



TEEN SERVICES COMMUNITY SERVICE TEEN BOOK REVIEW

Al Capone Throws Me a Curve By Gennifer Choldenko Reviewed by Gregory Cohen

Name: Gregory Cohen

Grade: 7th

Book Title: Al Capone Throws Me a Curve

Author: Gennifer Choldenko

Number of Pages: 210

Rating (on a scale of 1-5): 5/5

Character List:

- **Moose Flanagan** – Moose is a 13-year-old boy who lives on Alcatraz during the time of the Depression. Moose just became the son of the assistant warden and now he's watching out for his dad, who just became a target.
- **Natalie Flanagan** – Natalie is Moose's 16-year-old sister. Natalie has autism. Natalie's mom doesn't want Natalie to grow up. So, every year before this year, they pretended Natalie was 10 years old.
- **Scout** – Scout is a friend of Moose's in school and on the field. They love to play baseball together. But to Scout making the team next year means everything... He would do anything.
- **Piper** – Piper is the warden's daughter. She went to school with Moose and Scout but at home on Alcatraz she got in trouble for spending counterfeit money. Because of this she went to boarding school and came back for the summer.
- **Fastball** – Fastball is a criminal on Alcatraz. He's not a bad person though. He used to play baseball for the minor leagues and wants to get out of Alcatraz to do so again. But he doesn't want to break out. He's closing in fast on becoming the first person ever released.

Review: Have you met Moose Flanagan? If not, let me introduce you to him. Moose is a boy that lives on Alcatraz, but not as a criminal. He is the assistant warden's son. Sure, you may think that's "Awesome and Cool," but not to Moose. His dad being the assistant warden puts a target on his dad's back - especially after the Cons (Criminals) make a point system, and the highest amount of points you can get comes from killing the wardens. So Moose must figure out a way to watch out for his dad. But Moose already has a lot on his plate with babysitting Natalie and now Piper too. Piper came back from boarding school for the summer, and someone must watch her to make sure she doesn't get in anymore trouble.

Moose loves baseball and wants to be on the high school team, and needs to see the captain of the team to ask. Scout also wants to be on the team. So, Moose takes Natalie and Piper to the park so he and Scout can ask the team captain if they can be on the team. After they ask, the team captain keeps giving them the same answer: only if you can get a picture with Capone. Al Capone. Of course, Moose says this isn't possible but Beck, the team captain, says "it's a picture

or you're not in." Scout says yes, of course Moose will get the picture, though Moose knows this won't happen. He may find another way.

Next time they go to the park, Natalie brings their fathers gun and says "Moose team! Moose team!" Moose figures out this means that Natalie wants Moose to show the gun to Beck, if this will himself and Scout be on the team. Beck says sure, only if he can keep it. Moose says no, because he can't let Beck have a gun. Back on Alcatraz, Moose finds a baseball with Babe Ruth's signature as well as Al Capones. He hopes it will get him on the team. Also, Natalie gets stuck in a pot because she curls up in stuff when she's agitated. This pot then went into the prison! Moose then uses everything in his power, including dressing up as the Nose, a guard on Alcatraz, to get Natalie back.

Part crime solving, part mystery, and part trouble making, this book has a great mix of excitement and fear. The flow of the plot was very smooth. You are able to keep up and enjoy the story. The only flaw in this story is one that most authors wish to have: It's too good! You can't put the book down. This book will be very enjoyable to people who enjoy a little excitement, a little fear for your characters, and a little mystery.