



# **Blue Bottle Mystery: An Asperger Adventure**

*Kathy Hoopmann*

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## **Blue Bottle Mystery: An Asperger Adventure** Kathy Hoopmann

'I read this book in under an hour and then immediately picked it up and read it again, much to my brother's disappointment ("It's my book!") It is a story that succeeds in the challenge parents and siblings have been faced with for years - how to explain what Autism is without drowning people amidst technical terms and psychology. It contains a lot of information whilst still being an intriguing tale of a boy's adventure that would excite any child whether they had autism or not. It was a wonderful to listen to my brothers cries of "Oh now I understand," "I do that," "Aspergers - that's what I have." The story highlights the problems for family and friends of Autistic children and for the children themselves and allows the reader to take up their part in the story. It provides advice and support, a good explanation of Autism and a heart-warming story. We shall have to buy another copy because both my brother and I love it too much to let the other have a read. My only criticism is that it does not make a good bed-time story as my brother would not go to sleep; he wanted to hear more of the story and tell me more about what he had read. Congratulations on a truly wonderful book. Best of luck.'

- Clare Truman (age 14)

This is a warm, fun-filled fantasy story for children with a difference: the hero is Ben, a boy with Asperger Syndrome. When Ben and his friend Andy find an old bottle in the school yard, they little realize the surprises about to be unleashed in their lives. Bound up with this exciting mystery is the story of how Ben is diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome and how he and his family deal with the problems and joys that come along.

Blue Bottle Mystery is a delight to read that is more than just another kid's book. For the first time, the issues and frustrations that a child may have with Asperger Syndrome are explored within a fictional format especially for children. Its portrayal of Ben as the central character offers other children with autistic spectrum disorders and their peers a positive role model. It is a valuable teaching tool that demystifies children with Asperger Syndrome, justifying their individuality as valid and interesting.

In Blue Bottle Mystery Kathy Hoopmann has combined her love of children with her passion for fantasy literature to produce a delightful read for anyone who loves an adventure and wants a unique insight into the mind of an Asperger child.

## **Blue Bottle Mystery: An Asperger Adventure Details**

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## **Ishta Mercurio says**

This is a tough one to rate, because it's a book with a purpose: explaining Asperger's Syndrome to kids. It does do that, and it describes some of the behavior of Asperger children well, while touching on some of the difficulties that they face. I found it to be lacking in some areas, but it's a quick read, and it would be easy to supplement this book with others. In that respect, I'd give it 3+ stars.

However, I found the storyline to be quite fantastical, and considering that Asperger kids often have trouble separating fact from fiction, I wonder if such an imaginative plot (in which two children find a genie in a bottle and have their wishes granted) is appropriate for the intended audience of this book. So I'd give it two stars on that count, averaging out at 3.

This book isn't bad and won't hurt, but you'll need to hand your kids a couple more titles to round out their understanding.

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## **Andi says**

While considering how to review this book, I have taken into account that this book was primarily aimed at children, however, I have read many children's books including those dealing with sensitive topics such as Aspergers, and I'm afraid I found this one to be a little flat, unrealistic and uninspiring.

It highlights some of the issues children with Aspergers have to contend with, but not in a particularly engaging way. I felt that Ben was just 'a boy with Aspergers' and not 'Ben' at all. Where was his personality? Apart from computers, what did Ben like and dislike which was not part of being on the Spectrum?

I picked up this book with the intention of giving it to my daughter (who has Aspergers) to read, but decided against it. I want my daughter to know she is a person and not a condition; that the things she does which other people find 'odd' are (mostly) linked to her having Aspergers, but that there are lots of things about her which have nothing to do with that and are just part of her personality.

I would have liked the author to have shown Ben in a more favourable light and explained why he did some of the things he did. I felt there were many questions left unanswered and as a child with Aspergers I would be left feeling confused and a bit negative, which I'm sure was not the author's intention.

She attempts to deal with the feelings and reactions of teachers and parents too, but it felt too rushed and was not given enough detail to make a young reader understand why the teacher or dad was frustrated.

It's a shame. There are very few stories out there about children with Aspergers and although the idea for the story was good, I feel it was not developed fully and needed more thought before being published.

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### **Katie says**

I started to read this book as I have seen positive reviews of it and I work in a college for autistic young adults so the book was in the library. The book details Ben's experiences of the world and what he finds confusing and interesting. The book seems to be a good introduction to Asperger Syndrome for older children and I would recommend it as a good book for practitioners and parents as a example of how to deal with situations without any technical jargon in a natural way.

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### **Kerry Kenney says**

This is the first book in a series of three. I did not like this AS MUCH as the second book because of the way the doctor described autism as "something wrong in the brain" and basically the whole doctor speech. Not helpful for my 7year old to read. We had a talk about that. The rest of the book is great and he loved it.

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### **Emma Witt says**

This book follows a young boy, Ben, who feels as though he is very different from all the other children. He has one very good friend called Andy and Ben and Andy find a blue bottle that releases a wisp of smoke. Through the course of the book things are happening that that the boys have wished for however Ben is still dealing with everyday life, being told off at school and not really being understood by his dad. I really like this book, it is a very easy book to read but also provides children with the view of a child with Asperger's and it does not just describe what Asperger's is. I believe the age range could be from 6 or 7 years of age upwards and I believe if there was a child in the class with Asperger's you could read with to quite a young class maybe even Year 1. Other uses for it could be independent reading.

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### **Susan T says**

Good story about a boy who having trouble with understanding the world or rather the people in the world around him. Poor Ben get's into trouble and has no idea why. He is diagnosed with Asperger's with the help of his grandmother who pushes for the father to take his son to a psychiatrist. Ben and his friend find a small corked blue bottle while digging in the playground at school. they open the bottle and this strange mist comes out of the bottle. Both boys quickly make wishes. Some wishes are granted and others are not. Enjoyed this book would be a good book to give to a sibling with a brother or sister with Asperger's.

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### **Crystal Sams says**

A cute, middle grade book that could be used to introduce children to the idea of Aspergers Syndrome. The story its self is about a young boy with Aspergers, who just believes that he is different. His family also are unaware of his condition. The main character and his best friend in this story set about solving a mystery revolving around a bottle they find on the playground at school. At the same time, the adults unravel the mystery of an Autistic boy.

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## A says

This is an enjoyable book for kids. It is a very oversimplified and 101 education on Asperger's; if that is what you are looking for, you are in the right place. In terms of plot and character, a lot of other books do it better.

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## Athalia Stoneback says

Great book that explains about Asperger's Syndrome in a fun way. However, I did find Ben to be a bit exaggerated, but Kathy Hoopman probably made him that way on purpose, to make a point. The father was a bully, harassing his son for flapping, when there is nothing wrong with flapping, as well as criticizing him for all his Asperger's-related behavior.

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## Anne Hamilton says

I learned more about Aspergers from a 96-page large print novel about a pair of boys who unearth a mysterious blue bottle (and suddenly find their wishes coming true) than I did from countless study papers I've been given over the years.

\*\*\*spoiler alert\*\*\*

*Blue Bottle Mystery* is nicely done – the boys, on realising what is happening, try to remember their wishes and are appalled when they realise that, to the best of their memory, the third idle wish spoken in front of the bottle was to see someone dead.

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## B says

Young Ben always knew he was different as he doesn't always understand what people are saying and meaning, sometimes his father gets angry with him, and many kids at school tease and bully him. It isn't until someone suggests he see a doctor that he finds out he has Aspergers and life begins to make more sense. This is a story that would be fine for any child with Asperger's or that is on the autism spectrum but I don't think its a good enough story to recommend overall.

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## Lucinda says

Profoundly evocative and meaningful, this inspired work of fiction is astonishingly significant and outstanding.

Please take note of this noteworthy book and of the messages it conveys regarding autism and the in-depth symptoms, of living with Asperger's syndrome. This easy-to-read volume explains in such a simplistic way

what autism is without over complicating things, by avoiding using technical jargon and psychology. Any child suffering with Asperger's will instantly connect to Ben and his personal journey, which greatly impacts one's life and those who surround us (i.e Andy). Amid an exciting adventure are truth-drawing prose and a weighty narrative, full of substance and important depth that defines Asperger's syndrome in a nutshell.

Ben and Andy are two typical young boys, whose curiosity is peaked when they encounter a mysterious blue bottle, containing a peculiar wisp of smoke that seems to follow them around like a shadow. As they both wonder what mysterious forces have been unleashed, things soon turn complicated as Ben is diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. I felt a sense of nostalgia as I was swept away by this enjoyable, intriguing school mystery that evoked such happy memories of blissful times. For any young child/ teen to have an illness or health condition overshadow your life is extremely hard, and in some cases this can detract from those uncomplicated years which should be pleasurable without anxiety.

Ben's story is one of hope and optimism, as you discover what living with the condition is like, by providing much advice and support to its target readership. Heartwarming and fulfilling this sensitive and wonderfully satisfying story, is ideal for all readers; who have autism or who care for someone/ know someone with it or just as something to read with a clear, distinct message. The explanation and insight is acutely perceptive, hence why I wonder that a book such as this has not been attempted before? For I truly feel that this story is an important edition to the bookshelf, as it heightens one's awareness in such an enchanting, delightful way. Greatly consequential and indisputably exceptional, Kathy Hoopmann's magical book is just sublime and a must-read!

\*Also included is a list of useful addresses and websites on Asperger Syndrome\*

I won a copy of "Blue Bottle Mystery: An Asperger Adventure by Kathy Hoopmann" from a Goodreads, first-read giveaway. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking 'Jessica Kingsley Publishers' and Alex Fleming, Marketing Executive.

[www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com)

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### **Kristylemmon says**

This book has a very \*Magic Tree House\* feel, which requires an enormous suspension of disbelief. I like that the author wrote about an Aspie character and explained the syndrome in \*kidspeak\* but overall I just did not find the story compelling or particularly well-written. Both my kids liked it a lot, though and since it's written for them, I should probably score it higher.

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### **April Rogers says**

This was a short and entertaining story for kids using magical realism to help understand Asperger Syndrome.

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## **Jess says**

I am so excited about this book and *Of Mice and Aliens*. The protagonist is a little boy with Asperger's disorder. I love that Hoopmann introduces Asperger's in a non-threatening, understandable way for kids. It is great for anyone trying to help kids understand other kids on the autistic spectrum - or for an kid dealing with being on the spectrum.

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