

An international bestseller

AMY HARMON

*Making  
Faces*

ANNIVERSARY  
EDITION

# MAKING FACES

Ambrose Young was beautiful. He was tall and muscular, with hair that touched his shoulders and eyes that burned right through you. The kind of beautiful that graced the covers of romance novels, and Fern Taylor would know. She'd been reading them since she was thirteen. But maybe because he was so beautiful he was never someone Fern thought she could have . . . until he wasn't beautiful anymore.

Making Faces is the story of a small town where five young men go off to war, and only one comes back. It is the story of loss. Collective loss, individual loss, loss of beauty, loss of life, loss of identity. It is the tale of one girl's love for a broken boy, and a wounded warrior's love for an unremarkable girl. This is a story of friendship that overcomes heartache, heroism that defies the common definitions, and a modern tale of Beauty and the Beast, where we discover that there is a little beauty and a little beast in all of us.



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Genre: Teen and Young Adult Romance, Inspirational, Coming of Age  
Recommended for ages: +14



**ATTENTION**  
**THIS DOCUMENT INCLUDES SPECIFICS YOU MIGHT WANT TO AVOID  
UNTIL YOU HAVE FINISHED READING THE BOOK.**

## CHARACTERS

The love story is centered around Fern Taylor and Ambrose Young. Do you consider them the only main characters in this novel or do you think there are others who play a pivotal and influential role? If so, who and why?

Do you think the characters were realistically portrayed? Describe these character's personalities, motivations, inner qualities.

How does the way the characters see themselves, differ from how others see them? How do you see the various characters?

What did you think about their attraction to each other? What drew them in? What did you think of their fast relationship?

What is motivating the actions of the characters in the story? What do the sub-characters want from the main characters and what do the main characters want with them?

Were there any moments where you disagreed with the choices of any of the characters? What would you have done differently?

What past influences are shaping the actions of the characters in the story?

How did Fern's eavesdropping shape her view of her world?

What was your reaction to the conversation between Fern and Ambrose about God?

Through the beginning of the book Ambrose either didn't notice Fern, was angry with her, or avoided her. When do you think Ambrose realized he had feelings for Fern?

Why do you think Ambrose chose to not dance with Fern at the dance?

Why do you think Fern and Ambrose never ever exchanged letters while he was away at war?

When do you think Ambrose decided to really live again?

What does Fern mean when she says, *"It's not that there aren't answers, it's that we wouldn't understand them if we had them."*?

Bailey has Muscular Dystrophy and is expected to die young . . . do you think he is afraid of death? Why or why not?

Bailey and Fern had learned to "live in the moment," so to speak - because the future wasn't necessarily promised, due to Bailey's illness. In that way, Bailey's death allowed Fern to move forward with her own life, sad as that is. He freed her to move on. Do you agree with this statement?

The wrestling gym became a sanctuary for Ambrose. He said he could feel them there . . . hear them. What do you think they were saying to him? What answers was Ambrose seeking?

Why do you think Fern picked Kite and Ambrose picked Balloon? What did each choice say about their different experiences in life? Given the choice, which would you choose and why?

Who did you like best? And who do you like the least? Why?

Did any of the characters remind you of yourself or someone you know? How?

What were the dynamics of "power" between the characters? How did that play a factor in their interactions?

Do the main characters change by the end of this novel? Do they grow or mature? What events trigger such changes?

What do you think will happen next to the main characters?

## THEMES, DEFINITIONS & SYMBOLISM

### Beauty

*noun*

a combination of qualities, such as shape, color or form, that pleases the aesthetic sense, especially the sight

*“True beauty, the kind that doesn't fade or wash off, takes time. It takes incredible endurance. It is the slow drip that creates the stalactite, the shaking of the Earth that creates mountains, the constant pounding of the waves that breaks up the rocks and smooths the rough edges. And from the violence, the furor, the raging of the winds, the roaring of the waters, something better emerges, something that would have otherwise never existed.*

*And so we endure. We have faith that there is purpose. We hope for things we can't see. We believe there are lessons in loss, power in love, and that we have within us the potential for a beauty so magnificent, our bodies can't contain it.”*

When Fern and Ambrose bury the dead spider, Fern says a prayer and thanks God for "making even ugly things beautiful". Beauty (both physical and inner) is a big part of the book. Is physical beauty a blessing or a curse? Why? And the opposite . . . Is the absence of physical beauty a blessing or curse?

Why do you think Ambrose's identity is so tied up in his appearance?

Ambrose is very self-conscious of his scars when he returns. Why do you think it was so easy for Fern to look past the scars and love him even though he didn't have the same beautiful face?

Would the story end differently if Fern did not suffer from Ugly Girl Syndrome? Or did life with Bailey shape her into a better person so she could reach out to Ambrose and see him as still beautiful?

Fern believes she is ugly. She describes herself in an unflattering way at the beginning. She can see beauty in everyone except herself. Why do you think she finally starts to see herself in a better light? Does Ambrose unknowingly help her?

# Heroism

*noun*

great bravery

***“Victory is in the battle.”***

This is a very powerful quote from the book. What are your thoughts about it?

Each of the characters, Fern, Ambrose and Bailey, show heroism in the book. When and how?

Why do you think Ambrose's friends decided to join the army with him?

If Ambrose were to come back from war with his friends. Would he have went looking for Fern?

How would the story have changed if Ambrose didn't get hurt? And what about Bailey? What if he didn't suffer from MD?

## QUOTES

*“If God makes all our faces, did he laugh when he made me?  
Does he make the legs that cannot walk and eyes that cannot see?  
Does he curl the hair upon my head ’til it rebels in wild defiance?  
Does he close the ears of the deaf man to make him more reliant?  
Is the way I look coincidence or just a twist of fate?  
If he made me this way, is it okay, to blame him for the things I hate?  
For the flaws that seem to worsen every time I see a mirror,  
For the ugliness I see in me, for the loathing and the fear.  
Does he sculpt us for his pleasure, for a reason I can’t see?  
If God makes all our faces, did he laugh when he made me?”*

This is the most highlighted quote from the novel. What are your thoughts about it?  
Do you have any favorite quotes or passages in the novel that you enjoyed or found insightful?

Discuss the following quotes.

*“Everybody is a main character to someone...”*

Bailey says, "Everybody is a main character to someone". Why does he say this?

*“Death is easy. Living is the hard part.”*

*“There isn't heartache if there hasn't been joy. I wouldn't feel loss if there hadn't been love.”*

*“Everybody who is somebody becomes nobody the moment they fail.”*

*“Sometimes beauty, or lack thereof, gets in the way of really knowing someone”*

*“I would rather be lost with you than alone without you.”*

Were there any particular quotes that stood out to you? Which ones and why?

## STRUCTURE, WRITING & GENERAL DISCUSSION

What did you think of the overall structure of the novel? Were you engaged immediately?

What did you think about the time-line and points of view?

How did you feel reading it? Which emotions conveyed the story? Did the story keep you interested?

Would you say this is a plot-driven book or does the story unfold slowly with a focus on character development? Were you surprised by the plot? Or did you find it predictable?

How credible did the author make the setting and dialogue?

What scene did you find was the most pivotal for the book? How do you think the story would have changed had that scene not taken place?

What scene resonated most with you personally in either a positive or negative way?

Did certain parts of the novel make you uncomfortable? Were there any scenes that made you laugh?

What is the significance of the title? Did you recognize it in the book? Would you have given the book a different title? If yes, what is your title?

How soon did you figure out the meaning behind the chapter titles?

Do you have your own bucket list? And how many have you been able to strike off already?

Would you rather be blind or deaf? Why?

Would you rather be smart or beautiful? Why?

What surprised you the most about the book?

How important is the setting & time period to the story? How would it have played out differently in a different setting? What about a different time period?

Based on the prologue, did you expect the ending or were you surprised?

Did you think the ending was appropriate? How would you have liked to have seen the ending go?

Have any of YOUR views or thoughts changed after reading this book?

What do you think about the cover of this book? Would you change it? How?

Has this book changed you, broadened your perspective?

What did you learn from, take away from, or get out of this book?

Did your opinion of the book change as you read it? How?



## FUN EXTRAS

Fan made book trailer with music and lyrics of “**Polaroid**”, written and performed by Paul Travis.

[Watch and listen on YouTube.](#)

[Making Faces inspired playlist on YouTube.](#)

## Valentine’s Day note from Ambrose

Dear Fern,

Once, in Iraq, Beans asked all the guys, “Rita or Fern?” He was trying to mess with me. Beans was always messing with me. They all were. But the first thing that came to my head was you. Fern. Red hair, sweet smile, brown eyes. And I knew, for me, the answer was Fern...not Rita. I never told him that. I never told any of them. But I kind of think they knew. I promised myself that when I came back, I would get to know you. I wanted to know you better, and I missed you. I missed the girl I got to know in the letters we wrote back and forth. And I think I realized then that I was half in love with you already. That’s why I kissed you before I left. I know it’s hard for you to believe that. You don’t know you’re beautiful, you don’t know that if things had gone differently, if I’d never been injured in Iraq, if I’d come back the same Ambrose, I still would have found you. I still would have loved you. I may be a changed man, but that much wouldn’t have changed.

I love you, Fern. I think I always have. And I know I always will.

Ambrose

