



Kelly Coons is an autism advocate who studied English at Smith College. Before Kelly was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder at the age of thirteen, she had a coming-of-age story that was mostly deemed as neurotypical. However, she always felt isolated and, until her diagnosis, believed that she was to blame. After her diagnosis, Kelly became passionate about disability advocacy and promoting Autistic pride. She believes that people are disabled less by their bodies and brains and more by society.

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ASK ME ABOUT...

 What inspired you to want to write a book during the COVID-19 pandemic?

 Why did you choose to use humor in a book with some serious subject matter?

 What is the message you want people to take away from All Ways?

 What is your opinion on diagnosis?

 What is your opinion on Autism Speaks?

 The Raleigh episode.

 Depiction of abusive parents.

 The diner scene.

 Fandom as a neurodiverse space

 Video games.

 Dungeons & Dragons.

KELLY COONS

AUTHOR, ADVOCATE, #ACTUALLYAUTISTIC



ABOUT THE BOOK

“We’ve always been told that we’re the ones who aren’t communicating. That we need to use our words... or look at people’s eyes. We’ve always been told that we’re the ones who are wrong.”

All Ways follows two brothers, Andreas and York, as they embark on a cross-country road trip from their home in Ridgecrest, California to York’s future college in Albany, New York. Though both brothers know they are “different,” neither of them know that they are Autistic, so they feel separate the world around them. With older brother York set to leave for college in the fall, the duo must learn to navigate an uncertain future without the grounding presence of each other, in a world that so often misunderstands them.

With humor and warmth, author Kelly Coons introduces neurotypical readers to the rich interpersonal lives of Autistic people, challenging biases about autism. At the same time, Autistic readers will feel at home with Andreas and York as they come to terms with their “differences” and move boldly toward their future.

QUOTES FROM THE BOOK

Autistic characters aren’t often allowed to go on a journey. They are allowed to be solitary geniuses. They are allowed to hold pearls of wisdom for a neurotypical character’s journey. (Here is the secret to creation: Even when we are not building off of our own lived experience, we are drawing upon someone’s.)

“Well if you’re done experimenting with my name, what can I get for you?” Everything Mickey has said has been in the form of a long, sighing exhale.

"There’s you and me. We understand each other. Then there’s the rest of the world. They seem to understand each other fine too. But then there’s you and me and the rest of the world. Then, it’s like we’re on opposite sides of a bridge."

At the grocery store, when he accidentally knocks something over, she says, “I’m sorry, my son can’t understand.” Andreas didn’t have to ask, "How do I help fix it?"

“No!” York snaps. “It’s not a desperate thing to want to make friends! It’s not a desperate thing to want to make friends with us!”