



## Rules

By Cynthia Lord



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This 2007 Newbery Honor Book is a humorous and heartwarming debut about feeling different and finding acceptance. Now in After Words paperback!

Twelve-year-old Catherine just wants a normal life. Which is near impossible when you have a brother with autism and a family that revolves around his disability. She's spent years trying to teach David the rules from "a peach is not a funny-looking apple" to "keep your pants on in public"---in order to head off David's embarrassing behaviors.

But the summer Catherine meets Jason, a surprising, new sort-of friend, and Kristi, the next-door friend she's always wished for, it's her own shocking behavior that turns everything upside down and forces her to ask: What is normal?

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## Rules By Cynthia Lord Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 4-7-Twelve-year-old Catherine has conflicting feelings about her younger brother, David, who is autistic. While she loves him, she is also embarrassed by his behavior and feels neglected by their parents. In an effort to keep life on an even keel, Catherine creates rules for him (It's okay to hug Mom but not the clerk at the video store). Each chapter title is also a rule, and lots more are interspersed throughout the book. When Kristi moves in next door, Catherine hopes that the girl will become a friend, but is anxious about her reaction to David. Then Catherine meets and befriends Jason, a nonverbal paraplegic who uses a book of pictures to communicate, she begins to understand that normal is difficult, and perhaps unnecessary, to define. Rules of behavior are less important than acceptance of others. Catherine is an endearing narrator who tells her story with both humor and heartbreak. Her love for her brother is as real as are her frustrations with him. Lord has candidly captured the delicate dynamics in a family that revolves around a child's disability. Set in coastal Maine, this sensitive story is about being different, feeling different, and finding acceptance. A lovely, warm read, and a great discussion starter.-*Connie Tyrrell Burns, Mahoney Middle School, South Portland, ME*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4-7. "No toys in the fish tank" is one of many rules that 12-year-old Catherine shares with her autistic younger brother, David, to help him understand his world. Lots of the rules are practical. Others are more subtle and shed light on issues in Catherine's own life. Torn between love for her brother and impatience with the responsibilities and embarrassment he brings, she strives to be on her parents' radar and to establish an identity of her own. At her brother's clinic, Catherine befriends a wheelchair-bound boy, Jason, who talks by pointing at word cards in a communication notebook. Her drawing skills and additional vocabulary cards--including "whatever" (which prompts Jason to roll his eyes at his mother)--enliven his speech. The details of autistic behavior are handled well, as are depictions of relationships: Catherine experiences some of the same unease with Jason that others do in the presence of her brother. In the end, Jason helps Catherine see that her rules may really be excuses, opening the way for her to look at things differently. A heartwarming first novel. *Cindy Dobrez*

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Review

100 Titles for Reading and Sharing List for 2006 -- *New York Public Library*

A great read, with a nice rhythm. . . an important book that siblings of kids with special needs need to read. -- *Kid Lit: Books and More For Kids and Teens*

Appealing . . . entirely convincing. . . . A rewarding story that may well inspire readers to think about others' points of view. -- *Publishers Weekly*

Catherine is an endearing narrator who tells her story with both humor and heartbreak. -- *Read On Wisconsin, September 2006 Middle School Pick*

Middle-grade readers will recognize her longing for acceptance and be intrigued by this exploration of dealing with differences. -- *Kirkus Reviews*

This is a story that depicts the impact of a needy child on an entire family very realistically. -- *Children's Literature* - Joan Kindig, Ph.D.

This is an absorbing tale about valuing people even when it's difficult. -- *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

[Catherine] begins to realize "normal" means different things to different people. And maybe normal is not so important after all. -- *KidPost Book of the Week--The Washington Post (04/16/06)*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Latrice Miller:**

Do you have something that you like such as book? The guide lovers usually prefer to pick book like comic, small story and the biggest some may be novel. Now, why not seeking Rules that give your satisfaction preference will be satisfied by simply reading this book. Reading behavior all over the world can be said as the opportunity for people to know world better then how they react towards the world. It can't be explained constantly that reading routine only for the geeky individual but for all of you who wants to always be success person. So , for every you who want to start reading as your good habit, you are able to pick Rules become your personal starter.

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