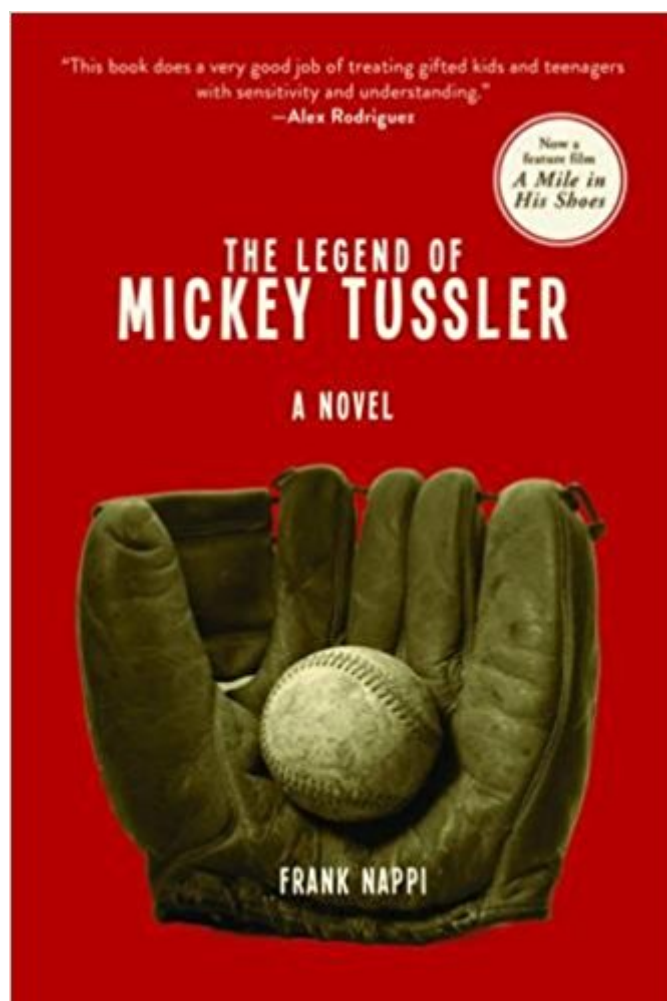




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# The Legend Of Mickey Tussler: A Novel (Mickey Tussler Novel)



## Synopsis

In the late 1940s, the minor league Milwaukee Brewers are foundering yet again and manager Arthur Murphy is desperate. When he sees seventeen-year old Mickey Tussler throwing apples into a barrel, he knows he has found the next pitching phenom. But not everyone is so hopeful.

Mickey's autism; a disorder still not truly understood even today; has alienated the boy from the world, and he is berated by other players and fans. Mickey faces immense trials in the harsh and competitive world of baseball while coping with the challenges inherent to his disorder.

An honest and knowledgeable book about overcoming adversity, and the basis for the television movie *A Mile in His Shoes*, Mickey's powerful story shows that with support and determination anyone can be triumphant, even when the odds are stacked against him.

## Book Information

Series: Mickey Tussler Novel

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 6 - 11

## Customer Reviews

Nappi (Echoes from the Infantry) has produced a knowledgeable yet unsentimental book starring an autistic teenager with a fearsome fastball. Milwaukee Brewer's manager Arthur Murphy recruits 17-year-old farm boy Mickey Tussler as a pitcher for his team. And though Mickey's slowness enrages his impossibly cruel father (who abuses his wife and derides Mickey as a "retard"), the

boy's dad is happy to collect his son's pro baseball salary. In short order, Mickey achieves local stardom despite his mental disability and his teammates' clubhouse pranks. Lefty Rogers, the Brewers' southpaw ace, resents Mickey's triumphs on the mound and plots to sabotage his rival's budding career. At the same time, Murphy romances Mickey's much-abused mother and leads his resurging team in a hot pennant race. The writing is clear and direct, and there's no confusing who's a good guy and who's a bad guy. The baseball elements really sing; baseball fans will find much to appreciate, while the sports treatment of triumphing over adversity adds crossover appeal to the YA market. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In an age where scandal has taken over sports, especially baseball, it was refreshing to finally be transported to an age where the game is all that matters. Nappi does an incredible job bringing these people and players to life. A great read. -- Brian Kilmeade, author, *The Games Do Count* A touching story of finding one's dream even when the cards dealt to one are poor. -- Midwest Book Review The Legend of Mickey Tussler is a very good story that I'm sure will resonate with those readers who have experience with special needs children and teens... --

BaseballBookReview.com Praise for THE LEGEND OF MICKEY TUSSLER: "In my work with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America I see all kinds of challenges facing kids today, and this book does a very good job of treating gifted kids and teenagers with sensitivity and understanding in coping with and meeting these challenges." --Alex Rodriguez "A compelling tale that will touch the hearts of fans of the game everywhere." --Fergie Jenkins, Chicago Cubs Hall of Fame Pitcher "A story with something for everyone. 'THE LEGEND OF MICKEY TUSSLER' is 'a walk off homerun.'" --Larry Izzo, New York Mets Scout "A powerful baseball story, certain to rank among the best ever written." --Don Williams, retired sports columnist, Newark Star Ledger "Riveting. Rewarding. THE LEGEND OF MICKEY TUSSLER reaches the heart the way Alex Rodriguez reaches the bleachers." - Bill Madden, New York Daily News

This is the first book about fictional autistic pitcher, Mickey Tussler. I thought that the cover showing a ball in a mitt illustrates the role of the catcher in Mickey's development into an extraordinary pitcher. The rapport that Boxcar, the Brewers' catcher, develops with Mickey is integral to the story of Mickey's success. I read the sequel to this book, *Sophomore Campaign*, before this one. I was interested enough in the characters to want to know more about their backgrounds. Author Frank Nappi wisely left some things for me to discover in *The Legend of*

Mickey Tussler that weren't mentioned in the second book. I didn't feel that I already knew the entire plotline and all the information about the past of the characters. I was surprised at several points while reading *The Legend of Mickey Tussler*. I was most astonished by Molly, Mickey's Mom. I understood her and identified with her because of what was revealed about Molly in *The Legend of Mickey Tussler*. Reading this book also caused me to appreciate how much she grew in the sequel. The author's style was another reason to read the first Mickey Tussler book. I did find some passages that were noteworthy for their elegance as I did in *Sophomore Campaign*. This turned out to be a correct assumption. Nappi is a class act, and the editing is also a winner. I only found one typographical error, but many more instances of lovely prose. Yet the one haunting passage that I recorded in my book journal runs counter to the philosophy of *Sophomore Campaign* that prejudice can be overcome. So *The Legend of Mickey Tussler* is a darker book than the sequel. Both the tone and the resolution are darker. I concluded that Nappi continued writing about Mickey to give us more hope for him, and all those who have been victimized by prejudice.

A desperate manager of a minor league baseball team of a small town of Milwaukee in 1948, Arthur Murphy knows that the only thing that can happen to get things back on track in his unsuccessful career is, perhaps, a miracle "and he does encounter one in the face of seventeen years old Mickey, who was skilfully throwing apples into a bucket. When Arthur persuaded Mickey's parents to sign him for the team as a new pinch, he did not know how much life in a small town is about to change. Alienated from the world and the people and unable to understand them, Mickey suffers from autistic disorder, which makes everything very, very complicated. Autism is not fully understood still nowadays, but late 40's were definitely not the time of tolerance or support for anyone who was different. Mickey's joining the team affects fans, team-mates, and rivals profoundly and in unexpected ways, revealing things that should have been under cover. Although Arthur and Mickey's mother do their best to protect "wonder boy" from his abusive, greedy father on the one side, and jealous and cruel rivals and teammates on each other, evil keeps on taking over. What can they all do to make a difference in people's minds? A heart-breaking if not shocking story of Mickey Tussler, has become a best-seller and a basis for a television movie, "A Mile in His Shoes" by William Dear. Although the latter was not really praised by critics, the book had a great influence. Proper rhythm of the narrative and enjoyable writing uncover Nappi's in-depth research on psychology and people, making the book a great choice for everyone who is interested in human nature. I am rating this book 4 out of 5 stars. Thanks.

By definition, the word tussle means: a vigorous struggle or scuffle, typically in order to obtain or achieve something. There is no coincidence in Frank Nappi's choice of a name for the hero/underdog here. The Legend of Mickey Tussler combines two very unique topics: baseball (who doesn't know Mickey Mantle?), and autism (any family with a child with autism can attest to the daily struggle of parenting a child with this affliction). Although this book is so much more - Mickey is "us" - and the game of baseball is "life". Even though Mickey's disability is apparent, he represents all of us and our struggles as human beings. While each of us has obstacles to overcome (whether physical or mental - there will always be that something that keeps us from being able to obtain something in life, unless we learn how to rise above it and work with what we have). In addition, I believe that each of us possess a gift that can benefit ourselves, as well as others. In Mickey's case, that was apparent, too, as he was obviously a gifted pitcher. As in baseball, life isn't always easy and/or fair - you win some, you lose some. In addition, there will always be those mitigating factors that play a part in the outcome of our lives (or a game). Both in Mickey's personal life and his life on the ball field, he encountered both good and bad people in his world. Some were obviously more supportive than others (the same is true for each of us). Frank Nappi's amazing gift to bring a story to life is apparent in his vivid, attention to detail, from beginning to end! "The Legend of Mickey Tussler" is a must-read and I'm looking forward to continuing reading the rest of his series of the life of Mickey Tussler - the baseball diamond in the rough.

Struggling against overwhelming odds books are always a favourite of mine but only when handled with deft craft and skill by the author. It's too easy to stray into cliché and that's when sentiment turns tacky and I'm put off for good. Nappi is an amazing author and this story of an autistic boy looking to fulfil his one-in-a-million chance dreams is a real pageturner. I didn't realise there was a movie based on this book until I'd finished and I may go and watch that now, but I'll definitely be reading more books by Frank Nappi.

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