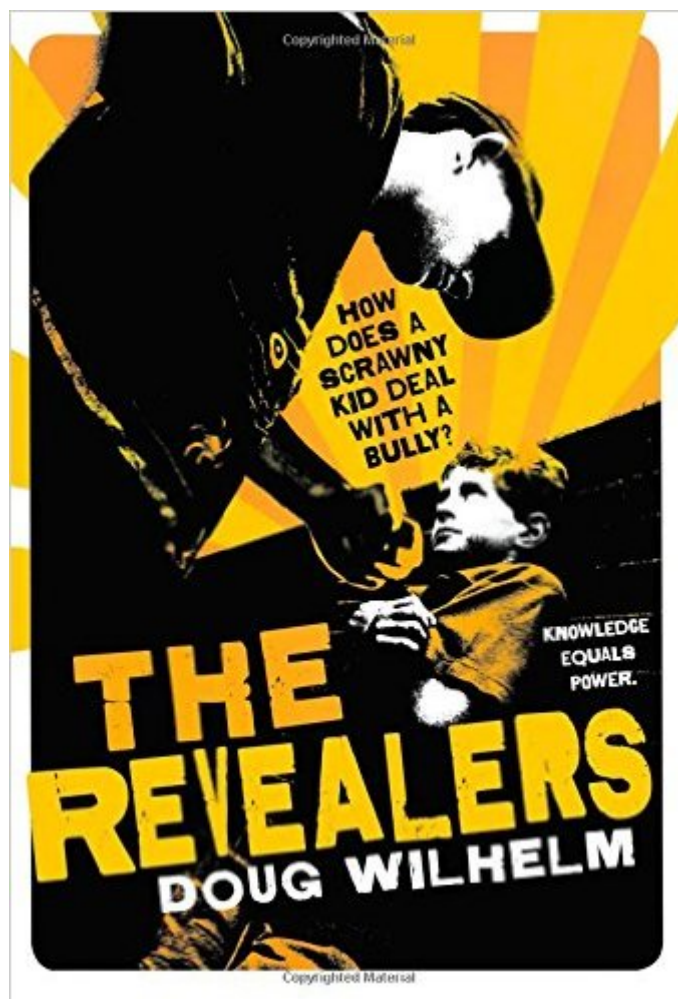


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# The Revealers



## Synopsis

Throwing light on a dark problem Parkland Middle School is a place the students call Darkland, because no one in it does much to stop the daily harassment of kids by other kids. Three bullied seventh graders use their smarts to get the better of their tormentors by starting an unofficial e-mail forum at school in which they publicize their experiences. Unexpectedly, lots of other kids come forward to confess their similar troubles, and it becomes clear that the problem at their school is bigger than anyone knew. The school principal wants to clamp down on the operation, which she does when the trio, in their zealously for revenge, libel a fellow student in what turns out to have been a setup. Now a new plan of attack is needed . . . This suspenseful story of computer-era underground rebellion offers fresh perspectives on some of the most enduring themes in fiction for young readers. *The Revealers* is a 2004 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I was browsing the book store when I came upon this book, after reading through a few pages and looking at the description on the back it seemed like a fairly predictable, boring, book that I would read the first few pages uninterested and move on to something else. Because, I must admit, I thought that it would be another cheesy story with dull, flat characters written by an adult who had no real idea of what kids were like. Although skeptical, I decided to buy it because the other book I was considering was too expensive and I figured if I didn't like it, I didn't spend a lot of money on it. After reading farther into the book I knew I had definitely underestimated it. This book kept me reading from

beginning to end and just when I thought I knew what was going to happen next, it surprised me! The story begins with the main character, telling his experience with another classmate who is constantly bothering him and giving him trouble. One day he tries to figure out how he can stop him and meets two kids, who are middle schoolers, and who are being teased, harassed, and overall humiliated by these bullies. Each of these kids are different but they all have one thing in common; they don't want to tolerate it any longer. Determined and united they try to stop them from taking over the school! Since they later find out, that other kids are dealing with this problem too. One of the main reasons I liked this book was because of the lessons it taught. This story really showed that kids have the power to stand up to their peers. It also showed that kids don't have to let anyone treat them badly because they have a choice and they have the power to speak up. Not to mention that although some kids think they're better than you for some reason, they're not because in the end we're just people and no one deserves to be treated that way. One thing I liked about this was the characters as I said earlier they were all different but I felt I could relate to each one in some way or another. I think despite the qualities that made them individuals they all felt trapped in some way as does every person some time in their life. Another thing I liked, (which I also mentioned earlier) was how the plot was constantly changing. It was enough to keep the reader in suspense from cover to cover. This book had a lot of elements combined to make it a good story, but I think this review is long enough as it is. To sum up this review, really I think that despite the fact that this may seem like something worth passing by on the shelf, you should give it a chance. I won't say it's a classic, it's not perfect, but it's a good book and definitely worth reading. Before I end I was surprised to see only five reviews when I looked up the title of the book. I thought more people would have been able to see parts of themselves in the character, or at least found the plot enjoyable. Whether it's one person looking past as I did, not what most kids are interested in, or simply hasn't been discovered yet I thought it was certainly worthy of praise. Please, it's no Harry Potter or Artemis Fowl, but you should at least give it a try.

As a high school teacher with twenty-eight years of experience, I have found myself drawn to young adult fiction as a way to engage reluctant readers. The most successful books I have found are those that deal with social issues directly affecting student lives: prejudice, racism, substance abuse, or domestic/sexual abuse. I just finished teaching Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak* to my seniors and every single student was successful because they all identified with at least one of the characters Ms. Anderson created--she was inside their world and they can spot a fraud in a minute. *The Revealers* is just such a book. Every page and chapter rings true with the angst,

isolation, drama, confusion, and humor of middle school kids trying to find their way through the cruel and complex social order of early puberty. Some bewildered kids are clueless as to how they fell out of favor; some "nerds" have simply accepted their fate and learned how to stay out of the crossfire; and the few and powerful "alpha males" and "queen bees" are already wielding their social power with diabolical and menacing accuracy. Doug Wilhelm's extensive research and work with middle-schoolers has paid off in the authentic voice of this short and powerful work. Not only are the scenarios recognizable to anyone who has suffered through middle school (or suffered through raising middle-schoolers), but the technology that permeates the novel is realistic as kids post messages, use Kidnet (the school's local area network), and "instant message" each other in ways my generation still can't quite grasp. We watch in awe as three kids, empowered by their intelligence, use technology to "out" the bullies in their own backyard: Darkland (a.k.a. Parkland) Middle School. Some of the sequences are horrifying--yet kids will tell you they are not exaggerated. Wilhelm artfully weaves lessons of history through his tale as students explore the story of Anne Frank in social studies class and realize that silence--even in the face of a formidable enemy--is wrong and can turn deadly. Like much of Walter Dean Myers's work, this book has a winning combination of realistic problems, ordinary kids, good values (without giving easy answers), and just enough grit to keep kids on the edge of their seats. Middle-schoolers have their own little world, their own rules, and their own ways of communicating. Although there are some well-meaning adults in the book, most of the time they orbit the perimeter of this strange world rather than engage in it--just like real life.

I recently started seventh grade, and this book was assigned reading for every seventh grade student. After I read it, I remember feeling distinctly disturbed. For one thing, this book is tastelessly unoriginal. There was absolutely no one in the story who wasn't a stock character. The nerd, the prissy girl, the tough guy. If I want to see characters like these, I'll watch Lizzie McGuire. The story's plot is bland, obviously derived, and lacking any literary subtlety whatsoever. Mr. Wilhelm must have been out of ideas when he wrote this. Even worse than the oversimplified plot is the message of the story. Not once does Mr. Wilhelm even allude that maybe physically fighting back at your antagonists isn't the best solution. I wish that Russell, Elliot, and Catalina had reached out to their tormentors and tried to befriend them instead of attacking and publicly humiliating them. Somebody has to be the one to stop the vicious cycle. That is true heroism. Fighting violence with violence does not solve anything. I was extremely disturbed by the incident in which Elliot launches an unprovoked attack on three boys and then refuses to apologize. The boys who dropped him are

punished, but Elliot's hand in the incident is never acknowledged. And Elliot is supposed to be one of the "good guys"! This book is immoral, unoriginal, uninteresting, and extremely tacky in general. I would not recommend it to anyone who does not have a penchant for violence.

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The Revealers

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