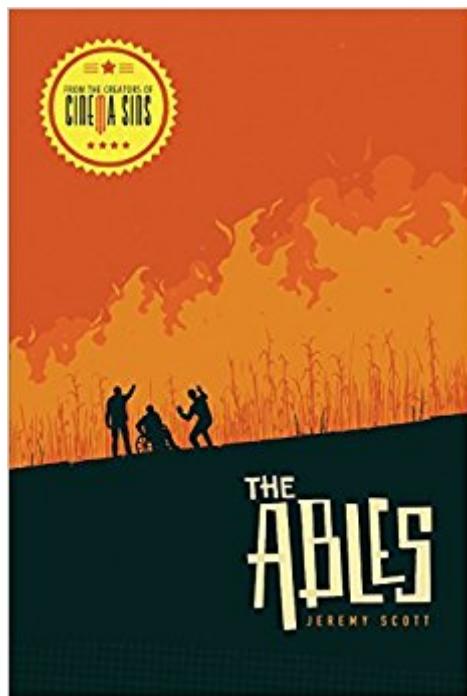


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# The ABLES



## Synopsis

I did have fantastic hearing, mostly by virtue of being blind. But that couldn't actually mean that he's trying to tell me I have super powers, right? Because that would be ridiculous. It wasn't the "sex talk" he expected. Phillip Sallinger's dad has told him he's a custodian--a guardian--and his genetically inherited power is telekinesis. He'll learn to move objects with his mind. Excited to begin superhero high school until he discovers he's assigned to a "special ed" class for disabled empowered kids, he suddenly feels like an outsider. Bullied, threatened, and betrayed, Phillip struggles, even as he and his friends--calling themselves the Ables--find ways to maximize their powers to overcome their disabilities, and are the first to identify the growing evil threatening humanity. As vital custodians disappear and the custodian leadership is mired in indecision, a mysterious and powerful figure taunts Phillip, and the enemy is poised to strike. But what if the next "one who does all," the multi-gifted custodian predicted to come, is one of the Ables? The Ables is a fast-paced, captivating debut novel from Jeremy Scott, a bold new voice in fantasy and sci-fi, and already a widely popular storyteller as co-creator and narrator of CinemaSins, a YouTube channel that has amassed more than 3.8 million subscribers in under two years.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## Customer Reviews

The heroes of this wildly inventive and unpredictable superhero epic don't want to be ignored, or

pited, or placed on a pedestal. They want what all of us want: The chance to forge their own destiny. The fictional world The Ables inhabit struggles to admit it needs its team of Special Ed heroes. But it does, and I would say our pop culture landscape (and, you know, your bookshelf) needs them even more. —David Wong, Executive Editor of Cracked.com and NY Times Bestselling Author

Jeremy Scott is a writer and entertainer from Nashville, TN. He is the co-creator & narrator of CinemaSins, a YouTube channel dedicated to movie-related comedy that has amassed over 3.8 million subscribers in under two years' time. A former online marketing consultant, Jeremy spends his time writing, being sarcastic, and generally hoping to find a good laugh once a day.

I gave The Ables a five star review because I truly enjoyed the story, and think that it was an original and well executed idea. However, the finished product was difficult to read at points, and my immersion was broken at several points throughout the journey. If you are looking for a fast, well written, and original young adult story about truly handicapped children, then The Ables is for you. Just be prepared to scratch your head over formatting, chapter design, and the occasional missed detail. Below are spoilers for the book, and I would recommend that anyone who is interested in reading it stop now. Let's get the bad out of the way, and then end on a high note. First off, the entire formatting of the book was a confusing choice. Having non indented paragraphs with large spaces between them was distracting and difficult to ignore. My thought is that the author did this intentionally to imitate how I imagine brail might read. Large spaces to separate thoughts and an unattractive presentation that is easier for the blind to read. If that was an intention decision then I applaud the originality. If it wasn't, I would just pretend that it was. I also noted several errors in formatting. One paragraph was split at the end leaving three words floating, another chapter ended on what I assume was supposed to be the heading of the following page, and several pages were left entirely blank. As a self-published author myself I understand how difficult it can be to catch everything, but some of these were fairly obvious, and a quick look would have found them. I also found myself confused on the time line of things. One chapter would end, then in the next the character says it's been weeks when it only read like one day. I went back several times to ensure I didn't miss anything. Another character who I originally thought was only deaf was then referenced as being both blind and deaf, and lastly the character's blindness augmented by his friends sight was often confusing as to how he saw certain things, even

after it was explained. I found myself thinking, how could he see that through his eyes? Are they both looking at that spot? Does he have sight now? A lot of that had to do with the No Power Zones that played a large part of the story. It wasn't always clear when they were or weren't inside of one, and a reminder from the character would have been helpful. These are just small issues that broke my immersion, and I only draw them out to make the point that I enjoyed this book so much; these things annoyed me for getting in the way. This is also a cinemasins book, so I feel the need to be extra nitpicky. On to the good, which there was a lot of, but I'll only name a few. The main character was likeable, relatable, and I was constantly rooting for him to overcome. At no point did he seem weak or powerless, despite the hurdle he was forced to overcome. At the half way point of the book when they learned to use their powers together I was almost disappointed, as I wanted to see him kick ass as a totally blind superhero. Still, I was happy to follow him to the logical conclusion of the plot. The author did a fantastic job of treating his characters like normal well rounded people, who happened to have some hindrance in their day to day life. The book did not beat you over the head with trying to sympathize with the characters for their disabilities, instead it just treated them like any other character might be; nice, funny, sarcastic, and even mean. The self-deprecating humor and dialogue were so realistic, that I went out and googled to see if I somehow missed the author himself being blind. The story is well told, a blend of typical high school drama intermixed with super hero tropes, and with a running narrative of evil in the background that reminded me of the Harry Potter series. I was equally invested in both the struggle to fit into school as I was to see the characters take on the big bad. The twists were predictable, but still well done, and the character's reaction to them made it worthwhile. I saw both of the big twists coming when the foreshadowing was introduced, but was still surprised by the way everyone handled it. All in all, it was a good first novel, and with an obvious hook for a sequel I have no doubt I'll be enjoying the author's work again in the future. I will probably buy the audio book just so I can enjoy the author's voice outside a cinemasins video, and so I can see the story as he meant it to be heard.

Like a lot of people, I am a fan of Jeremy's CinemaSins channel on YouTube. I was finally persuaded to buy the book after seeing him advertise it a lot in several of his videos, and I wasn't disappointed. Some of the issues I had with the book was the narrative itself, especially early on in the novel. I understand that he was trying to write in the perspective of a 12 year old when he's no longer 12, but the main character's inner dialogue didn't flow in several places. It was a bit awkward

and clunky at times. The language was also a bit odd in places, but that's to be expected, again, given that he isn't the age of the character, and was likely pulling from his memories of being that age. The concept of the book (disabled kids with superpowers) was very cool, and I liked that he grounded the history of the Custodians really well, with their roots going back thousands of years. Some aspects of the plot felt incredibly contrived though, namely, something that happened to a character that I will not describe for the sake of not spoiling it for people. It just felt incredibly cliché, and you'll know it when you see it. It's also ironic that it's something Jeremy has sinned in movies before, yet he used it in his novel. There were at least 2 really obvious spelling and formatting errors that surprised me, because they made it through editing unnoticed! As others have noticed, there was also a continuity error regarding a character and hands. Once again, I'll leave that unspoiled. While I do agree with some reviewers that female representation in this book is really low, I understand Jeremy's reasoning for it; 12 year old boys don't really like to hang out with girls, sure. Jeremy probably could have done more to make female characters a bit more interesting/relevant to the story, but if you squint a bit, you'll see that what he's doing is actually an accepted practice in hero stories. The female characters are either mothers or wise old crones; 2 of the three typical roles (the last being fair maid). All in all, the book is decent. Some aspects will stick with you, some will be forgettable. This section of the review will HAVE to have spoilers, and for that I apologize, but I can't avoid mentioning it because it was a huge disappointment for me. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED, FROM HERE ON, MAJOR PLOT POINTS WILL BE SPOILED. Philip and Henry...and being able to receive images that Henry sends him. Ok, sure, it was cool. But suddenly, without explanation, the main character is able to SEE like a seeing person does? And he knows what people look like, and what colors are which, despite the fact he's never seen them before, and never associated the name with the image? The fact that he can read as well is apparently hand-waved in the book, though I don't recall where (another review I read said he can supposedly read because Henry can, and he's getting the images from Henry). I didn't feel like Philip "seeing" really took away from the fact that he is and forever will be blind, except that he didn't seem to need to learn how to interpret what he was now seeing. He just instantly knew. THAT took away from the story for me. Especially in the end, when he sees everything that happens when no one else does, even though he's blind, so he doesn't even have the "Henry showed it to me" excuse. This aspect could have been done better, and it would have fit more cohesively with the story. The big reveal was predictable, but I liked that Jeremy still turned it a bit by making the main character NOT the object of the prophecy (even if some folks still found that predictable).

Spoiler Heavy Review. Read the book first.---Usually I'm fantastic at predicting the plots of books, however this one caught me off guard. Every time I figured the author didn't have the balls to make a story choice, he did. Killing off Philip's mother caught me off guard. Most authors would have twisted the plot and found an unrealistic way to save her. Scott didn't do that. He let her die because the story required it. Having Chad be a spy was another tough choice. It went against genre conventions. In any other story, his turn around would have been genuine. It would have been an after school special. And Scott turned it in the other direction, and followed through. There were mistakes in the book. I'm still looking for an email of the author to send them in. There are several times Philip, who can't see without Henry's help, looks at things on his own. One example is when they meet Finch on Halloween: Henry turned away, but Philip stared Finch down, independently. Also, near the climax when Chad is sneaking Philip and Henry into the school, it is said that he puts a hand on each of their shoulders. Chad lost an arm. He only has one hand, not two. I admit, I saw Finch being Thomas Sallinger coming from a mile off. I think it was the easy choice, and I don't quite approve of it. All in all, it was a well-written, very strong story with emotional impact. The characters felt genuine, and the plot flowed smoothly, and Donnie's sacrifice made me cry. 10/10 Tricia's would read again.

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