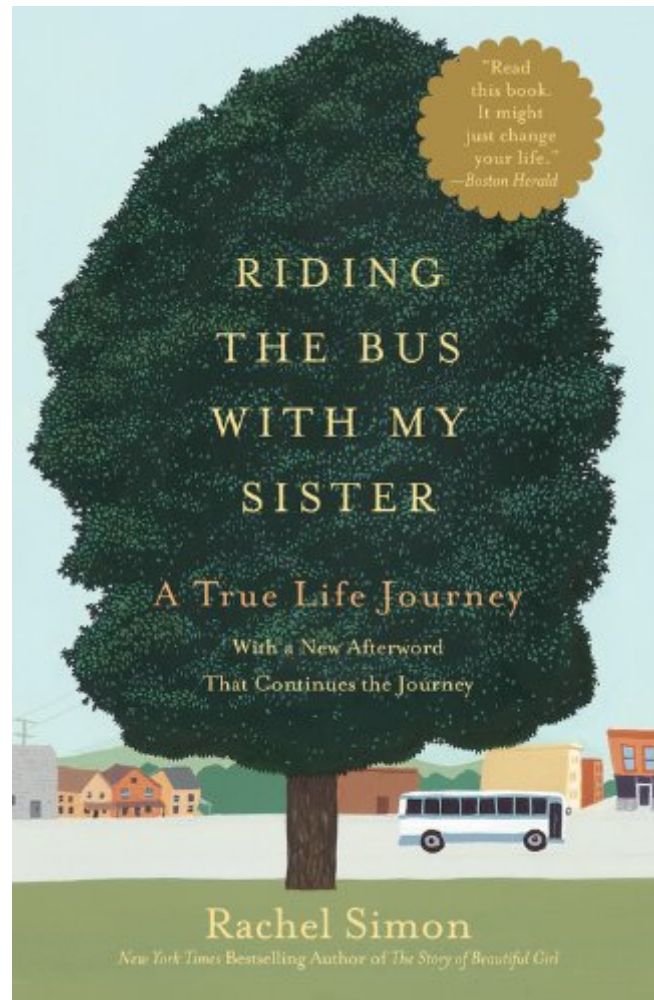




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Riding The Bus With My Sister: A True Life Journey



Synopsis

In the ten years since Rachel Simon first invited the world to board the bus with her and her sister, Cool Beth, readers across the globe have been moved by their story. Now, in an updated edition, Rachel Simon reflects on changes in her life, Beth's life, and the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The highlight is Beth's update, which is in her own words. A new reader's guide is also included. Join these two unforgettable sisters on their journey, this time in an even deeper and richer way. Rachel Simon's sister Beth is a spirited woman who lives intensely and often joyfully. Beth, who has an intellectual disability, spends her days riding the buses in her unnamed Pennsylvania city. The drivers, a lively group, are her mentors; her fellow passengers are her community. One day, Beth asks Rachel to accompany her on the buses for an entire year. This wise, funny, deeply affecting true story is the chronicle of that remarkable time. Rachel, a writer and college teacher whose hyperbusy life camouflaged her emotional isolation, had much to learn in her sister's extraordinary world. Full of life lessons from which any reader will profit, *Riding the Bus with My Sister* is "a heartwarming, life-affirming journey through both the present and the past . . . [that] might just change your life" (Boston Herald). Elegantly woven throughout the odyssey are riveting memories of terrifying maternal abandonment, fierce sisterly loyalty, and astonishing forgiveness. Rachel Simon brings to light the almost invisible world of adults with developmental disabilities, finds unlikely heroes in everyday life, and, without sentimentality, portrays Beth as the endearing, feisty, independent person she is. This heartwarming memoir about the unbreakable bond between two very different sisters takes the reader on an inspirational journey at once unique and universal. *Riding the Bus with My Sister* was made into a Hallmark Hall of Fame movie starring Rosie O'Donnell and Andie McDowell, and directed by Anjelica Huston.

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Customer Reviews

I always try to read a book without any prejudices in regards to the author or the story's nature. But, I have to admit that I was more than a little afraid at first about *Riding The Bus With My Sister*. I feared that this book would be a stereotypical "feel good" story, where the mentally retarded sister was depicted as a misunderstood noble creature and the "bus rides are a journey of self-discovery" metaphor was abused. It didn't take me long to realize that my initial fears were unfounded. They went unrealized because Simon chose to infuse her story with honesty, instead of stereotype. Nowhere is this quality better displayed than in her depiction of Beth. Simon makes a point of showing that her sister is stubborn, opinionated, and not liked by everyone. But, she also shows that Beth has qualities that make her distinctive and important. By providing this balanced portrayal, Simon gives her sister a realism that transcends the stereotypical depiction of the mentally disabled. The only area where Simon veers dangerously close to typecast is in her portrayal of the "wise beyond their station in life" bus drivers. While she does state that not all drivers were like those she highlighted, those that were shown were portrayed as near saints. What rescues this depiction is the honesty behind the stories. Simon takes care to show how each of these drivers obtained their wisdom through their life experiences. As a result, the drivers, and their level of understanding, become believable. While the metaphor running throughout the book had the potential to be abused, it turned out to be appropriate. Because of the truthful portrayal of her sister and the situations during that year of riding, I came to believe that Simon had discovered, changed, and grown.

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