

# A Manual for Marco

By Shaila Abdullah

An 8-year old girl decides to make a list of all the things she likes and dislikes about dealing with her autistic brother, and in doing so realizes that she has created *A Manual for Marco*.



**SHAILA ABDULLAH** is an award-winning author and designer based in Austin, Texas. She has written four other books: *Saffron Dreams*, *Beyond the Cayenne Wall*, *My Friend Suhana*, and *Rani in Search of a Rainbow*. The author has received several awards for her work including the Golden Quill Award and Patras Bukhari Award for English Language.

Along with the author, *A Manual for Marco* was also illustrated by **IMAN TEJPAP**, a 12-year-old artist from Canada. In addition to being a budding artist she is an avid crafter, creating masterpieces with ordinary items like duct tape.

"In a story inspired by a real-life family, Abdullah, who tackled cerebral palsy in *My Friend Suhana*, discusses life with an autistic sibling, as described by a girl named Sofia. Endnotes provide additional tips and information about interacting with those on the autism spectrum."

-PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

"Through her genuine, caring accounts about growing up with an older, autistic brother, this eight-year-old also shows her love for her sibling who is special but sometimes does things that are not-so-special. I highly recommend this book written with sensitivity and beautifully illustrated."

-LORNA D'ENTREMONT, Special Needs Book Review

"*A Manual for Marco* is a welcome addition to children's literature that will help in introducing the condition of autism to young people and providing information that will enable them to understand a little more about it so that will not seem so scary."

-WAYNE WALKER, Home School Book Reviews

For more information please visit [www.ShailaAbdullah.com](http://www.ShailaAbdullah.com)

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# *A Manual for Marco*

## Praise and Endorsements

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"Through her genuine, caring accounts about growing up with an older, autistic brother, this 8-year-old also shows her love for her sibling who is special but sometimes does things that are not-so-special. I highly recommend this book written with sensitivity and beautifully illustrated."

-LORNA D'ENTREMONT, SPECIAL NEEDS BOOK REVIEW

"Shaila Abdullah's vivid writing quickly drew me into Sofia's world. Readers will enjoy the journey with this perceptive narrator, who navigates her challenging situation with heart and a sense of humor."

-JACQUELINE ADAMS, AUTHOR OF MORE THAN 60 CHILDREN'S BOOKS

"*A Manual for Marco* is a 'must read' for families or friends of an autistic child. Abdullah's writing is clear, warm, and accessible. Even the youngest readers will be able to understand autism. Abdullah has the ability to show love under the worst circumstances, even when Marco's sister realizes her treasures are probably in the toilet. The illustrations are delightful. *A Manual for Marco* is perfect for younger elementary students."

-GWENDOLYN HOOKS, AUTHOR OF 17 BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

"*A Manual for Marco* is a welcome addition to children's literature that will help in introducing the condition of autism to young people and providing information that will enable them to understand a little more about it so that will not seem so scary."

-WAYNE WALKER, HOME SCHOOL BOOK REVIEWS

"*A Manual for Marco* is an outstanding resource that will help educators, family members, children, friends, and siblings understand how to focus and deal with a child who is autistic. Not only do I recommend that this book be in every regular classroom, special ed, and in schools that focus on children with autism, but as a read aloud in classrooms for all children to learn more about autism and create discussion groups and possibly add more to the list of what you think others should know about dealing with children with autism."

-FRAN LEWIS, FORMER READING AND WRITING STAFF DEVELOPER AT NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Shaila Abdullah proves to be a great ambassador for autism, using explanations and warm, welcoming illustrations in *A Manual for Marco* that give a complex condition a simpler explanation. What a marvelous educational tool for kids (and adults) about a subject not found in children's books. Impressive."

-C. HOPE CLARK, AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR, THE CAROLINA SLADE MYSTERIES

"It's tough being a sister when your little brother is not the easiest kid to deal with. In fact, sometimes Marco is so difficult that it seems as though he should come with an instruction manual. That's because Marco has autism, which makes him behave differently than other kids. Marco's sister's manual, with its delightful illustrations, explains that behavior. It also tells how to be helpful when it occurs, and most of all, reminds us of the reward of learning to treasure Marco for who he is. Once again, Shaila Abdullah has written a sensitive book about children with disabilities that should be of interest to all parents and children."

-GWEN FLORIO, AUTHOR OF MONTANA AND DAKOTA



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By Shaila Abdullah

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# A Manual for Marco

## Author and Illustrator



### SHAILA ABDULLAH, AUTHOR

Shaila is an award-winning author and designer based in Austin, Texas. She has written four books: *Saffron Dreams*, *Beyond the Cayenne Wall*, *My Friend Suhana*, and *Rani in Search of a Rainbow*. The author has received several awards for her work including the Golden Quill Award and Patras Bukhari Award for English Language. Several academic institutions have adopted her books as course study or recommended reading, including the University of California, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Indiana University, Boston University, California State University, and George Washington University. Learn more about the author at [www.ShailaAbdullah.com](http://www.ShailaAbdullah.com)



### IMAN TEJPAR, ILLUSTRATOR

Iman Tejpar is the 12-year-old artist behind the sketches of *A Manual for Marco*. She is the youngest of three siblings, born and raised in Calgary, Canada. From an early age, Iman loved to dabble with art and would sit for hours with her sketch pad and colors. Over the years that became a passion, and Iman continues to draw, paint and color every chance she gets. She has a keen sense of balance of colors and elements. In addition to being a budding artist, she is an avid crafter, creating masterpieces with ordinary items like duct tape.

*Apart from Iman's clever sketches and Shaila Abdullah's illustrations, the background art was created by a few other little girls: 10-year-old Sophia Pirani and 11-year-old Aanyah Abdullah, along with a creation of some merit by 2-year-old Aaliyana Abdullah.*



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By Shaila Abdullah

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2015

## **New Children's Book Explores Life from the Lens of an Autistic Child's Sibling**

*In her new book, award-winning author, Shaila Abdullah pens a tender and humorous account of a sibling who describes the joys and woes of living with her autistic brother.*

Ann Arbor, MI—While there is a wealth of information that deals with the various challenges faced by parents of autistic children, there is relatively little information available on how a sibling can cope with an autistic brother or sister. Shaila Abdullah's latest children's book *A Manual for Marco* (ISBN # 978-1-61599-242-3, February 1, 2015, Loving Healing Press) is a game changer in that category.

For 8-year-old Sofia—the main character in *A Manual for Marco*—living with her autistic brother is not easy but she does so with wisdom, wit and loads of patience. Sofia thinks that if her brother Marco had come with a manual, her family would be better equipped to handle his various needs. When the girl decides to journal about her experience dealing with her brother, she realizes that she has, in fact, created a manual for Marco.

*A Manual for Marco* is inspired by real life characters—the Alis in Austin, Texas—who have a 13-year-old son, Zain with autism, and a 9-year-old daughter Sofia who is neurotypical. Despite the challenges the family faced in raising a child with special needs, they never regarded autism as a life sentence. Instead, they considered their experience as an opportunity for their family to grow stronger together. “Initially it was a tough journey for us, especially for young Sofia, who did not understand the nature of Zain’s condition,” stated their mother Dr. Salima Ali who also offers tips for parents in the book. “Sofia went through many stages of confusion, fear, anger, and embarrassment. As is commonly seen in siblings of special children, Sofia in time became a compassionate and caring sibling.”

Lorna d’Entremont of Special Needs Book Review hailed *A Manual for Marco* as highly recommended. “Through her genuine, caring accounts about growing up with an older, autistic brother, this 8-year-old also shows her love for her sibling who is special but sometimes does things that are not-so-special,” said d’Entremont.

More information about *A Manual for Marco* is available at [www.ShailaAbdullah.com](http://www.ShailaAbdullah.com). The book is available in hardback, paperback, and ebook formats. For book orders and media queries, please contact Loving Healing Press at the address provided above.

### **About the Author:**

Shaila Abdullah is an award-winning author and designer based in Austin, Texas. She has written four other books: *Saffron Dreams*, *Beyond the Cayenne Wall*, *My Friend Suhana*, and *Rani in Search of a Rainbow*. Abdullah has received several awards for her work including the Golden Quill Award, Norumbega Jury Prize for Outstanding Fiction, and Patras Bukhari Award for English Language. Several academic institutions have adopted her books as course study or recommended reading, including the University of California, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Indiana University, and Boston University.