



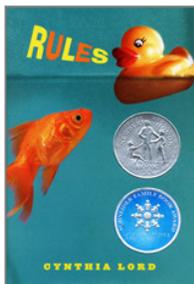
Cynthia Lord

Picture a quiet, dark kitchen, the smell of the ocean and coffee mixed in the air, and the sound of tiny clicks on the keyboard. This is what mornings in Maine sound like for author Cynthia Lord. These quiet moments are what Lord calls: “the just-me time to open my heart and spill it across white pages.” It is this open heart that pours through every page of every story she writes.

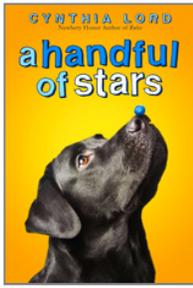
Ever since she was little, Lord has been a writer of songs, chants, poetry, and ghost stories. Her childhood was filled with stories - those of famous writers, of not so famous writers, and her own. Lord’s writing reflects her life: memories from her childhood and motherhood, her love of animals, her experiences as a teacher, and her deep sense of place. Lord’s stories capture emotions of everyday life, often entwined with events that most children will never experience (death of a mother, caring for a brother with autism, fighting to keep open the one-room school house on a secluded island in Maine, moving from place to place as a migrant worker). She evokes empathy from her readers, helping them to truly understand what life is like for the characters in her novels. Readers are able to see the beauty in everyday experiences, the joy and laughter, sadness and tears.

It is Lord’s love of a good story, her willingness to open her heart and her capacity for opening up ours that draw readers into her characters’ genuine experiences. On her websites she writes: “I still love watching words jump onto the page, and I still love making people laugh and cry and shiver with my writing, I still love to read a great story.” Thanks to Lord, readers have even more great stories – stories that invite them to laugh and cry and shiver.

Selected Bibliography



Rules (2006). Catherine’s brother, David, needs a lot of rules to know how to interact with others. All Catherine really wants is a normal life, but with a brother with autism, it feels like the weight of the world is on her shoulders. It is not until she meets Jason that she begins to reevaluate her relationships with her family and friends. Lord’s experiences and heart shine brightly in this novel as twelve-year-old Catherine discovers who she is and what she wants in life.



A Handful of Stars (2015). When Lily's almost-blind dog, Lucky, escapes and runs wild and free, Lily is terrified that he will run into the street. The only thing that stops Lucky in his tracks is a sandwich, offered by one of the migrant workers, Salma. A friendship is forged on the blueberry fields of Maine. Lily believes that she can earn enough money to pay for the expensive surgery that might be able to save Lucky's eyes. In the process, Lily finds that thinking (and painting) outside the box is often powerful, that friendships change, that "giving up and letting go are two very different things" and that some friendships are as steadfast and bright as a handful of stars.



Hot Rod Hamster (2010). In this picturebook, Lord and Anderson introduce readers to Hot Rod Hamster. His love for adventure is contagious. At every stage, Hot Rod Hamster and his friends ask for input from the reader – which would you choose? These entertaining picturebooks are a must for adventurers of all ages, especially those who like to go fast!



Shelter Pet Squad: Jelly Bean (2014). In this charming beginning reader, Suzannah is desperate for a pet, which is strictly forbidden by the apartment complex! She challenges herself to try something new, and volunteers at an animal shelter every Saturday. In the process of making treats and toys for the shelter animals, Suzannah finds new friends and a little bit of confidence in herself. Lord's endearing characters, both animal and human, find their way into the hearts of readers. There are more to come in this series as well.

Awards

- Newbery Honor (*Rules*)
- Schneider Family Book Award (*Rules*)

Links of Interest

- <http://www.cynthialord.com>
Cynthia Lord's Website
- <http://childrensbookradio.com/childrensbookradiopodcast31.mp3>
Audio Interview with Cynthia Lord

Cynthia Lord is a member of USBBY. Why not join her?



This featured author profile was prepared by Bettie Parsons Barger, August 2015.