



# The Girl Who Heard Colors

*Marie Harris , Vanessa Brantley-Newton (Illustrations)*

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This eye-opening picture book introduces readers to their five senses and to **synesthesia**—a condition in which one sense triggers another. For some people, sounds or tastes have colors. And for others, numbers and letters do. Many famous artists have been synesthetes, including Tori Amos, Duke Ellington, Jimi Hendrix, Lady Gaga, Stevie Wonder, Billy Joel, John Mayer, Mozart, Kandinsky, and Degas.

Imagine that when you hear a bell you see silver or when a dog barks you see red. That's what it's like for Jillian—when she hears sounds she sees colors. At first the kids at school make fun of Jillian. Jillian worries about being different until her music teacher shows her that having synesthesia is an amazing thing. This lively, informative picture book makes synesthesia easy to understand and celebrates each person's unique way of experiencing the world.

## The Girl Who Heard Colors Details

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Author : Marie Harris , Vanessa Brantley-Newton (Illustrations)

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# From Reader Review The Girl Who Heard Colors for online ebook

## Jennifer says

Thought this was a biography, but it was just a fictionalized story about a girl with synesthesia.

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## Danny Jacobs says

This is a great book not only for helping kids understand words in regards of whats around them and their own feelings, along with their five senses. It also is a great introduction to children with an extra sense called synesthesia. Great colors, great art style and exciting sentences that invoke a lot of sensation for the reader.

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## Max says

I like picture books that introduce various special needs/conditions to children. It teaches them about diversity and empathy. I didn't even know there's such a condition called synesthesia. Whoever said that adults can't learn a thing or two from children's books?

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## Danielle says

Jillian is a joyful kindergartener who loves typical kindergarten things: maple syrup on her waffles, the smell of wet grass, and her bunny's whispers on her cheeks. Yet there is something different about Jillian that she loves most of all: she loves that she can see the colors of the sounds that she hears. Through Jillian, young readers are exposed to synesthesia, where one sense triggers a perception or color. When Jillian gets to school however, the other students don't understand her. When she says a spilled lunch box is yellow, the other students laugh "inky black" laughter at her. No one can identify what is going on with Jillian until one day a musician comes to class. The musician helps Jillian and the class identify what happens in Jillian's brain, as he also has synesthesia. At the end of the book, the author's note describes her interactions with synesthetic children and how the different ways the extra sense can manifest.

This book offers a very developmentally appropriate way to begin talking about differences in very young children. Readers will connect with Jillian and her experiences with school and want to know more about her special sense. This book would pair extremely well with "The Noisy Paint Box," a book about the famous painter Wassily Kandinsky, who was also a synesthete. The illustrations help mirror Jillian's perceptions, depicting the sounds she hears in a variety of colors. As she names the colors of the sounds she hears, the text itself changes to match the color, adding dimension to the pages and clues for young readers.

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## Tracy J Hora says

Wow - I am so impressed by the handling of the topic of synesthesia. Both the story and the artwork!

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## **Rummanah (Books in the Spotlight) says**

The Girl Who Heard Colors is about a little girl with synesthesia, a neurological condition in which two or more senses are attached. Jillian is thoroughly in touch with all of her senses. She can enjoy the exquisite taste of maple syrup on waffles and the smell of wet grass, but what she loves most are the colors that all the sounds she hears make. To Jillian the bark of a dog is red, the tinkle of her bicycle bell is silver, and at school her teacher's voice is green. Jillian feels all of these things are normal, but when a lunchbox crashes to the floor at school and she calls it yellow, all the children begin to laugh at her, making a sad, black sound. When Music Day rolls around and all the children play, Jillian is overwhelmed by all the colors she hears. Fortunately the visiting musician is also a synesthete, so he understands exactly what she means and explains it to everybody. While the resolution in the book is a bit unrealistic, I did like exploring Jillian's unusual perception. I have not read too many books with people who have synesthesia. The illustrations are nicely done giving Jillian a spunky attitude and making the text manipulate according to Jillian's perception. A brief author's note gives a little bit more information about synesthesia, grounding it in the experiences of children the author has encountered on school visits. I learned a lot from this book and I think younger readers will too.

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## **Katy says**

I love the story. This could work in Read Set Move! or a special program with music or movement.

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## **Kellee says**

Review at: <http://www.unleashingreaders.com/?p=5603>

Synesthesia is something that I only became aware of after reading The Noisy Paint Box, and the idea of seeing colors of words or hear colors or foods having colors when you eat them just is quite fascinating and intriguing. This is a picture book, a very well done picture book, that introduces Jillian who is a young girl who loves her 5 senses and specifically loves being able to see colors of things. She doesn't realize that this is different until she starts school, but she soon realizes it isn't something to be ashamed of but something to be proud of.

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## **William Doran says**

Wow - a book about a child with synesthesia! Jillian goes through the story of her day told through her senses. She touches, hears, smells, feels and sees, and then she sees color. She is perfectly happy seeing colors, unaware that she perceives the world differently from the other children at school ... until something happens. The book is illustrated in simple understated style with a rich color palette. It is a fun exploration into a condition student's may not have heard of before.

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**Angie says**

Loved the pictures

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**Angelica says**

Beautifully illustrated book with lots of diverse characters and a really interesting premise. The sentences on each page are just the right length for Au's 17-month attention span.

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**Danielle Katz says**

A picture book about a girl with Synesthesia.

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**Kaethe says**

I'm broadly in favor of books which introduce the less common forms of natural human variety. Synesthesia is one of the most appealing variations, one I wish I had. Cute book.

Library copy

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**Jackie says**

A great introduction into the sense of synesthesia...the ability to see colors that are attached to objects. Jillian has this sense, but her classmates make fun of her for it...that is, until a musician visits their school and he tells them he is a synesthete, too!

Beautifully illustrated with bright colors (of course!), *The Girl Who Heard Colors* will have kids (and adults) talking, seeing, and believing.

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**Krystal Shoop-Hardin says**

This is a very intriguing story about the girl named "Jillian" and her special talent: Every sound she hears, she sees a color! This book introduces readers to the five senses and to the special category of people that have "Synesthesia". One sense will trigger another perception, usually color. This is determined as a special sense. This story is informative and sensitive to people with differing needs. I think children would find it unimaginable, but somehow magical and perhaps true. Acceptance of those with varying needs and talents. Teaches acceptance, colors, senses, friendship, kindness, and it's okay to be who we are.

