



2008

Marcelo in the Real World

Alison Canar

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Stork, Francisco X. *Marcelo in the Real World*. Scholastic, 2009. ISBN 9780545054744. \$17.99. 312 p.

Reviewer: Alison Canar

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Autism--Juvenile fiction; Asperser's syndrome--Juvenile fiction; Interpersonal relations--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Marcelo has always seen the world differently. He is classified as autistic, so he attends a special school for children with disabilities. Marcelo believes the safe environment at Patterson enables him to flourish. His father, an accomplished lawyer, disagrees. He feels his son will never grow unless he experiences the challenges of the real world. They make a deal that if Marcelo can survive the summer working at his father's law firm, he can choose for himself how to spend his senior year. At the law firm, Marcelo witnesses all the gritty details of the self-serving, competitive society he has been sheltered from in school. When he discovers evidence of corruption within his father's business, Marcelo overcomes all varieties of prejudice and stands up for his beliefs.

Marcelo's internal dialogue gives the novel an intriguing style. Often the reader clearly understands the implications of a situation, while Marcelo must struggle to comprehend what is happening. This creates tension and keeps the reader engaged in the story. The real world is not always a pretty place, and the reader should be advised that this novel does contain strong language and sexual references. However, those who are not offended by the content will find *Marcelo in the Real World* an enlightening and thought-provoking read.

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