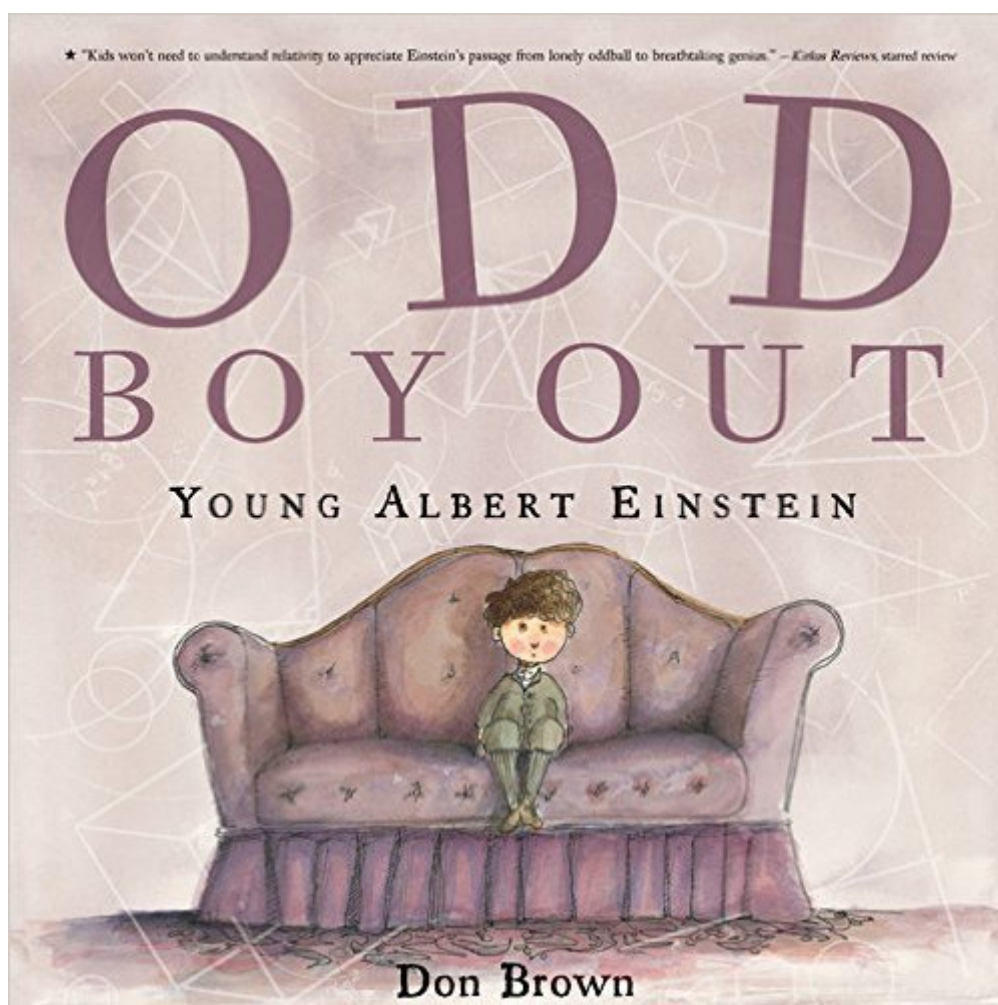


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Odd Boy Out: Young Albert Einstein



Synopsis

When he was born, Albert was a peculiar, fat baby with an unusually big and misshaped head. When he was older, he hit his sister, bothered his teachers, and didn't have many friends. But in the midst of all of this, Albert was fascinated with solving puzzles and fixing scientific problems. The ideas Albert Einstein came up with during his childhood as an odd boy out were destined to change the way we know and understand the world around us . . .

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 830 (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers (June 16, 2008)

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Product Dimensions: 10 x 0.1 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars See all reviews (29 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #61,650 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Physics #64 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Science & Technology #154 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Historical

Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

If every adult biographer has his or her own personal style, why should the case be any different for children's book biographers? And when it comes to picture book biographies, certain names come to mind. David Adler, of course, though his books are so uncommonly dull that I tend to pity the children I hand them to (being a children's librarian and all). Peter Sis, though his bios require a great deal of time and patience to parse. James Rumford to some extent, though "Sequoyah" is probably his best bio to date. No, when it comes down to it Don Brown is the picture book biographer that nine of ten kids prefer every time. I don't have any actual statistics to back that statement up, I just say what I see. And what I see is an author who is able to take unknown heroes (Mary Kingsley, Alice Ramsey, Ruth Law, etc.) and too well-known heroes (Albert Einstein, Mark

Twain, etc.) and give them interesting picture book biographies that kids will both relate to and love. We all know some basic facts about Einstein. He was a guy with a head of white unruly hair. When you yell, "Hey, Einstein!", you are making reference to the fact that he was once a genius. So how much do you know about this great man as a child? In this book, Brown introduces us to Albert from day one (March 14, 1879, to be exact). As a boy, Albert has his good moods and he has his bad moods. In a good mood he can create a house of cards fourteen stories high and ponder the mysteries of a compass for fun. In a bad mood he is prone to hitting his little sister, terrifying his tutor, and getting so upset that his nose turns white. As we watch, Albert is given an amazing amount of freedom. He wanders the Munich streets alone at the age of four. He discovers geometry with the help of a friendly medical student. The book progresses and we learn a little about Albert's personality from offhand comments. "Soldiers on parade excite the boys. They disturb Albert". At end of this journey, Albert comes up with theory of relativity and, "For the world, Einstein comes to mean not fat baby, or angry child, or odd boy, but great thinker". And now our children can understand where all genius has its beginnings. In the ordinary and familiar. What I enjoyed about the book was that Brown doesn't linger on just the good things in Einstein's life. No child's a saint, and Albert is no exception. Brown humanizes this latter-day god, giving him a family, a childhood, and a history that kids today (in spite of their love of computerization and high-tech toys) will understand. Who amongst us doesn't recognize Albert's reluctance to engage in organized sports as something we, or someone we know, have also felt? The story is laid out beautifully. The illustrations are little more haphazard. Granted, I really liked the picture of Albert engaged in a temper tantrum. His little fists are clenched and his nose, true to the text, is a slightly whitish color. By and large these pen and ink pictures colored in with watercolors work well. There's just the occasional oddity. When teachers wonder if Albert is dull-witted, Brown illustrates a disturbingly glazed-eyed kid who reinforces their concern. It's a peculiar picture, but there's no denying that it conveys the text well. I saw Mr. Brown speak not too long ago to a gathering of librarians, and I found that I was not especially impressed with him as a person. Nonetheless, the man does nice work. And of the work that he has done, "Odd Boy Out" is probably one of his best. It's a beautifully rendered story that kids will prefer far above and beyond similar Einstein biographies. Not genius, but pretty darn close.

Some very smart kids just don't fit in the classroom. They learn differently. This book assures those kids that they are not "weird", but just might need to learn lessons differently. Unfortunately, most state educational programs do NOT address these needs. Hopefully, these different-learning kids

will learn to accept themselves rather than to succumb to any titles that may be assigned to them, ie, slow learner.

Odd Boy Out: Young Albert Einstein
Great story for most children but especially for the child who deems himself out of sync with his classmates. Young Albert proves the point that we all have something to offer, faults in all.

I ordered this book for my son because he has Pervasive Developmental Disorder, he has a hard time fitting in at school and knows he's different. I wanted him to be able to relate to someone he looks up to. He likes learning about Albert Einstein and is always asking me questions about Albert Einstein, so when I found out there was a book for children who are like him I knew I had to purchase this book. It is made for younger readers, my son is 12 but he is a very immature 12 and hates reading chapter books with no pictures so this worked out.

This book on the young Albert Einstein is filled with fascinating bits of information that make the subject, young Albert, come alive. The art works exceptionally well with the story, capturing the oddity and out-of-place-ness of somebody who is radically different from those around him: in this case, because he's a genius. Still, there's something missing: we learn that Einstein excelled in math and physics, but we never enter his mind to see his thoughts. (Perhaps this isn't possible with a genius, but it leaves me feeling there's something missing in the story.) We are told that $E=mc^2$ is the theory of relativity and then we're told that thanks to Einstein somehow we get automatic door openers, television, and space travel. There's a huge gap between those sentences, a gap that perhaps should be filled with a bit more explanation. Nevertheless, a fascinating story and a book worth reading.

What ARE you going to say about Einstein that'll fit in a picture book for the 4 - 8 crowd? Quite a lot, apparently. Like many children, young Albert (and this book does focus mainly on his youth) never fit in. The other children liked sports, and watching soldiers on parades; he didn't. Other children talked and cooed at two; he didn't. Other children answered questions quickly in class, and bothered with the classes they didn't like, and socialized at parties... not so Albert. The author covers Einstein's childhood admirably (I especially recommend this book to autistic/aspie children, who may readily see aspects of themselves in his behavior. This does **not** mean I necessarily agree with the hypothesis that Einstein was on the spectrum, just that it may be a useful book for kids on

the spectrum), and then rapidly sums up his adult accomplishments without going into too much detail. Quotations from Einstein on himself, or from other people about him, are used to great effect to help make his personality more vivid. One thing about this book, it's a bit awkward as a read-aloud. It's a longer book, for one, and also, it's written in the historical present. Reading about events over 100 years ago in the present tense... well, I suggest if you're going to read this book aloud that you do a quick read-through first to make sure you don't slip-up mid-sentence. That just sounds awkward. Please note that this book is definitely not going to teach your children the theory of relativity :) If you want a more science-y book for children, this isn't it.

A neat little story that relays the challenges that Albert Einstein encountered as a youth who didn't quite fit the mold. Takes a few liberties with the truth, but gets the point across. Delivered on Kindle with no issues.

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