



## Mockingbird

By Kathryn Erskine

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**Mockingbird** By Kathryn Erskine

**THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER and ONE OF THE MOST  
IMPORTANT NOVELS OF OUR TIME FOR YOUNG READERS**

Caitlin has Asperger's. The world according to her is black and white; anything in between is confusing. Before, when things got confusing, Caitlin went to her older brother, Devon, for help. But Devon was killed in a school shooting, and Caitlin's dad is so distraught that he is just not helpful. Caitlin wants everything to go back to the way things were, but she doesn't know how to do that. Then she comes across the word closure--and she realizes this is what she needs. And in her search for it, Caitlin discovers that the world may not be so black and white after all.

**"Powerful."**--*Publishers Weekly*

**"A strong and complex character study."**--*The Horn Book*

**"Allusions to Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the portrayal of a whole community's healing process, and the sharp insights into Caitlyn's behavior enhance this fine addition to the recent group of books with narrators with autism and Asbergers."**--*Booklist*

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### Editorial Review

#### From School Library Journal

Grade 4–6—From inside Caitlin's head, readers see the very personal aftermath of a middle school shooting that took the life of the older brother she adored. Caitlin is a bright fifth grader and a gifted artist. She also has Asperger's syndrome, and her brother, Devon, was the one who helped her interpret the world. Now she has only her father, a widower who is grieving anew and whose ability to relate to his daughter is limited. A compassionate school counselor works with her, trying to teach her the social skills that are so difficult for her. Through her own efforts and her therapy sessions, she begins to come to terms with her loss and makes her first, tentative steps toward friendship. Caitlin's thought processes, including her own brand of logic, are made remarkably clear. The longer readers spend in the child's world, the more understandable her entirely literal and dispassionate interpretations are. Marred slightly by the portrayal of Devon as a perfect being, this is nonetheless a valuable book. After getting to know Caitlin, young people's tendencies to label those around them as either "normal" or "weird" will seem as simplistic and inadequate a system as it truly is.—*Faith Brautigam, Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin, IL*

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#### From Booklist

Ten-year-old Caitlyn hates recess, with all its noise and chaos, and her kind, patient counselor, Mrs. Brook, helps her to understand the reasons behind her discomfort, while offering advice about how to cope with her Asperger's Syndrome, make friends, and deal with her grief over her older brother's death in a recent school shooting. She eschews group projects in class, claiming that she doesn't need to learn how to get along with others, but solitude is neither good for her or her grieving father, and when Caitlyn hears the term closure, she turns to her one trusty friend, her dictionary, and sets out on a mission to find it for both of them. Along the way, Caitlyn makes many missteps, but eventually she does achieve the long-sought closure with great finesse, which is another of her favorite vocabulary words. Allusions to Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the portrayal of a whole community's healing process, and the sharp insights into Caitlyn's behavior enhance this fine addition to the recent group of books with narrators with autism and Asperger's. Grades 4-7. --Cindy Dobrez

#### Review

"A valuable book." -*School Library Journal*

"A strong and complex character study." -*The Horn Book*

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#### Asia Haynes:

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**Donald Sams:**

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