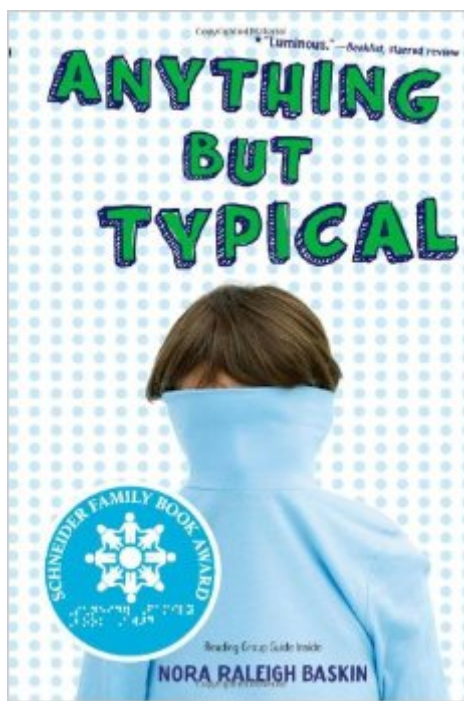


The book was found

Anything But Typical



Synopsis

Jason Blake is an autistic 12-year-old living in a neurotypical world. Most days it's just a matter of time before something goes wrong. But Jason finds a glimmer of understanding when he comes across PhoenixBird, who posts stories to the same online site as he does. Jason can be himself when he writes and he thinks that PhoenixBird-her name is Rebecca-could be his first real friend. But as desperate as Jason is to meet her, he's terrified that if they do meet, Rebecca will only see his autism and not who Jason really is. By acclaimed writer Nora Raleigh Baskin, this is the breathtaking depiction of an autistic boy's struggles-and a story for anyone who has ever worried about fitting in.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 640L (What's this?)

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (March 9, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1416995005

ISBN-13: 978-1416995005

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.7 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (85 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #35,469 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #70 in Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Special Needs #426 in Â Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Emotions & Feelings #10066 in Â Books > Reference

Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

Customer Reviews

In addition to the number of books that purport to be written from an autistic perspective, there are a number of books with main characters who - if you know what you're looking at - are almost *certainly* autistic, but the word is never mentioned. As a rule, this latter category of books tends to be better. I don't know why. Maybe it's because the focus is on the story rather than the message? I read this book in one sitting at B&N. I didn't skip any passages, however, because I decided I didn't really care for it I don't have it at hand, so if I make a minor error of fact please just point it out to me

and I'll fix it. This book claims to be in the mind of an autistic boy. I say claims to be because, after reading the author's website and watching her video on the book, I am certain that the author is not, herself, on the spectrum. So what this book really is is a book about a NT trying to pretend to be realistically autistic enough to write a book from the perspective of an autistic boy. A daunting task to be sure, and I start to ask myself - why? Why aren't there more books by autistic authors? It's not that there are no autistic authors at all - off the top of my head I can count seven or eight, and I know there are many more. If anybody is qualified to say what life is like as an autistic individual, surely it's somebody who actually knows? I know what you're thinking. You're thinking "But if she wrote a good book, does it matter?" And you're right. IF this book accurately catches the experience of being autistic, it doesn't matter that much who wrote it. Except I'm not convinced the author really "gets it". She has a video, as I said, about writing the book ([...]). Three things about this video really jump out at me.

When I was recommended this book and found it was a novel about an autistic boy told in first person, I could not imagine how this could be done, and thought, at best, it must be pretty weird. I found it is unusual, but not weird at all - it is touching and encouraging. Touching because Jason, the 11 year old autistic narrator is blessed with something every kid needs but not all have, un-judgmental love and complete acceptance by his parents, and the ability to accept and return this love. It is encouraging because in the end we get the idea that no matter what kind of defect we might be born with, and we all have them, we are also born with something that makes us special and which we can use to make our place in life. Jason, like many autistic people, is a savant, and his special genius is creative writing, where he excels with his Story Board postings on the web. He finds a friend there, a girl his age, whom he helps with her writing. However, away from the web he shows all of the hard-to-see characteristics (hand waving, temper tantrums, fear of crowds) of autism. These problems are related by Jason, as he experiences them causing everyone trouble, especially his teachers at school. He wants very much to meet the girl in person but is terrified that she would not like him then because of his behavior, which he hates, but can't help doing. At a young writers conference he does meet her and things don't go well. However, one of his teachers there, who is one of the "little people", encourages Jason both to bring a good ending to his story, which happened to be about a dwarf, and to realize that he has a special talent that could make his life worthwhile despite his autism.

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