



Far from Normal

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A boy and his family find out whether fame and fortune are all they're cracked up to be in this sequel to DELIVER US FROM NORMAL.

When we last left Charles Harrisong and his family, they were drifting in a houseboat off the coast of Alabama. But their direction shifts abruptly when Charles's book about their decision to leave Normal, IL, gets made into a major motion picture, catapulting the Harrisongs to instant fame. And when the superstore Bargain Bonanza debuts a clothing line based on the family called Normalwear, Charles and his family's lives go from their not-so-normal houseboat to a penthouse apartment and their own reality TV show.

Far from Normal Details

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From Reader Review Far from Normal for online ebook

Runa says

While the plot was, overall, a very interesting one full of great plot twists, in the end, I prefer Kate Klise's humorous books for children much more than her realistic novels. Don't get me wrong, her realistic novels go right down to the core of realism when it comes to human emotions (Charles' prayers to God, saying He doesn't exist? It's something teens deal with but isn't written about all that often), even though some of the situations are crazily goofy. I did feel as though the last few pages made it out to be a big love story between Charles and Sophie, which really wasn't the root of the story at all. The writing was lovely though, the characters were all very three dimensional and interesting, and everything was great--just lacking that extra bit of awesome found in her children's books. I did, however, enjoy this book much more than I enjoyed its predecessor, *Deliver Us From Normal*.

Rating: 4.5

Lauren says

This book was a very disappointing follow up to *DELIVER US FROM NORMAL*. Weird. Very disappointing. I was really looking for something better. Do not read! Just very weird and I will stop there.....

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Mechele R. Dillard for TeensReadToo.com

Fourteen-year-old Charles Harrisong cannot understand why God hates him, but he knows that He does: "How could You abandon me and my family like this. Never mind. Don't answer that. I already know. It's because You hate me. Amen" (p. 217). All of the praying and begging and promising he has done over the years has gotten him nowhere. Rather, it has gotten him everywhere he doesn't want to be: far from normal. "My family," he muses. "We were turning into a vaudeville act" (p. 234).

Klise's story is confusing at times, and the motivation for the family to run from their previous home in Normal, Illinois, and live on a houseboat--the rickety S. S. O'Migosh--just doesn't make sense, even with the knowledge that there is an earlier book, *DELIVER US FROM NORMAL*, dedicated to the explanation of the situation. The family had been labeled "poor white trash," so they snuck out of town in the middle of the night, like criminals, and headed for Alabama and a life on the water? Mmmmmm, okay, I guess.

Leaving the original story behind, the depiction of the Harrisongs as they unwillingly and unknowingly become prisoners of megastore Bargain Bonanza is an interesting metaphor for society today. Yes, it's true, we are all caught in the net of one "superstore" or another, whether we wish to be or not, and, yes, the little man has become completely helpless in the shadow of the wealth and power driving humanity today. We are all captives of the "superstore," and there is little we can do to free ourselves at this point, as most of us don't even realize we are prisoners.

My concern with FAR FROM NORMAL, ultimately, is not the improbability of some of the situations or the confusing twists and timelines, but that the underlying message may be missed by the audience, especially younger readers. Few teens are reading Hegel, after all, and the use of his words to inspire Charles seems odd to me: Is this scenario a case of "right against right" (p. 118)?

Still, Klise's words have the potential to make a reader puzzle, think, consider, question, search, and discover, and, as these are goals of good young adult literature, I believe FAR FROM NORMAL to be a positive addition to any reading list.

Samantha says

The Harrisong family is back and this time around they're famous. After Charles writes a magazine article about his family's flee from Normal, IL and their time spent living on a houseboat Bargain Bonanza threatens to sue his parents claiming the article caused a drop in sales. In a strange twist of events Bargain Bonanza cons the family into signing on as spokesmodels and Bargain Bonanza begins marketing items inspired by and endorsed by the Harrisongs.

Life in the spotlight gets crazier and crazier and soon the Harrisongs feel like caged rats. That's when they begin a desperate plan to escape and start over.

An exciting read that is unpredictable and full of plenty of surprises, especially near the end as the escape plans kick into high gear. At times readers can't even be sure who to trust.

The characterization is great, each person is an individual and has a distinct set of actions, way of thinking/processing information, and speaking. The plot is fresh and has a little bit of everything: love, sadness, embarrassing moments, humor, and plenty of adventure. Overall, a quirky read for grades 5-8.

Lorelie says

OK, much as I would like to view the big box stores as evil, this takes it a bit to the extreme. But at the same time I very much enjoyed the Harrisong family. The action was well paced. I liked the book over all. I'm still a huge Kate Klise fan...

Hannah says

I haven't read this yet but everyone is saying bad things about this and the book before it which is disheartening (sorry if that spelling is off) I really like Deliver us from Normal so everyone is entitled to their own wrong oppions.

Bridget says

This was wonderful, but very stressful for me. Again with people, including kids, being steamrolled by other

rotten people! Great story though with a really likable main character. I never tire of Kate's books.

Kim Patton says

The continuing saga of the Harrisons family picks up 3 years after the first book, *Deliver Us From Normal*. They have survived living on a run-down boat and have found themselves in the middle of a reality nightmare thanks to a magazine article Charles wrote about their life. Though a bizarre at times, it was an enjoyable book.

Martha Schwalbe says

I was disappointed with this book, I liked the first one better. The idea behind this book was good but the ending seemed very contrived. I didn't buy it and not really believable.

K says

A bit over the top, but enjoyable. I will definitely recommend it to some of my middle school students.

CuriousLibrarian says

Even before finishing *Deliver Us From Normal* I knew I had to pick up this sequel. I think the second one is more bizarre than the first. (Although the first one is a little bit better.) Things get stranger and stranger all the way through this until the rather desperate ending.

I loved these books, and must seek out more from this author.

Recommended for grades 5-8.

Ariele says

This book might've gotten 3 stars, for nostalgia's sake. And because it had a subtle sort of moral lesson that you might not get unless you were a bit older than the protagonist (which, when I read the first book in this series, I was not). Either way, though, it was hard to escape a few of the things in the book that were seemingly more socially acceptable in 2006, and now, ten years later, are far less so. It was a fun story though, and the reality fame juggernaut theme actually worked well and was really interesting, to me at least (even if, in the end, the whole series of events turned out to be fairly implausible). Would recommend this if you've read the first book, but if not... I mean, at least it's a somewhat interesting premise for kid/preteen/young teen novels.

Amber says

"Far From Normal." Sounds funny, right? Not really. It's about a kid getting sued for bad-mouthing some stupid company. The cover has nothing to do with the story either, There isn't a single rabbit in the book, so why are they on the cover? As weird as it was, I found myself enjoying it.

Luke says

I had tried to read this because the premise sounded much better than it's predecessor "Deliver Us from Normal". Unfortunately (but not surprisingly) this book was a dud. The author was just not writing in a captivating fashion. I was disappointed, because Kate Klise writes so well with her sister, M. Sarah Klise, in the "Regarding the..." series, but I guess her jump to middle grade/YA fiction was a failure.

Wendolyn says

I agree with many of the ratings of this book. Even more over the top, stressful, unbelievable...but a family to whom one can relate. Coming from a large family, I appreciate all the ages and the interactions that ensue.

The parents are educated, but their judgment is poor as if they also lack confidence in their abilities. A big box store is the cause of all their problems.

Again, Charles feels as if he caused his family's problems. He tries to get them out of it, and grows in the process. The family becomes even closer.

He reads Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel; "Genuine tragedy is a case not of right against wrong but of right against right."

And learns about people: "She taught me things you can't learn from a book, like the fact that we see what we need to see in people, and the rest we ignore - until the stuff we're ignoring becomes bigger than the stuff we made up to talk ourselves into love in the first place." Page 242
