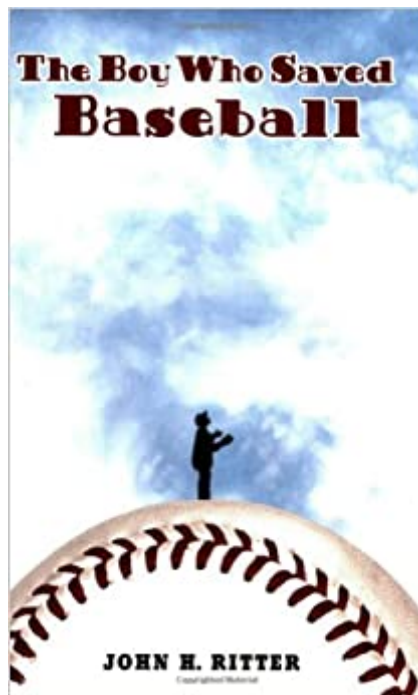


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# The Boy Who Saved Baseball



## Synopsis

Tom Gallagher is in a tight spot. The fate of the Dillontown team rests on the outcome of one baseball game, winner take all. If Tom's team loses, they lose their field too. But how can they possibly win? Just when everything seems hopeless, a mysterious boy named Cruz de la Cruz rides into town and claims to know the secret of hitting. Not to mention the secrets of Dante Del Gato, Dillontown's greatest hitter ever. Since he walked away from the game years ago, Del Gato hasn't spoken a word to anyone. But now he might be Tom's only hope for saving his hometown. From the award-winning author of *Over the Wall* and *Choosing Up Sides* comes this imaginative tale of one boy's struggle to preserve the spirit of the game he loves.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0660 (What's this?)

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (March 17, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142402869

ISBN-13: 978-0142402863

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.6 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 103 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #9,182 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #9 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Country Life](#) #9 in [Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball](#) #281 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Friendship](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Grade 5-8-This novel goes beyond the usual baseball story by introducing the deeper issue of big developers encroaching upon nature and small-town life in rural California. Doc Altenheimer, an 87-year-old apple rancher, seems to be ready to sell his 320 acres of prime real estate that makes up a good part of Dillontown and its baseball field. He surprises young Tom and the rest of the residents by proposing that the decision should ride on a baseball game between the locals and the well-equipped summer-camp team down the road. Despite the odds against Dillontown, a surprise

ending is in store. Characters are colorful and intriguing. There is the villainous mayor who believes there will be great prosperity if new roads and expensive houses are built. A mysterious boy, Cruz de la Cruz, arrives on horseback claiming to know the secret of hitting, and brings hope and spirit back to the residents. He and Tom seek out an old baseball legend, Dante Del Gato, a recluse who walked away from the majors many years before, and convince him to be their coach. Ritter's descriptive passages will have readers feeling they are actually at the ballpark tasting the swirling dust amid the authentic Mexican food cooked by the supportive townspeople. Spanish phrases blend in unobtrusively throughout the saga. This tale is peppered with both optimism and dilemmas; it has plenty of play-by-play action, lots of humor, and a triumphant ending. Blair Christolon, Prince William Public Library System, Manassas, VA Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 5-7. Ritter delivers a baseball tale of legendary dimension, featuring several larger-than-life characters and a team of ordinary young folk tackling a seemingly insurmountable challenge in defense of a worthy cause. After old Doc Altenheimer promises not to sell his acres to developers if the local, ragtag summer camp can field a team that beats the nearby exurb's all-stars, along comes young Cruz de la Cruz, with a bat slung into a rifle holster on his saddle and a self-designed computer game that simulates the delivery of any pitch. Knowing they'll need more than that to be ready, 12-year-old benchwarmer Tom enlists gruff loner Dante del Gato, a renowned Major Leaguer who suddenly quit the game, as trainer. While local boosters turn the tumbledown practice field into a rolling fiesta, and eager reporters gather to watch, Tom and his fellow Wildcats find themselves playing better than they ever thought they could--good thing, too, as Cruz, his work done, disappears on game day, propelling Tom into the lineup for last-inning heroics. Developing both cast and multiple plotlines in suitably "wild and woolbacious" prose, Ritter dishes up another stellar read--topped off by a convincing Web site, <http://www.cruz-on.com>, apparently fabricated for the book, that adds verisimilitude. John Peters Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

He's read many books and listed this as his favorite a couple months after finishing. Usually his favorites only stay his favorites for a couple weeks. There are a couple religious references, for those wondering, nothing significant though. It is an enjoyable book though for both parent and child to read together or for a child that reads at least at a 5th grade level to read alone. There are also several girls on the baseball team so it isn't necessarily just a story for boys.

Arrived during estimated delivery date, just as advertised.

Gave as gift

This is a quality book that I've given to several kids. My grand kids all play baseball but they don't always like baseball books. Both my grandsons and my grand daughter (9 - 12) enjoyed reading this book. There is suspense and lots of action. This book received high reviews from others and I depend upon those reviews. This book has not disappointed me. Keep those reviews going!

9 year old baseball fan loved the story, a good read for any young baseball fan.

Great read especially if you have a little up and coming baseball fanatic in your house

A heart-warming story about a group of unlikely heroes who must work together to save their town.

My little five-year-old grandson loves this story. He can't get enough of it, and it's encouraging him to read for himself.

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