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## The Chancer Chronicles

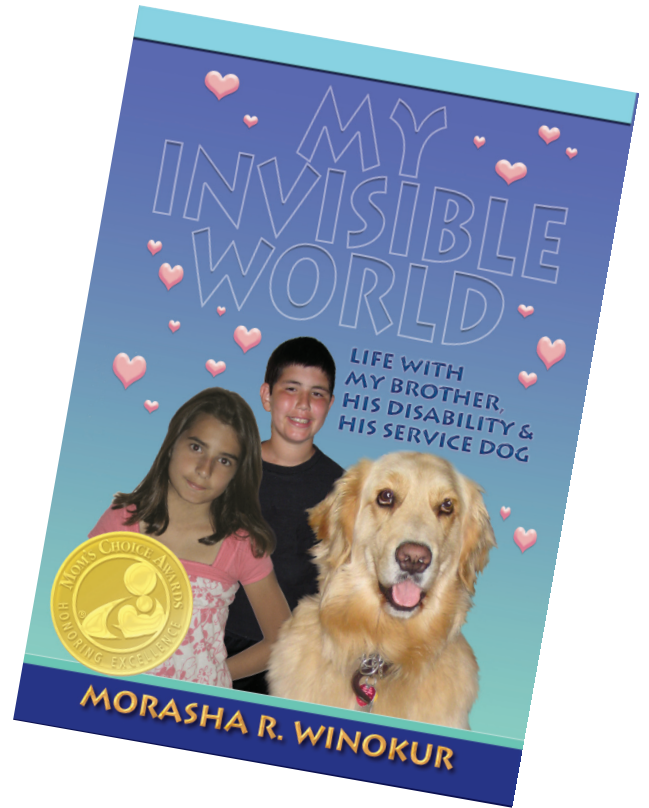
Three stories of second chances and hope for a boy and his dog.

- "My Invisible World"  
by Morasha Winokur
- "Wounded in the Womb"  
and "Nuzzle"  
by Donnie Kanter Winokur

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*Reader Views  
Kids Award  
for Best  
Children's  
Book of the Year*



## My Invisible World

*Life with my brother, his disability and his dog*  
by Morasha Winokur

The annual literary awards were established to honor writers who self-published or had their books published by a subsidy publisher, small press, university press, or independent book publisher geared for the North American reading audience. Reader Views Kids is the place where you can read book reviews written by children and teens.

[www.readerviewskids.com](http://www.readerviewskids.com)

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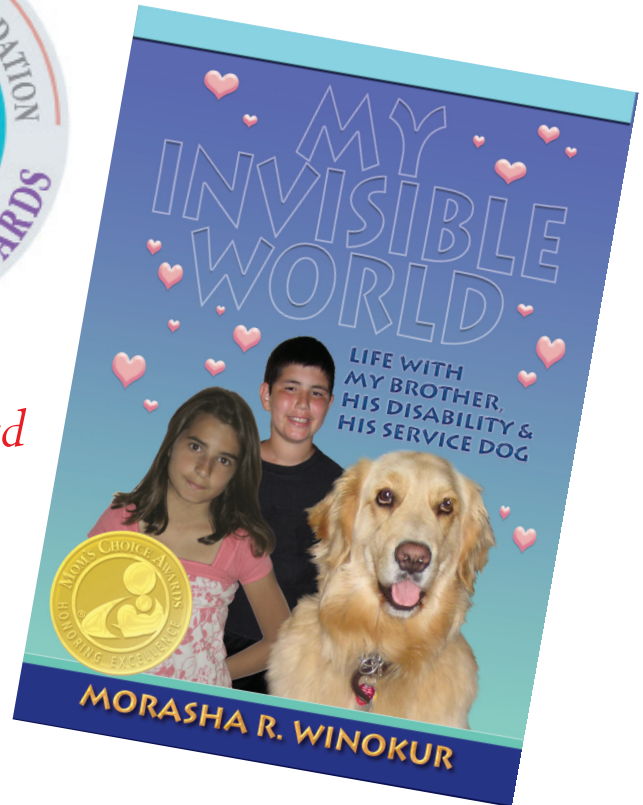
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*2010 Gold Award*  
*Outstanding*  
*Young*  
*Contributor!*



## My Invisible World

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The Mom's Choice Awards® program recognizes authors, inventors, companies, parents and others for their efforts in creating quality family-friendly media, products and services. Parents, educators, librarians and retailers rely on our evaluations when selecting quality materials for children and families. The Mom's Choice Awards® seal helps families and educators navigate the vast array of products and services and make informed decisions.

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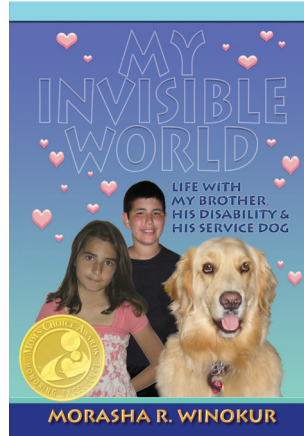
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## About the Author

# My Invisible World

*Life with my brother, his disability and his dog*



by Morasha Winokur

### Morasha's Bio

Morasha's life in the United States began at 14 months when she was adopted from Russia by her parents, Donnie and Rabbi Harvey Winokur. As a toddler, Morasha created elaborate stories about her "former" life in Russia setting the stage for developing a vivid imagination and irresistible style of expression. At eleven years old, Morasha is in sixth grade at a public school in Roswell, Georgia. She lives with her parents, her brother, Iyal, his service dog, Chancer and two cats, Manhattan and Eilat.

### Speaking opportunities

Morasha's mom, Donnie Kanter Winokur, Founding and former Executive Director of NOFAS

Georgia, (state affiliate of the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) is available to speak to organizations about the writing of "The Chancer

Chronicles", about fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) as well as the

use of service dogs for children living with Autism and other developmental disabilities.



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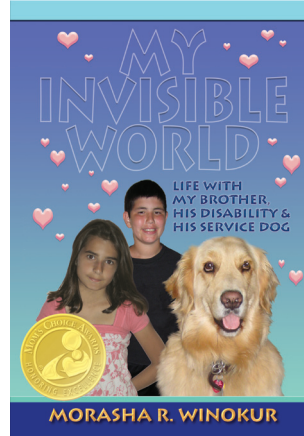
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## Book Excerpt

# My Invisible World

*Life with my brother, his disability and his dog*



by Morasha Winokur

"When my mother and I go out shopping I usually get asked, "What's the matter?" because people think something is wrong with me. They just can't get it into their head that it's okay for people to all be different and some people need to wear glasses, or use a wheelchair for better abilities.

I reply, "Nothing, the service dog is for my brother, but we just wanted to take him for a walk. My brother is not here right now."

The person who asks that question responds "oh", or nothing at all and turns away.

I get that a lot.

It's really quite annoying.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: First of a kind book on Fetal Alcohol.

## 11-Year-Old Change Agent Exposes An Invisible World and Wins Gold



ATLANTA, Georgia (January 2011) — This is not your usual boy-meets-dog, boy-loves-dog, dog-helps-boy story. But then Morasha Winokur is not your usual eleven-year-old sister. "My Invisible World" cleverly exposes a hidden, completely preventable, public health crisis that impacts each of us. Up to 1 out of 100 live births are affected by prenatal alcohol exposure and it is the leading known preventable cause of intellectual disability. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) are life-long birth defects. An individual may live with neurological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral challenges. FASDs may be the most undiagnosed/misdiagnosed developmental disability of our time.

Eleven-year-old Morasha shares her in-depth and personal life story of what it feels like to be the sister of a sibling that struggles with FASDs. "My Invisible World" is an incredible inside account of the daily issues that arise for a child that deals with an invisible brain injury. Winokur, describes her brother's disability with tween-humor and addresses her struggles in knowing she is mentally and physically healthy while her brother has special needs beyond her ability to fix.

Morasha and her brother Iyal are non-biological siblings who were adopted by a loving couple and traveled from Russia to their new family's home in Georgia. Young Morasha shows her commitment to her brother's disability by sharing her inner-most thoughts in an effort to raise awareness in her peers so they too can understand the importance of not drinking while pregnant.

As the "typical" sister, Winokur wrestles with the angst of whether or not it is better to remain translucent in her existence, or whether she should embrace the visibility that having a service dog in the family creates. Not only is an eleven year old boy's hidden disability validated by Chancer, a service dog – but the effort it takes for an entire family to support this person becomes perceptible. The unconditional presence and specifically trained skills of an irresistible 90 pound Golden Retriever help to heal not only Winokur's brother, but each member of the family in unexpected ways.

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“There are so many lessons embedded in this 11 year old Morasha’s story: embracing diversity, empathy, self-acceptance, supporting siblings, growing up, being an agent of change, and the importance of prevention. My son read it to me as his homework. These kinds of lessons are best learned from peers like Morasha Winokur.”

Founding Executive Director of software company for children with Autism and Executive Function Impairment

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### BOOK DATA

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 ISBN 13: ..... 978-0-9842007-0-2  
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## Quick Quotes from Readers



*"Whether you are learning to cope with a disability in your own family, or simply interested in reading a great book that shows immeasurable strength and courage, this is a must read!*

*– Melissa Lacquement'*

*Read this book and I guarantee you'll never think the same about the outcome of drinking while pregnant. But it's much more. It's an opportunity to meet a delightful family that advocates for children with FASD.*

*– Judy Vorfeld*

*An honest and sensitive assessment of life for the sibling of a special needs child. Eleven year-old Morasha puts into words the burdens faced growing up with a brother affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The reader learns how the whole family embraces the challenges of living with an FASD child and finds support in a specially trained service dog, named Chancer. This book provides insight, and is an appropriate read, for any parent or sibling of a of special needs child - not limited to only FASD affected families.*

*– J Michael Williams*

*This is a great book to share with others, especially children. This book should be in every elementary and middle school library in the county. Morasha tells it like it is!*

*– J Liebman*

*Heartfelt voice of a young sister's love and her own internal struggle of acceptance with her sibling's disability. Wonderful read for inspiring authors, siblings and parents. Wish elementary schools would use this book for their student's curriculum and writer's workshops. There are so many lessons embedded in this 11 year old Morasha's story: embracing diversity, empathy, self-acceptance, siblings, growing up, being an agent of change, and the importance of prevention. My son read it to me as his homework, but the lessons have only begun to start to take root.*

*– Gailynn Gluth*

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# The Chancer Chronicles

## ***My Invisible World - life with a brother, his disability and his service dog***

(Juvenile Non-fiction—Fall 2009)

Being the sibling of a child with special needs has its own unique challenges that often go unrecognized, unseen...especially when the disability itself is invisible. As the "typical" sister, Morasha Winokur candidly shares her story about the invisible life that exists within a life that others think they know. Hidden dreams and hidden challenges become understood and embraced when a specially trained Behavioral Assistance Dog for Morasha's brother joins the family. Through the unconditional presence and skilled companionship of Chancer, an irresistible 90 lb. Golden Retriever, healing happens for not only Morasha's brother, but for each member of the family in unexpected ways.

## ***Nuzzle - the love between a boy and his service dog.***

(Children's Picture Book—Spring 2011)

Through the eyes, ears, nose, paws and voice of Chancer, a service dog, children will learn how this irresistible 90 lb. Golden Retriever helps to raise his special 'human' boy. Children and adults will understand the daily challenges faced by an 11-year old living with the life-long, hidden birth defect, a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). This sensitive and humorous portrayal of adoption, disability and the unconditional relationship between a boy and his assistance dog, will change forever the way you think about brain injury and second chances.

## ***Wounded in the Womb - a story of adoption, disability and the hope we found on four paws***

(Adult Non-fiction—Winter 2012)

Parents of children with special needs exist on a landscape often filled with seemingly bottomless holes of despair and mountains of obstacles that defy climbing. When a diagnosis of the birth defect, fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) is given to their adopted 4-year-old son, the Winokur family travels an emotionally treacherous path that leads to a surprising compass towards a brighter future. This mother's story of uncompromising devotion to her family and the urgency she feels to help her son cope with his invisible disability, reveals how resilient parental spirit can grow. This true story of a service dog named Chancer, and his remarkable ability to connect with a brain-injured boy - will create new places inside your heart and your head for celebrating the animals that help heal our deepest wounds.

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# The Chancer Chronicles

## Q&A

### **Why did you decide to write My Invisible World?**

When I was eight years old, I wanted to write a book, so I did. It took me three years and I just finished at eleven.

### **What do you want readers to know?**

I want people to experience while they are reading my book, what life is like when you live with a family member with a disability.

### **What's your favorite thing to do for fun?**

Hang out with my friends, talking and just being together.

It is important to have good friends when your life can be stressful.

### **Morasha, do you have any dreams for this book?**

I hope this becomes a really good thing and that people know about FASD and it gets out to a lot of people. FASDs are 100% preventable and my generation can stop it from happening to more babies. We ALL have to know about it.

I hope people read it and think "Oh, if I see someone who is disabled, I shouldn't talk about them or make fun of them." I want the bullies to stop being bullies to people who have differences.

I hope my book can make life easier for people like my brother.

### **Iyal, do you have any dreams for this book?**

I want people to know that I am a really good boy and that I like to do normal kinds of things that all kids do. Chancer is my dog, and he is the best dog ever!

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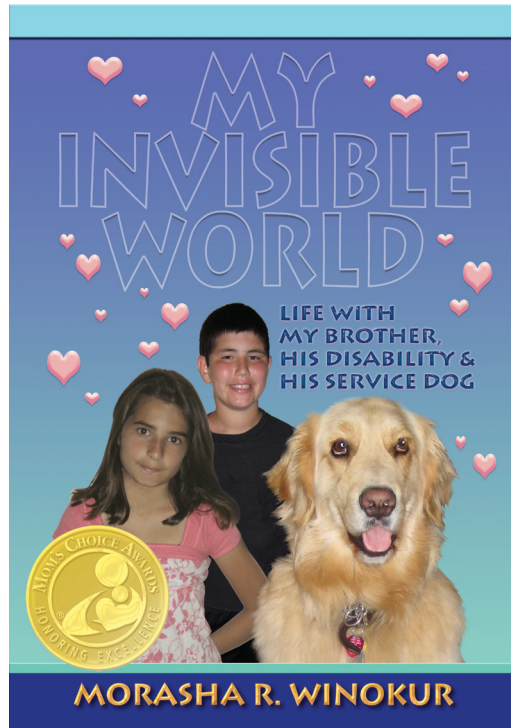
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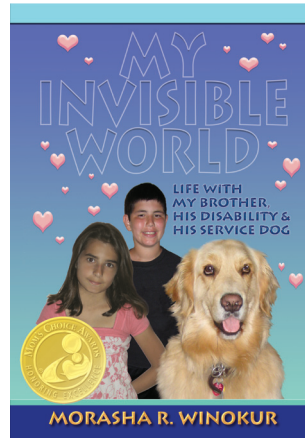
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## Book Reviews

# My Invisible World

*Life with my brother, his disability and his dog*



by Morasha Winokur

*"Eleven-year-old Morasha Winokur makes two invisible worlds—the life of a child with special needs and the life of his sibling—come alive. Although specifically written regarding fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), her well-communicated observations are applicable to other diagnoses. As a result, "My Invisible World" should be recommended reading for all school personnel, pediatric healthcare providers, and health policymakers. Bless Morasha for her quietly emotional, loudly effective improvement of my own vision."*

Yvonne W. Fry-Johnson, MD, MSCR

*"Morasha, you really nailed it. I bet there are a lot of other kids with brothers or sisters they love who are also challenging. I'm so glad I got to know you, Chancer and your whole family and that we got to work together on this book. I love Iyal, he is a great kid with a huge heart. I hope because of your writing, it will make a difference in the lives of many kids. You are a strong young woman and congratulations on taking the risk to tell your story. Much love."*

Jodee Kulp, award winning author, The Whitest Wall

*"OMG I love it!!! Morasha's words are really powerful and you can feel how she feels!"*

Maddie –11 year old reader

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## Book Reviews - My Invisible World (continued)

### MIDWEST BOOK REVIEWS

Author, Morasha Winokur, gives readers a fresh and new perspective on what it's like to live with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs) in her new book *My Invisible World, Life With My Brother, His Disability and His Service Dog*. Eleven year old Morasha shares her in-depth and personal life story of what it feels like to be the sister of a sibling that struggles with FASDs. Her openness, honest views and private thoughts lift audiences of all ages to a new place of understanding, compassion and awareness of what Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is.

*My Invisible World* is an incredible inside account of the daily issues that arise for a child that deals with an invisible brain injury. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome leaves life-long birth defects on individuals that include cognitive, physical, neurological and behavioral impairments. FASDs are also the most undiagnosed / misdiagnosed developmental disability of our time. Author, Morasha Winokur, describes her brother's disability in tween-humor and addresses her own struggles in knowing she is mentally and physically healthy while her brother has special needs beyond her ability to fix. Morasha and her brother Iyal are non-biological siblings who were adopted by a loving couple and traveled from Russia to their new family's home in Georgia. Young Morasha shows her commitment to her brother's disability by sharing her inner-most thoughts in an effort to raise awareness in her peers so they too can understand the importance of not drinking while pregnant.

*My Invisible World* dives in-depth into the important role service dogs play when her brother Iyal is given Chancer, a loving Golden Retriever. Chancer, trained by 4 Paws for Ability, is a kind companion for Iyal and specifically taught how to live with a child who has FASDs. Chancer offers emotional support with soothing and calming effects for Iyal and his family. Morasha explains that Chancer also gives her family a "second chance" at calming peace for her brother and her family that allows them to function together as a cohesive unit.

As readers learn about Morasha's life, her brother's special needs and her family, they can look forward to a better understanding of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and its effects on individuals and their families. Author, Morasha Winokur, includes a personal scrapbook with family photos that welcomes readers to her world. She includes a glossary of terms, a spot quiz and additional supportive websites for further learning about the effects and prevention of FASDs.

Author, Morasha Winokur, is a supportive sister and sensitive young adult who is an effective communicator on the importance of not drinking while pregnant and the hardship it causes. Powerful and enlightening, *My Invisible World* is highly recommended for adoptive families, social service workers, educators, healthcare personnel and pediatric health providers. This book makes a wonderful gift, classroom guide and an excellent library reference that will help others learn about FASDs and how to prevent this invisible disability.

Sara Hassler, Reviewer

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Book Review

### *Life with my brother, his disability and his service dog*

ISBN 9780984200702 Reviewed by Evan Weldon (age 7) for Reader Views (11/09)

"My Invisible World: Life with My Brother, His Disability and His Service Dog" by eleven-year-old Morasha R. Winokur is an excellent book about what it is like for the author to live with her disabled brother and his service dog.

Morasha and her brother Iyal are both the same age. They were adopted from Russia. When Iyal was still in his mother's womb, his birth mother drank some alcohol. What the mother eats and drinks is what the baby eats and drinks, too. Alcohol damages the developing brain in the baby, destroying some of the brain cells that help control behavior, thinking, learning and remembering things. This kind of disability is called Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Life is hard for Iyal. Sometimes, if he is even thinking of Morasha, he will scream out her name for a really long time. Iyal needs a lot of attention from his parents, so sometimes Morasha feels like she doesn't get any attention. Sometimes Iyal embarrasses her in front of her friends, and sometimes keeps her from being able to do things she wants to do. Iyal can be really annoying, but Morasha still loves him a lot.

When they finally get a service dog named Chancer, it helps the whole family immensely. Chancer gives Iyal (and everybody else, too) lots of love. When Iyal is having a tantrum, Chancer will lie on him to calm him down. Chancer can keep Iyal from wandering away with strangers or running into the street.

The book has fifteen pages of photos of Morasha, Iyal, Chancer and their family. They are extremely good and help you to get to know the family.

If I could give "My Invisible World: Life with My Brother, His Disability and His Service Dog" by Morasha R. Winokur more than five stars, I would! It is probably the best book I have ever reviewed. Everybody should read this book. I think that there are three things that everyone should learn from this book. First, women should never drink any alcohol if they could possibly be pregnant. Second, everyone should treat people with disabilities and their families nicely. Finally, everyone should respect working dogs.

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### Book Reviews - My Invisible World (continued)

*Morasha Rael Winokur rocks. She's authentic. Morasha knows that her brother's constant babbling isn't his fault, but sometimes she just wishes she could be a regular eleven-year-old girl. Not exactly possible, when brother Iyal, born with FASD, is unpredictable and emotional no matter where he is. At times, part of her wishes he would just shut up, while another part says, "But deep inside, I love him so much."*

*There are plenty of "That's not fair" times for Morasha, but also amazing amounts of family love, insight, and support. And an FASD service dog named Chancer for Iyal. With Chancer, Morasha says, she has a chance for a life of her own.*

*Read this book and I guarantee you'll never think the same about the outcome of drinking while pregnant. But it's much more. It's an opportunity to meet a delightful family that advocates for children with FASD.*

*Morasha's book is the "must have" of the 2009 holiday season and the coming year. A perfect gift, regardless of whether the reader has family or friends with special needs."*

Judith Vorfeld

*My Invisible World is a wonderful book. It provides a caring and thoughtful perspective on living with a sibling who has developmental challenges. Morasha is a very insightful, honest and intelligent author.*

*When you realize how old she is it is absolutely incredible. I think this is a "must-read" for families, young people, professionals and anyone who wants to read about a remarkable family, a remarkable young lady, and living with someone who has FASD. It is really a great read! For the professionals....it does provide an invaluable perspective on how siblings affect each other.*

Eve Bogan

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## Book Reviews - My Invisible World (continued)

### *Young Author Delivers Important Message About Living With Her Brother Affected by FASD*

*Morasha Winokur's compelling book, "My Invisible World" shares with tween-humor and bitter-sweet honesty her young life as a sibling of a brother with special needs. Adopted internationally, both Morasha and her non-biological brother, Iyal, leave Russia together as fourteen-month-old infants when their new parents bring them home to Roswell, Georgia. A few years later, the family is informed that Iyal had been exposed to prenatal alcohol resulting in fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). This life long birth defect leaves an individual with cognitive, physical, neurological and behavioral impairment. FASDs (fetal alcohol spectrum disorders) are the leading known preventable cause of intellectually disability. It may be the most undiagnosed or misdiagnosed developmental disability of our time, as up to 1 out of 100 newborns, "tens of thousands of babies each year" in the U.S. are affected by prenatal alcohol exposure. And yet 1 out of 8 pregnant women still consume alcohol. (CDC 2009)*

*Morasha clearly explains to kids and adults alike, through anecdotes and philosophy, how down right "annoying" it can be to navigate her seemingly impossible world. FASDs are 100% preventable, but 0% curable. She asks, "When will it stop? Not soon enough as far as I'm concerned." With alcohol attached to this diagnosis... shame and blame build barriers to compassion and understanding for both the birth mother and the baby born to her. Reading Morasha's book may provide a breakthrough to greater understanding and acceptance of this cultural undertow. Shakespeare said, "Age is counted not by calendar years but by wisdom." An eleven-year makes clear how we must support the individual and the family dealing with the unimaginable disability we don't want to see.*

Be in the Know NJ

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### Book Reviews - My Invisible World (continued)

*"I found the message and deliverance of this book so powerful and heartfelt. The unconditional sibling love and respect displayed by this young lady reminds us that love truly has no boundaries. Whether you are learning to cope with a disability in your own family, or simply interested in reading a great book that shows immeasurable strength and courage, this is a must read! Great for children and parents, alike."*

Melissa Lacquement

*An honest and sensitive assessment of life for the sibling of a special needs child. Eleven year-old Morasha puts into words the burdens faced growing up with a brother affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The reader learns how the whole family embraces the challenges of living with an FASD child and finds support in a specially trained service dog, named Chancer. This book provides insight, and is an appropriate read, for any parent or sibling of a of special needs child - not limited to only FASD affected families.*

J. Michael Williams

*Morasha has written a difficult and heartfelt story about her life and the affects of her brother's illness on her and her family. She shares her feelings very openly and candidly. This is a great book to share with others, especially children. This book should be in every elementary and middle school library in the county. Morasha tells it like it is!*

Richard Liebman

*Heartfelt voice of a young sister's love and her own internal struggle of acceptance with her sibling's disability. Wonderful read for inspiring authors, siblings and parents. Wish elementary schools would use this book for their student's curriculum and writer's workshops. There are so many lessons embedded in this 11 year old Morasha's story: embracing diversity, empathy, self-acceptance, siblings, growing up, being an agent of change, and the importance of prevention. My son read it to me as his homework, but the lessons have only begun to start to take root.*

Gailynn Gluth

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### INTERVIEWED ON CNN

View interview at

[www.TheChancerChronicles.com/Morasha.html](http://www.TheChancerChronicles.com/Morasha.html)

*Morasha Winokur, 11,  
is the author of 'My Invisible World.'*

*Morasha's mother describes her daughter as "an old soul." She's 11 years old but has the sharp sense of awareness and honesty of someone many times her age. In her new book, "My Invisible World – Life with a Brother, His Disability and His Service Dog," Morasha discusses a rarely talked about condition, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).*

*Morasha and her brother Iyal were both adopted from different Russian orphanages when they were babies. When Iyal was 4 years old, he was diagnosed with FAS. The disorder, along with its similar conditions, affects 1 out of 100 infants each year. That's more than autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, spina bifida and sudden infant death syndrome combined. Growing up with Iyal has been challenging, dealing with his outbursts and behavioral issues. To help make it easier, the family brought home an FAS-trained dog named Chancer, the first-ever in the U.S.*

*Morasha's uses her book to blatantly and poignantly express what her life is like having someone with FAS in the family. With her youthful voice, she has raised awareness for FAS and touched other families who are going through the same thing. She writes, "When my mother and I go out shopping, I usually get asked, 'What's the matter?' because people think something is wrong with me. They just can't get it into their head that it's okay for people to all be different and some people need to wear glasses, or use a wheelchair for better abilities. I reply, 'Nothing, the service dog is for my brother, but we just wanted to take him for a walk. My brother is not here right now.' The person who asks that question responds, 'Oh,' or nothing at all and turns away. I get that a lot. It's really quite annoying."*

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