

HOT ROD HAMSTER

Dear Reader,

The idea for my first picture book, *Hot Rod Hamster*, came from my experience of reading picture books to my daughter. She would cuddle close to me, and whenever she saw an array of fun things in the illustrations, she'd stop me from turning that page. "What would you pick, Mama?" she'd ask. Then with great joy and purpose, she'd point to something else on the page, "And I'd pick this one."

As a parent, I loved hearing her choices and her ideas. Sometimes I learned new things about her. Other times, she chose the same item, over and over. In fact, some of our family's picture books have small smudges on the pages from her small finger touching her favorites so many times. It was always a special moment between us.

In *Hot Rod Hamster* I wanted to recreate that experience for other families. So I wrote a rip-roaring tale about a tiny hamster with huge dreams of winning a hot rod race. Illustrator Derek Anderson brought that character to life with beautiful, bold colors and added his own touches and wonderful sense of humor. As the hamster chooses wheels and paint and parts for his car, that page also invites the reader to participate with the question, "Which one would you choose?"

Whether the child beside you chooses the "shiny painted blue car" or the "itty-bitty green car," I hope *Hot Rod Hamster* gives you the warm opportunity to enjoy both a fun story and each other.

Happy Reading!
Cynthia Lord

