



Reality Boy

By A.S. King

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In this fearless portrayal of a boy on the edge, Printz Honor author A.S. King explores the desperate reality of a former child television 'star' struggling to break free of the oppressive anger he's felt since he was five years old. Twelve years later, he's still haunted by his rage-filled youth - which the entire world got to watch from every imaginable angle - and his anger issues have resulted in violent outbursts; everyone is just waiting for him to snap. And he's starting to feel dangerously close to doing just that - until he chooses to create possibilities for himself that he never knew he deserved.

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Reality Boy By A.S. King Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #540679 in Books
- Brand: Little Brown Books for Young Readers
- Published on: 2014-09-23
- Released on: 2014-09-23
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x 1.00" w x 5.50" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 400 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up-When 16-year-old Gerald was 5, his parents made a contract to appear on a reality television show where a stage nanny offered techniques to mend their beyond-repair family. Gerald was targeted as the problem child when it was actually his psychopathic sister, Tasha, who was the true menace. His parents turned a blind eye, repeatedly allowing their firstborn to torment and threaten the lives of Gerald, sister Lisi, and even the mother while the edited television broadcasts skewed the truth. At first, readers will be taken aback when they learn that little on-camera Gerald defecated on Tasha's and his mother's belongings, earning him the infamous nickname "Crapper," but they will soon realize that in his young mind it was his only weapon of defense in a desperate situation. The horror and injustice of it all follow insecure, angry Gerald into his teens. So does fearsome, unemployed Tasha when she moves into the family's basement with her boyfriend, has loud and regular sex, and is still enabled by their parents. When Gerald warily falls in love with Hannah, a schoolmate and coworker with family troubles of her own, "kidnapping" themselves by running away together seems their only recourse to wake up their parents. King's trademarks-attuned first-person narrative, convincing dialogue, realistic language, and fitting quirkiness-connect effectively in this disturbing, yet hopeful novel. Not since Norma Fox Mazer's disquieting *When She Was Good* (Scholastic, 1997) has an emotionally and mentally deranged sibling and dysfunctional parents wreaked such havoc on a main character who still manages to survive and grow beyond it.-Diane P. Tuccillo, Poudre River Public Library District, CO©(c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From Booklist

Seventeen-year-old Gerald became infamous at age five, when he took a dump on his family's kitchen table for the whole reality-TV viewing public to see. A network TV nanny came in to help Gerald be less of a problem child, but the cameras didn't catch what Tasha, his older sister and tormentor, was doing to him and his other sister, Lisi, or his mother's constant defense of her eldest daughter at the expense of her youngest children. And so Gerald continued to rage on. Though years of anger-management training and a boxing-gym regimen have helped him gain better control, his future still feels limited to jail or death. The narrative, though striking and often heartbreaking, is disjointed in places, namely with Gerald's grand plan to run away to the circus. However, this is still a King novel, and the hallmarks of her strong work are there: magical realism, heightened emotion, and the steady, torturous, beautiful transition into self-assured inner peace. Like Gerald, it's wonderfully broken. Grades 9-12. --Courtney Jones

Review

A *New York Times* Editors' Choice

A 2013 *Publishers Weekly* Best YA Book

A 2013 *School Library Journal* Best Book

A 2013 *Kirkus Reviews* Best YA Book

A 2013 *VOYA* Perfect Ten Book

A 2013 Association of Booksellers for Children Best Book for Children

A 2014 *YALSA* Best Fiction for Young Adults Book

A 2014 *YALSA* Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Readers Book

An Amazon Best Book of the Month

A *Publishers Weekly* Book of the Week

A Winter 2013-2014 Top Ten Kids' Indie Next List Pick

A 2014 Texas Tayshas Reading List Top Ten Book

A 2014 Carolyn W. Field Award Nominee

A 2015-16 Tennessee Volunteer State Book Award Master List Book

"A.S. King is one of the best Y.A. writers working today. She captures the disorientation of adolescence brilliantly.... *Reality Boy* is finally a novel about whether you are fated to the life the world expects you to have." **John Green, *The New York Times Book Review***

* "Heart-pounding and heartbreak.... a compulsively readable portrait of two imperfect teens learning to trust each other and themselves." **Kirkus Reviews, starred review**

* "A nuanced portrayal....This is a story about healing." **Publishers Weekly, starred review**

* "King's trademarks--attuned first-person narrative, convincing dialogue, realistic language, and fitting quirkiness--connect effectively in this disturbing, yet hopeful novel." **School Library Journal, starred review**

* "King's writing is tighter, more focused, and better than ever....[An] intense and incredibly fresh plot." **VOYA, starred review**

* "King offers a compelling look at possible long-term effects of reality shows.... thought-provoking and ultimately optimistic." **Library Media Connection, starred review**

"Put down the remote and pick up *Reality Boy*--it's a showstopper." **The Horn Book**

"The hallmarks of [King's] strong work are there: magical realism, heightened emotion, and the steady, torturous, beautiful transition into self-assured inner peace. Like Gerald, it's wonderfully broken." **Booklist**

"[A] smart and sympathetic story about breaking free from the world's expectations." **The Bulletin**

"We all know at least one teen who needs a book like this; I didn't know I needed it until I turned the last page." **Dodie Ownes, SLJTeen**

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jose Holmes:

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