

HOLIDAY HOUSE



Dear Readers,

While raising my daughter, I often struggled to stay positive, keep one step ahead of the bills, and be a strong role model even when the going was tough. That wasn't always easy, particularly when I chose tough professions like farming and the arts.

When I saw an NPR article about Barbara Moore, the first woman bricklayer in Baltimore, I was inspired by her story. It's always encouraging to see other women in non-mainstream careers, and I wanted to write a story that explored this still-less-than-common-for-women profession.

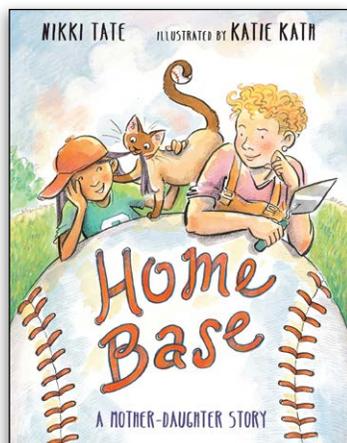
Around the same time, the sports media was asking the question, "Will we ever see a female pitcher in the majors?" **I had the essence of my story: a mother and a daughter, equally driven, supporting each other as they pursued their goals.**

More than anything, I wanted to convey a sense that though it can be difficult to excel in sports or in business, working hard and staying positive will take you a long way. I didn't want to write a sappy story, but I did want to convey the importance of family—and the idea that a mom and daughter can make an impressive team.

In many ways, the fierce determination, mutual support, and camaraderie that emerge between the mother and daughter in *Home Base* remind me of my relationship with my own daughter. There were many small ways my daughter and I supported each other as she was growing up, and Katie Kath's illustrations captured that idea perfectly.

Finally, bricklayers (and farmers) are physically strong. I used to be a bit embarrassed about my muscly shoulders and arms, but that changed when my athletic daughter embraced her strength and power—first as a gymnast and then as a soccer player. Horseback riding, farming, and rock climbing have made me strong and I wanted to find a way to celebrate the pair's physical strengths and emotional moxie as well as their powerful familial bonds.

Nikki Tate
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Home Base



HOME BASE

by Nikki Tate
illustrated by Katie Kath

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