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Reviews

"Kids will tune in to this book's clear message about appearances." --*Publishers Weekly*

"A worthy subject that should give kids plenty to think about." -*Kirkus Reviews*

"This book will not only be enjoyed by teen readers for its entertaining story, but also for its statement about prejudice. Zephaniah is not just telling a story of a brave and inspiring young man, he is also teaching readers an important lesson through the voice of Martin." -*VOYA*

Also available in hardcover

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About the author

Benjamin Zephaniah is a British performance poet who travels on literary world tours for the British Council. He is the author of a number of acclaimed novels for young adults, including *Refugee Boy* and the upcoming *Gangsta Rap*. He lives in England. Visit his Web site at www.benjaminzephaniah.com.

Face Details

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Suzannah Withers says

I read this when I was young and had briefly fallen out of love of reading. I didn't want to read about another farm or even collies (I went through a phase!!) so while I was in my local Library (Halesowen) I found this. I was only 11/12 and I loved it, the reality of perceptions, peer pressure and a character learning to be confident in his own skin - brilliant read. I just read it, then at the end, when I found out it was Benjamin Z and he was only 'up the road' in Birmingham, I loved it more. A local author reignited my love of reading at a difficult time in my younger years, which has now set me up to fall in love with stories again. Cheer Mr Zephaniah!

Suzie, now aged 32 years :)

Izzy says

I would hugely disappointed by this book. The intriguing synopsis and amazing cover made this seem like it would be great, but I had so much trouble connecting with the characters. I didn't dislike Martin, but I did feel pretty apathetic toward him. He seemed a bit cocky to me and just overall difficult to relate to. Even in the scene when he looked at his horribly burned and disfigured face for the first time, I was thinking more about how terrible that has to be for anyone rather than feeling especially bad that it happened to the main character, if that makes sense.

I also feel like this book didn't delve too deeply into the issues Martin's facing. The ending didn't really feel like an ending to me, and I would have liked to see this book expanded. I wanted to know more about Martin because I never felt like I got a good grasp of who he is and his personality. The writing itself felt a bit flat and dragged on in places, and sometimes I had trouble picking it up.

That said, this book did have its good points. I like that the author didn't shy away from anything, and it was an honest portrayal of what burn victims have to go through. It was both believable and sad when Martin's girlfriend no longer wanted anything to do with him and instead hooked up with some other guy, and the scene when he confronted her nearly brought tears to my eyes. And although his old friends melted away from him, I was glad that Martin was able to make other friends.

CharlotteN says

Face is an amazing book with a inspiring message. You follow the main character Martin with his emotional ups and downs after his accident. Some parts are scary and some bring you tears of joy and sadness. Over all an amazing book with a good poem to finish it of.

Dane Cobain says

Face was okay, but it wasn't Zephaniah's best – it was a little too preachy, too much like a moral tale, and it took me a while to get into it. Even once I'd been absorbed into the story line, I didn't enjoy it much, although I did appreciate that the large print made it easy for me to power through it.

It's just a little too shaky in places, and whilst there aren't any overt mistakes in terms of grammar and punctuation, I did occasionally find myself being jerked out of the story when somebody behaved strangely or said something unusual. You could tell it was purely for the sake of advancing the moral. And then there was the part where Zephaniah said it was a Friday, and in the following scene it was "the next day" and still Friday, somehow.

Plot-wise, it follows the story of a kid who gets into a car accident and who badly injures his face. It explores the way that – as a society – we take things at face value, and teaches us that what's inside a person is what counts, and not how they look.

Jules ? ?Bookvergent? says

Martin's life looks good with a model for a girlfriend, the best gymnast in school, and as a class clown. But, his life is drastically changed by one choice - to get into a car unknowingly with a stoned driver. Martin is left to deal with the burns he received after the car rolled and blew up. Through this trial he discovers who his true friends are, the difference between love and lust, and what it really means to be beautiful.

This is a book that actually transmits the message "looks don't matter at all"

I read this book ages ago but I remember that it scarred me for life (but in a good way) and made me appreciate things more.

Ziggy_D1 says

Face, a young adult book, by Benjamin Zephaniah unravels the story of a 15-year-old boy named Martin who chose mistake after mistake until he found a burden too heavy to replace. Fortunately, the burden helped Martin find his voice of reason and uncovered who his loyal and faithful friends really were. The book however did tell more than show the reader the events which made the book a bit less enjoyable. Nevertheless, the poem at the end will be one I won't forget so easily with specifically the last sentences, but don't read the poem until you've finished reading the book. The value of support repeats throughout the book and generates the events that Martin will choose. Anyone keen enough to face a new reality and not to judge someone too quickly will enjoy this book.

K. Carters says

I'm not usually a huge fan of Zephaniah but recently his work has been really growing on me. This is a nice little piece and sits well with "Wonder" as my comparative piece. Very deep, powerful and hard hitting, it really surprised me and I couldn't put it down.

Emily says

Martin's life looks good with a model for a girlfriend, the best gymnast in school, and as a class clown. But, his life is drastically changed by one choice - to get into a car unknowingly with a stoned driver. Martin is left to deal with the burns he received after the car rolled and blew up. Through this trial he discovers who his true friends are, the difference between love and lust, and what it really means to be beautiful.

There is some "light" language and the subject matters are drugs, underage drinking, and lust/love.

Caitlin says

coping with the change
shocking
fear
scared
consequences of actions
not necessarily fault
karma?

Maria Renee says

I finished reading this book on the 25/2/10. I really enjoyed reading this book. I learned a lot of things by the story narrated by Martin a boy whose life is changed after a car accident. Martin in the beginning of the story was a very confident and happy boy whose life was perfect. Perfect personality, perfect group of friends and perfect girlfriend too.

The book has a really good moral and one of my favourite morals. In the end of the story Martin realises who his real friends are.

Yanni says

Face taught me that looks don't matter at all. It's kinda devastating what happens in the book because its good details. You can visualize what's going on. Also there's some awkward parts that are kinda funny.

Sumaiyya says

I've always enjoyed and looked out for Benjamin Zephaniah's poetry so I knew I had to read his books too! I absolutely loved Face for its simplicity and insight. Even though the book did not meet my expectations of some crazy story (but that's not a problem with the book but with my assumptions) I still loved it when I realised it wasn't going where I'd assumed. This is definitely an important book and the writing is quite

simple so I'd recommend it to younger kids and adults as well. Zephaniah shows the different ways in which the society/world reacts to huge physical changes and how difficult it can be to cope with it. It also shows us a strong young protagonist who is able to deal with the situation maturely and learn as it goes on. I think I'd categorise this under coming of age stories, and even though it's a book about young adults the wonderful maturity in the book makes me want to not call it a YA.

Nikki Hunter-Norris says

What an amazing book this is! It has so many lessons to learn in it, and a must for all youngsters if you ask me!

Benjamin is such an awe inspiring author, and cant wait to read the rest of his stuff!

Mary says

I really wanted to like this book. The cover is good and thought provoking and the concept behind it was really interesting. I feel like if it had been executed better this book could have been brilliant. Unfortunately it wasn't.

The first problem I had was with Martin and his two friends called Matthew and Mark, it took me until the accident to be able to differentiate between the two of them and at that point they became much small characters. While they seemed like they could have been more interesting it also seemed as though they were assigned one character trait and that was the whole basis of who they were. Little depth was given to them.

I did like his friends from after the accident the Jamaican sisters and Anthony. I thought that they were interesting and unique characters and I would have loved to learn more about them.

I think the big problem with the book was that it just didn't seem finished. It was a good base but there wasn't a lot of depth in the characters, there was a lot of telling and not showing (which was the biggest problem in my opinion.) Then things seems to happen all at one. Before the accident he hated gymnastics at school and then on his second day back it was his favorite activity and two days later he was the captain! Slow it down, add more scenes and let the plot and characters develop.

I did think the poem at the end of the novel was great. I haven't read much Zephaniah but from what I can tell he is significantly better at poetry. Perhaps this novel would have really shown had it been written in verse.

Den says

What a brilliant book which I feel everyone should read. It deals with a teenager who after an accident finds his face disfigured. It deals with how he copes during this time and how others respond to him.
