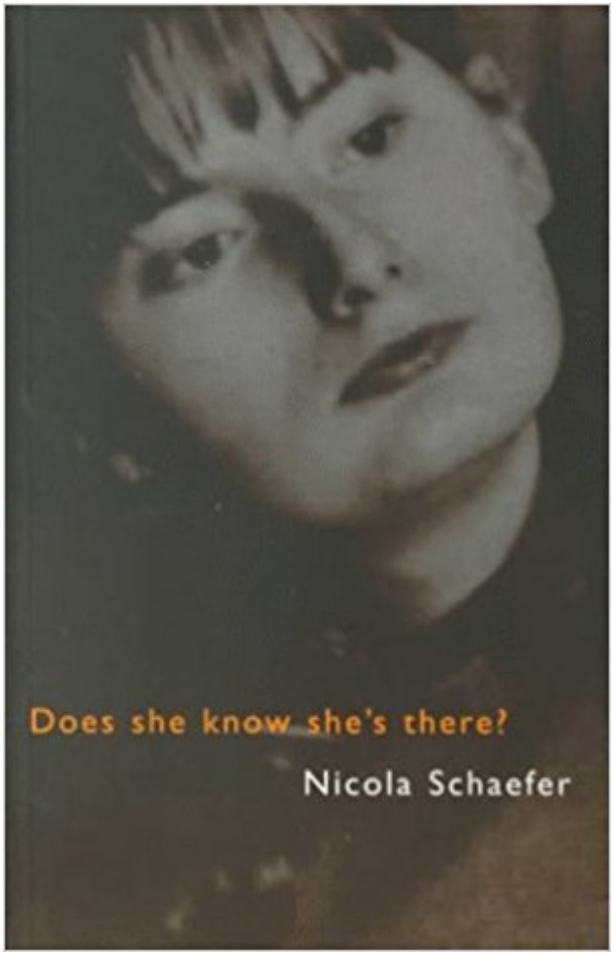
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Does She Know She's There?



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Synopsis

First published in 1978, Does She Know She's There? is the inspiring story of one family's determination to love, cherish, and keep their only daughter. From the moment the Schaefers were told their first-born Catherine would never walk, or talk, or even feed herself, they swore that to institutionalize her would be their last resort. The keeping of that vow was far from the story of tears and despair that some would assume. "Cath" emerges as an engaging personality in her own right, as terribly challenged as she is. Now 37, Catherine Schaefer lives in her own home, with live-in support, plus friends-cum-tenants in the upstairs apartments. Still unable to move much, or to speak, Catherine's life has, nevertheless, been a rewarding success story. This book is its chronicle, illustrated with black and white photographs.

Book Information

Paperback: 310 pages

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Customer Reviews

"With candour, poignancy and humour, Schaefer, who has spoken internationally about helping people with disabilities to achieve a good quality of life, chronicles her steadfast determination not to institutionalize or stigmatize her daughter . . . [Schaefer] has a knack for evoking empathy because of her resolute optimism and refreshing bluntness. Readers may be moved to tears and laughter as they share the tragedies and triumphs of these two unique women. Due to the challenges faced by Catherine, stories of even the most ordinary events in her life become extraordinary. Their extraordinariness is because of the sheer complexity of the effort required on the part of everyone involved in order to accomplish them. Schaefer, through her positive approach towards adversity, inspires in the reader an appreciation for the smallest pleasures in life." - Brenlee Carrington, The

Winnipeg Free Press "This is not a reference book for those seeking information about cerebral palsy. Rather, it is a celebration of the lives of some remarkable people; in that respect, it succeeds admirably." - Canadian Book Review Annual "In this book, Nicola Schaefer shares her experiences of being the mother of a child with cerebral palsy. Her daughter Catherine was born in Winnipeg in 1961. Schaefer takes us through the challenges she faced to get appropriate care and stimulation for her daughter. She came up against significant roadblocks because there were minimal programs available for people with disabilities. At that time, most people with mental disabilities were institutionalized, and Schaefer wanted no part of that for her child. Schaefer has spent most of her life advocating for programs, not only for her own daughter, but also for other families in similar circumstances. A significant part of this book deals with the lack of services in Winnipeg and how Schaefer attempted to change that. Schaefer also shares personally about her own feelings of what it means to live with a child who is disabled. I could relate to many of the feelings she expressed, including guilt, anger and exasperation. But it was mostly joy, the kind that comes from a child accomplishing a milestone. The photographs throughout the book help the reader get a better picture of the challenges the family faced and the love they had for Catherine. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants a better understanding of people with mental disabilities. I hope that this book will encourage you to make a new friend the next time you encounter Catherine or someone like her." - Mennonite Brethren Herald, April 2001

Nicola Schaefer is a Fitzhenry and Whiteside author.

Ad described; quick shipping. The book is very interesting for anyone who has is raising a disabled child. God Bless! :)

This is the story of a woman who chose to raise her severely disabled child at home, at a time when doctors recommended putting brain damaged children in an institution and forgetting about them. Nicola’s motivation to keep her daughter with her at all costs was inspiring.I did not finish the book feeling convinced that Catherine knows she’s there, but Nicola knows Catherine is there, and that is what seemed to work for the family as Nicola struggled to get her daughter what she deserved.This book is about a mother’s love for her daughter and her acceptance of, and her pride in, her daughter as she is.

We read Does She Know She’s There? as a requirement during our college course about teaching

students with significant disabilities. We all really enjoyed the book. Although the novel was long, we found it to be a heartwarming story. Nicola Schaefer journals about her life with her daughter Catherine. Catherine is a child with multiple physical and cognitive disabilities. At a time when institutionalization was a common answer for children with disabilities, Nicola spent the great majority of her life advocating for her daughter and other children like her. She worked to get Catherine into appropriate schools and provide nurturing environments for children and adults with significant disabilities. Schaefer's genuine writing style brings readers into the story where they experience both her heartaches and joys. The text is also complimented with touching black and white photos of Catherine and the people that were important in her life.

It's hard to believe that Mrs. Schaefer isn't a professional writer who spends hours at the typewriter every day of her life. Her writing is amazing! I am the mother of a son with severe disabilities who was born in 1998, and Nicola is now my role model. Her daughter, Catherine, was born just a year before me in 1961, a time when services were essentialy non-existent for someone with her degree of disability. The Schaefer's raised her at home during a period of history when supports were something that had to fought for and won. And fight she did. What a woman.What's most inspiring to me, though, is the joy and humor that Nicola shares when telling Catherine's story. Despite the "inconveniences", as she refers to them, that Cath's disability presents, life is good. Not easy, but very, very good. I fell in love with the entire family.

Wonderfully written! Nicola shares an aspect of life that many are too afraid to explore. Throughout the story of her daughter's life, Nicola shares the inhumanity and stigma that go with being a person with a disability in yesterday's society. This book is a time travel that spans through 1961 to 1999. It was astounding to see how society has changed and unfortunately...how it hasn't. This book will enlighten you and challenge you to view people with disabilities in a new light.As part of a college requirement, I read this book along with 3 of my classmates. We have analyzed and come to the conclusion that this book could change even the hardest of hearts.

Does She Know She's There? brings the story of Catherine Schaefer up to date. Brought up at home, after doctors told her parents to put her in an institution, Catherine now has her own home, and is an integral part of her community. The book, by her mother, Nicola, is a funny, intelligent, and compassionate story of her years of effort to create an atmosphere where her daughter can thrive and have joy in her life. And yes, Catherine knows she's there!

Be careful! There are two versions of this book. You want to read the newer version, so you can get the whole story. Both versions are great. It is an inspirational true story written by a mother of a child with a severe disability. It discusses the mother's courageous attempts to better the quality of her daughter's life, when that was not the normal.

What a lovely way with words. The author eloquently welcomes the reader into her world and allows you to meet Catherine, a unique and special young lady. The novel also lends itself to be a textbook on history and legislature regarding those with disabilities. Mrs. Schaefer obviously is rich in both knowledge and love.

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