

The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

1. Are the characters convincing? Do they come alive for you? How would you describe them — as sympathetic, likeable, thoughtful, intelligent, innocent, naive, strong or weak? Something else?
2. Do you identify with any characters? Are you able to look at events in the book through their eyes — even if you don't like or approve of them?
3. Are characters developed psychologically and emotionally? Do you have access to their inner thoughts and motivations? Or do you know them mostly through dialogue and action?
4. Do any characters change or grow by the end of the story? Do they come to view the world and their relationship to it differently?
5. Does the plot hold your interest? Does it keep you turning pages? Does it move briskly or unfold slowly?
6. What is the story's central conflict? Is it between characters, a character and society, a character and nature? Is it internal—an emotional struggle within the character? Does the conflict create tension, even suspense, to hold your interest?
7. How is the story told— in chronological order? Or does the author play with time, veering back and forth between past and present?
8. Is the plot simple or complex? Are there subplots related to the main plot—or separate, distinct story lines, operating independently and merging at the end?
9. Were you surprised by the ending? Was information withheld till the end? Were there cliff-hangers at the end of chapters? Did that irritate you or make you want to read on?
10. Can you think of the work's themes, or its larger meanings? What might the author be trying to get at, to say?
11. Symbols intensify meaning. Can you identify any in the book—people, actions or objects that stand for something greater than themselves?

12. Does the author use irony—a different outcome, or reality, than expected. Irony mimics real life: too often the opposite of what we want or intend happens.

Adapted from www.litlovers.com

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