**Blogging Mentor Text**

***Book Review and Comments, Wonder***

Source: [http://www.amazon.com/Wonder-R-J-Palacio/dp/0375869026/ref=sr\_1\_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1355938789&sr=8-3&keywords=books+wonder](http://www.amazon.com/Wonder-R-J-Palacio/dp/0375869026/ref%3Dsr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1355938789&sr=8-3&keywords=books+wonder)

Review from: *Wonder* (Hardcover) 0375869026 R. J. Palacio Knopf Books for Young Readers Wonder Books

160 of 179 people found the following review helpful

I wanted to give it a better rating…but I couldn't. Here, I'll explain why. June 11, 2012

By [thehydrogenpoptart](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A2OK6E3UHIUWFV/ref%3Dcm_cr_rdp_pdp)

**First Sentence**: I know I'm not an ordinary ten-year-old kid.

**How I Acquired the Book**: Borrowed from my town's library.

**The Review**: When I first read the synopsis of this book, my thoughts instantly turned to a friend of mine who had a facial anomaly, just like the main character, August, in this book. So I was excited to read it, to get a glimpse of what my friend's life could be like.

In that aspect, it did not disappoint. Auggie's voice is brilliant, and you can tell R.J. Palacio definitely spends a lot of time around kids. Auggie sounds just like my friend when he was in fifth grade, and is highly believable. It is this that makes the book so heartwarming and realistic. A book full of Auggie would be great.

But this book is /not/ entirely full of Auggie. The first and last 80 pages or so of it are AMAZING, definitely the best parts, because they're told from Auggie's point of view. But the rest of the book is told from different characters' points of view, like Auggie's friends and family. This just does not work. Each character gets 20 to 50 pages, and as I just was getting used to and liking their voice, BAM, the point of view changed again. In the middle of the book I found myself scanning the book to get to Auggie's part more quickly. Not only that, but the plot is lost in these parts, and these supporting characters are not well-developed.

That said, I completely respect and admire Ms. Palacio for doing something so ambitious. It may have not been the best it could be, but Wonder has absolutely raised my awareness and sympathy of people like Auggie. While this novel doesn't deserve a standing ovation, I will be waiting to see if Ms. Palacio's next novel deserves one.

-reviewed by a teenager. (I apologize for any teenagery and/or snarky comments in this review, if they have offended you. I understand they can be very annoying, just like teenagers themselves. In any case, thanks for dealing with them and thanks for reading this review.)

Sort: Oldest first | [Newest first](http://www.amazon.com/review/R2UNS0KXR12JIU/ref%3Dcm_cd_pg_oldest?ie=UTF8&asin=0375869026&cdForum=Fx3V8F6XDAQQBAO&cdPage=1&cdSort=newest&cdThread=Tx3GH9T0NJ7QJMT&store=books#wasThisHelpful)

Initial post: Jun 29, 2012 6:45:54 AM PDT

[Shoshanna Friedman](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A3GCQBH9V7UB8N/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

You're a teenager?? Don't apologize for anything...kudos to you for writing such a sophisticated and well thought out review. I'm an English teacher and am quite impressed! Keep on writing and you'll get your standing ovation!

Posted on Jun 30, 2012 10:05:53 AM PDT

[Anonymous](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A3TONM0OLOCLOH/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

You're a good writer, hydrogenpoptart. Keep reviewing! Perhaps, you'll have a story of your own someday.

In reply to [an earlier post](http://www.amazon.com/review/R2UNS0KXR12JIU/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detaep2?ie=UTF8&asin=0375869026&cdForum=Fx3V8F6XDAQQBAO&cdMsgID=Mx1DHUBDKMYJXX6&cdMsgNo=2&cdPage=1&cdSort=oldest&cdThread=Tx3GH9T0NJ7QJMT&store=books" \l "Mx1DHUBDKMYJXX6) on Jun 30, 2012 10:21:27 AM PDT

[thehydrogenpoptart](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A2OK6E3UHIUWFV/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

Dear Ms. Friedman and Anonymous-
Thank you! Really, I mean it. Thank you for reading and commenting on my review! People like you guys are why reviewers keep on reviewing. And writers can't be writers without readers, right? So, again, thank you so much for reading my review! :D

-hydrogen

Posted on Aug 19, 2012 9:43:03 AM PDT

[Laura Robles](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A1MX1KFMA8VGGU/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

Really great review. I was looking for a reviewer that had first hand experience with someone with a facial deformity. I knew someone in High School with one. And I also went to a disabled grade school. I was 13 before I went to a regular school. So I was curious if I would like it or would be reminded of terrible memories. I enjoyed what you had to say and will buy this book today. Thank you.

In reply to [an earlier post](http://www.amazon.com/review/R2UNS0KXR12JIU/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detaep2?ie=UTF8&asin=0375869026&cdForum=Fx3V8F6XDAQQBAO&cdMsgID=MxSF8KI3RM1QD3&cdMsgNo=4&cdPage=1&cdSort=oldest&cdThread=Tx3GH9T0NJ7QJMT&store=books" \l "MxSF8KI3RM1QD3) on Aug 20, 2012 3:59:03 PM PDT

[thehydrogenpoptart](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A2OK6E3UHIUWFV/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

Dear Ms. Robles--
Thank you for your kind comment! I found what you had to say very fascinating too. I knew I couldn't be the only one out there who knew someone with a facial deformity. Even though I didn't enjoy Wonder that much, I hope that you will find something that you'll like in it. Again, thanks for reading!

-hydrogen

In reply to [an earlier post](http://www.amazon.com/review/R2UNS0KXR12JIU/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detaep2?ie=UTF8&asin=0375869026&cdForum=Fx3V8F6XDAQQBAO&cdMsgID=MxXFM3SOHH5WNI&cdMsgNo=5&cdPage=1&cdSort=oldest&cdThread=Tx3GH9T0NJ7QJMT&store=books" \l "MxXFM3SOHH5WNI) on Aug 25, 2012 6:55:08 PM PDT

[pfs63](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A2X2KGD6QI9L7Z/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

very well written piece...but in my opinion it is important to see how others view auggie and how their day to day life changes based upon him being in his life...via loves him to death but you can see at some points she needs to have her own life and people know her for who she is and not just auggies sister ...others narrating the book brings important aspects into the book..how everyone perceives august...miranda mr. tushman...etc etc

In reply to [an earlier post](http://www.amazon.com/review/R2UNS0KXR12JIU/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detaep2?ie=UTF8&asin=0375869026&cdForum=Fx3V8F6XDAQQBAO&cdMsgID=Mx1XVR3QSO000IH&cdMsgNo=6&cdPage=1&cdSort=oldest&cdThread=Tx3GH9T0NJ7QJMT&store=books" \l "Mx1XVR3QSO000IH) on Aug 27, 2012 11:31:41 AM PDT

[thehydrogenpoptart](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A2OK6E3UHIUWFV/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

Hi there, pfs63!
I think I see what you're saying, as the thought did cross my mind a few times. I suppose it is important, but not necessary for readers to see the viewpoint of characters other than Auggie. I also think it was very daring and creative for the author to think of that concept. However, I thought that the execution of the switching points-of-view concept wasn't that great, and some characters sounded very similar to one another. I hope that explains things a bit more. And even with that said, thank you for your compliment; I really appreciate it!

-hydrogen

Posted on Oct 1, 2012 10:41:19 PM PDT
Last edited by the author on Oct 1, 2012 10:42:47 PM PDT

[N. Sumstine](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A2MCQQWNSJBX2S/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

Thank you. I am going to read this and it is nice to know the voices change. If it is done well the narrative voice change can really add to a story. I know you don't think this one did, but I was wondering if your anticipation of the story from Auggie's perspective might have affected your perception of the story.

If you would like to try another book with multiple voices that was done well, try YOUR OASIS ON FLAME LAKE by Lorna Landvik. This was the first book I read with changing voices and it surprised me. I think it is done well. There is a twist to the story that involves the teenage daughter of the initial characters (her voice is heard) which brings intrigue and depth to the story.
Good review, keep reading and writing!

In reply to [an earlier post](http://www.amazon.com/review/R2UNS0KXR12JIU/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detaep2?ie=UTF8&asin=0375869026&cdForum=Fx3V8F6XDAQQBAO&cdMsgID=Mx2Q08Q46XZQCHR&cdMsgNo=8&cdPage=1&cdSort=oldest&cdThread=Tx3GH9T0NJ7QJMT&store=books" \l "Mx2Q08Q46XZQCHR) on Oct 4, 2012 4:47:54 PM PDT

[thehydrogenpoptart](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A2OK6E3UHIUWFV/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

Hi N. Sumstine--
That's an intriguing idea, the idea that perhaps my anticipation did affect my perspective of the story. I truly try and not rate/review based on what I was expecting (in this case, for the whole book to be narrated by Auggie). Do know that for the first few voices I was not expecting the shift back to Auggie, and yet I still found the other voices not distinct enough. And quite honestly, this review was written quite a few months ago, so I'm forgetting a lot of the stuff I read :S

I believe the first book that I remember reading with distinct voices was The Lost Hero by Rick Riordan, although that was told from the third-person point of view. I thought that was done really well. I'll take a look into the book you suggested too. As a reader, I've never thought that creating distinct voices was an exceptional achievement. Perhaps as a reviewer, I really should.

Thanks for reading, thanks for commenting!

-hydrogen

In reply to [an earlier post](http://www.amazon.com/review/R2UNS0KXR12JIU/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detaep2?ie=UTF8&asin=0375869026&cdForum=Fx3V8F6XDAQQBAO&cdMsgID=Mx1L69GXWMDNIEO&cdMsgNo=9&cdPage=1&cdSort=oldest&cdThread=Tx3GH9T0NJ7QJMT&store=books" \l "Mx1L69GXWMDNIEO) on Oct 5, 2012 12:00:23 PM PDT

[N. Sumstine](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A2MCQQWNSJBX2S/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

I think it does. It takes skill to reveal a character, to flesh them out. It takes more skill to hear the character's voice and then write it in such a way that it is clear to a reader. I think it would take so much more skill to write distinct voices for more than one character.
I've read several books narrated this way and some are just abysmal. One author I read recently has two different series, both written in first person, and even though the characters narrating are completely different, they have the same voice. It seems to be the only voice the writer can hear (probably her own).

Have you read THE ILLUMINATION by Kevin Brockmeier? It was my number one book of 2011. He switches perspectives, but I can't remember if he switches voices. It is a beautiful piece of literature.

Posted on Oct 5, 2012 3:58:40 PM PDT

[joanne haggerty](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A1VWHC30WCT99M/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:





Wow, I am a 5th grade teacher who is obsessed with this book. SHaring it with my class has sparked many lively discussions and the concept of trying to get kids (and adults) to be "kinder than necessary" is my mission in life. I didn't want to like your review. But I must say, that I , too, am impressed. Well written, intelligent. Everyone's entitles to their opinion and isn't it awesome that we live in a place where we can ALL do that, regardless of the topic. I am also looking forward to RJ's next book. WEll done review! :)

In reply to [an earlier post](http://www.amazon.com/review/R2UNS0KXR12JIU/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detaep2?ie=UTF8&asin=0375869026&cdForum=Fx3V8F6XDAQQBAO&cdMsgID=Mx2ZRFSB30HHTCU&cdMsgNo=11&cdPage=2&cdSort=oldest&cdThread=Tx3GH9T0NJ7QJMT&store=books" \l "Mx2ZRFSB30HHTCU) on Oct 7, 2012 7:40:03 PM PDT

[thehydrogenpoptart](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A2OK6E3UHIUWFV/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

Hi Ms. Haggerty, and hi again N. Sumstine!
I agree with you that this book can and will spark many discussions, be it in a classroom or elsewhere. I did enjoy the message of this book--I simply thought the way the message was delivered could be better. If you got your students to be "kinder than necessary"--then I truly think the book has achieved what it was meant to do. Maybe you should tell Ms. Palacio about that!

N. Sumstine--Yes, after thinking about it a bit more, I think I've been taking the "switching voices" concept a bit for granted. I've read many books where authors switch perspectives (The Lost Hero, Warriors series, Septimus Heap) but the ones that switch voices are rarer. I still believe, though, that it is very hard to flesh out an entire character's voice in 20-50 pages, and that Ms. Palacio isn't /that/ good of a writer (very few are).

I haven't read The Illumination, as I tend to stick to juvenile/young adult books, however I do read the occasional adult book once in a while. The premise sounds fascinating, but I don't know if I will have time to read it. The last book I read with switching voice was Burn For Burn by Jenny Han and Siobhan Vivian. I have yet to write a review for it, but all three of the narrators in that book sounded very similar to each other.

As always, thank you for commenting and thank you for reading :D

-hydrogen

Posted on Nov 4, 2012 4:31:54 PM PST

[H. James](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A4J4HIR4SJBH/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

I think that you might have a future as an author yourself. Keep it up.

Posted on Nov 29, 2012 11:21:41 AM PST

[Kathy](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/A2UYS683GYRFSM/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

You are an amazingly thoughtful writer yourself. Do you mind me asking exactly how much of a teen you are? Hopefully, you're working on your own novel. By the way, I very much enjoyed Wonder but agree with your criticism.

Posted on Dec 1, 2012 8:29:26 PM PST

[FuracãoChelsea](http://www.amazon.com/gp/pdp/profile/AHHDROZ5GPDF/ref%3Dcm_cr_rev_detpdp) says:

I haven't read this book, I'm just looking for a gift for my 10-year-old cousin, but I came across your review and I just wanted to say-- don't apologize for your voice. I was really lucky in high school, because I had a theater teacher who helped us find our voices, even if they were brash, crass, dark, twisted, or otherwise not considered "acceptable" for young people. My voice in writing tends to fall into all of those categories at one time or another so before my drama class, I spent a lot of time apologizing for my style, or trying to soften it. I now regret the time I wasted trying to make myself and my writing fit in with what's acceptable. Of course, in high school, there are limits on what you can do, but if you're not depending on a grade, don't hold back.

Also, I think teenagers are the most underrated age group. Can they be whiny and obnoxious? Of course. But toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary school kids are too. So are the parents of those toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary school kids (a depressing realization for me). Teenagers have so much more insight than anyone gives them credit for. People who deny that are just jealous, or scared that high school students are savvy enough to call them out on their wrongdoing.

So anyway, I found your review in all its honesty to be very helpful, and I appreciate your insight. Keep writing.