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The Schwa Was Here



Synopsis

They say his clothes blend into the background, no matter where he stands. They say a lot of things about the Schwa, but one thing's for sure: no one ever noticed him. Except me. My name is Antsy Bonano, and I was the one who realized the Schwa was "functionally invisible" and used him to make some big bucks. But I was also the one who caused him more grief than a friend should. So if you all just shut up and listen, I'll tell you everything there is to know about the Schwa, from how he got his name, to what really happened with his mom. I'll spill everything. Unless, of course, "the Schwa Effect" wipes him out of my brain before I'm done.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 7-10 Eighth-grader "Antsy" Bonano recounts how his accidental relationship with three quirky characters winds up being mutually beneficial. The catalyst in this social collision is Calvin Schwa, a classmate who has an almost supernatural knack for going completely unnoticed. When Antsy decides to become an "agent" for the "nearly invisible" Schwa by entertaining wagers on what he can get away with by being able to fly almost entirely beneath the social radar, the boys enjoy temporary success until they accept a dare requiring "The Schwa" to

enter the home of a legendary local eccentric and retrieve a dog bowl belonging to any one of his 14 Afghans. Crawley, a powerful restaurateur who also happens to be severely agoraphobic, nabs the unlikely young intruders, and the crusty shut-in orders them to return daily to walk his dogs in exchange for their impunity. Once Antsy has gained Crawley's trust, he is asked to perform another task: to act as a companion for the man's blind granddaughter, Lexie. Antsy is then flanked by two peers—one who cannot see and one who cannot be seen—and, together, they overcome their collective liabilities through friendship, improving their own lives and the lives of those around them. Antsy tells his story in a bubbly Beastie Boys-meet-Bugs Bunny Brooklynese that keeps the pages flipping, and Shusterman's characters are reminiscent of those crafted by E. L. Konigsburg and Jerry Spinelli—they are infused with the kind of controlled, precocious improbability that magically vivifies the finest children's classics. Jeffrey Hastings, Highlander Way Middle School, Howell, MI Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Gr. 6-9. When Anthony "Antsy" Bonano and his friends meet Calvin Schwa, they are impressed and puzzled by his ability to appear and disappear before their very eyes. Antsy concocts a moneymaking scheme based on the Schwa's invisibility that seems promising until he and his friends overreach and are caught by the town's legendary mean millionaire, Mr. Crawley. Their resulting community service project--walking the 7 virtues and 7 vices (Crawley's 14 afghan hounds) and going out with Crawley's granddaughter Lexie--cements and ultimately challenges friendships. The humor is just right for boys, but the complexity of plot, the depth and richness of the characters, and the underlying seriousness of the issues belies the easy-to-read comedy. Schwa is an average kid who hangs on the periphery of the crowd and longs to be noticed and included, not simply ignored. His character is extreme, but far too many adolescents--and the adults who work with them--will sadly and guiltily recognize him. Frances Bradburn Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

great price for this book. exactly what my son needed, and I didn't have to go look for it at different stores.

I started reading Neal Shusterman books this past year on recommendation from a relative. The stories are geared to young adults. But they are fun reads for an old fogey like me. The characters are well developed and have the most interesting faults.

The Schwa was Here is greatly written and I believe would be a great book to be read in school. Everyone, popular or not, can relate to feeling invisible. This book is relatable, has a great message, and is narrated by a charming narrator with classic New York humor and sarcasm. The narrator, Antsy, also seemed to read my mind on most parts in the book in the great way that Neal Shusterman's books do. The first time I read this book was with my mom when I was about 12, and I don't think you can grow out of the quality and deep thinking that this book produces in your mind at the ending. If anything, you might get more of the jokes! Definite must-buy!

I loved this book! The main character has a slightly sarcastic, humorous voice that held my interest. I like the way he thinks. I will definitely be recommending this book to my 8th graders. I also ordered the next two in the series, but I haven't read them yet. I want to see what happens next in this character's life.

This book is funny and you can't stop reading. You want to stop but then you see the next chapter or word and you just keep reading. If your just reading it for fun or summer reading book it's a great book to get.

I'm far from being a young adult but this is the kind of book that made me a lifelong reader. I think the Schwa has been visiting me forever.

Well now my son knows both things that a schwa can be. He started a little slowly with this book (he's 13 and it's spring) but because he has to read at school every day he gave it another try and ended up finishing it and requesting the sequel right away on Kindle.

Great experience all around!

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