Karl Taro Greenfeld knew from an early age that his little brother, Noah, was not like other children. He couldn’t crawl, and he had trouble making eye contact or interacting with his family. As Noah grew older, his differences became even more pronounced—he was unable to communicate verbally, use the toilet, or tie his shoes, and despite his angelic demeanor, he often had violent outbursts.

No doctor, social worker, or specialist could pinpoint what was wrong with Noah beyond a general diagnosis: autism. The boys parents, Josh and Foumi, dedicated their lives to caring for their younger son with myriad approaches—a challenging, often painful experience that the devoted father detailed in a bestselling trilogy of books.

Now, for the first time, acclaimed journalist Karl Taro Greenfeld speaks out about growing up in the shadow of his autistic brother, revealing the
complex mix of rage, confusion, and love that defined his childhood. Boy Alone is his brutally honest memoir of the hopes, dreams, and realities of life with a mentally disabled sibling.

Seamlessly weaving together the social history of autism and autism research—as the Greenfelds lived through it in seeking treatment for Noah—with the deeply affecting story of two very different boys growing up side by side, this book raises crucial philosophical questions: Can relationships exist without language? How should aging parents care for a nonverbal, violent child, and then a grown man who is not self-sufficient? Is there anything that can be done to help an extremely autistic child or adult become a member of mainstream society?

Haunting, tragic, and unforgettable, this chronicle of autism is a beautiful, wholly original exploration of what it means to be a family, a brother, and a person.

**Personal Review: Boy Alone: A Brothers Memoir by Karl Taro Greenfeld**

For a moment during my reading of this book, I was furious. I won't explain exactly why, so you can read the book yourself with the full impact, but basically, by means of a literary trick, I was given extreme false hope.

I am exactly the same age as Karl, and growing up, I read and re-read his father's books about Noah. I don't know why I was drawn to them—perhaps the same reason many people are drawn to accounts of autism, as they find the disorder fascinating. If I were more of a believer, I'd say I was led to read them. For now I am the mother of a 5 year old autism. She is not high functioning—not as low functioning as Noah, more in the middle. She is difficult and wonderful, fascinating and frustrating. I am very aware that now she is young—that people are drawn to her beauty and what they feel is her hidden potential, and that it won't always be the case. This book is ultimately in many ways a tragedy. Karl's parents gave everything they possibly could to Noah, and it didn't really help. Noah is now an middle aged man, no higher functioning than he ever was. He is in an institution, he has been hurt and abused, and one could certainly argue that all that was done for him was a waste of time. Was it? Is the fact that all three other family members have been inspired enough to write tremendously moving books about him enough to give his life worth?

While this book was tricking me, I was crying tears of hope and happiness for Noah and for my daughter Janey. When I realized it was a trick, I felt like I had been punched. However, now I realize why I think this was done. Every single day, that kind of trick is being played on parents of autistic kids. They are told if you do this, if you do that, if you do EVERYTHING just right, your child will get better—they will have a bright future. If it works, great. You can feel proud of yourself. If it doesn't, you
didn't try hard enough---it's your fault. It's like the bad old days of "The Empty Fortress". Someday, it will be realized that many of the 18 month olds that being called autistic and then being "cured" were never autistic to start with, or were very high functioning. Someday, kids like my Janey, baring the miracle that I certainly pray for, will no longer be cute little children, and there needs to be a change in society so their lives are better than Noah's.

Every parent of an autistic child, everyone whose life is touched by an autistic child or even more, an autistic adult, needs to read this book.

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Boy Alone: A Brothers Memoir by Karl Taro Greenfeld 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!