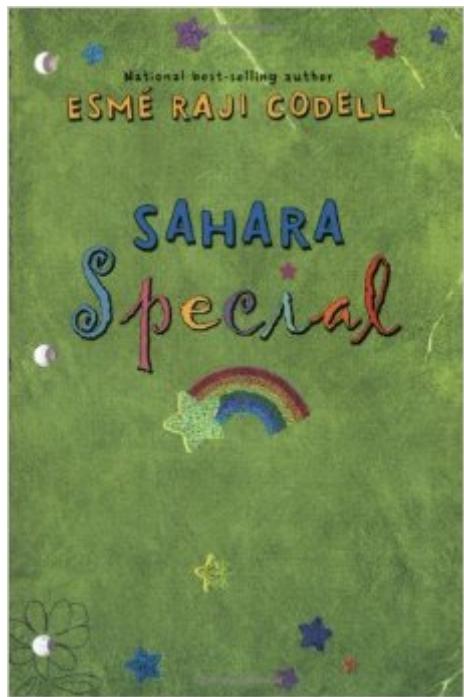


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# Sahara Special



## **Synopsis**

Sahara Jones is going into fifth grade-again. Although she won't be "Sahara Special" anymore (special needs, that is), she doesn't expect this year to be any better than last year. Fifth grade is going to be different, though, because Sahara's class is getting a new teacher: Miss Pointy. From her eggplant-colored lipstick to the strange subjects she teaches, like "Puzzling" and "Time Travel," she is like no other teacher Sahara has ever known. With Miss Pointy's help, Sahara just might find a way to redefine special for herself. The latest chapter in her book unfolds when her mother insists that she be taken out of special Ed. So Sahara is facing fifth grade in the regular classroom, again. But why even try to do the work, Sahara wonders, if everything just winds up in the counselor's file? Enter Miss Pointy, the new fifth-grade teacher. With her eggplant-colored lipstick, and strange subjects such as "Puzzling" and "Time Travel," she's like no other teacher Sahara has ever known. Through Miss Pointy's unusual teaching, storytelling, and quiet support, Sahara finds the courage to overcome her fears and prove which file shows her true self.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 660 (What's this?)

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Disney-Hyperion; Reprint edition (September 1, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786816112

ISBN-13: 978-0786816118

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (81 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #206,975 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #214 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Special Needs #379 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Chapter Books & Readers > Intermediate Readers #749 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Self-Esteem & Self-Respect

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

Sahara Special, opens eyes!!! The book is about a young 12 year old girl, who has troubles in

school. People say she is special to be mean, just because she has issues, but she is really a remarkable girl who has a dream! She wants to become a writer more than anything. Sahara lives in a bad part of Chicago, where kids don't even know who their own father is. Unfortunately Sahara is one of those kids. Her daddy walked out on the family, and it's having a huge problem with her, she doesn't know why he walked out on her mom, and her, and thinks it's her fault. Since Sahara had issues with her dad leaving, she started writing notes and thoughts to her dad, and she'd shove them in her desk. One day while the school counselor was in the room all the notes fell out of her desk, and on to the floor. The Counselor saw the notes and actually read them, and she decided Sahara needed counseling, so they put her in this special program for challenged kids. Sahara didn't like it one bit, so she got out of it, but got held back in school. The following year in school she got a new teacher named Miss. Pointy, who was wonderful and helped Sahara realize that Sahara was special, but in a good way! This book opened my eyes to what some kids go through!! I'm glad I read it, and it has a very positive message! The author is wonderful! I hope U read it too!!

Esme Raji Codell has done the impossible-- she has written a book that transported me back in time to my own school girl days, and made me realize how miraculous life can be. *Sahara Special* is an insightful, funny and moving tale about a troubled, but talented young girl. Codell has an incredible ear for kids' voices that makes her first person narrator feel like a best friend. I recommend this book to kids dealing with divorce, life changes, and of course, the desire to write!

Wow! I can't even remember why I bought this book in the first place, but I think I had something like a good vibe that proved to be very much correct. This is about a girl going through a rather awkward time. Though she is brilliant, her behavior and ability in school put her into a resource program that earns an sadly unfortunate nickname. It's about her world and her relationship with the people around her. As a teacher, I am reminded of how students think and that they are still children that have thoughts, feelings, and ideas. The writing is sassy and brilliant, and the story is subtle and touching. Simply amazing.

Like Francie Nolan in *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, Sahara learns to flower in the desert of city life and the absence of her father. Sahara's character is in the tradition of antiheroines or, rather, heroic young "misfits" before her, such as Mick Kelly who privately and protectively creates her music in *The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter*. Who will hear--or want to? From her teacher Miss Pointy (who, despite her name, helps smooth the sharp edges of school life), Sahara learns to listen to her own

mind and heart and, most touchingly, to take comfort from it. Younger readers who live in crowded inner city neighborhoods will recognize and appreciate Esme Codell's descriptions of city and classroom life and relationships with family, friends, and teachers. Once read, older readers will want to read this book to younger ones so they can hear Sahara's special voice again.

This was a really good book, like none that I've never read before. "Sahara Special" is magical (not in the ways of Harry Potter), it's enchanting, it's intriguing, it uses words in such a way that you've never imagined it before. The metaphors in the book make it 10x better, and you have to agree with me that Ms. Pointy, the teacher in this book, is the best teacher that ever could be. Also, there's this really bad boy in the story, known as Darrell, and I have to say, it took a genious to make him how he was in the book. Esme Raji Codell wrote this as her first novel, and you only know that her writing skills will get better as time passes. A first novel, and it's so good already! Sahara Special makes me wonder about why I ever thought school as boring, since you can have so many adventures once you turn the corner. This is truly the best book I've ever read, and I doubt that anyone could replace the impression that Sahara Special left in my heart forever. You have to read Sahara Special, and hopefully I've already convinced you to do so.

My favorite read aloud book for fifth graders. They stay engrossed and love the 'bad boy' character as well as Sahara. Some of us even cry when she talks about her dad. I usually have to put the book down and wipe away my tears.

In *Sahara Special*, Esme Raji Codell pulls from her experience as a teacher to portray realistic kids and an audacious teacher who gets their attention. The main character Sahara goes from being an extremely introverted although talented child to one who is more willing to show her talents. The unconventional Madame Poitier or Ms. Pointy, as the class calls her, is able to reach not only Sahara, but also Darrell, the class troublemaker, several ESL students, Sahara's shy cousin, and practically every character mentioned including Sahara's mother! An interesting and mostly believable story about a budding writer and her teacher. With some minimal strong language, this story is inspirational without being heavily moralistic and would be appealing to 10 to 12 year olds.

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National Geographic. October 2009. Vol. 216 No. 4. The Tallest Trees. Redwoods. Plus Whales; Indonesia; Sahara; Shipwreck. (Rocketing Whales; Indonesia Faces the Fanatics; Lost in the Sahara; A Priceless Shipwreck., 216) *Sahara Special* Sahara, A Princess Tale Africa South of the

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