

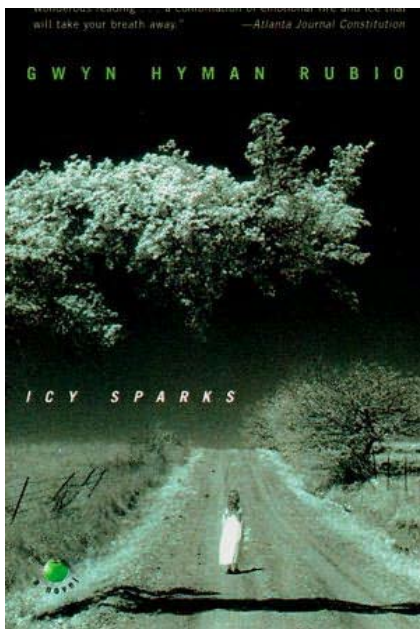


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BATTLE AXE'S BOOK OF THE MONTH

Icy Sparks

by *Gwyn Hyman Rubio*



The diagnosis of Tourette's Syndrome isn't mentioned until the last pages of Rubio's sensitive portrayal of a young girl with the disease. Instead, Rubio lets Icy Sparks tell her own story of growing up during the 1950s in a small Kentucky town where her uncontrollable outbursts make her an object of fright and scorn. Orphaned and cared for by her loving grandparents, Icy weathers the taunts of a mean schoolteacher and, later, a crush on a boy that ends in disappointment. But she also finds real friendship with the enormously fat Miss Emily, who offers kindness and camaraderie. Rubio captures Icy's feelings of isolation and brings poignancy and drama to Icy's childhood experiences, to her temporary confinement in a mental institution and to her reluctant introduction to the Pentecostal church through which she discovers her singing talent. Rubio's first novel is remarkable for its often funny portrayal of a child's fears, loves and struggles with an affliction she doesn't know isn't her fault.

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