



Face

By Benjamin Zephaniah

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Reviews

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"A worthy subject that should give kids plenty to think about." -*Kirkus Reviews*

"This book will not only be enjoyed by teen readers for its entertaining story, but also for its statement about prejudice. Zephaniah is not just telling a story of a brave and inspiring young man, he is also teaching readers an important lesson through the voice of Martin." -*VOYA*

Also available in hardcover

ISBN: 1-58234-774-3 Price: \$15.95

About the author

Benjamin Zephaniah is a British performance poet who travels on literary world tours for the British Council. He is the author of a number of acclaimed novels for young adults, including *Refugee Boy* and the upcoming *Gangsta Rap*. He lives in England. Visit his Web site at www.benjaminzephaniah.com.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Zephaniah (*Refugee Boy*) paints a sympathetic portrait of Martin Turner, a burn victim, who changes as much on the inside as on the outside after a car accident leaves his face severely disfigured. The author uses bold lines to describe how the once fun-loving wise-cracker confronts the fact that his life can never be the same. Even more disturbing than the stares and cruel taunts, perhaps, are his friends' obvious discomfort and overly solicitous behavior ("He hated being pitied and he hated being given special treatment. He learnt how to look into the eyes of others and measure their sincerity"). Martin also resents those (like the priest at the community center) who refer to him as "disabled"; however, he develops the confidence and poise to correct such misapprehensions. Newfound friends who are able to look beyond his scars encourage him to rise to challenges and develop his talent for dancing and gymnastics. Although the plot is somewhat formulaic and although Zephaniah discusses many of Martin's struggles rather than offering specific examples, Martin himself is believable enough to be appealing. Kids will tune in to this book's clear message about appearances. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 8-10-Accepting a ride home with a former schoolmate, Pete, after a night out, Martin and Mark, 15, are unaware that he has been joyriding in a stolen car, and the short trip turns to tragedy as he is killed and Martin's face is burned beyond recognition. The medical treatments for burn victims are described accurately, and each professional involved with the teen's care comes into play as a supporting character. Martin's emotions run the gamut from guilt and anger to fear of losing his friends and being ignored by classmates. A psychologist helps him handle looking into a mirror for the first time and he befriends another patient, whose reassurance is pivotal to his recovery. Because of his grit and tenaciousness, Martin refuses to play the victim for long. When his girlfriend rejects him and children call him "Dog face," he becomes depressed but ultimately recovers after gaining the respect of his gymnastics teammates, who name him captain. Rather than pity Martin, readers will empathize with his desire to be normal. They will also enjoy the British dance club scene and the hip teen vocabulary.

Vicki Reutter, Cazenovia High School, NY

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 6-9. Something terrible has happened to Martin's face. An automobile crash and fire have left the handsome, popular 15-year-old boy horribly disfigured. No doubt about it, his life is about to change drastically. How he deals with the changes and their attendant challenges is the subject of this new novel from a British performance artist and poet from Jamaica, and the author of *Refugee Boy* [BKL J1 02]. Unfortunately, although the author is clearly passionate about the prejudice and injustice that his protagonist suffers as a result of his disfigurement, he tends to demonstrate it by preaching at his readers and transforming what should be the inherently dramatic into the borderline didactic. To his credit, however, he does an excellent job of animating his setting, the economically disadvantaged, ethnically mixed neighborhoods of East London. Martin's personal growth may lack literary finesse, but his struggle to overcome adversity will still involve some readers. *Michael Cart*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Geraldine Dube:

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