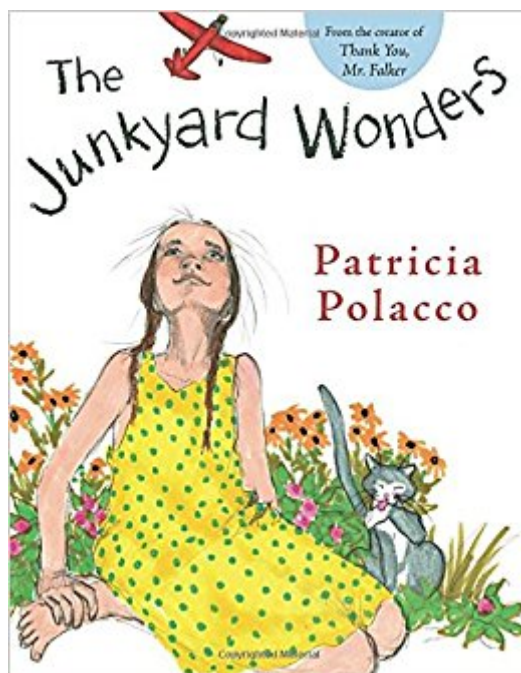


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# Junkyard Wonders



## Synopsis

When young Trisha finds out her class at the new school is known as "The Junkyard," she is devastated. She moved from her old town so she wouldn't be in a special class anymore! But then she meets her teacher, the quirky and invincible Mrs. Peterson, and her classmates, an oddly brilliant group of students each with his or her own unique talent. And it is here in The Junkyard that Trisha learns the true meaning of genius, and that this group of misfits are, in fact, wonders, all of them. Based on a real-life event in Patricia Polacco's childhood, this ode to teachers will inspire all readers to find their inner genius.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## Customer Reviews

Grade 3-5 Based on true events, this inspiring story celebrates the extraordinary influence a teacher can have on her students. As Trisha enters a new school in Michigan, she hopes she won't be relegated to a special class. At her old school, she had trouble learning to read. On the first day, she is disappointed to learn that Room 206 is known as the junkyard. Fortunately, their teacher, Mrs. Peterson, doesn't allow her students to feel like misfits. She divides her Junkyard Wonders into tribes, creating a sense of unity among them. One day, the children visit a local junkyard where they

discover a place full of wondrous possibilities and collect objects for a class project. Trisha and her tribe retrieve an old model plane, which they refurbish. The whole class looks forward to the science fair when they will fly the plane from the roof of the school in remembrance of a classmate who has died. The school bully tries to foil their plans, but in the end the Junkyard Wonders launch the plane and watch it soar up into the stratosphere. The touching story is accompanied by Polacco's trademark illustrations in which a motherly Mrs. Peterson presides over her busy classroom. The children's expressive faces convey their devotion to her and to each other. Pair this title with Lester L. Laminack's *Saturdays and Teacakes* (Peachtree, 2004), another nod to a fondly remembered past. Linda L. Walkins, Mount Saint Joseph Academy, Brighton, MA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Looking forward to a fresh start at a new school, Trisha is crestfallen when she is assigned to a special class with children who are different. Their teacher, Mrs. Peterson, proudly calls them the junkyard and takes them to an actual junkyard, which she describes as a place of wondrous possibilities . . . amazing things waiting to be made into something new. It's clear that she sees her class the same way as she divides them into tribes and urges their creativity. Reclaiming and rebuilding an old model plane they intend to send to the moon, Trisha's tribe manages a triumphant launch. Illustrations, rendered in pencil and marker, portray children in saddle oxfords and poodle skirts brimming with energy and excitement, guided by a model teacher. Based on her own childhood, Polacco's inspiring story will touch children and teachers alike. In an appended note, Polacco updates the subsequent successful lives of her former tribe members and reveals how they did make it to the moon after all. Grades 2-5. --Linda Perkins

As a retired teacher of special needs children, I cried during parts of what I consider to be one of Patricia Polacco's most poignant books. I have observed hurt and doubt on the faces of my students, and she validated that most schools create those feelings in students who are bright but learn in different ways. Ms. Polacco also made it clear all students have potential, and was honest about the fact many students are ill but attend school even while they may die during the school year. I was elated that an author was able to tell the story of what some students live through each school day from the viewpoint of the students. She was accurate in revealing the subtle but very real battles some teachers must wage for the most basic supplies or the approval of projects. This book should be required reading by students in teaching programs, and it should be read by every administrator each year.

This is a great book. I used it in school with several ages of students. All of the students seemed to enjoy the book and got the message that Patricia Polacco was sending - or at least what I thought was her message- that you can achieve what you want to as long as you keep on trying. I love her illustrations and she always has such a good story. Junkyard Wonders would be a great book to give as a gift to an under achieving child, I think. She never fails to teach such good lessons and has such good stories.

Darling, darling story which I enjoyed reading as an adult, but bought especially for my granddaughter.

A good idea, but maybe the road to the ending could have been longer. Seemed cut off.

Patricia Polacco never ceases to amaze me. This book will put a smile on your face and tears in your eye. Each person is created with special talents. Sometimes we have to look hard to find them, but they are there. Each child has feelings and wants to be successful. As teachers, we need to recognize what is special about each of our students and then encourage the children as well as helping others see how special each child is. This book shows what can happen when teachers (parents, friends, etc.) look for the "specialness" in each person. This is well-written and should be read to every class a teacher has at the beginning of the school year. A seeming junkyard is always filled with wonders waiting to happen.

Again, Polacco gives readers a book that inspires and challenges us to celebrate the uniqueness in each individual. In this story, we hear what it was like for Tricia as she joins a special education class. We feel for her as she feels shunned by "regular" kids and gets labeled as junk. And, then we meet her teacher. A true hero that will inspire teachers to see beyond what tests say about students. One who will challenge teachers to build a community within their classrooms so that every student finds the wonder of learning and can grow to achieve beyond all expectations. The story will show students that nothing is impossible if you believe in yourself and work towards a goal. When you get to the end you will either stand up and applaud, or grab tissues and wipe off your tears. Who knows maybe you'll do both!

Excellent story! Brings a new found appreciation for teachers. Awareness that we are all different

but ultimately each have important gifts and knowledge. this book teaches acceptance and friendship. I well thought out book! It reminds me of when I was in school, in a special class with others with dyslexia ADHD and autism spectrum disorders.

Every child who has been ridiculed for being "special ed" will rejoice in this book. In a class that has been labeled the Junkyard by the rest of the students, Patricia meets a teacher who sees thme as unclaimed treasures. I especially liked the scene when the teacher divided them into groups with scents instead of labeling them Bluebirds and Redbirds! This treasure of a book will show you that everyone is a genius in some way. I especially liked the afterward. Don't miss this one!

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