

Synopsis

Twelve-year-old Ambrose is a glass-half-full kind of guy. A self-described "friendless nerd," he moves from place to place every couple of years with his overprotective mother, Irene. When some bullies at his new school almost kill him by slipping a peanut into his sandwich " even though they know he has a deadly allergy " Ambrose is philosophical. Irene, however, is not and decides that Ambrose will be home-schooled. Alone in the evenings when Irene goes to work, Ambrose pesters Cosmo, the twenty-five-year-old son of the Greek landlords who live upstairs. Cosmo has just been released from jail for breaking and entering to support a drug habit. Quite by accident, Ambrose discovers that they share a love of Scrabble and coerces Cosmo into taking him to the West Side Scrabble Club, where Cosmo falls for Amanda, the club director. Posing as Ambrose's Big Brother to impress her, Cosmo is motivated to take Ambrose to the weekly meetings and to give him lessons in self-defense. Cosmo, Amanda, and Ambrose soon form an unlikely alliance and, for the first time in his life, Ambrose blossoms. The characters at the Scrabble Club come to embrace Ambrose for who he is and for their shared love of words. There's only one problem: Irene has no idea what Ambrose is up to. In this brilliantly observed novel, author Susin Nielsen transports the reader to the world of competitive Scrabble as seen from the honest yet funny viewpoint of a boy who's searching for acceptance and for a place to call home.

Book Information

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Customer Reviews

Imagine being twelve and not having any friends, and the highlight of your week is playing Scrabble with your mother. Welcome to the world of Ambrose, the boy who loved words but just didn't fit him. His mother kept a short leash on him as she's overly protective; always fearing the worse will emerge and swallow him up. Poor Ambrose, lived in a plastic bubble, his mother didn't realize the harm she was causing her son as she believed she was just keeping him safe from the dangerous world that surrounded him. Being so sheltered and always on the move to another city, as danger crept too close to where they were, Ambrose was a target and bullied repeatedly. My heart went out to him. He had no choice but to listen to his mother as he tried to act strong when the words and the actions beat down on him when inside he was lonely and hurt. He finally gets a break when his mom signs him up for correspondence school and this action takes a dramatic change in his life. More time alone at home allows him to become a more independent person, and the idea of less lying gets swept under the rug. He's becoming a person, he's speaking out for himself and for once in his life he acquires a friend. Ok, it might be the friend you'd hope for but if you throw stereotypes away, you'd change your mind. As Ambrose starts to become a person, he finally likes himself and he finds worth in life and within. Sounds too perfect |. and it is. Mom, she blind to the fact of who Ambrose is becoming until it's too late, he's found himself and he doesn't want to go back to the child that mom wants. The descriptions of the way Ambrose lives, I know other teens would be embarrassed yet Ambrose knew it was the best his mother could provide.

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