

Reading Questions: Prompt Sheet

Wonder by R J Palacio

p. 119–132 Weird Kids, Plague, Halloween Party, November, Warning: This Kid is Rated R, Egyptian Tomb.

p. 119–120 Why does Summer sit with August at lunch?

- Summer first sat with August at lunch because she felt sorry for him when others were being horrible about him. Now she sits with him because he's fun and not like the others who want to 'hang out' and 'talk'. She's also a decent human being and role model who can withstand peer pressure.

p. 121–122 Summer isn't in the 'popular group'; why is she invited to Savanna's party?

- The popular group is part of Julian's circle. They want to find out more about her relationship with August and to make her stop being friends with him. Julian also likes Summer and they want to pair them up as a couple. So, dumping August is a price for Summer joining the 'popular' set.

p. 124–126 One of the themes of this chapter is 'secrets and lies'. Can you explain this?

- Summer lied to Savanna when she said she got sick and that she had a crush on someone else. August said that he was sick on Halloween – he's lying to Summer to keep the incident in the classroom secret. He thought Summer was lying when she said that Tushman hadn't talked to her about him – he thought her friendship was all a big secret that everyone knew about but him. When he's sure of her friendship, he tells her the story he's been keeping from her about the classroom incident and makes her promise to keep it secret herself.

p. 127–130 In this chapter, we see in detail what a good relationship Summer has with August. Can you summarise (get it?) what they're doing with each other in this chapter?

- Summer has invited August around to her house to study. She tells her mum off for acting 'weirded-out' and shares her feelings with August about her dad's death. They talk about their thoughts and August jokes about his face. Summer is nervous about asking him about what's wrong with his face – they've never talked about it before, but August is happy to tell her about it. At the end, they share a joke. You can tell that they're both happy and relaxed in one another's company.

p. 131–132 Which other scene does this chapter remind you of? How is it different to that scene? It might be helpful to look back at it.

- This scene is like the Bleeding Scream scene on p. 76–78. Everyone is in fancy dress and August's face is covered up, so he feels like everyone else. The difference is that in the first scene August felt bad when he heard Jack talking about him, in this scene, it's Jack who feels bad.

p.132 Does Summer break her pinky promise?

In a way, she does break her promise to August by half-telling Jack about the Bleeding Scream but because she doesn't tell him directly, she thinks she's not really broken her promise. We find out later that Jack doesn't understand what she meant anyway.

Deeper Reading

p. 119 Where do you think Charlotte got the idea about Mr Tushman in line 9? Where have you heard this before?

- This sounds like something Julian would say. On page 77, Jack says Tushman asked him to hang out with August and Julian has probably told everyone about that conversation.

p. 121-123 Why do you think the author has included this chapter? What does it tell us about the community, about Summer and what message is the author sending to the reader?

- This is the first time we've seen Julian's group close-up. We see how 'mannered' they are - they have a Halloween party but don't get dressed up. They are exclusive, deliberately excluding others. They are all in couples and have paired up with the popular girls/boys. They feign grown-up actions like kissing on the cheek - there are rules of behaviour in this group that everyone must adhere to. Summer is a contrast to this group; she's genuine and nice. The author is asking us to sympathise with Summer and to be like her in our own dealings with people rather than trying to be like the 'cool' kids.

p. 124-126 Compare August and Summer's behaviour in this chapter to that of the 'popular kids' in the previous chapter.

- August and Summer are genuine with one another. August is upset with her because he thinks she's only his friend because she was told to be. They're not mannered and not trying to be anything they're not, in contrast to the kissing in the previous chapter, for example. They have more childish conversations like the 'yeah, no' exchange at the top of p. 126 and they cross all their fingers and make pinky promises in a way that the 'popular' group would never do since it's not cool. They're not pretending to be something they're not or trying to live up to a set of 'cool rules'.

p. 128 August mentions his grandmother on this page. His words provide a contrast to other characters. Explore your ideas around this.

- August says that he can't remember his grandma. This contrasts with the way Summer feels about her dad - she thinks about him every day. It's also a reminder of Via's feelings towards their grandma earlier in the book and how strongly she felt about her death. There is also the scene on p. 87 showing Mom's reaction to Grans' death. But August doesn't feel anything - he doesn't know the pain of losing someone special.

p.131 Why do you think the author has included this scene? Remember, authors usually have more than one purpose!

- The author is driving the story along by Summer telling Jack about the Bleeding Scream. It's a reminder to the reader about the Bleeding Scream chapter and a contrast to it. There is also a theme throughout the book of dressing up in fancy dress and disguise or masks (like truth and secrets/lies). It shows August getting on with this life and the development of his friendship with Summer. It shows how Jack has been feeling about August since the previous scene we'd seen him in and we know that he is the nice guy we originally thought him to be. The reader knows more than August.

