



The Eagle Tree

Ned Hayes

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Fourteen-year-old March Wong knows everything there is to know about trees. They are his passion and his obsession, even after his recent falls—and despite the state’s threat to take him away from his mother if she can’t keep him from getting hurt. But the young autistic boy cannot resist the captivating pull of the Pacific Northwest’s lush forests just outside his back door.

One day, March is devastated to learn that the Eagle Tree—a monolithic Ponderosa Pine near his home in Olympia—is slated to be cut down by developers. Now, he will do anything in his power to save this beloved tree, including enlisting unlikely support from relatives, classmates, and even his bitter neighbor. In taking a stand, March will come face-to-face with some frightening possibilities: Even if he manages to save the Eagle Tree, is he risking himself and his mother to do it?

Intertwining themes of humanity and ecology, *The Eagle Tree* eloquently explores what it means to be part of a family, a society, and the natural world that surrounds and connects us.

The Eagle Tree Details

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From Reader Review The Eagle Tree for online ebook

Cathy says

I did not finish this book. I could not keep reading it. If you love trees and every bit of information you could possibly dig up about each and every tree, then you will like this book. I thought there was much much too much info about trees and not enough about the story, which I think was about an autistic 14 year old boy who was always hurting himself by climbing trees and was affecting the possibility of him being taken away from his mom.

Laura Cushing says

As a person on the autism spectrum, I especially love books with autistic narrators. I am always a bit wary when they are written by a neurotypical author. Will they write from the martyr parent position, the Rainman, or the Autistic Speaks puzzle piece perspective? Only a few manage the Autistic character as an interesting individual who happens to be autistic, not a stereotype. The author of The Eagle Tree does a splendid job with the character of March Wong, using his special interest in trees to draw us in to the world of the Pacific Northwest and a tree in need of conservation. It is also the story of 14 year old March branching out and becoming more aware of his place in the world, and his interactions with those in it. Loved the story!

In the resources to learn further, I was very pleased to see the author linked to autism self advocacy sites and not autism speaks. He really does get it. Well done.

Read on my kindle fire as my kindle first monthly choice

Melki says

I believe in trees.

Meet March Wong, a fourteen-year-old autistic boy who is obsessed with trees. If he had his way, he would talk about nothing but trees, and spend his time doing nothing but climbing them. But, this tree-climbing thing isn't sitting too well with everyone else. Neighbors are calling the cops, and his mom is threatening to move him to a treeless town in Arizona. And, if he continues getting injured in his climbing quests, the authorities may take him away from his mother, and put him in an institution. Then one day, he spies the majestic *Eagle Tree*.

Nothing will keep him from climbing that beauty.

Unless . . .

The tree is on property that has been sold. Property that is going to be forested. If he hopes to save the Eagle Tree, March will have to conquer his fears of public speaking, and learn to communicate and cooperate with others.

I wish I could rate this one higher. It's well written, and I applaud any young adult book that doesn't contain a

paranormal love story. BUT - there's just too much tree-talk for me. There is tree history, tree facts, tree names in both Latin and Native American, tree descriptions, tree taxonomy, and on and on and on. I'm a tree-hugger, but I honestly wanted to ~~reach for a chainsaw~~ scream.

It is difficult for me to care about people. But I believe it would be useful for me to keep in mind the idea that we are like trees - all connected at the roots, all touching each other all the time, even though we may not consciously feel those connections or those touches.

Becky Kondritz says

Finished this Kindle First book two days after selecting it this month. This novel is narrated by a fourteen-year-old boy with autism. Viewing the world through these eyes was a treasure (especially as a teacher reading this). Loved the ideas of trees, nature, our connectedness with all things, etc.

Debbie Carlson says

I selected this book from Amazon First because the reviews were tremendous, but it is not a book that would have ordinarily stood out to me. I was super impressed since most of the Amazon First books seems so amateurish.

The narration from the young boy is done so well that I feel as if I am actually inside a real boy's mind. I especially like how well the author has captured the autistic mind. The only thing that would have made the book better is if he had added sections of the mother with her thoughts and fears about raising her autistic child.

I thought the story was compelling and the writing was well done. There were a couple moments that I felt were unrealistic, or uncharacteristic, but honestly, I could be wrong. I'm an artist and one thing I learned about drawing or painting is that if one accurately portrays a subject, but others are unfamiliar with that subject, they will often assume the artist got the work wrong than believe the validity of the work. For instance, I painted a chocolate lab puppy and hung it at an art fair. People continuously asked me why I had painted the dog's eyes yellow. Astounded, I exclaimed, "Because they ARE yellow."

McKenzie says

2.5 stars

It is very difficult for me to assign a rating to this book, so I felt I should communicate my feelings in writing. The description grabbed my attention because I am very interested in autism, particularly books with autistic narrators. However, the description makes the plot seem much more intriguing than it actually is. I wanted to give up on this book too many times to count, but I trudged on only because the description promised that March, the narrator, would "take a stand" and enlist "unlikely support" in his efforts to save the beloved Eagle Tree. These things barely happened. I would go so far as to say there is almost no plot to this book. Instead, it is a 262 page description of different types of trees.

The only merit to this book -- and the only reason I am giving it a generous 2.5 stars -- is that it is extremely

well-written. Having read many books written from the perspective of autistic narrators, I believe this to be the most realistic. Hayes made me feel as though I were truly inside the mind of a young, autistic, tree-obsessed boy, and I think that is quite the feat.

Unfortunately, the writing style and my interest in autism alone were not enough to make this book enjoyable. I apparently also needed to have an obsession with botany and a hatred of plot-driven writing. If all of those traits describe you, give this book a read!

Glauber Ribeiro says

This is a book about love and loss. Did you know that it's possible to lose a whole forest, one tree family at a time? Not only possible, it's happening right now and it will continue. The Appalachians will become a desert within a few years. How do you feel about this?

Have you wanted something so much that you were willing to risk your life for it?

I like books that make me feel like I'm inside another person's mind, especially if the mind is very different from my own. March, the narrator of the story, is very good at explaining clearly what he does and why he does it. Ned Hayes' narrative is a tour de force, always staying in character, almost entirely convincing. I've never seen better.

Ms.pegasus says

I admit it. I have a problem with first person narratives by children. My problem is so great that I could not make it through Jonathan Safran Foer's highly regarded book, EXTREMELY LOUD AND INCREDIBLY CLOSE.

The EAGLE TREE is narrated by 14 year old Peter March Wong. Peter, or March as he prefers to be called, is autistic. He is preoccupied by trees, so it is fortunate that he lives with his mother in the state of Washington, rather than with his father in Arizona. He describes the surviving old growth forests and the nurse logs from fallen trees that nurture future growth so passionately, it draws the reader into his point of view. These forests are an affirmation of continuity. March not only knows everything about trees, he is obsessed with climbing them. He can no more explain that compulsion than George Mallory could explain why he wanted to climb Mt. Everest. Mallory's response to the question sounded visionary. March's response elicits dismay and an ever-growing list of constrictions about which trees he can climb, when he can climb them, and how long he can stay in them. His is no casual passion. He estimates he climbs some 5.6 trees a day, and that's only on average. None of these climbs, however, can compete with the lure of the Eagle Tree. The Eagle Tree is a special case. It rises to a height of perhaps 300 feet. It is ancient. It represents an endangered species, due to the winter survival of ponderosa pine beetles in a warming climate.

The plot moves in two directions. First, there is March's attempt to save the tree when that section of the forest is marked off for development. Second, there is a looming custody hearing to determine if March should be institutionalized. Although March's passion for trees is at times lyrical and persuasive, these two plot scenarios are insufficient to support the length of a novel.

The strength of the book lies in descriptions of March's acute tactile imagery. Here, the mind of the boy and the magical beauty of the trees become one. While he hates touching people, he loves the feel of trees. "I

reached down to feel the soil, and I touched the outreaching roots of the trees that bore horizontally and vertically hundreds of feet through the forest. I stroked the earth with my palm, and I could almost feel that invisible network of capillary roots that sucks moisture and nutrients out of every inch of the soil I was standing on. I breathed in and out. I was part of the forest. I was alive.” (Loc. 887) On another walk he thinks: *“I felt the bark of the trees on either side of me as I walked. It was very soothing. Here in the LBA Woods, the trees grew very close together and when I did not walk on the path, I would reach out with my fingertips and touch their bark as I passed. The skin of the trees was warm in the sunlight, and rough, and I imagined that each tree contained a soul. Like an Ent. I knew this idea was not a true thing, but still I felt good that the trees were here.”* (Loc. 1744) Passages like these made the book worth reading.

Unfortunately, I had THE GOLDEN SPRUCE by John Vaillant and THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME by Mark Haddon in the back of my mind while I read this book. The former is a nonfiction account of the Pacific Northwest forests. The latter is a quasi-mystery narrated by a teen with Asperger's Syndrome. The EAGLE TREE, by comparison, did not carve out a compelling narrative to me. I could not sustain an immersion in the book, and much of the plot was predictable. A focus on the dynamic between March, his mother and his uncle would have strengthened the development of the characters. Instead, we never see the adults in this book except through March's eyes. However, anyone with some interest or background in botany will appreciate the details on forest ecology. I obtained this book for free from the Kindle First program and found it an interesting experiment.

Daniel Clark says

A thinker. Is everything in this book accurate? I don't know. It does it make me excited to learn more about Autism and trees.

David Reviews says

The Eagle Tree by Ned Hays is about an autistic teenager's love of trees. March Wong is fourteen years old and he lives with his mother, who occasionally struggles to cope with his behaviour. His favourite daily activity is climbing the local trees, with which he is both fascinated and concerned about. A memorable read that takes us sensitively into the mind of an autistic child. March's frustrations are touching, from a world he perceives doesn't care about trees as much as he does, to the difficulties he has expressing his affection for his mother are heartfelt.

When March spies a huge tree while climbing his new neighbour's Red Cedar, his life is changed and his desire to climb the Eagle Tree becomes almost an obsession. But before he can climb it he learns that there are plans for the tree to be cut down as part of new housing development. March plans to make a protest and we are taken through an unusual, while ultimately uplifting story.

The author touches on global warming and other ecological issues through March's insights and readings. There are a lot of facts about trees, tree pests and how man has influenced the environment. These details really were part of the story and didn't detract from the emotional family issues or the obsession March has with the Eagle Tree.

I took me a little while to get in to this, but once involved it's a really enjoyable read that I won't forget. It's great to see March develop as a person and see his relationships strengthen. The author makes March's autistic thought patterns interesting and there is the environmental message, as well some emotional scenes.

This was overall a worthwhile read and I'm sure others will think so too.

Shomeret says

The Eagle Tree by Ned Hayes is a book that I nominated on Kindle Scout like Melophobia and The Lost Tribe. In this case, the author's name was familiar to me. I had reviewed his rather unusual historical mystery, Sinful Folk, on Book Babe.

It seems to me that there was a long delay between the selection of The Eagle Tree for publication by Kindle Press in October 2015 and its recent publication this May. I confess that I forgot that I had nominated it and was entitled to a free copy according to Kindle Scout's rules. So when I first encountered it on Goodreads, I became as enthusiastic as I had been when I nominated it. I then proceeded to purchase it right away on Amazon.

So why did I jump at the chance to acquire The Eagle Tree? It combines two elements that are of tremendous interest to me. The protagonist, Peter March Wong, is an autistic teen. This novel's protagonist is also deeply concerned with climate change and other environmental issues, as am I. I consider The Eagle Tree the most original piece of contemporary fiction that I've ever read about an autistic, and it also excels as eco-fiction. It will definitely be among my favorite 2016 reads.

For my complete review see <http://shomeretmasked.blogspot.com/20...>

Cateyesmd says

I enjoyed this book about fourteen-year-old March Wong, who is autistic and very bright! I have family and friends with children on the spectrum and what's most important for people to know is that every autistic child is different. Hearing March describe what he likes and does not like and why he does things was very enlightening.

March knows everything there is to know about trees and he doesn't hesitate to let people know. His desire to do something greater was a selfless act that everyone should learn. March is fascinated by one tree in particular, the Eagle Tree, which is a monolithic Ponderosa Pine, which he wants to keep from being cut down.

I'd definitely recommend to anyone who has a genuine heart to children on the spectrum, but don't know how to ask questions about it. It's a good book!!

Emily says

You know, I really wanted to finish this book. I really, really did. But the plot progressed far too slowly and the book was too repetitive to keep me engaged till the end.

The story is written from the point-of-view of a 14-year-old autistic boy who loves everything about trees. He loves counting trees, climbing trees, and talking about trees. And talking even more about trees. Talking about where they grow, when they grow, why they grow, and how they grow, in extremely intricate scientific detail. Because of this, the book read a lot more like a textbook than a novel.

I understand that the author is striving to speak from an "autistic boy's" point of view, but since the author is not autistic himself, I feel that he would have been better off leaving actual autistic authors to write about their own experiences and thought processes than struggling to put himself in an autistic person's shoes. I find it worrisome that a lot of the people writing favorable reviews for this book have said that it helped them "better understand autism" and even more worrisome that a lot of these people begin these reviews by saying that they are educators who work with autistic students. I would not recommend this book to anyone, ESPECIALLY those who are trying to better understand the way autistic people think. Read literature written by autistic authors if "understanding the autistic mindset" is truly your goal for reading this book.

Tfalcone says

I know this is told by an autistic character, but the trees are getting to me, even as a biologist. I did like it, overall 3.5 rating for slow start.

Becky says

March loves trees. He knows everything there is to know about their ecosystems, the various species, and anything else pertaining to them. His real passion is climbing them, mapping out the routes in his head and planning which to tackle next.

His absolute favorite tree is the Ponderosa Pine. A rare and endangered tree, he never thought to see one in his home state. But while climbing the tree in his new backyard, he catches sight of a magnificent specimen. Known locally as the Eagle Tree, March believes it might be an elusive Ponderosa Pine. But when the land the tree sits on is purchased privately and under contract to become the site for a new development, March realizes the Eagle Tree is in grave danger. March's sole focus is saving the tree, no matter the cost, but doesn't realize that it could mean losing his mother in the process.

There's not really a way to sum up Ned Hayes's latest in a manner that truly does it justice. Yes, it's about a boy and a tree. It's about an autistic boy who connects to the world through trees. It's about an autistic boy being raised by his single mother who is facing the very real danger of losing her son to the courts.

And it's told from the perspective of March himself.

Because of this, the reader is forced to see the world through March's eyes. Pieces of his story, as a result, are gleaned through inference or by piecing together clues March allows us to see. In between facts about trees and global warming, that is. It might sound strange, and again I blame the fact that it's very hard to sum up adequately in a nutshell while conveying exactly what makes this book so special.

I loved it. Absolutely and completely. And honestly, though I'd read and enjoyed Hayes's previous work, I really wasn't sure that this one was going to appeal to me. I'm glad my apprehension was proven to be without merit!

I really thought that Hayes did a magnificent job with March. Without experiencing it ourselves, many of us will never truly have a good understanding of autism and how it affects people. Hayes, through March, gives readers a chance to see that first hand and to understand how a mind like March's works. And though we don't see the story from March's mother or uncle's eyes, we do see, through March, how his autism affects them as well. It's a unique perspective that could definitely have had grave faults to it. Hayes, though,

manages to handle it with respect and honesty, making March a real and sympathetic character.

I could probably go on and on speaking to Hayes's talent and how wonderful this book is but I really want you to grab a copy and see for yourself. Know this, though: Hayes is quickly becoming a favorite of mine and an author who can grab my attention no matter what I might be in the mood for. And readers, that struggle is real! I'll admit that this holiday weekend had me craving GoT level epic fantasy and I thought there was no way I'd be able to get into and enjoy *The Eagle Tree* as a result. I was oh, so thankfully wrong. I breezed through most of March's story in one sitting and stayed up way too late reading the rest! Hayes and *Eagle Tree* are definitely on my highly recommended list :)

Amy says

I am a biology teacher and I really like trees, so this book piqued my interest.

I appreciated the insight of Peter March Wong, a 14-year old boy who is on the spectrum and who is a self-made tree expert. Seeing the world through Peter's eyes allowed the reader to experience the world in a different way. The book incorporates a lot of scientific information about trees into the storyline: photosynthesis, carbon fixation, transpiration, carbon "sinks", and the nitrogen cycle, as well as ecological issues such as global warming. But do not let this technical information scare you: the author described processes like photosynthesis in breathtaking beauty, and all of this enabled me to have a true insight into Peter, his great affinity for trees, and the inter-connectedness of Earth. A possible modern fiction partner to Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring".

Mary E. Gilmore says

All thanks to Amazon Prime's Kindle First perk, I was able to read this book prior to its release. *The Eagle Tree* is narrated by 14 y/o March Wong, an autistic boy with a vast love and knowledge of Pacific Northwest trees. I learned a lot about trees, the marbled murrelet, nature and people—and just how interconnected and interdependent they are. The book also has a lot to teach about autism. Author Ned Hayes based the story on his past experience working with children on the autistic spectrum.

I can confidently say that I'll never look at trees the same way again. This book has touched my heart and soul deeply and won't soon, if ever, leave me.

Would love to see a film adaptation.

Jen La Duca says

My So-Called Review

The Eagle Tree is the first book I've read by author, Ned Hayes and I'd like to start this review by giving a very special thanks to Trish Collins at **TLC Book Tours**. She contacted me to ask if I'd like to review this book and after reading the synopsis I couldn't accept fast enough. Although she could not have known it at the time, *The Eagle Tree's* subject matter is one I relate to on a very personal level. My oldest son was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome when he was 5 and it's not often that you find fictional stories, TV shows, or movies that portray characters with ASD (**Autism Spectrum Disorder**) accurately and honestly.

So thank you Trish, this is not a book that would have been on my radar had you not contacted me!

The Eagle Tree is the story of an autistic fourteen year old named March Wong and how he connects to the world through his love of trees. He and his mother recently moved to a smaller home and while she's struggling with his behavior, March is struggling to understand and adapt to these changes. He spends every day climbing the local trees; he knows everything about each species and their ecosystems. While climbing a neighbor's tree one day March sees a huge tree in the distance and becomes rather obsessed in his need to climb it. He learns that the locals call it the "Eagle Tree" but before he gets the chance to climb it he also learns of the plans to cut down the historic tree to make way for a new housing development. March makes a bold plan to protest the destruction of the beautiful tree but doesn't realize he could potentially lose something far greater in the process.

Told through the eyes of March, *The Eagle Tree* is an intimate and respectful look into the mind of someone with autism. I was truly blown away by how well Ned Hayes wrote March's character. I was completely pulled into this world where the most important thing was a desperate tree in need of salvation. March's frustrations in expressing himself and making those around him understand and care about the trees he loves so much was equally heartfelt and touching. As the story moves on March begins to grow and mature, he becomes more self-aware which in turn begins to strengthen his personal relationships with those that care for him.

I cannot tell you enough how much I loved *The Eagle Tree*. I'm not the type of reader who re-reads books and most books that I love tend to fade from my memory soon after I've finished them. I think this happens because I read so much and so quickly so the finer details of novels tend to fade or blend together. This book is different though. March's story is so beautiful and so very special to me and they will both always have a place in my heart for a very long time. I would highly recommend this one to anyone who's interested in books that have a diverse point of view. I would also recommend it for anyone who's been touched by knowing someone or caring for someone with ASD.

A huge thank you to **TLC Book Tours** for inviting me to participate in this blog tour and for providing me with a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for my honest review!

This review was originally posted on My So-Called Book Reviews

Kartik Santhanakrishnan says

Looking at the world from the point of view of another person is always interesting. This book goes a step further with a first-person account from a boy somewhere in the autistic spectrum. That, and a crash course in the ecology of the evergreen Pacific Northwest, make this book very compelling. As a novice birder, I loved the references to the marbled murrelet.

The book reminded me of reading *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* many years ago. A similarly thought-provoking book for those who have read that one.

Thank you Kindle First, for giving this book for free. I would have gladly paid for this book.

Devon H says

A compelling read, this story will captivate and inspire readers to greater goals. The Eagle Tree is one of the first books in a while for me that has captivated my attention and helped me feel alongside the main character.

Enter March Wong. A teen on the autistic spectrum, March eats, breathes, and sleeps knowledge of trees. He has read science book after science book filled with facts and figures about trees and how to identify them. As a coping mechanism and something to lean on, his uncle, Mike, introduces him to climbing trees and March is hooked. He diligently climbs a minimum of three trees per day, sometimes as many thirty trees.

What is truly fascinating about this book, is that Hayes expertly weaves together the study of human behavior with the study of science in a way that feels effortless even to a reader who has very little knowledge of either trees or autistic behavior. I found myself hanging onto every feeling and emotion that March had, hoping and hoping for progress and feeling each set back as if it were my own. The overarching narrative about global warming and climate change also set a precedence for healthy contemplation. What does an environmentalist look like? Who should be expected to change their behavior to halt global warming?

March experiences everything very literally due to his autism. Hayes employs first person so effectively that readers are privy to the way March views everything. There is little or no narrative that doesn't come from March's perspective and that proves effective for developing readers' feelings for our protagonist. Here's a sample of March's thought processes: "I don't know what a Republican is, or how you can kill education. Education is not a living thing, it is an action that you perform to someone else to give them knowledge. And most of what I learn at ORLA is not knowledge. I have learned all about trees on my own, for example.... They have me do art, even though I am not good at art. And they teach me the history of human beings, for which I cannot see an applicable purpose. I like dates and times to be precise, but the way Mr. Gatek teaches, that appears to be a very small part of human history." March thinks hard about each metaphor and he does improve upon his judgment about when he should or should not tell somebody that they are factually incorrect.

Instead of painting autism as a tragedy, Hayes paints a more complete picture of what an autistic experience can look like. March has good days and bad days, progress and setbacks. His autism does prove to be challenging for himself and his family, but they work with all the behaviors associated with his autism to allow him to successfully communicate with not only his family, but all the people around him.

The conclusion of this book felt a little confusing and jumbled together. I'm not really sure how it all related or how it wrapped up the story. The narrative seemed a little more fantastical than the rest of the book, which mostly felt very literal and factual. This fantastical element was rather a new introduction and made March's story feel rather theatrical because it was so dramatic and improbable. I felt through most of the book that the story line was very believable and authentic, but the ending muddled that for me. I guess the only thing I can suggest would be for you to go read it for yourself and see how you feel about it.

I received a copy of this book as a part of TLC Book Tours in exchange for an honest review.
