

About Reviews

Posted on Apr 01, Posted by [Lois Lowry](#) Category [Uncategorized](#)

Yes, I'm aware that I have now posted two quite glowing reviews: one from PW for my newest book, GOSSAMER, and one for the play adapted from THE GIVER.

And so I am in danger of becoming a member of the Strut-and-Preen Society.

Would this woman post a BAD review? Readers want to know.

Yeah, I guess I would. Will.

But not today because I don't have one close at hand. Let me muse for a moment about reviews in general, though.

I do read them. Some writers say they don't. I don't believe them for a minute.

Do reviews affect me? Yes. But I always consider the source. There are a number of very reputable and responsible publications that review children's books. Their reviewers tend to be intelligent, scholarly, well read in the field, unbiased, and they care about children and books.

I read what those reviewers say with interest and a sense of being taught about my craft. They know more about what I do than I do. If they alert me to the fact that I've done one part of it not-so-well? I listen.

There are others, maybe writing for small town newspapers (although I shouldn't generalize here), who sometimes are not well versed in the field, and who don't understand the process of "reviewing"...who are more likely to re-tell the plot, the way a fourth grader does in a book report.

I read those but with much less interest.

There are some...like the one who wrote of NUMBER THE STARS, "A well-told true story of a Christian Danish child who sacrifices her life to save a Jewish friend"...who clearly have only leafed through the pages and not bothered reading the book.

I throw those away after a quick glance.

There are the letters and email from kids. "I had a hard time getting into the book at first" is a comment worth my attention, I think, even if it comes from an eleven-year-old. It alerts me to problems with pacing and I'll be aware of it next time I start a book slowly. I might not speed it up, but I'll have that kid in the back of my mind, the one who wants to plunge right in instead of tiptoeing. I'll try to make those tiptoeing baby steps comfortable and inviting.

But an email like one received recently, one that said I HATE YR BOOK ITS BORING AND I LOOKD AT YR WEBISTE U R OLD AND UGLY AND LOK LIKE A LEZBIAN ? Well, that's not really a review, and it says more about the kid than the book. So I hit the "delete" button, but not without a sense of sadness: for the kid, for the teacher, for the book, for the lost opportunity.

And that reminds me that I want to say a few words about author mail in general.

Soon.

Tags: Untagged