

**Sophia Hudson (Grade 6, Hastings Middle School, Columbus, OH)**  
**Level I Honorable Finalist**  
**Letter to author R. J. Palacio concerning her book, *Wonder***

Dear R. J. Palacio:

While reading your book, *Wonder*, many feelings were sparked inside of me. At first, I was confused and depressed by these feelings, but the more I thought about them, the more I understood them.

At two years old, I was diagnosed with Enlarged Vestibular Aqueduct Syndrome, EVAS. EVAS is a fancy title that means I have larger tubes in my ears, so there is more fluid that blocks my hearing. So, I need to wear hearing aids. All of my life, I have never liked my hearing aids because they would draw too much attention to me. I have never liked being any different than everyone else. Reading your book really hit close to home. I've been asked repeatedly about the "things" in my ears by young children who wanted to touch them, or my peers who were curious, and sometimes, even disgusted.

Every night, I would end the day by reading *Wonder*. There were moments that I laughed aloud and moments that I sobbed emphatically. I could understand Auggie's feelings. From the stares from other people to the friendships he made, it reminded me of myself. Your book helped me in so many ways because for a long while I was trying to hide the fact that I had a disability and I wanted more than anything, to be perfectly normal. But as I read more, my feelings started to change, especially when Auggie got hearing aids.

Auggie changed my feelings about being different. My mind would toss this idea of *normal* around like a ping pong ball. All day, every day, I thought about how we are all different. I would objectively watch people, not as a judge, but as an observer. I watched to see if there were people who needed any help or had something that they couldn't control. Then, I started thinking; *maybe we all are perfect*, in our own ways. I'm not bothered by the fact that I need a little help, it's just something else that makes me *imperfectly perfect*. Now, I understand there is good that comes from being different. Consequently, I've made so many new friends, because I opened myself up, instead of being embarrassed of my hearing aids.

Thank you for showing that no one is perfect. One day I will find out how I can use my differences to help others learn the same lesson.

Sincerely,  
**Sophia Hudson**