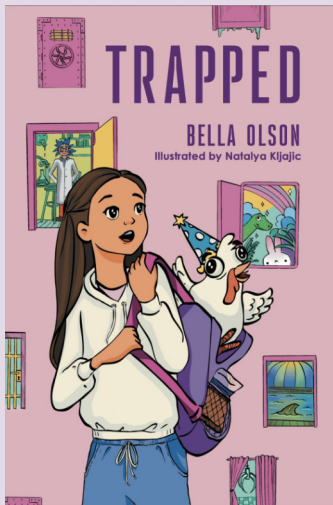


BEING WEIRD IS MY SUPERPOWER (AND IT SHOULD BE YOURS TOO)

Bella Olson



Let me tell you something important: weird is not an insult.

Weird is a compliment wearing a disguise. Some people hear the word “weird” and think it means offbeat or strange in a bad way. I think it means authentic. Creative. Brave enough to think your own thoughts instead of using

someone else’s.

I have definitely been called weird before. I made a band with my friend Rocco called *Poster Malone*, and it’s full of very questionable songs. I have a journal with thousands of characters. I keep an emergency harmonica in my fanny pack.

If that’s weird, then I guess I’m very weird. And honestly? I’m okay with that.

Creativity Looks Weird Before It Looks Brilliant

In my book *Trapped*, the main character, Ava, survives an evil scientist, a giant maze, and even sharks because she thinks differently. She invents gadgets like grappling hooks. She solves problems in unusual ways. She carries an emergency BLT sandwich in her pocket in case she gets stuck somewhere and becomes “hungrified.” None of that is exactly normal behavior. But normal behavior wouldn’t have saved her.

Here’s something I’ve noticed: the things that make you stand out are usually the same things that make you brilliant. Ava isn’t the biggest person in the room. She’s not fearless. But she keeps moving forward anyway, using her creativity like a flashlight in the dark.

Creativity often looks weird before it looks brilliant.

The first person who suggested humans could fly in giant metal tubes probably sounded ridiculous. Now

we call that an airplane. The first person who said the Earth was round probably sounded strange, too. Now we have science proving it. The people who change the world usually start out being called weird.

Sometimes I think “weird” just means “early.”

Starting When You Feel Ready

I started writing my book when I was seven years old. Most seven-year-olds are not writing about mad scientists with spiky blue hair. They are usually trading snacks or learning multiplication tables. (Which I still have trouble with.)

I could have decided my ideas were too strange. I could have traded snacks like everyone else.

But I didn’t, because I felt ready for the challenge. It’s important to start when you feel ready. If you start something before you believe you can handle it, it feels overwhelming. I didn’t write this book to be ahead of anyone else. I wrote it because I wanted something big enough to hold all my creativity.

And I felt ready.

The Lonely Side of Being Different

The tricky part about being weird is that it can feel lonely.

There are moments when you share an idea and someone just looks confused. Or you laugh at something nobody else thinks is funny. Or you love a TV show that nobody wants to talk about because it’s “too weird.”

Sometimes you think,

“Maybe if I act more like everyone else, it’ll be easier.”

“Maybe I should just blend in.”

Fear whispers, “Don’t stand out. It’s safer.” But fitting in is overrated.

If Ava tried to fit in, she would have ignored her instincts. She wouldn’t have trusted her inventions. She wouldn’t have believed she could solve the



puzzle in front of her. And she definitely wouldn't have escaped.

Being different is what gave her the power to escape. When everyone else sees a locked door, she sees a hidden lever. When everyone else sees a problem, she sees a puzzle.

Weird Is Curiosity in Action

Being weird often means you're paying attention. You're noticing details other people miss. You're asking questions that don't have obvious answers. Curiosity is one of the most important superpowers in the world. Ava survives because she keeps asking, "What if?"

What if this key works?

What if there's a clue on the wall?

Those are weird questions. They are also brave questions. And sometimes curiosity looks a little weird.

Protect Your Imagination

I think adults sometimes forget that kids are some of the most imaginative people in the room. We are still experimenting. Still building roller coasters for bunnies. Still wondering what would happen if

unicorns were real or if slides could go upside down. Imagination isn't something you grow out of. It's something you protect.

If someone calls you weird, it might just mean your brain works in a different way. It might mean you care a LOT about things other people don't understand yet. It might mean you're seeing ideas and possibilities that other people haven't noticed.

The world doesn't need to copy-and-paste humans. It needs kids who build stuff. Draw stuff. Imagine stuff. Fix stuff. Ask big questions. Kids who are brave enough to share their ideas.

Kids who are weird.

The Beginning of Extraordinary

So here is my advice:

If someone calls you weird, don't shrink yourself. Don't trade your roller coaster ideas for something quieter.

Smile. Say thank you. Because weird isn't the opposite of normal.

Weird is the beginning of extraordinary.

(Bacon and Cheese!)

I'm 11 years old and the brains (and glitter) behind [Avocado Awesomeness](#), my YouTube channel, where I do everything fun, creative, and maybe just a little bit extra.



I'm a Brazilian-American SLAY queen, fluent in Portuguese and English, and yes—I can switch between them mid-sentence. Even my dog, Miso, is bilingual!

When I'm not filming, I'm usually on stage being super dramatic (in a good way). I've been in *The Lion King*, *Descendants*, *Matilda*, and a bunch more. Oh, and I can perform the *Hamilton* soundtrack from beginning to end without missing a beat. Here's my favorite story: When I was seven, I literally just woke up one morning and decided, "I'm writing a book." Four years later—and A LOT of rewrites later—BOOM!! My debut novel, *Trapped*, is alive in the world.

YES, I'M 11! Besides being an author and a theater kid, I'm also the Chief Imagination Officer (yes, that's a real title) at Salt and Light Coalition. Basically, I get to use my ideas to change the world. When I'm not doing all that, you can usually find me hanging out in Michigan or giving snuggles to my best furry friend, Miso.

