

Braced

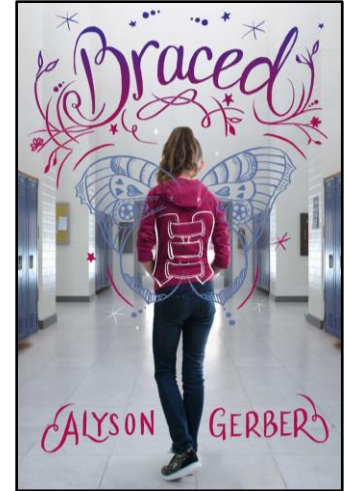
Alyson Gerber

GENRE: Realistic Fiction

BOOK SUMMARY

7th grade is about to begin. Rachel is looking forward to the new school year, trying out for the soccer team with her friends, and having her first crush. But a visit to the doctor throws a wrench in all her plans as she discovers that her scoliosis has worsened and that she must wear a brace for 23 hours a day. Rachel's world comes tumbling down as she struggles to deal with the brace, her parents, her appearance, friendships, and bullying. Rachel battles with finding her own inner strength to confront the trials of being different and overcoming the challenges that scoliosis and the brace bring with it.

* The author writes from her own experience dealing with Scoliosis as a teen and provides a list of scoliosis resources for the reader in the *Notes* section.



BOOK TALK

I can't believe it! School is starting and I had a great chance of being the forward on the soccer team. But instead I have to wear a stupid back brace for scoliosis. It is not for a few hours a day but for **23 HOURS A DAY!!!** I look like a turtle. It hurts. My clothes don't fit right. I can't kick straight. What will my friends say? I can't bring myself to tell them. No way can I tell Coach! And what about Tate? Will he still like me? No one understands. Not even my Mom who had to wear a brace too when she was growing up. All she says is, "Keep that brace on so you won't have to have surgery!" How will I ever get through this year?

LINKS TO HELPFUL WEBSITES

- **Official Website:** <http://alysongerber.com/books>
- **Author:** <http://alysongerber.com/bio>
- **Curvy Girls Livestream:** Q&A with Alyson Gerber, Author <https://youtu.be/VK28x1KRNVI>
- **Braced: a Downloadable Book Talk and Discussion:** <http://www.jtsa.edu/braced-a-book-talk-and-discussion>
- **Curvy Girls Scoliosis Foundation,** <https://www.curvygirlsscoliosis.com>
- **TeachingBooks.net through INSPIRE:** <https://www.teachingbooks.net/qlnmns>

MAKERSPACE ACTIVITIES

- Build a prototype for a new brace.
- Design a different costume that would fit over Rachel's brace.
- Solve Meaningful Problems: "She says there are many people with this same knee condition and she wants her creation to help them all. She also has said the Makerspace encourages her to explore solutions in a way that would not have been possible elsewhere." <http://www.nea.org/home/66589.htm>
- Doing Good: "These students want to design a prosthetic hoof for horses." <http://www.nea.org/tools/making-matters.html>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Rachel's literal spine is still growing. Think about how the figurative term "to have backbone" fits or does not fit with the trials Rachel goes through as she wears her brace. Cite evidence from the book.
2. Discuss how Rachel's friends changed as the year progresses. Did any remain faithful to her? Why did some friends turn away from her? Cite evidence from the book, when available.
3. Read about scoliosis at <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/190940.php>. Discuss the condition and how you think you would handle a diagnosis and treatment. Is your decision the same as Rachel's behavior or different?

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS BOOK, YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE

- **Scoliosis:** *Straight Talk Scoliosis* by Theresa E. Mulvaney <http://www.straighttalkscoliosis.com>
- **Scoliosis:** *Deenie* by Judy Blume (1993)
- **Same Author and Challenges in School (ADHD):** *Focused* by Alyson Gerber (Spring 2019)
- **Physical Challenges:** *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio
- **Athlete Female Conquering Physical Challenge:** *The Running Dream* by Wendelin Van Draanen

Resource page created by 2019-20 **YOUNG HOOSIER BOOK AWARD** committee member:
Cindy Newton, School Media Specialist, Connersville Middle School, Connersville, Indiana