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### Hazel Green

Mary Chapman

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Hirsch, Odo. *Hazel Green*. Bloomsbury USA Children's Books, New York, 2003. ISBN 1582348200. \$15.95. 190 pp.

Reviewer: Mary Chapman

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary Realistic Fiction; Humorous Stories;

Subject: Friendship – Juvenile Fiction; Parades – Juvenile Fiction;

Everyone is anticipating the Frogg Day parade but Hazel Green thinks it's unfair that children are not allowed to participate. At one time, children did march in the parade but for some reason they are no longer allowed. After all, the building she and many other children live in is the birth place and childhood home of Victor Frogg, the man the parade celebrates. Doesn't it make sense that children should represent their building in the parade? Hazel and her friends set out to convince the parade committee to change the rules and must come up with a design for a float in time for the parade. In the mean time more problems come Hazel's way when she is accused of giving out her friend's, the local baker, secret recipe, and she must prove her friendship to a young boy whom she used to tease.

Written by Australian author Odo Hirsch, *Hazel Green* is an entertaining, sweet story of a spunky young girl who won't take no for an answer. Most characters are well drawn and there are only a few stereotypes. Hazel isn't a perfect child but, for the most part, learns from her mistakes. She learns a lesson when she discovers that the math genius, Yakov, whom she used to call "the Yak," is really a nice boy after all and someone she'd like to call a friend. This little girl is a born leader, who makes friends with adults as well as children and who can negotiate her way around other leaders like Leon Davis, whom lots of people listened to "almost as many as listened to Hazel herself."