



[Brave Face: A Memoir](#) by Shaun David Hutchinson

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Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2020

*Age Range: 14+ (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 8+ (Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

The critically acclaimed author of *We Are the Ants* opens up about what led to an attempted suicide in his teens, and his path back from the experience.

"I wasn't depressed because I was gay. I was depressed and gay."

Shaun David Hutchinson was nineteen. Confused. Struggling to find the vocabulary to understand and accept who he was and how he fit into a community in which he couldn't see himself. The voice of depression told him that he would never be loved or wanted, while powerful and hurtful messages from society told him that being gay meant love and happiness weren't for him.

A million moments large and small over the years all came together to convince Shaun that he couldn't keep going, that he had no future. And so he followed through on trying to make that a reality.

Thankfully Shaun survived, and over time, came to embrace how grateful he is and how to find self-acceptance. In this courageous and deeply honest memoir, Shaun takes readers through the journey of what brought him to the edge, and what has helped him truly believe that it does get better.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "*Brave Face* serves not just as a personal story but as a guide to help queer and questioning readers survive—better yet, to thrive—against all odds, in defiance of a world that so often appears to want them to fade away." —[Booklist](#), **starred review**

★ "A must-purchase for libraries, as this book will resonate with teen readers who live with depression or other mental illnesses, as well as teens who identify as LGBTQ+. Readers familiar with Hutchinson's fiction will see many themes from his novels inspired by his lived experience." —[School Library Journal](#), **starred review**

Updated 3.21.24

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AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- Junior Library Guild selection
- Thumbs Up! Award Top Ten Title (MI)
- Chicago Public Library's Best of the Best
- Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award Master List
- Eliot Rosewater Indiana High School Book Award Nominee
- TAYSHAS Reading List (TX)
- Washington State Book Award Finalist

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Reading Group Guide](#)
- [Teen Librarian Toolbox blog post](#)
- [TeachingBooks.net Resources](#)
- [Unban Coolies Author Interview](#)
- [Junior Library Guild Webcast](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

AUTHOR STATEMENT

“. . . part of the narrative in *Brave Face* is about how the negative and lacking queer representation fostered an environment where I felt that being gay meant I had no future, and my hope is that by telling my story, teens will read it and not feel as isolated as I did . . . And the truth is that if only one teen reads *Brave Face* and gets what they need from it, then it will have been worth it.”

—From [Geekmom](#)'s interview with Shaun David Hutchinson

*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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