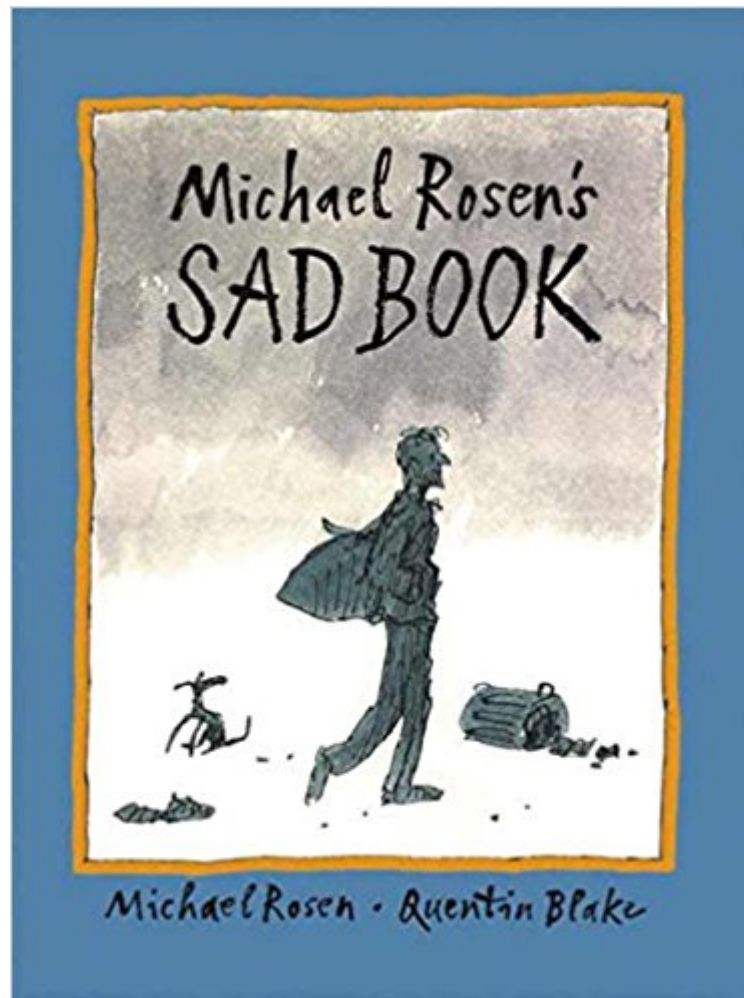




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Michael Rosen's Sad Book (Boston Globe-Horn Book Honors (Awards))



Synopsis

With unmitigated honesty, a touch of humor, and sensitive illustrations by Quentin Blake, Michael Rosen explores the experience of sadness in a way that resonates with us all. Sometimes I'm sad and I don't know why. It's just a cloud that comes along and covers me up. Sad things happen to everyone, and sometimes people feel sad for no reason at all. What makes Michael Rosen sad is thinking about his son, Eddie, who died suddenly at the age of eighteen. In this book the author writes about his sadness, how it affects him, and some of the things he does to cope with it—like telling himself that everyone has sad stuff (not just him) and trying every day to do something he can be proud of. Expressively illustrated by the extraordinary Quentin Blake, this is a very personal story that speaks to everyone, from children to parents to grandparents, teachers to grief counselors. Whether or not you have known what it's like to feel deeply sad, the truth of this book will surely touch you.

Book Information

Series: Boston Globe-Horn Book Honors (Awards)

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 41 customer reviews

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Age Range: 9 and up

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 12

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 3 Up—This is a personal and moving account of the author's experiences with grief over the loss of his son and mother and various ways of dealing with the

melancholy that attends it. "Sometimes sad is very big. It's everywhere. All over me." The gentle text assures readers that despair, anger, and hopelessness are common feelings when dealing with death, but that memories of happier times can elicit a spark of joy and optimism for the future. "And then I remember things. My mum in the rain. Eddie walking along the street, laughing and laughing and laughing." Blake's evocative watercolor-and-ink illustrations use shades of gray for the pictures where sadness has taken hold but brighten with color at the memory of happy times. This story is practical and universal and will be of comfort to those who are working through their bereavement. A brilliant and distinguished collaboration. — Maryann H. Owen, Racine Public Library, WI

Starred Review When we first received this book, I wanted to review it quickly and get it out of the way. It was so sad. Instead, I pushed it aside and kept pushing it aside—for the same reason. Finally, the book was getting late; it was time to deal with it. As I sat down to write, I realized that my reaction to Rosen and Blake's provocative collaboration was based on the same impulses people have who are faced with real grief: deal with it quickly and say it's done, or sweep it under the rug for a time and then, finally, look at it squarely and begin the struggle. The book begins with a head shot of Rosen: "This is me being sad." But the picture shows him smiling, at least until you look more closely. Then you realize that the twist of his lips and teeth forms a grimace. The text goes on to say he's pretending because he thinks people won't like him if he's sad. In a clipped, first-person text, Rosen relates that he's sad because his son, Eddie, has died. Illustrated snaps of Eddie in Blake's signature scrawl show him as a baby, a boy, a teen. The last frame is blank. The extent of Rosen's rage is staggering, but it's quiet, not loud (wouldn't want to scare the children, eh?). It pierces with its honesty: "Sometimes because I'm sad I do bad things. I can't tell you what they are. They're too bad. And it's not fair to the cat." (And, yes, kids will understand that this is black humor.) When the book is at its darkest—and Blake's black-and-gray line work wrests every bit of the agony from the understated words—there is despair. The ways in which Rosen tries to comfort himself—by rationalizing that everyone has his or her own pain or by trying to do things he is proud of—only work a little. An adult reader may wonder at this point, Is the book even for young people? Is it too self-indulgent? To think that would be to dismiss the truth we all try to hide from: sadness is part of the human condition. Children know this as well as adults and perhaps feel it even more keenly since they haven't had as much time to develop defenses. This book tells them what they already intuit, and while you might not want to give it to a child who, at the moment is happy, you would most certainly want to give it to one who is sad. It shows children that they are not alone, and it does so brilliantly. And Rosen is not left in total despair. As time passes, he begins to look at

things more intently, and those moments push up happier memories, some even about Eddie. Remembrances of birthdays bring to mind candles: "There must be candles." This slow evolution allows Blake to lighten his pictures both in color and underlying spirit. The last spread shows Rosen sitting at a table, unshaven, focused intently on one lit candle, which one hopes is bright enough to lead him to a better place. This book's power is in its utter honesty. No couching, no prettying up. It's as if Rosen and Blake are taking readers by the hand and saying, "C'mon, let's look at this now. Sadness, yes. Here it is." But they pull you just past the heartbreak, too. The journey from grief to a glimmer of hope is a long, often lonely one, but there's relief in knowing that it's possible. Ilene Cooper

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Bought it to give to a family who recently had a loss. But I found this book to be too dark. That's probably the reality of losing a family member but I wasn't sure if it would be an appropriate gift. If it's to be given from someone who had a very similar experience (e.g., losing his/her mother recently, etc., and giving it to someone who has just lost their mother), maybe it would be alright. The book itself is well written, though I am not sure how appropriate it would be for a child.

Going through a very difficult time right now and this book helps put my feelings into thoughts and words. Thank you to the author and seller.

This book is amazing. It is awesome actually. The illustrator is what is amazing about it. Just depicting the emotions in such a childlike way. It is a book that anyone can connect with. Love this book.

One of the best books I've ever read. It is an exquisitely personal meditation on loss, sadness and what it means to experience despair. The book is very short (approximately 45 pages), but packs a wallop in terms of emotional availability, and truth.

WONDERFUL book to help support children through grief and depression. It is masterful, encouraging, supportive, raw, real.

A very useful approach for early childhood educators, parents, and all who care about children. We need more of this strength-based material.

I love this book. If you have experienced loss of a loved one, I implore you to buy this book.

This book is amazing. It arrived quickly and it was a mindblowing book. I love Michael Rosen and this made me love him even more. It deals heavily with depression and sadness in its many forms and it is a fantastic read.

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