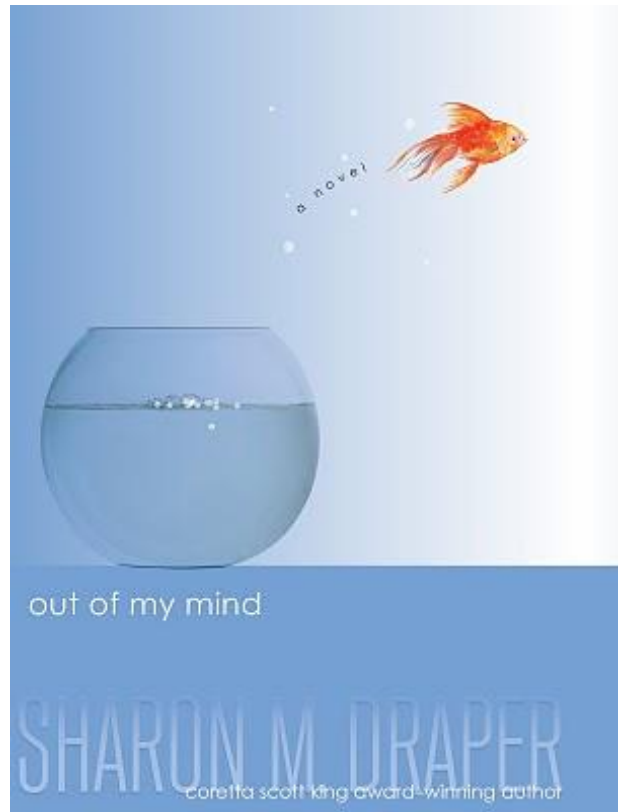


***Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper** (Atheneum, 2010)

Melody is probably the smartest student in her school, but no one knows it because cerebral palsy has her trapped inside her body. Can technology open her world to everyone else?



1. Melody says in the beginning of the book – “Sometimes people never even ask my name, as if it is not important or something.” Kids on the playground never come over and say hi – “it’s as if we are invisible.” Why do people not even ask her name, or treat her as invisible?
2. Melody has a photographic memory – she can remember just about anything she hears. Do you remember that incident in the supermarket when she was four and she saw blocks that were being recalled because they were dangerous? She started kicking and making noises – her mother thought she wanted the blocks. Melody says she doesn’t think her mother ever figured out what she was trying to tell her. Melody talks about all the words stuck inside of her. What seems to cause the biggest frustrations for Melody?
3. Describe Melody's parents. How do they learn to communicate with Melody and help her to overcome everyday problems? Why are those efforts sometimes a complete failure?
4. Melody’s parents ask Mrs. V to take care of Melody, saying that she is special. Mrs. V responds “All kids are special, but this one has special superpowers. I’d love to help her find them.” What role does Mrs. V play in Melody's development? Why is she a necessary addition to Melody's life? (early on gives her words)
5. When Melody starts going to school she is put in the class for children with all sorts of disabilities. How does Melody feel about school? How does she fit in with her classmates and what makes her different from the rest of the children in H-5?
6. Melody has a goldfish name Ollie – she says that “Ollie’s life was worse than mine.” What do you think she means by this? How does Melody's feel when she is unable to tell her mother what really happened to Ollie? Does this incident foreshadow another incident later in the story?
7. When baby Penny is born she learns to talk and walk easily. How does Melody feel about her little sister?

8. Fifth grade brings two big changes for Melody – an electric wheelchair and inclusion. How does the inclusion program change Melody's school experiences?
9. Rose is the person who volunteers to sit beside Melody in music class. They spend time together, and Melody desperately wants Rose to be her friend. Why do you think Rose behaved the way she did during the trip to the aquarium? Is Rose a good friend to Melody?
10. When Melody gets her Medi-talker she is so excited she says: “I feel like Christopher Columbus bumping into America.” What does she mean by this? Why does she name it Elvira?
11. Why does Melody decide to enter the quiz team competition? What obstacles must she face and overcome just to get on the team?
12. What does Melody learn about friendship and the relationships of children working together as she practices and competes with the quiz team?
13. What is ironic about the events at the restaurant after the competition? How does this scene foreshadow the events that led up to the airport fiasco?
14. Describe Melody's extreme range of emotions as she tries to tell her mother that Penny is behind the car.
15. On pages 289-290 Melody confronts the class about leaving her behind when they went to Washington D.C. Why does she reject the trophy as a gift and tell her teammates that they deserved it?
16. Why is the first page repeated at the end of the book? How has Melody changed from the beginning of the book to the end?
17. Why is the book called *Out of My Mind*?

The above questions were developed with assistance from Sharon Draper's Group Book Guide for *Out of My Mind*.

Caroline Ward,
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