



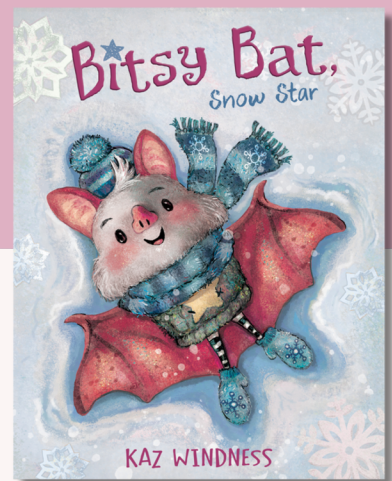
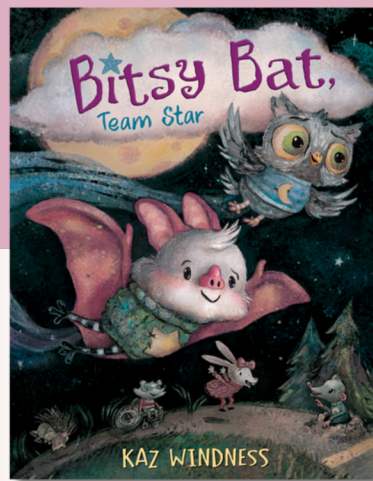
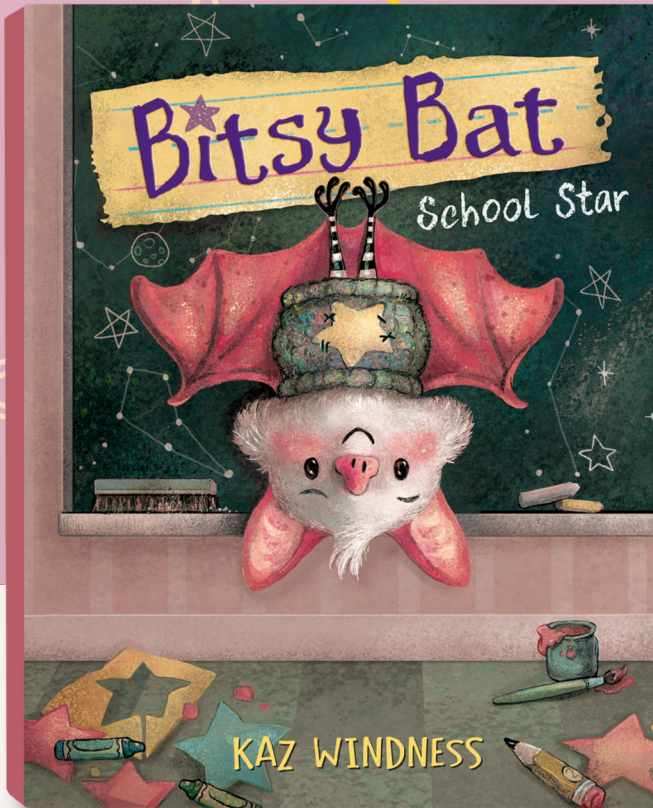
BITSY BAT, SCHOOL STAR

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## BITSY BAT, SCHOOL STAR

### ABOUT

A little bat struggles to fit in only to learn to celebrate differences in this heartfelt picture book from an autistic perspective about starting school, making friends, and seeing what makes each person special.

A "Bat"-To-School Book

Autism Awareness

Celebrating Differences



WindnessBooks.com

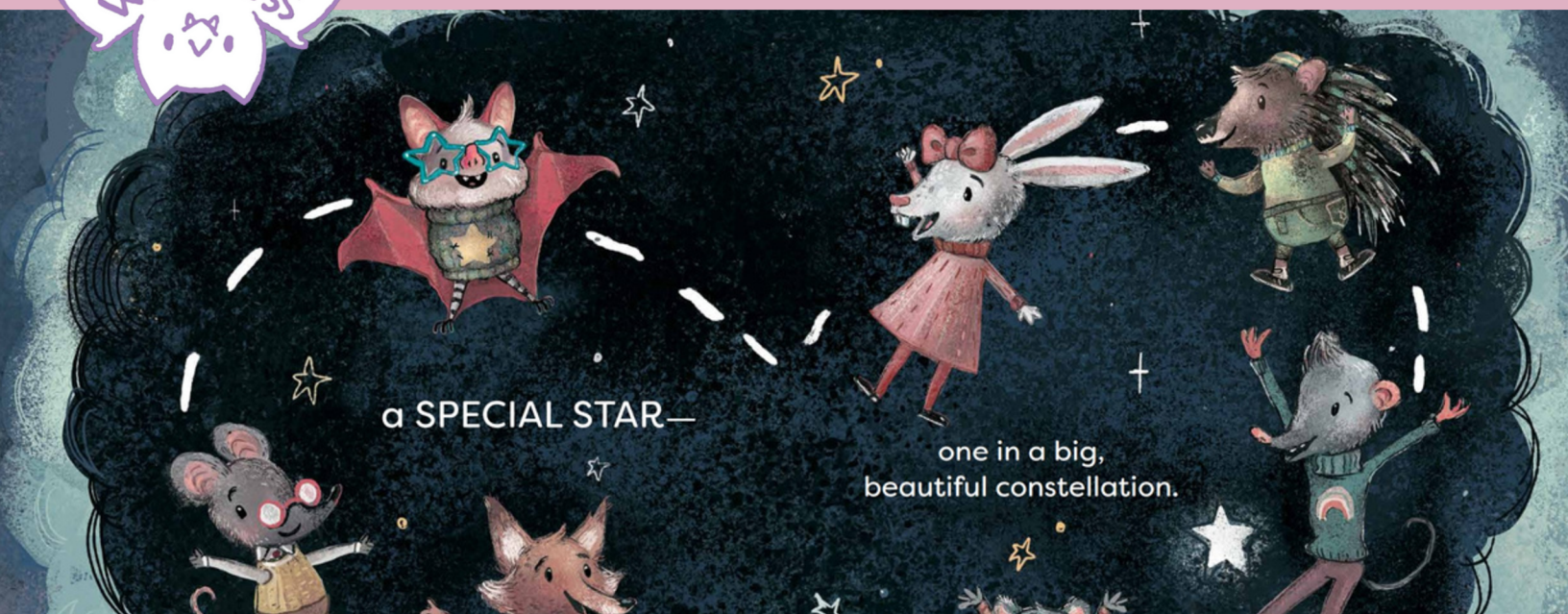


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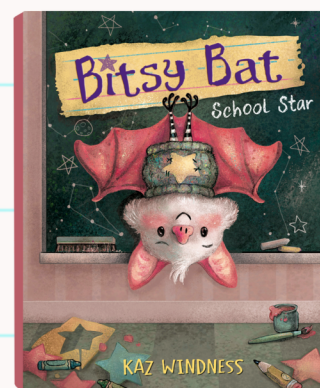


## ➤ BITSY BAT, SCHOOL STAR ➤

Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman Books

### WHERE DID YOU GET THE IDEA FOR THE BOOK?

Bats are my favorite animal to draw. In Fall 2019, I challenged myself to draw bats every day (#100DaysofBats) and struck up a conversation with an illustration student who is autistic like me, comparing growing up neurodivergent to being like a bat in a school for mice. Everything felt upside down, and when I tried to act like everyone else, it made me feel confused, upset, and more prone to meltdown. I realized there was a story there and began writing and drawing Bitsy Bat.



### HOW WAS THE BOOK ART CREATED?

I think better when I'm doodling on paper, so all my art starts as a pencil sketch. Once I like the sketch, I take a photo with my phone, email it to myself, and edit and paint the illustrations in Adobe Photoshop. Picture books go through a lot of steps and changes, so using digital media has made the editing process easy. There are two or three digital brushes I use all the time because they look like real paint and pastels. One page of final artwork usually takes two days to paint, after all the sketches and revisions are done. The whole book took around six months to illustrate total.

### WHAT WAS THE HARDEST PART OF CREATING THIS BOOK?

It was important to me and my editor, Catherine Laudone, that Bitsy's story reflect an authentic autistic experience, offer compassion and sensitivity to all children, and tell a fun and engaging back-to-school story as well. It's uncommon for an autism book to be written by an actually autistic person, and there are a lot of misunderstandings about autism. We worked very hard to get every word right. The book grew into 48-pages to cover everything we needed and wanted to say, so the art took more time as well. BITSY BAT, SCHOOL STAR was a labor of love, and I'm so proud of what we created together.

### WHAT DO YOU HOPE KIDS GET FROM BITSY BAT, SCHOOL STAR?

I hope readers gain a better understanding and sympathy for what it's like to be autistic. I hope the book inspires more inclusivity. I also want all children to know that they are special and loved exactly as they are. The school star activity that goes along with the book is something I'm very proud of and excited for educators and students to implement in the classroom. (BitsyBat.com) I can't wait!



A "Shine and Share" activity improves self-esteem and empathy by recognizing and celebrating differences.

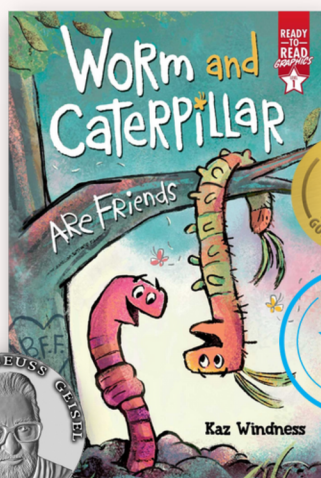
What makes you special?



## Instructions:

1. Read "Bitsy Bat, School Star" by Kaz Windness.
2. Think about something that makes you feel special.
3. Write it down on this star.
4. Cut out your star and hang it somewhere you can see it every day.





**new!** 2025



# KAZ WINDNESS

AUTHOR-ARTIST-EDUCATOR-SPEAKER

Kaz is an award-winning, genre-crossing illustrator and author of heart-warming and funny books for young readers. Proudly neurodiverse, Kaz specializes in character-driven books celebrating inclusivity, grit, and kindness. Kaz is celebrating over a decade of teaching and inspiring emerging writers and illustrators.

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