

Out of My Mind

Sharon M. Draper

Reviewed by: Ella Gohari, 12 years old

Star Teen Reviewer of the Be The Star You Are! Charity

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Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper chronicles eleven-year old Melody Brooks's struggles as she deals with cerebral palsy, a disability that limits her to simply moving her thumbs. The book is told from her point of view, and from the beginning, it is obvious that while physically she struggles, intellectually she soars. Melody has a photographic memory and just may be the smartest person in her grade; however, because of her disability, no one believes her. The emotion poured into this story made it one of the best books I have ever read, which is saying something. It brings the reader on an emotional rollercoaster, from sadness to happiness to anger, and by the time it was over, I was begging for more.

The book starts with Melody going to school. She befriends a girl named Rose, but is bullied by others because they believe she is dumb. After she gets a perfect score in a trivia competition, she is accepted on the team, yet still has to deal with social injustices, which is the theme of this story. Throughout the book, we can see that while her peers are maturing and trying their best to accept her, she still has to endure the judgement people have when they see her, and it seems that this will never get better. This idea is reinforced again in the earth-shattering climax, which changed the opinion I had of everyone in the story. While I will not reveal what happened, I can say that I have never been angrier at a character in a book than I was when I read it. It shows that Sharon Draper really knows how to pull on people's heartstrings, and is extremely well deserving of all the awards and praise she got for this book.

Another thing I liked about this story was the family aspect. Melody's parents do the best they can, and while they may not be right all the time, they are always there for Melody. Her little sister Penny is also adorable, and I wish we got to see more of her; however, the chapters we did get with her were fulfilling. I also liked the symbolism, from the title "Out of My Mind" symbolizing Melody feeling like she's trapped in her body, to Rose's name symbolizing her being both sweet and thorny, to Penny basically being a "lucky penny". Melody's character is also very relatable, because all of us have felt excluded, different, and trapped.

This is a definite must-read for people aged twelve and above, because I believe that both adults and kids can enjoy it! Buy it as a gift for the book-lover in your family, or maybe as a gift for yourself. You will not regret it! If you like this book, I recommend Fish in a Tree, Counting by 7s, or The Fourteenth Goldfish.