

# *There's a Girl in My Hammerlock* by Jerry Spinelli (Published in 1991)

Approved for use in 7<sup>th</sup> grade

## Summary of the Work:

Maisie goes out for wrestling to get close to Eric, the boy of her dreams, but she soon finds out that she loves wrestling. Most of the boys hate having her on the team--one boy quits and some of the others write nasty letters to the newspaper. Still, Maisie sticks it out, and finally wins the respect of the team.

## Rationale:

## Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

### • From Publishers Weekly

When eighth-grader Maisie Potter decides to try out for the wrestling team, she has no idea of the repercussions that will follow. Legally, the school must allow her to participate, but there are a lot of hard feelings and she quickly becomes the center of a media blitz. Thoroughly modern Maisie is an eminently likable character, and her trials and triumphs make for a highly satisfying tale. Although Newbery Medalist Spinelli ( *Maniac Magee* ) doesn't break any new ground here, he tackles a meaty subject--traditional gender roles--with his usual humor and finesse. The result, written in a breezy, first-person style, is a rattling good sports story that is clever, witty and tightly written. Ages 10-14.

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### • From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8-- Maisie Potter knows what she wants, she knows why, and she knows how to get it. So when her teenage hormones begin acting up around Eric DeLong, she abandons girls' field hockey for cheerleading. And when she doesn't make the squad, she patiently waits for next season's sports to begin, and to the horror of almost everyone in the school, tries out for wrestling. Of course, this is an all boys' team, and Eric DeLong is one of those boys. Maisie makes the team and surprises everyone with her endurance and skill. She also makes more than her share of enemies, including Lizard Liz Lampy, Eric's aggressive girlfriend, and Holly, her fickle best friend. But Maisie has heart and determination--she's a female Maniac Magee with an intact, nurturing family, and she picks up more well-wishers along the way, as pockets of strength appear in refreshingly whole supporting characters. Maisie's is an original and vibrant adolescent voice--curious, confident, and very alive. She tells a story of sexism and challenges that is fresh from the headlines and perfectly integrated into the everyday events at a suburban junior high school, rich with nuance and melodrama. Kids will eat it up. --Susan Knorr, Milwaukee Public Library

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\* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

\* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

## Noted Distinction:

- An ALA Best Book for Young Adults.

## Readability:

- Lexile Score: 520
- Readability Level:

## Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

## Standard Alignment: ([link](#))

## Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

## Notes on the Text:

*(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)*

Traditional gender roles are questioned.

## Connection to the Curriculum:

## Additional Connections:

*(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)*