

Reading Questions: Prompt Sheet

Wonder by R J Palacio

p. 43-44 Lamb to the Slaughter, p. 51-53 The Summer Table

p. 43. Ms Petosa calls August 'honey'. Where have you heard this kind of language before in the book? What do you think of Ms Petosa calling him this when he's 11 years old?

- August's mum calls him 'honey' earlier in the book (p. 15) and later on in the section we're reading this week she calls him 'sweetness' 'sweetie' and 'baby' (p. 54, 55 & 60). She might just be being nice, but the language is a bit patronising. Later in the section, August complains of his mum treating him like a baby.

p.43. Julian interrupts Ms Petosa to ask August a question. Do you think Julian's interested in the answer? What does this tell you about Julian?

- No, he's not. He's just asking the question as a lead-up to mentioning Darth Sideous. He's obviously planned the whole thing since it's quite a stretch from a braid to Padawan to Jango Fett to Darth Sideous (referring to August's face). This shows how devious and nasty Julian can be.

p. 44. Why does Ms Petosa move the conversation on? Do you think she realises what's going on? How do you know?

- Ms Petosa thinks they're talking in too much depth about a subject that the whole class might not be interested in – after all, it's only an introduction. She's keen to hear from the rest of the class and wants to move onto Jack. She doesn't know anything about Star Wars characters (she didn't know what a Padawan was) so it's unlikely that she realises that Julian is being cruel. The book also says she moves them on 'cheerfully'. She wouldn't be cheerful if she knew bullying was going on right under her nose.

p. 44. How is August sure that Julian was being insulting?

- He peeks over and Julian is looking at him, while Jack is talking. If he'd not meant anything by it, he'd be looking at Jack; but he's looking for August's reaction – he wants to see him hurt.

p. 52. What does Summer think of Ms Petosa? What do you think August might think of her?

- Summer isn't too keen on her. She made a face when she told August that she had Ms Petosa for Math. August probably feels a similar way about her – she's patronised him and not protected him from Julian (though she's not to blame for that).

p. 44 & 53. On the very last lines of these pages, there's a similarity or a contrast. Do you notice it?

There's a mention of eyes. Julian and August are looking at one another on p. 44. August mentions Summer's eyes (he talks about eyes a lot – can you find any other examples in the book so far?). The first isn't a nice experience, the second one is – he likes Summer's personality and probably likes the way she looks too.

Deeper Reading

p. 43 & 51. Compare August's feelings introducing himself to Ms Petosa and Summer and their reactions. What is the same and what is different?

- In both introductions, he only says his name. Ms Petosa asks him to speak up after someone (probably Julian) shouts, 'what?'. He's probably intimidated by having to speak in front of the whole class for the first time – they're sure to notice his face. Ms Petosa says 'wonderful' when what he's said isn't wonderful (note the title of the book). In contrast, when introducing himself to Summer, he's still nervous (he doesn't say much) but she makes him feel comfortable – she just says 'cool' then gets on with a normal conversation.

p. 43 & 51. Compare what happens just after August introduces himself to Ms Petosa and Summer. Who is in control in each of the situations?

- Julian interrupts Ms Petosa and brings the conversation around to Darth Sideous. Ms Petosa doesn't know what's going on because she's not aware of Star Wars characters, so Julian can control the insult to August. When Summer's friend comes over to bring her back to the table she was sitting at, she makes a polite excuse, embarrasses the other girl and stays with August. She knows what the other girls is trying to do and resists it. She's the one in control, in contrast to Ms Petosa earlier. August knows what's going on in each situation and it makes him warm to her and by the end of the scene, they're talking comfortably.

