



Real

Carol Cujec with Peyton Goddard

Tome Society It List Discussion Guide

September 2022 Book of the Month



Pre-reading questions

1. Look at the cover of this book. Make a guess about what you think it will be about? Keep track of your answer and after finishing the book, look back to see how close you were to the story the authors wrote.
2. The main character of Real has an almost perfect memory and remembers almost everything that happens to her. If you had a memory like hers, would you feel like it was a super power or a curse?
3. Define the following words, pity and empathy. Some may think these words mean the same thing, how are they different? Create a t-chart or venn diagram to categorize different feelings or actions that may fall under these two words.

Post-reading questions

1. In the beginning of the book, people like Elvi and Miss Marcia assume that Charity can't understand them and isn't capable of learning. Why do some people think that those who are neurodivergent can't achieve what neurotypical people can? How is this thinking harmful to others as well as themselves? Even after Charity proves that she can communicate, this is a battle she continues to have to fight. If someone did this to you, how would it make you feel?
2. Charity can feel when people look at her with pity. Discuss this quote, "Define pity: a poison offered to another person as if it were a gift of pure gold." Find examples from the book where Charity and the other EPIC students experience pity instead of empathy. How does getting pity make the students feel? How do you think it would make you feel? What does Charity say makes her feel real? What could others do to make you feel real?
3. Consider this passage, "Most importantly, Miss Amira looked at me with possibilities instead of limitations". How do you think this small difference can affect a person?
4. Often, Charity needs other people to treat her with patience and calmness. Who are some people in her story that support her with patience, kindness, and calming behavior? What characteristics and personality traits make them so good at helping Charity?
5. Discuss this quote, "Their labels do not define me. They only limit me." Despite the numerous obstacles in her way, Charity continues to be hopeful. How do you think she is able to stay so optimistic? Do you think you could persevere the way she did?
6. Charity often says she feels alone in a crowd. What do you think she means by this? How do people exclude her? Do they always intentionally exclude her or sometimes is it unintentional? Can you give some examples?
7. How did you feel when Grace and Mason finally started to include Charity? Discuss the different ways that both Grace and Mason stood up to their classmates when they mistreated Charity. How do each of their characters grow throughout the story? Do you think it took courage to speak up in front of others?

8. Charity's first full sentence is "I am intelligent". Why do you think she chose this specific thought to communicate? If you were in Charity's position, what would your first words be?
9. Charity says she is always having to fight. Fight to be heard, fight to go to school, fight to be included, and then fight to even stay in school. How do you think this also applies to the different EPIC students? Think about this quote, "Dare to be included" by Charity after Jaz was selected for the Princess Court. How is this part of their fight?
10. Read the authors note and back flap of the book to learn more from Carol Cujec and Peyton Goddard. How do you feel knowing that this story was based on the real life experiences of Peyton?

Post-reading activities

1. With the help of a parent or teacher, research Stephen Hawking as well as his achievements and struggles of his life. Compare and contrast his challenges with Charity's. How did type-to-speech help him continue studying, learning, and teaching? Can you discover any other people who use this technology to communicate? Create an infographic with your findings and enter it into the Infographic competition.
2. Think about Charity's mission. Are there ways we can continue to help her mission succeed in real life? Discuss some ways you individually and your community as a whole could help.
3. After finishing the book, write a book review or film a book review vlog sharing your opinion with others. If you loved the book, try to convince other readers to give it a try. Check out the competition page on our website for more information. Ask your advisor to submit your finished project to the It List Book Review Blog Article or It List Book Review Vlog.

More About This Book

Author's Website: <https://www.carolcujec.com/>

Publisher's Discussion Guide:

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