



Ricky's Atlas: Mapping a Land on Fire

Judith L. Li, M. L. Herring

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In this sequel to *Ellie's Log: Exploring the Forest Where the Great Tree Fell*, Ricky Zamora brings his love of map-making and his boundless curiosity to the arid landscapes east of the Cascades Mountains. He arrives during a wild thunderstorm, and watches his family and their neighbors scramble to deal with a wildfire sparked by lightning. Joined by his friend Ellie, he sees how plants, animals, and people adjust to life with wildfires.

While hiking across a natural prairie, climbing up a fire tower, and studying historical photos and maps, Ricky and Ellie learn about the role of fire in shaping the landscape of the semi-arid plateau east of the mountains. They experience the scary days of wildfire in progress, explore a gritty site after a wildfire, and discover how some plants and animals depend on fire to survive.

Color pen-and-ink drawings accompany the text and vividly illustrate plants, animals, and events encountered in this exciting summer adventure. With his friend Ellie, Ricky creates a brightly colored diary of the fire, with maps, timelines, and sketches of what they see in this fire-prone land. Ricky's notebook about his summer visit to his uncle's ranch becomes an atlas of fire ecology, weather patterns, and life in the rain shadow.

Upper elementary kids will enjoy the mixture of amazing adventures with actual historical, physical, and ecological data about the region. Woven into the story are the small pleasures of ranch life, intriguing histories of Native Americans and early settlers, and almost unbelievable views of ancient fossils. Ricky and Ellie's explorations, accompanied by their hand-written notes, introduce readers to a very special landscape and history east of the mountains.

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