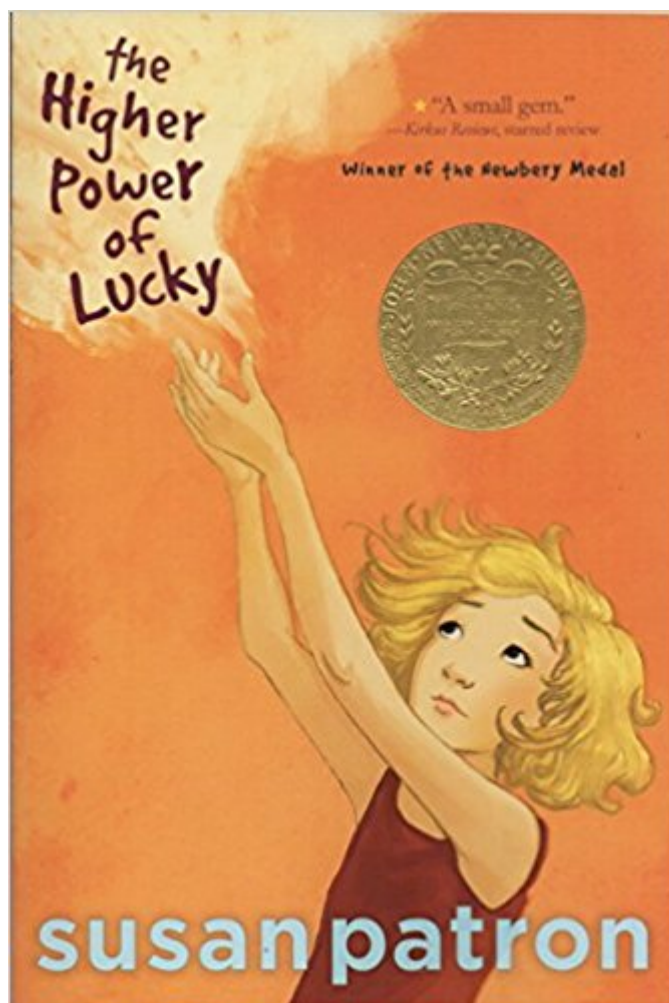


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The Higher Power Of Lucky



Synopsis

Lucky, age ten, can't wait another day. The meanness gland in her heart and the crevices full of questions in her brain make running away from Hard Pan, California (population 43), the rock-bottom only choice she has. It's all Brigitte's fault -- for wanting to go back to France. Guardians are supposed to stay put and look after girls in their care! Instead Lucky is sure that she'll be abandoned to some orphanage in Los Angeles where her beloved dog, HMS Beagle, won't be allowed. She'll have to lose her friends Miles, who lives on cookies, and Lincoln, future U.S. president (maybe) and member of the International Guild of Knot Tyers. Just as bad, she'll have to give up eavesdropping on twelve-step anonymous programs where the interesting talk is all about Higher Powers. Lucky needs her own -- and quick. But she hadn't planned on a dust storm. Or needing to lug the world's heaviest survival-kit backpack into the desert.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1010L (What's this?)

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (December 30, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1416975578

ISBN-13: 978-1416975571

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.5 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 105 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #139,171 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #23 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Drugs](#) #188 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Orphans & Foster Homes](#) #281 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction](#)

Age Range: 9 - 11 years

Grade Level: 4 - 6

Customer Reviews

Grade 4-6
When Lucky's mother is electrocuted and dies after a storm, Lucky's absentee father calls his ex-wife, Brigitte, to fly over from France to take care of the child. Two years later, the 10-year-old worries that Brigitte is tired of being her guardian and of their life in Hard Pan (pop. 42) in the middle of the California desert. While Lucky's best friend ties intricate knots and the little boy

down the road cries for attention, she tries to get some control over her life by restocking her survival kit backpack and searching for her Higher Power. This character-driven novel has an unusually complicated backstory, and a fair amount of exposition. Yet, its quirky cast and local color help to balance this fact, and the desert setting is fascinating. Lucky's tendency to jump to conclusions is frustrating, but her struggle to come to terms with her mother's death and with her new life ring true. Phelan's cover and line drawings are simple and evocative, a perfect complement to the text. Fans of novels by Deborah Wiles and Katherine Hannigan will be happy to meet Lucky.

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Lucky, age 10, lives in tiny Hard Pan, California (population 43), with her dog and the young French woman who is her guardian. With a personality that may remind some readers of Ramona Quimby, Lucky, who is totally contemporary, teeters between bravado--gathering insect specimens, scaring away snakes from the laundry--and fear that her guardian will leave her to return to France. Looking for solace, Lucky eavesdrops on the various 12-step meetings held in Hard Pan (of which there are plenty), hoping to suss out a "higher power" that will see her through her difficulties. Her best friend, Lincoln, is a taciturn boy with a fixation for tying knots; another acquaintance, Miles, seems a tiresome pest until Lucky discovers a secret about his mother. Patron's plotting is as tight as her characters are endearing. Lucky is a true heroine, especially because she's not perfect: she does some cowardly things, but she takes pains to put them to rights. Francisca Goldsmith

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This is a short and sweet story. No more and no less. I enjoyed it and will be reading it to my eight-year-old boy and nine-year-old girl. The use of the word scrotum does not play into that decision. My children have been taught proper terminology for all body parts, including genitalia, since birth. They have grown up using words like scrotum, vagina, anus, and urethra. I suppose that it unusual though I am not certain that it is highly unusual anymore. My being a physician and comfortable with those terms myself makes me more appreciative of books that do not exclude them. What is disappointing is the huge fuss and controversy a word like scrotum still triggers in adults. Not in the least because it distracts from the overall theme of the story, which is not scrotum-centered. I don't begrudge the book the Newberry-I finished it with great enjoyment and satisfaction and only learned about the Newberry debate when I mentioned this to an author friend of mine, who responded with, "Oh, they say that only won the Newberry because she used the word

'scrotum'".....what? This was the first I had heard of any controversy and I am glad I bought and read the book before knowing about any of that. I recommend this story for both adults and children. There is a lot to love here, scrotum notwithstanding.

Granted, this series is not for everyone, and the target audience is hard to pin-down. Children's book??? Mmmm, personally I think the series is more suited for adults 20+yrs with a light-hearted youthful spirit. If you're a regular person that's not put-off by a little boisterous language etc, Then this is a wonderful series of books that you might want to give a try.

I've read and reviewed, (and enjoyed), a lot of fantasy and adventure and action and school daze books, but sometimes you want a calm, mellow, well crafted book that's just about life and family and community and growing up. Here, we have an engaging and thoughtful narrator with a realistic feel, a good heart and an inquiring mind, and while the drama in her life may not be monumental in any large sense it is important to her and so it is important to us. Lucky is concerned about stability and getting control of her life. She's sort of an orphan, lives in the middle of nowhere, and is worried that her beloved guardian might leave her to return home to France. Lucky is surrounded by other lost souls of both the kid and adult variety. She is scrappy and decent and alternates between being a bit dreamy and being overly practical. Her voice is fresh and innocent, but not simple. In her way, and not in an unnerving way, she concentrates and gives voice to the kinds of insecurities that sometimes plague the youngsters for whom this book is intended. The graceful way Lucky assures her place seems likely to interest and comfort those readers. So, this book is a nice, well crafted and thoughtful change of pace, and a gently upbeat meditation on the issues of home and place that matter most.

This is kind of long. Pictures- Easy to visualize and got me thinking about what the characters were going through. Characters- I didn't fall in love with them. They were kind of boring, dull like they appeared out of an informational novel, not a fun one. Words- Gracias Susan and Matt! It's perfect for my reading level, which isn't exactly low. Overall- This is the kind of book that might be on a Reading Invitational Tournament but not on a Picks of the Day reading list.

I ordered this book just in defense of the correct use of the word "scrotum." I'm curious as to what other word could be preferable to the critics--? The "f" word recently in the news deserves such an outcry of objections! I started the book late at night and didn't put it down until the Serenity Prayer. A

terrific book beautifully written. Yes, I was surprised (shouldn't a good book be surprising?); I admired; I laughed; I wept. I am online to order more copies. Regardless the video/consumer pablum they are fed, children know life has its tough patches. Losing one's mother, not having a father, are there greater fears? The resistance to foreign language is almost a national pastime, and how many adults recognize the name HMS Beagle? "Slow Children" has always been a rude cultural curiosity corrected in the book by a real (imaginary) contender for a more just US. The use of lowercase for the "anonymous people"--perfect. A ten-year old's perspective all the way...especially when Lucky "would be interested in seeing an actual scrotum," while being definite that she "did not want to see one." Life is like that. I would have loved this book at ten. And, even now, it's right up there with my other two favorite books this spring: Castles by Kyle Olmon and Being Singular Plural by Jean-Luc Nancy. Lucky and Brigitte got stuck with each other through not-lucky events. Then they chose each other. HP.

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