

Reading Questions: Prompt Sheet

Wonder by R J Palacio

Reading Questions and Answers on p. 74, 85–87 Seeing August, 109–110 October 31

p. 85 Why did Via say to Grans that she wished she could live with her forever? Can you think of three reasons?

- While she was staying at Grans', Via was free of all the self-consciousness and awkwardness of people's reactions to August. She could be 'normal' and anonymous.
- Grans treated her and did nice things with her such as face painting, running in the ocean, eating ice cream. Via's mum probably didn't do that since she was focused on making sure August was OK.
- Via felt special at Grans'. She was the full focus of Grans' attention without August having to take priority.

p. 87 Do you think Grans loved Via more than August? Try to give two reasons.

- She said she did. Perhaps it was because Via was the first child and Grans preferred her because of that.
- She says she loves August very much but that he has enough angels looking after him.
- She knew that Via needed someone just for her and needed to hear that she was special.

p. 74 August describes Via's crying meltdown on the morning of Halloween. Can you explain it, giving three reasons?

- Halloween is the day after Grans died (four years before, p. 09).
- Via says she always feels sad but this is a particularly difficult time for her at the moment starting school and she feels the need for Grans' support more than ever.

p. 110 Why did Mom suggest watching the film together? Can you think of three reasons?

- Both were upset about the anniversary of Grans' death.
- It was their favourite film that they've probably watched together many times before when they've needed cheering up. It sounds like a 'girly' film (not Star Wars, which August would have watched).
- The film sounds like it's got a ghost in it (The Ghost and Mrs Muir). It might remind them of Grans since she's now a 'ghost'.

p. 74 Why do you think the author waits until page 109 to tell the reader why Via was having the crying breakdown on p74?

- The author is using a cliff hanger device to keep us interested in why Via was crying. The incident is towards the end of August's section before Via begins to narrate.
- August doesn't seem to give Via's upset a second thought. He's much more concerned with what's going on in his own life. It's interesting to see the contrast between their attitudes towards each other.
- The reader doesn't know enough yet about Via's story, so explaining her upset at that point would interfere with the story.

Deeper Reading

p. 85 Compare Via's reaction to others staring at August to August's own reaction. What might account for the difference?

- Via's reaction is angry – she'd get mad. August (e.g. p.49) is quiet about other people staring and being rude to him. He notices it and feels hurt but he never openly challenges it.
- August is in quite a weak position, socially. He's not used to challenging people and probably wouldn't know how to do it. Although he does with Julian when he corrects his 'supposably' on page 30.
- Via is in a stronger social position. She's not been used to people being rude directly to her but sees them being rude or staring at August regularly. Partly, she is trying to defend him as she feels protective of him; partly perhaps she's embarrassed (when she's a little older and more self-conscious) at others' treatment of him and some of her anger at having to deal with the situation comes out in her reactions.

p. 86 At the top of page 86, Via describes seeing August the way others see him. She hates herself for it? How do you feel about her reaction?

- Answers that capture the ambivalence Via feels. It's the first time there has been anything but a positive reaction to August from one of his family, so it's a shock to the reader too. It's quite a realistic reaction and a realistic passage that tackles her reaction head-on. Perhaps by allowing Via to have that reaction, the author takes some of the 'blame' away from the other people who feel the same way elsewhere in the book (we sympathise with Via so, as readers, we'll look for ways to forgive her).

p. 110 Describe Via's mix of emotions when Mom became 'August's Mom' again.

- Answers that capture Via's disappointment at the interruption to her special time with her mum and balance that with her love and care for August, her understanding that he has to come first because of what he goes through and has gone through, as well as her feeling of responsibility for him.

p. 110 Via describes Mom's reaction to the costume at the end of the page. How is this reaction like Via's reaction to August's needs?

- Both characters drop their own feelings and needs to support August.
- We hear from Via what that pushing away of her own needs is like for her (particularly with the contrast of her time at Grans'). It's likely that Mom feels a similar way – that her needs and feelings are secondary to August's but that that's what's necessary and what she wants to do.

