Every child is special! *Sahara Special* by Esme Raji Codell is developed around a well-known theme about an unconventional teacher who changes children’s lives. However, readers will overlook that obvious fact when reading the book. While the theme has stood the test of time, what compels us to keep turning pages is the empathy we develop for Sahara, her mother, Darell, Ms. Pointy, and other interesting characters. Most of us have personally or through association felt the frustration and emotional pain of struggling in school to complete work accurately. Like the main character Sahara, it often happens that a person gives up and decides, “I was through giving them evidence. They wouldn’t get anything else out of me.”

When Sahara opts out she has two choices, special education or repeating fifth grade. Her mother knows Sahara reads and writes constantly. She is convinced that Sahara doesn’t need special education, and could do well if she would work harder. True to the theme of this story, we meet the new teacher Ms. Pointy soon after Sahara begins her second year in fifth grade. What follows throughout the year certainly turns out to be very special for Sahara and the reader.