Eleven-year-old Melody has a photographic memory. Her head is like a video camera that is always recording. Always. And there's no delete button. She's the smartest kid in her whole school—but no one knows it. Most people--her teachers and doctors included--don't think she's capable of learning, and up until recently her school days consisted of listening to the same preschool-level alphabet lessons again and again and again. If only she could speak up, if only she could tell people what she thinks and knows... but she can't, because Melody can't talk. She can't walk. She can't write.

Being stuck inside her head is making Melody go out of her mind--that is, until she discovers something that will allow her to speak for the first time ever. At last Melody has a voice... but not everyone around her is ready to hear it.

From multiple Coretta Scott King Award winner Sharon M. Draper comes a story full of heartache and hope. Get ready to meet a girl whose voice you'll never, ever forget.

A Note to Readers from Author Sharon Draper

People often ask me, What was your inspiration for Out of my Mind? I reply, All great stories emerge from deep truths that rest within us. But the real truth of a story often can be found in places that not even the author has dared to explore. I suppose the character of Melody came
from my experiences in raising a child with developmental difficulties. But Melody is not my daughter. Melody is pure fiction -- a unique little girl who has come into being from a mixture of love and understanding. Out of my Mind is the story of a ten-year-old girl who cannot walk or talk. She has spirit, determination, intelligence and wit, and no one knows it. But from buildings that are not wheelchair-accessible to classmates who make fun of her she finds a strength within herself she never knew existed.

I was fiercely adamant that nobody feel sorry for Melody. I wanted her to be accepted as a character and as a person, not as a representative for people with disabilities. Melody is a tribute to all the parents of disabled kids who struggle, to all those children who are misunderstood, to all those caregivers who help every step of the way. It's also written for people who look away, who pretend they don't see, or who don't know what to say when they encounter someone who faces life with obvious differences. Just smile and say hello!

--Sharon M. Draper

My Personal Review:
Sharon M. Draper is one of my favorite authors. Her books usually focus on high school characters living through high school problems. OUT OF MY MIND heads in a different direction. The main character is faced with the daily struggle of living with severe cerebral palsy. Draper takes readers into a world most can't even come close to imagining.

Melody is trapped not only in a wheelchair but also in her own body. She has very little control over her physical functions. She can't walk, can't feed herself, but the worst thing is she can't communicate beyond grunts, squeals, and unreliable facial expressions.

People might think her biggest problems are her obvious physical disabilities, but if Melody could speak, she would reveal that she is actually a very smart young girl. She has a photographic memory, and from as early as she can remember, she has been learning words and storing them away. She learned her alphabet, how to count, and gained early reading skills just like every other youngster whose parents sat them in front of the TV to watch Sesame Street. Melody even has a fairly decent command of a second language, Spanish, thanks to the cultural diversity of preschool TV programming. The fact remains, no one knows because Melody can't tell them.
Fortunately, Melody's parents sense that their child is intelligent and capable of learning just like every other child, maybe even more so. They speak for Melody and insist she attend public school. It hasn't always been successful, because school officials place Melody in a special education room where the teachers haven't always given her the attention she deserves. With the help of one devoted teacher, a college teacher's aide, and a loving neighbor, Melody is given a chance to learn - and also a chance to speak in her own unique way.

Melody's world opens even more when she is mainstreamed into several regular classrooms. She gains confidence and the knowledge that she is as smart as or smarter than many kids her age. With the academic playing field on the level with her peers, she is able to show off her skills and make some friends. However, even though fitting in and being "normal" may be her greatest desire, it might prove to be an impossible dream.

My heart went out to Melody as she struggled to communicate with those around her. Sharon M. Draper captures the frustration Melody faces every moment of every day. Even though Draper provides a supportive family for Melody, she also shows the frustration of raising a child like Melody. With a direct and frank approach, Draper reveals the ups and downs of dealing with cerebral palsy. Draper covers everything from the physical challenges to the crushing guilt associated with having and raising a child with the condition in her trademark style.

Reviewed by: Sally Kruger, aka "Readingjunky"

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Out of My Mind by Sharon M. Draper - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!