

So Embarrassing: Awkward Moments and How to Get Through Them

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The self-help guide *So Embarrassing* is designed for teenagers and uses humor to spell out survival tactics for falls, flatulence, and other mortifying moments.

Guided by a large cast of cartoon characters, the book devotes its chapters to the dangers of unreciprocated waves, getting names wrong, and other embarrassing situations. It's infused with good-natured fun, which aids in its mission of showing that embarrassment is fleeting, that it happens to everyone, and that any incident can be overcome with time and a good attitude.

Each page is filled with illustrations and dialogue in addition to the book's extra features, like "True Story" asides that reinforce the message that even famous people who seem to have it all together, like singer Elton John and baseball star Alex Rodriguez, can fall victim to embarrassment by falling off of a chair or tripping on an untied shoelace. "True Fact" captions give historical background for their pages' subjects, as with a step-by-step analysis of the comedy classic "slip on a banana peel," which is enriched by lines describing its origins. Elsewhere, a section about having food stuck in one's teeth is informed by a quick history of flossing, and the book's discussion of the mechanics of "likes" on social media is revelatory.

Scientific explanations of blushing, sweating, and gas emissions are educational and lead to sound advice. A licensed health counselor appears as a hippo, with tips on how to handle the emotional impacts of embarrassment. Geared toward early teenagers, the book's art and design are colorful, humorous, inventive, and relatable. Every page is different; some pages resemble comic strips, while others are structured as charts, diagrams, or games.

Great for entertainment and comprehensive in its study of embarrassment, *So Embarrassing* is a cartoon self-help book that doesn't embarrass itself.

PETER DABBENE (November / December 2020)

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