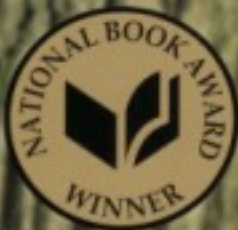


"Extraordinary... [A] moving and insightful masterpiece."
—*Publishers Weekly*

mockingbird

(mok'ing-bûrd)



KATHRYN ERSKINE

CHAPTER 1

DEVON'S CHEST

IT LOOKS LIKE A ONE-WINGED bird crouching in the corner of our living room. Hurt. Trying to fly every time the heat pump turns on with a click and a groan and blows cold air onto the sheet and lifts it up and it flutters for just a moment and then falls down again. Still. Dead.

Dad covered it with the gray sheet so I can't see it, but I know it's there. And I can still draw it. I take my charcoal pencil and copy what I

see. A grayish square-ish thing that's almost as tall as me. With only one wing.

Underneath the sheet is Devon's Eagle Scout project. It's the chest Dad and Devon are making so he'll be ready to teach other Boy Scouts how to build a chest. I feel all around the sheet just to be sure his chest is underneath. It's cold and hard and stiff on the outside and cavernous on the inside. My Dictionary says CAVERNous means filled with cavities or hollow areas. That's what's on the inside of Devon's chest. Hollow areas. On the outside is the part that looks like the bird's broken wing because the sheet hangs off of it loosely. Under the sheet is a piece of wood that's going to be the door once Dad and Devon finish the chest. Except now I don't know how they can. Now that Devon is gone. The bird will be trying to fly but never getting anywhere. Just floating and falling. Floating and falling.

The gray of outside is inside. Inside the living room. Inside the chest. Inside me. It's so gray that turning on a lamp is too sharp and it hurts. So the lamps are off. But it's still too bright. It should be black inside and that's what I want so I put my head under the sofa cushion where the green plaid fabric smells like Dad's sweat and Devon's socks

and my popcorn and the cushion feels soft and heavy on my head and I push deeper so my shoulders and chest can get under it too and there's a weight on me that holds me down and keeps me from floating and falling and floating and falling like the bird.



Good and strong and beautiful...

Ten-year-old Caitlin's world had always been black and white. Anything else was confusing; but her brother, Devon, helped her understand. Then tragedy struck, and now nothing makes sense. As a girl with Asperger's syndrome, Caitlin turns to what she does know—textbooks and dictionaries. And after reading the definition of *closure* ('klō-zhər), she realizes that this is what everyone needs. In her search for closure, she discovers that black and white are surrounded by shades of gray, and that those are beautiful and necessary for healing.

"A strong and complex character study."—*The Horn Book*

"A lovely, important book."—*Children's Literature*