

*Colors Through Clouds is a brutally honest, first-hand account of the life of the thoughtful, sensitive Shana, a girl diagnosed with high functioning autism, from her preschool years through the summer after her first year of high school.*

**Colors Beyond Clouds:**  
**A Journey Through the Social Life of a Girl**  
**on the Autism Spectrum**  
by Shana Belfast

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# Colors Beyond Clouds

A Journey Through the Social Life of a Girl  
on the Autism Spectrum



Shana Belfast

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## Prologue

It is early December. The year is 2017. I have waited so long for this. It is time for my first high school musical audition, for *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*. This is only my fourth audition ever, but I guess I still came a long way.

I practice.  
Practice.  
Practice.

I am so nervous and excited. The first part of the audition is dance. I'm not great at following choreographies. Following the order of the steps is hard for me. Especially when I need to be in sync with other people.

We had to dance in groups on stage

In front of the other groups.

I danced with a group of kids

To “My New Philosophy.”

The steps were not too hard.

I was surprised that I did not have too much trouble. I think that my dance audition actually went well!

I wait...

For the singing auditions. I’m ready for this. I love to sing. My card says #1, which means that I am first to perform. I feel confident and nervous all at the same time.

“Number One”, they call.

It’s my turn.

I go on stage. I sing “Live Out Loud”, a song that I like a lot, from the show *A Little Princess*. It is a good audition song because it is powerful and expressive. The piano starts. I begin to sing. I nail that song.

I’m so proud of my audition!!

I'm so happy!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

For the whole week, I keep checking the theatre program chat site for the results of the audition.

I can't wait for the cast list.

Can't stop thinking about whether I got in or not. Then, a few days later, the show director posts that the list will come out that day. I check the site every few minutes. Nothing yet. But...

Then I see a private message from the show director. It says:

*"Hi Shana, unfortunately, you did not make the final list, your audition went well, but we just have a really small cast...."*

I am so, so upset.

I have such a passion for theatre.

It could be a whole year until I'm in a show again.

But it's more than just being in a show.

My life was not easy.

I felt alone a lot.

I felt different a lot.

Being on stage helps me forget

Being on stage helps me be part of something more than me

Being on stage helps me cope with difficult feelings.

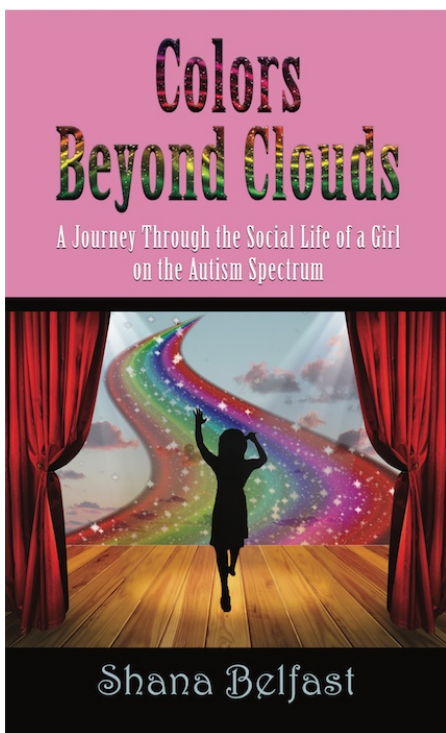
Theatre has helped me.

But my life is not just theatre

So, my story is not either.

This is my story.





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