



The Higher Power of Lucky

By Susan Patron

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Believing that her French guardian is about to abandon her to an orphanage in the city, ten-year-old Lucky runs away from her small town with her beloved dog by her side in order to trek across the Mojave Desert in this Newbery Medal–winning novel from Susan Patron.

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.

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The Higher Power of Lucky By Susan Patron Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

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.—*Adrienne Furness, Webster Public Library, NY*

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From [Booklist](#)

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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Review

* "Patron [is] a master of light but sure characterization and closely observed detail. A small gem."—Kirkus Reviews, starred review

"Lucky is a true heroine."—Booklist

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Patricia Joyner:

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Edward Phillips:

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Nicholas Schindler:

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David Swanson:

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