

Remarkable Remy

AUTHOR

MELANIE HEYWORTH

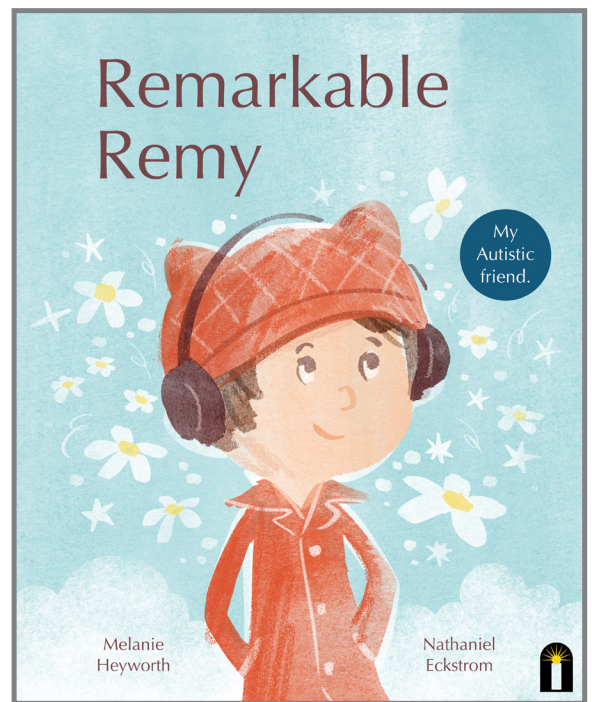
ILLUSTRATOR

NATHANIEL ECKSTROM

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower Primary



SYNOPSIS

My best friend's name is Remy. I think Remy is remarkable. Remy is Autistic. That means Remy's brain works differently to my brain. I love that Remy is different to me, because Remy can teach me new ways to experience the world.

Remarkable Remy is a warm and optimistic story that introduces an Autistic character to a young audience. The story helps explain the Autistic brain—how it works a little differently and how unique it is—and how our neurodivergent friends make the world remarkable!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Melanie Heyworth founded Reframing Autism, a company run by and for Autistic people and their families and allies. It is dedicated to creating a world in which the Autistic community is supported to achieve acceptance, inclusion and active citizenship. Reframing Autism combines capacity-building and leadership development with education, research, resource development, mentoring and support to strengthen the Autistic community. Reframing Autism has built strong online communities, with close to 40,000 followers on Facebook and 12,000 followers on Instagram, and more than 12,000 followers on LinkedIn, and 3000 Twitter followers. In addition, the company has more than 2000 website subscribers (who receive regular newsletters and EDM), a podcast (which has had more than 1500 downloads), and a YouTube channel. Find out more about Reframing Autism at <https://reframingautism.org.au/>

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Nathaniel Eckstrom is an illustrator based in Sydney, Australia. He has worked on a number of children's picture books including *The Ricker Racker Club*, *Road Trip* and *Stubborn Stanley*. Nathaniel has also illustrated for a number of commercial clients including Cadbury, the ABC, SBS and King Island Dairy. Find out more about Nathaniel at <http://www.nathanieleckstrom.com/>

ACCESSIBLE DESIGN

This book has been created with neurodivergent accessible design.

- A key design aim is to limit visual clutter. This includes unnecessary decorative and textural elements that might interfere or detract from the text or story comprehension. The overall design should feel clean, quiet and clear.
- Use a low-contrast colour palette; this helps readers with visual processing differences, including colour and contrast sensitivity. In practice, this generally means avoiding loud colours and opting for more muted tones.

- Humanist and san-serif typefaces have been used because they are easier to read. Humanist fonts have wide counters, loose letter spacing and low contrast between thin and thick strokes. Sans-serif fonts do not have any decorative stems or dashes at the end of each letter.
- It is important to create a clear hierarchy and structure for the flow of information equally to ensure sure any text has plenty of room to breathe.

THEMES

- Autism and Neurodiversity
- Inclusivity
- Gender Stereotypes or Non-Binary
- Gender

STUDY NOTES

- This book explores the experiences of an Autistic child and how they might interact with those around them. It is a book for parents, carers and teachers to share with both Autistic and non-Autistic children. Explain to students in simple terms what neurodiversity means.
- Boys and girls are often stereotyped in the style and colour of clothing that is selected for them. What are their favourite clothes? What are their favourite colours?
- Games are often segregated, and sports have been as well, although recently major women's cricket and football teams are challenging that notion. Ask students what games and sports they like, or don't like to play and why?
- After reading the book, answer the following comprehension questions
 - How does Remy inspire the narrator when they read together? (Answer: With stories of the galaxy.)
 - When the narrator feels energy building inside, how does Remy show the narrator how to release it? (Answer: To 'leap it out', or in other words to enjoy movement in dance or play.)
 - What do they discover in nature? (Answer: The feathery softness of a moth's antennae.)
 - What form of communication has Remy taught the narrator? (Answer: To speak with gestures.)
 - When Remy swings in the trees, what does the narrator learn? (Answer: How to have fun.)
 - Remy is passionate about research into some subjects, and often is so focused that nothing else is of interest. This means that Remy's friend/narrator has to learn to adjust and to do what? (Answer: To sit and wait.)
 - When Remy is kind to animals, what does the narrator learn? (Answer: To have empathy and to know that life is precious.)
 - The narrator is impressed to see how Remy accepts difference in others, which teaches the narrator what? (Answer: It teaches the narrator to also accept difference.)
 - The narrator is a loyal friend; when other kids ignore Remy, what do they do? (Answer: The narrator supports Remy and makes sure that Remy doesn't feel left out.)
- Invite students to write a story about an Autistic friend using a cumulative structure.
- Write a poem about being different.
- Invite students to write a response to this picture book.
- The front cover features Remy wearing earphones, and the back cover features Remy depicted with their friend, the narrator. How would you have drawn this cover? What else might it have focused on?
- The floral endpapers suggest the optimism of Remy's world view. Design your own endpapers for this book based on some of the objects or ideas which feature in it.
- Create a medieval town like Remy and the narrator do, using found objects and materials.
- Encourage students to be active; play some music in the classroom and allow them to 'leap it out' by dancing or jumping just as Remy and the narrator do.
- Take students into the school grounds or a nearby park and encourage them to observe something small in nature which impresses or surprises them.
- Invite students to use only gestures to indicate what they want to say to another person in their class.