



[A Boy Called Bat](#) by Elana K. Arnold

Walden Pond Press, HarperCollins, 2017

ISBN: 9780062445827 (Hardcover)

*Age Range: 6-10 (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 3-6 (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

The first book in a funny, heartfelt, and irresistible young middle grade series starring an unforgettable young boy on the autism spectrum.

For Bixby Alexander Tam (nicknamed Bat), life tends to be full of surprises—some of them good, some not so good. Today, though, is a good-surprise day. Bat’s mom, a veterinarian, has brought home a baby skunk, which she needs to take care of until she can hand him over to a wild-animal shelter.

But the minute Bat meets the kit, he knows they belong together. And he’s got one month to show his mom that a baby skunk might just make a pretty terrific pet.

"This sweet and thoughtful novel chronicles Bat’s experiences and challenges at school with friends and teachers and at home with his sister and divorced parents. Approachable for younger or reluctant readers while still delivering a powerful and thoughtful story" (from the review by Brightly, which named *A Boy Called Bat* a best book of the year).

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ “This engaging and insightful story makes readers intimately aware of what Bat is thinking and how he perceives the events and people in his life. With empathy and humor, Arnold delves into Bat’s relationships with his divorced parents, older sister, teachers, and classmates.” —[Publishers Weekly](#) (starred review)

“Brimming with quietly tender moments, subtle humor, and authentically rendered family dynamics, Arnold’s story, the first in a new series, offers a nonprescriptive and deeply heartfelt glimpse into the life of a boy on the autism spectrum.” —[ALA Booklist](#)

“Comfortably familiar and quietly groundbreaking, this introduction to Bat should charm readers, who will likely look forward to more opportunities to explore life from Bat’s particular point of view.” —[Kirkus Reviews](#)

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“The challenges faced by kids like Bat are often underrepresented in children’s literature; this is a refreshing depiction. Readers will appreciate this funny and thoughtful novel.” —[School Library Journal](#)

“Compassionate, warm, and funny, Bat’s story may leave some kids eyeing the forest for their next animal pal. Chipper monochromatic black and white illustrations bring out the appeal of both skunk and boy.” —Bulletin for the Center of Children’s Books

"How I love this beguiling and big-hearted book! Every child will root for Bat as he navigates the challenges that come with friendship and change, not to mention skunk parenting. A tender and important tale that belongs on every bookshelf." —Katherine Applegate, Newbery Medal-winning author of *The One and Only Ivan*

“*A Boy Called Bat* will help children understand autism and that everybody loves animals.” —Temple Grandin, author of *Animals In Translation*

“Delightful, endearing, and utterly relatable, Bat Tam is destined to be a dear and necessary friend for young readers. I adore him and his story.” —Anne Ursu, author of *The Real Boy*

“*A Boy Called Bat* is sensitive, sweet, and super fun. I read this book with the biggest smile on my face.” —Corinne Duyvis, author of *Otherbound*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- 2020-2021 Young Hoosier Book Award winner
- 2020 Nutmeg Book Award winner
- 2019-2020 Louisiana Readers' Choice Awards nominee
- 2019 Grand Canyon Reader Award nominee
- 2019 Massachusetts Children's Book Award nominee
- 2019 Rhode Island Children's Book Award nominee
- 2018-2019 Virginia Readers' Choice Award nominee
- 2018 Global Read Aloud selection
- 2017 Nerdy Book Club Award winner
- 2017 Junior Library Guild selection

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Educator’s Guide](#)
- [Behind the Book with Elana K. Arnold](#)
- [PEN America Member Spotlight](#)
- [Publishers Weekly Article](#)
- [PEN America TikTok](#)
- [Disability in Kidlit](#)

AUTHOR STATEMENT

Book bans harm the very children and teens they purport to protect. Literature gives us stories and information so that we might understand ourselves and the wider world. A reader is in a powerful place with a book: with a

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book in their hands, they are in charge. They can read it if they choose; equally, they have the power to set it down and walk away. When someone makes that choice for readers by banning a book that has been included in a library's collection by an educated, trained library professional, they rob readers of their freedom and cheat them of an opportunity to engage safely with information and art. Armed and empowered by the experiences and information they encounter in books, readers develop the language to understand what's happening in the great big world outside of them, and inside of themselves, as well.

Readers deserve free access to books. They have a first amendment right to freedom of press. Those who aim to take away their books, who are stripping their libraries and book collections, are thieves of art, culture, information, and liberty. I stand in solidarity with the librarians, teachers, parents, and educators who acknowledge that our duty is to the freedom of information, the art of literature, and the protection of young people's access to the full library collections to which they are entitled.

***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

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