeper, Willie May, says is a manifestation of the sadness that Rob keeps "down low."

Something else for Rob to think about is Sistine (as in the chapel), a new city girl with fierce black eyes who challenges him to be honest with her and himself. Spurred by the tiger, events collide to break Rob out of his silent introspection, to form a new friendship with Sistine, a new understanding with his father, and most important, to lighten his heart. This novel is about cages--the consequences of escape as well as imprisonment. The story and symbolism are clear as a bell, and the emotions ring true. (Ages 9 and older) -- *Karin Snelson*

#### From Publishers Weekly

After Rob's mother dies, he and his father move to a new town to get a fresh start, he discovers a caged tiger in the woods. An emotionally rich story about a boy caught in the powerful grip of grief. Ages 8-up.  
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#### From School Library Journal

Gr 4-6-A multifaceted story with characters who will tug at readers' hearts. Rob and his father moved to Lister, FL, to try to begin life anew without Rob's mother, who recently died from cancer. The boy goes through his days like a sleepwalker, with little or no visible emotion. "He made all his feelings go inside the suitcase; he stuffed them in tight and then sat on the suitcase and locked it shut." His sadness permeates the story; even the weather, with its constant dreary drizzle is sad. With the arrival of a new student, Sistine Bailey, Rob's self-contained world begins to crumble. He and Sistine are both friendless and victims of the cruelty often shown outsiders at school. The principal, worried about contagion, decides that Rob should remain at home until the rash on his legs improves. Rob appreciates the respite and Sistine appears daily on the pretense of bringing him his homework. She seems to have the keys to unlock the suitcase on Rob's "not-wishes and not-thoughts." When the boy finds a caged tiger in the woods, he recognizes a similarity between himself and the animal. Then the sleazy owner of the motel where Rob and his dad are living gives him the responsibility of feeding the creature, and Rob realizes he finally holds in his hands the keys to freedom. Quotes from William Blake's "The Tiger" intimate themselves into the narrative and set the tone. This slender story is lush with haunting characters and spare descriptions, conjuring up vivid images. It deals with the tough issues of death, grieving, and the great accompanying sadness, and has enough layers to embrace any reader.-Kit Vaughan, Midlothian Middle School, VA

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