

Prepared by Suellen, Guilford Free Library

“Rules” by Cynthia Lord

Book talk:

Catherine makes rules for her little brother David (who is autistic.) Rules like: “chew with your mouth closed, no toys in the fish tank, and if someone says hi, you say hi back.” She struggles with her embarrassment of his actions around others. When she makes new friends – things become more complicated. All Catherine wants is a “normal” life.

Questions:

What expectations did you have from the cover of the book?

When you hear the word “rules” how do you feel, and what comes to mind?

Are rules a good thing? Sometimes are they a negative thing?

Do your parent’s have rules for you?

Do you have rules for yourself?

If you could create a set of rules for your sibling, what would those rules be?

Some examples might be related to borrowing your things or how to act when you have a friend visiting?

Does this book inspire you to think about others points of view?

What’s wrong with David? (autistic)

Where did C. meet Jason? (clinic)

Why is Jason going to the clinic? (therapy)

How did Catherine put Jason first?

And David?

Why does Catherine do Morse Code?

What did C. buy Jason for his birthday?

Why do you think C. thought her Dad didn’t want to do things with her – alone? (because he didn’t have that much free time)

What toys did David put in the fish tank?(duck, Barbie, etc)

Tell instances where David embarrasses his sister?

What cassette did C. have to always fix for D? (Frog and Toad are friends)

What were Catherine’s guinea pig’s names? (Nutmeg and Cinnamon)

What do they like to eat? (hay and carrots)

What kind of wheelchair does Jason get for his birthday? (electric with a joystick)

Where do he and Catherine go after he gets his new chair? (beach)

Read also: *summer of the swans* by Betsy Byars

See how to draw a guinea pig at the back of the book and Morse code