

Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's

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✓ Verified Book of Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's

Summary:

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Ever since he was small, John Robison had longed to connect with other people, but by the time he was a teenager, his odd habits—an inclination to blurt out non sequiturs, avoid eye contact, dismantle radios, and dig five-foot holes (and stick his younger brother in them)—had earned him the label “social deviant.” No guidance came from his mother, who conversed with light fixtures, or his father, who spent evenings pickling himself in sherry. It was no wonder he gravitated to machines, which could, at least, be counted on.

After fleeing his parents and dropping out of high school, his savant-like ability to visualize electronic circuits landed him a gig with KISS, for whom he created their legendary fire-breathing guitars. Later, he drifted into a “real” job, as an engineer for a major toy company. But the higher Robison rose in the company, the more he had to pretend to be “normal” and do what he simply couldn’t: communicate. It wasn’t worth the paycheck.

It was not until he was forty that an insightful therapist told him he had the form of autism called Asperger’s syndrome. That understanding transformed the way Robison saw himself—and the world.

Look Me in the Eye is the moving, darkly funny story of growing up with Asperger’s at a time when the diagnosis simply didn’t exist. A born storyteller, Robison takes you inside the head of a boy whom teachers and other adults regarded as “defective,” who could not avail himself of KISS’s endless supply of groupies, and who still has a peculiar aversion to using people’s given names (he calls his wife “Unit Two”). He also provides a fascinating reverse angle on the younger brother he left at the mercy of their nutty parents—the boy who would later change his name to Augusten Burroughs and write the bestselling memoir *Running with Scissors*.

Ultimately, this is the story of Robison’s journey from his world into ours, and his new life as a husband, father, and successful small business owner—repairing his beloved high-end automobiles. It’s a strange, sly, indelible account—sometimes alien, yet always deeply human.

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