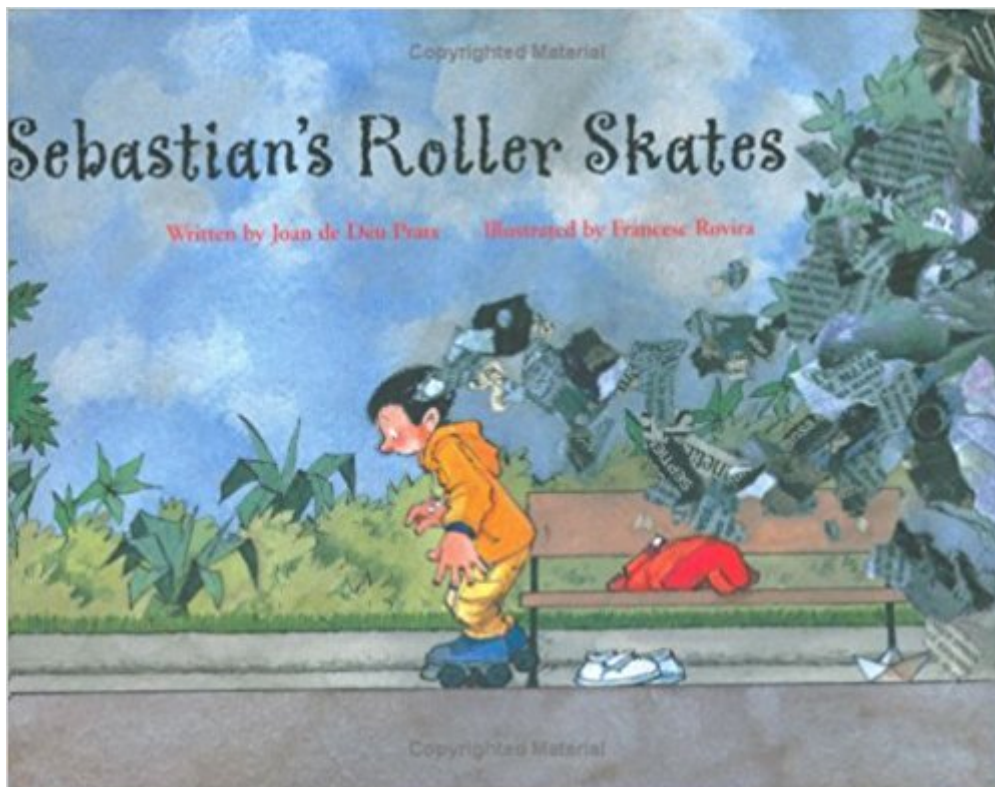


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# Sebastian's Roller Skates



## Synopsis

Sebastian didn't talk very much, even though he had a lot to say. He wanted to tell the barber not to make his head look like a billiard ball. He wanted to tell his neighbors that he hadn't grown all that much. And he wanted to ask Ester, the little girl who sat in front of him at school, if she wanted to be friends. But he couldn't. He couldn't say any of those things. Sebastian was shy. He was very shy. And then one day he finds an old pair of roller skates in the park. Roller skating is hard to learn, but if you practice, and practice, and practice, and then if you forget about worrying, and forget about falling and just skate, well, everything changes. And sometimes if you forget about worrying and forget about blushing and just talk, well, everything changes again.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD730L (What's this?)

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #328,271 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #329 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > City Life](#) #1127 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Self-Esteem & Self-Respect](#) #1334 in [Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors](#)

Age Range: 5 and up

Grade Level: Kindergarten and up

## Customer Reviews

Kindergarten-Grade 3 — Sebastian always has a lot to say, but he is too shy to speak up. He won't answer in class, tell the barber that he doesn't like his haircut, or talk to his neighbors. He is especially shy around the curly haired girl he likes at school. Then one day, Sebastian finds an abandoned pair of roller skates and tries them on. At first, he falls down and decides that skating is not for him. However, these mysterious skates won't go away and eventually he is gliding through the park. Soon, with his newfound courage, he is talking in spite of himself — after all, he has

always had a lot to say. The cartoon illustrations tell what the text cannot, as a collage of torn-paper thoughts spills from Sebastian's head whenever he wants to talk. The collages start out in black and white but as Sebastian grows more confident and begins to share his thoughts aloud, they erupt into full color. Careful observers will notice that details from previous spreads reappear a few pages later in Sebastian's thoughts and that any text in his mind and in the art itself are in Spanish as this book was originally published in Spain. There is much to be savored in this story of self-discovery, and young audiences will find something new with each rereading. ãœJulie Roach, Watertown Free Public Library, MA Copyright ã Å© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

PreS-Gr. 2. This picture book from Spain features Sebastian, a boy so shy that he can barely whisper a word to his apartment-house neighbors, his barber, or even his teacher. Inside his head, though, he has plenty to say. Finding a pair of roller skates abandoned in the park, he tries skating but goes so slowly that he stumbles from one place to the next. When he catches hold of a runaway dog's leash and takes a wild ride through the park, Sebastian is spurred to overcome his hesitancy in skating and, even better, in speaking to those around him. His happiness shines from his face and from the collage of images that represent his words and thoughts. First in shades of gray and later in brilliant colors, the collage elements imaginatively express what Sebastian is feeling as well as what he is saying. The universality of Sebastian's experience ensures that this pleasing picture book, translated from the original Catalan, will resonate with children on this side of the Atlantic. Carolyn Phelan Copyright ã Å© American Library Association. All rights reserved

My son loves this book!

Love this book!!!

I have a shy little guy. An adorable story!!!! I thought it might be a little long for a 3 year old, but he sat through it and enjoyed it. Still, probably the right length for children ages 5 and up.

Sebasstian is a "tweener." He's way past elementary school age (especially in his own mind), but not yet a real teen either. People don;t know what to make of him, and he doesn't always know what to make of himself. Saying what he really feel doesn't come easy: The neighbors tell him how tall he's become, "and Sebastian would look at the floor, nod his head, and blush. (Really, what is one

SUPPOSED to say to such self-evident remarks?) The barber asks him if he likes his haircut. Sebastain whispers, "fine," but he really think his head looks like a bolwing ball, and that the barber better not to THAT again. At school, Sebastian knows the capitals of Burundi, Iceland, and Mongolia, but he doesn't answer the teacher's questions. Perhaps Sebastian's disconnect between thought and expression concerns his feelings for Ester--curly-haired, honey-eyed. He'd never even spoken to her. One day, while walking home through the park, Sebastian finds some abandoned roller skates. He tries, he immediately falls, and he concludes, "Skating is not for me." However, the next day can stand on them before falling. At this point, author Joan de Deu Prats could have gone onward and upward, tracing Sebastian's slow but sure development into a sure-footed skater. Fortunately, she's more talented than that: Yes, Sebastian slowly improves, but when he sees skaters better than him, he's stops and goes home. They say that necessity is one Mother of Invention (Frank Zappa is another), but here it's a runaway dog who inspires Sebastian. Grabbing the running dog's leash, he's in the zone, bounding across a bridge and jumping a ditch, Before he realizes it, Sebastian has "skated through the whole park!" Without even trying, almost Zen-like, Sebastian has mastered something without trying to master it. Sebastian's formerly grey mood bursts into a collage, they fill the lobby of his apartment complex, and pour out of his mouth as he speaks. Even though he's still a tweener, smaller--smaller than grown-ups, maybe not even noticed by him, Sebastian's confidence and perseverance have grown immeasurably. Things come full circle at the conclusion: He TELLS the barber that he "doesn't want his head to look like a billiard ball," he answers tough geography questions, and, in his most important step, he asks Ester to go skating with him. Their eyes meet, she shyly agrees, and the page spills with orange, red, and purple hearts, light and free. 'SEbastian' tackles a difficult age with skill and aplomb. Not only does De Deu Prats understand the tweener psyche, but she respects it without over-dramatizing. Of course, skating doesn't melt all tweener anxiety--no one thing could--but Sebastian's path implies that it's possible. SHe seems to suggest that adults shouldn't judge kids by their "cover,"--there's much more going on--and that adolescents shouldn't label themselves either...a change is gonna come. The drawings are open, colorful, and match the emotional content: Rovira superbly depicts thoughts and settings--the inside and the outside. This superb book will appeal to kids both younger and older than the pre-teen Sebastian.

Our daughter was diagnosed with social anxiety & selective mutism. This totally describes her. She has so much to say but completely freezes & just can't talk when the anxiety hits. The other day she got her hair cut for the 1st time (she's 4 1/2) and she had this huge boost of confidence! She told the

teacher all about it & even participated in a group activity that day! I know she will relate to this story & might help her feel like she's not alone. So many people just don't get it.

Sebastian's Roller Skates is an award-winning picturebook by Joan de Deu Prats about a very shy young boy who has a lot to say but can't bring himself to talk much. One day he finds a pair of old roller skates in the park - and as he tries them on and practices, he learns not only how to skate, but also much more! The whimsical color illustrations by Francese Rovira are the perfect complement to the entertaining story about growth and self-discovery through applying oneself to a new talent. Highly recommended.

Young Sebastian is so shy that he barely speaks aloud, even though he has a lot to say. When he finds a pair of roller skates on a park bench, he practices with them for days. As his skating slowly improves, he also finds confidence to share his knowledge and feelings. The illustrations capture Sebastian's joy as his face and world brighten. Part of the book's charm is that change doesn't come immediately for Sebastian. He builds on small successes, and can hardly believe the wonderful changes in himself.

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