

REAL



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About the Book

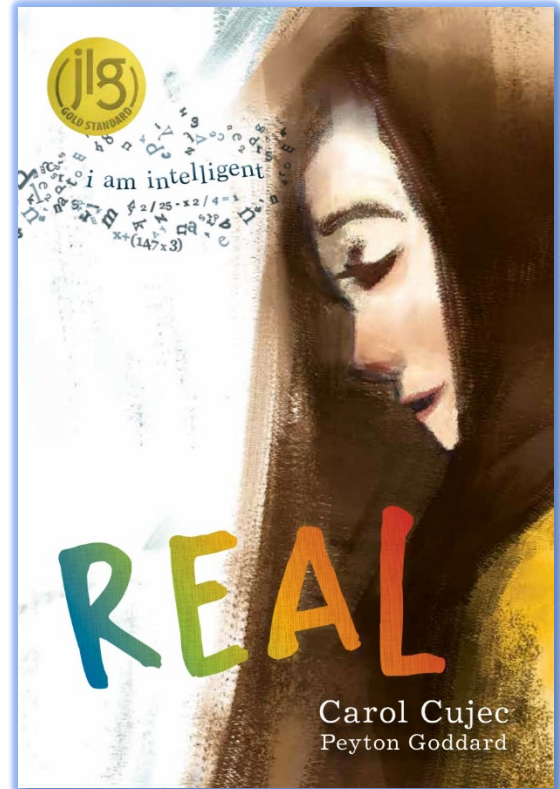
My name is Charity. I am thirteen years old. Actually, thirteen years plus eighty-seven days. I love sour gummies and pepperoni pizza. That last part no one knows because I have not spoken a sentence since I was born. Each dawning day, I live in terror of my unpredictable body that no one understands.

Charity may have mad math skills and a near-perfect memory, but with a mouth that can't speak and a body that jumps, rocks, and howls unpredictably, most people incorrectly assume she cannot learn. Charity's brain works differently from most people's because of her autism, but she's still funny, determined, and kind. So why do people treat her like a disease or ignore her like she's invisible?

When Charity's parents enroll her in a public junior high school, she faces her greatest fears. Will kids make fun of her? Will her behavior get her kicked out? Will her million thoughts stay locked in her head forever? With the support of teachers and newfound friends, Charity will have to fight hard to be treated like a real student.

Inspired by a true story, *Real* speaks to all those who've ever felt they didn't belong and reminds readers that all people are worthy of being included.

Author resources include tips on inclusion (for parents and teachers), and tips for making friends with someone who's different from me (for kids).



Carol Cujec, PhD, has worked as a writer and educator for more than two decades and currently teaches at Cal State San Marcos. Her own teaching and parenting experiences have given her welcomed insights into celebrating neurodiversity. Carol lives in San Diego with her husband, three children, and a mischievous orange tabby.



Peyton Goddard knows how it feels to be labeled as incapable of learning. For twenty-two years, her unpredictable body and inability to speak led people to assume she was mentally challenged. Once she gained a dependable mode of communication, not only did she learn, she graduated from college as valedictorian. Today, she is an advocate for inclusion who writes and presents about valuing all people and protecting those most vulnerable from abuse. Her message centers on "changing this worrisome world" through compassionate understanding and support for all. Peyton lives with support in her own apartment, adjacent to her parents' home in San Diego.

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