



The Speed of the Dark
Alex Shearer

Macmillan, 2003

'It is the story of an artist with a brilliant and fiendish skill. An imprisonment that can never end. And a boy who gives everything he has to find the people he loves.' (Bridget Carrington)

This was one of the shortlisted novels for the Guardian Prize 2003, (which was eventually won by Mark Haddon for 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time'), and has been variously described as 'a new take on the gothic novel' and 'a breath-takingly clever novel about power and loss'.

We first meet Christopher through the narrator, Charlie. After Christopher's disappearance, we learn of the circumstances of his life through the manuscript he leaves for Charlie. This is not a detective story so we are quickly able to work out where Christopher is and why; the joy of this story is the revelations that lead up to the fateful decision that Christopher makes

The small cast of characters is well defined and the emotional interplay between them on a more sophisticated level than many other children's books. There is a touch of caricature about Mr. Eckmann, but his struggle against the obsessive side of his nature, and then his vain attempts to make amends for his horrifying revenge is very believable. His fate, and Christopher's in his turn, is ultimately very moving, and thought-provoking.

This is an extraordinary and original story, and as character development rather than action is what drives the plot, this is for the confident reader who wants a more thoughtful style of writing.

I would give this ****

Mrs. I. Coles

Speed of Dark (released in some markets as *The Speed of Dark*) is a near-future science fiction novel by American author Elizabeth Moon. The story is told from the first person viewpoint of an person with autism . It won the Nebula Award for Best Novel in 2003, and was also an Arthur C. Clarke Award finalist. Lou Arrendale is a bioinformatics specialist, has high-functioning autism, and has made a good life for himself. A new manager at the firm where he works puts pressure on the department where many Fortunately *The Speed of Dark* (2003 Nebula Award winner) is immediately intriguing and I was sold on it by the end of the short sample. I keep hearing good things about Elizabeth Moon and Elizabeth Bear in sci-fi websites and forums, I get them mixed up a lot as I have not read either one until now. Elizabeth Moon surpasses my expectations with this book, hopefully Elizabeth Amazon's e-book samples are too short, only about 18 pages in length, good luck applying that olâ€™™ œ50 pages ruleâ€™ here.Â The idea is that there is always darkness before light, therefore darkness must somehow travel faster than light because it is always ahead. This is a metaphor the author is employing to represent knowledge illuminating ignorance, so it not some kind of crazy bad science. What I mean is the speed of dark is as interesting as the speed of light, and maybe it is faster and who will find out? What I mean is about gravity, if there were a world where it is twice as strong, then on that world would the wind from a fan be stronger because the air is thicker and blow my glass off the table, not just my napkin? Or would the greater gravity hold the glass more firmly to the table, so the stronger wind couldnâ€™™t move it? What I mean is the world is big and scary and noisy and crazy but also beautiful and still in the middle of the windstorm. What I mean is what difference *The Speed of Dark* by Elizabeth Moon. For Michael, whose courage and joy are a constant delight, and for Richard, without whose love and support the job would have been 200 percent harder. And for other parents of autistic children, in the hope that they also find that delight in difference. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. Among the people who had helped most in research for this book were the autistic children and adults and the families of autists who over the years have communicated with me â€™ by their writings, in person, on the Internet. In the