



KATE KLISE

on writing

THE GREATEST STAR ON EARTH

MIDDLE GRADE FICTION

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*"The truth, of course,
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 different ways."*

This book asks a simple question: Is there anything more important in life than winning a trophy? I remember as a kid craving a trophy more than anything else on earth. A trophy seemed to symbolize everything I wanted: achievement, success, respect from others. So in this story, I wanted to explore that yearning we all sometimes feel to be best, along with the competitions we participate in to determine who's a "winner" and who's not. The truth, of course, is that we're all talented and successful in different ways.

In writing this book, it was helpful for me to recall my old days as a figure skater. In one competition, I won first place. Later the same day, I skated in a different division and came in dead last. I remember thinking, *Wow. I'm a winner and a loser.* Not a bad lesson to learn early in life. That's why I chose this Serbian proverb for the epigraph of this book: *Be humble, for you are made of earth. Be noble, for you are made of stars.*

So is there anything more important in life than winning a trophy? I think there is. At the risk of spoiling the ending, I'll just say that I hope *The Greatest Star on Earth* celebrates the power of teamwork and the pride that comes from helping a friend in need. I also hope young readers will discover through the characters of Bert and Gert that you're never too small to save the day.

—Kate Klise



Photo Credit: Dawn Shields

KATE KLISE and **M. SARAH KLISE** have collaborated on numerous middle-grade and picture book projects. Their most recent series, *43 Old Cemetery Road*, has been nominated for reading awards in nearly twenty states to date and is a Junior Library Guild selection. Kate Klise does more than seventy school visits a year, and the pair's novels and picture books are promoted on their website: kateandsarahklise.com. Kate lives in Norwood, Missouri, and Sarah lives in Berkeley, California.

