**Why Do You Hold Her Hand?**

(revised 1)

**Page One:**

**A little boy is playing with a ball on a basketball court. There is a children’s party going on in the background. An adult stands watching the player with his 12-year-old daughter. The little boy looks at them curiously. He runs over with the ball.**

**The Boy:**

*Do you want to play ball?*

**The Girl:**

*Ball.*

**He passes her the ball but she drops it, not really ready or paying attention. The man smiles and helps her pick it up and throw it back.**

**The Man**

*Throw ball. Good.*

**The Boy:**

*Thanks…Why do you hold her hand?*

**Pages Two and Three:**

**In the corner of the page the little girl is smiling, looking off as the man and boy talk. With each thing the boy sees we see the physical representation.**

**The Man:**

*She seems a little old for hand-holding, huh?*

**The Boy:**

*Kinda.*

**The Man:**

*It’s just that my daughter has something called autism. And that means a lot of different things, but mostly that her brain works differently than ours. She thinks differently. Look around. What do you see and hear?*

**The Boy:**

*There’s Tommy’s party. His sister is upset that she’s not getting ice cream.*

**Sister:**

*I WANT CHOCOLATE!*

2)

**The Man:**

*What else?*

**The Boy:**

*Some of the other kids are playing hide and seek. And Tommy’s dad is making hot dogs.*

**The Man:**

*She sees and hears that, too. And a lot more. Just differently.*

**Pages Four and Five:**

**These pages should represent what the man says about his daughter’s experience. The Boy and the Man should be represented as looking from the outside into her world, from the corner. The little girl should be represented across the page paying attention to it all.**

**The Man:**

***Her world is different than ours. She can see and hear everything that you and I can but her focus is different. She saw you play with the ball. She was concentrating so hard on watching the ball that she wasn’t ready to actually catch it when you threw it to her. You see everything happening at this party at the same time, right? You hear everything at this party happening at the same time. So much is happening. She concentrates on one little thing at a time.***

**Note: Each of these experiences mix with others. There should be a beautiful confusion to it all. Following are the sights and sounds of the park.**

**A bird in a tree CHIRPS.**

**The Sister is complaining to her mom about not getting chocolate.**

**Sister:**

*I WANT CHOCOLATE!*

**Mom:**

*We’re having the hot dogs first, Honey. Where are the hot dogs?!*

**Dad:**

*Coming up!*

**Various kids playing tag:**

*I got you!*

*You did not!*

*Your shirt looks funny!*

*Your face looks funny!*

**A Car HONKS its horn in the far background.**

**Another Kid BOUNCES a basketball.**

**Another Parent is opening bags of chips.**

**The Girl:**

*Hot dogs…honey.*

3)

**Pages Six and Seven:**

**They’re now back in their own world at the park. We maybe use a close-up of the girl, wonder in her eyes, as the man and boy talk behind her. Butterflies float nearby.**

**The Man:**

*All of what she sees and hears can be beautiful, but all of it at the same time can be scary.*

**The Boy:**

*Is that why she doesn’t look at me?*

**The Man:**

*She does look at you. And she hears you. She just does it differently than you or I.*

**The Boy:**

*She doesn’t say anything to me…*

**The Man:**

*With her it’s more about being with people. She knows when I hold her hand it’s me holding her hand. She knows when you talk to her it’s you talking to her. And she likes to be around people.*

**The Boy:**

*That’s weird.*

**The Man:**

*No, just different. And there are more and more people like her. You’ve probably noticed them…*

4)

**Pages Eight and Nine:**

**Here we see a variety of people on the autism spectrum doing things in their everyday lives. We see them as the man and boy describe them…**

**The Man:**

*Sometimes you see them shopping in the store. Sometimes in a group. Sometimes you’ll see them working in the store…*

**The Store Bagger:**

*Please come again.*

**The Shopper:**

*Thank you.*

**The Man:**

*Sometimes they’re older and you see them holding hands with a helper. Sometimes you’ll see someone who is afraid of loud noises and covers their ears. Sometimes you’ll see them laugh and dance for no reason you can see except they feel like laughing or dancing.*

**The Boy:**

*I see some on the playground at school. But some talk funny. Some talk okay. Some are in a special class. Some talk to me.*

**The Kid on the Playground:**

*Hey Dude!*

**The Boy:**

*But how can they be different and the same?*

5)

**Pages Ten and Eleven:**

**Here the man and boy frame a variety of autism spectrum folks, represented in puzzle pieces. The girl is part of this group.**

**The Man:**

*Do you remember what my daughter has?*

**The Boy:**

*Autism?*

**The Man:**

*Right. And all of these different people are on what is called the autism spectrum. It’s like the colors of the rainbow, or the pieces of a puzzle. Each color of the rainbow is unique, but together they make a rainbow. Each puzzle piece is unique, but together they’re a part of the same puzzle.*

6)

**Pages Twelve and Thirteen:**

**We now see the differences side-by-side in the described situations. The Little Boy focused on Pizza…the Little Girl and all of the planes in her mind…**

**The Boy:**

*So some don’t speak. Some speak a little...*

**A Little Boy:**

*Hi! I want pizza*!

**The Boy:**

*Some speak a lot…*

**A Little Girl:**

*I love planes. I have three models at home one is from an old war one is a 747 one is a Concorde the Concorde looks really weird is that a plane up there? I wonder what kind it is it looks like a 747…*

**The Man:**

*Some like to stay still…some like to move a lot…some are shy, some are not…*

**A Little Boy:**

*Pizza! With cheese!*

**The Boy:**

*That kid sure likes pizza…just like me!*

**The Man:**

*That’s right. He’s just like you in a lot of ways. But there’s a sad thing…*

7)

**Pages Fourteen and Fifteen:**

**This is a tough one as we have to convey the hate and hurt felt by these adults and kids in various situations.**

**The Man:**

*There are some boys and girls and even adults who see people like my daughter and make fun of them. Or laugh at them. Or worse…*

**Older kids and adults:**

*Ha! Look at the retard!*

*Stupid!*

*Dummy!*

*Eww!*

*She’s so Ugly!*

**The Boy:**

*Why do they do that?*

**The Man:**

*Have you ever made fun of someone?*

**The boy is quiet (we have to see the guilt on his face).**

**The Man:**

*Sometimes we make fun of what we don’t understand. We don’t realize how much we’re hurting people who really, really need love and understanding. But when you know how hard some things are for them and you try to get to know them…you could make some new, great friends.*

8)

**Page Sixteen and Seventeen:**

**The man and boy stand together with the girl between them. She is smiling.**

**The Man:**

*I hold her hand because I want to show her I love her and that she’ll always have a hand to hold.*

**The boy thinks for a second.**

**The Boy:**

Can I hold her hand?

**The Man:**

You can ask her.

**The boy looks at her and reaches out.**

**The Boy:**

*Can I hold your hand?*

9)

**Page Eighteen:**

**The man watches as the boy and girl walk off hand-in-hand into a beautiful summer day in the park.**