



Seeing Things

Patti Hill

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Birdie Wainwright, 72, isn't concerned about seeing things that others can't. For a woman who still climbs mountains with her dog (Miss Bee Haven) and likes to tango, the impractical visions brought on by macular degeneration are just another gift from God, adding more adventure to life. But when a tumble down the stairs breaks her ankle and leads back to her son's home in Denver where she must convalesce, Birdie's imagination really takes flight. Following a conversation with her grandson about *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, she begins to see and speak with the unkempt literary character himself on a regular basis. As the line between reality and whimsy turns brittle, faith is tested among friends and loved ones, and hope is reborn.

Seeing Things is a story about family, reconciliation, and hearing from God in unexpected ways.

Seeing Things Details

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From Reader Review Seeing Things for online ebook

Beckie Burnham says

I have had Seeing Things on my Kindle for a while now. When I finally had a break between review books, I dove into this sometimes quirky, all the time touching story of family. Patti Hill has a different way of seeing things from other authors, and for that I am thankful. This contemporary novel explores the way families interact — with hurt feelings and rejection and love and forgiveness. Birdie had a lot to teach, but also a lot to learn, and so did I. If you like contemporary family drama, make sure you check this one out. It is also FREE for Kindle Unlimited!

Characterization is key in Seeing Things. Birdie Wainright is a great character. She is a very active and vibrant senior citizen who lives with her age-related macular degeneration (AMD) with graciousness and style. When a fall puts her in the middle of her son's semi-dysfunctional family, she is relegated to the guest bedroom. But in typical Birdie-style she puts both feet (one good/one injured) into the middle of the mix. Other characters — Andy her distracted son, Suzanne her sometimes passive/sometimes aggressive and always stressed daughter-in-law and Fletcher her angst-ridden teenage grandson — are all ripe for intervention with varying degrees of success. And you will love the supporting and supportive cast of housekeeper Lupe and The Bats, other women living with low-vision realities. And did I mention the imaginary character of Huck Finn? He plays an important role in the ultimate healing of the family.

Even though I had a bout with (mercifully temporary and partial) blindness early on in my journey with Multiple Sclerosis, I never had to deal with a world in which glimpses of clear vision are marred by a gray fog. Birdie's AMD was an eye-opener for me! (Please excuse that really bad pun.) But what Birdie couldn't see, she trusted by faith in God. Her prayers for her family, or as she put it, lowering them through the roof to reach Jesus, are lovely and loving. One particular prayer for Suzanne shows the real-life struggle to pray for those who are our enemies. It is also laugh out loud hilarious!

Seeing Things has been out for a while (2009), but still a great read from Patti Hill. I rank this one highly recommended and a good bet for book club discussions!

Highly Recommended!

Christy Lockstein says

Seeing Things by Patti Hill is a tasty treat for a summer's afternoon. Birdie Wainwrights prides herself on her independence and zest for life, even at the age of 72 and suffering from macular degeneration. When she starts seeing hallucinations of flowers in the middle of her living room, she starts to doubt her sanity, and when she ends up breaking her ankle because of them, her perfect life is turned upside-down. Birdie is forced to recover while living with her son Andy and wife Suzanne whose busy lives keep them on the run and away from son Fletcher, who has memorized baseball stats as a form of prayer in his lonely life. Things get even crazier when Huckleberry Finn shows up and starts talking to Birdie, and the faith of the whole family is tested. I absolutely adored the character of Birdie, and I hate that the book had to end! Hill precisely renders the conflict between aging parent and busy child when it comes to assisted living centers and independent living. Birdie wants only to heal and please her family, but she is forced over and over again to

turn their care over to God. Her interpretation of putting them through the roof on a mat is one I will remember and use myself. The characters feel real, full of passion and life, like people you know personally, and the story has just the perfect amount of humor, faith, and love.

Emorgan05 says

This was a totally charming story. Birdie is a fun narrator who tries to help her family, be independent, and goes on adventures with Huck Finn of all people. It's also a well-designed story. I started the semester with The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn in my American Lit class, so I had finished reading that just a month or so before I started this, and the author actually parallels Mark Twain's construction of Huck Finn. So Birdie, the narrator, starts off speaking to the reader in the same way that Huck starts. I found it cute and clever.

Caterina Fava says

Birdie is a lovely, eccentric lady, who has visions, due to her degenerative disease, that affects her sight. This doesn't stop her: she hikes, she is extremely social, she even has a love interest in an adorable younger pharmacist.[return]When she falls from the stairs and break her ankle, though, she moves from her little town to the more comfortable home of her son. It's immediately clear that the family (beside the son, a too busy wife and a teenager grandson in distress) will need Birdie's wisdom and good humor, not to mention her visions, to go through this hard time.[return]The story is feel good one, with a lot of good sentiments: but they are perfectly balanced by a quirky sense of humor, plus it's incredibly well written. It makes you want to re-read Mark Twain, which is definitely a plus.

MBP says

I really enjoyed some aspects of this book: the main character, Birdie Wainwright, seems like a fun older woman you'd love to have a conversation with. The depiction of macular degeneration and the "Bats" (support group) were very interesting, and reminded me so much of my mother's experiences with MD.

However, I found the whole Huck Finn subplot odd and intrusive. It did nothing for me; I would have preferred keeping the focus on Birdie, coming to terms with the drawbacks of aging, and trying to make peace within her family. I would have enjoyed more character development of the family members, and more time spent with the "Bats," who were delightful.

Also, I thought the Huck Finn business could be misleading to readers who know little about macular degeneration. Visual hallucinations may (rarely) occur, but the imaginary conversations and tactile component are not a normal part of MD. That plot element was never satisfactorily resolved, and I fear some readers may assume there's a link between macular degeneration and dementia, which there isn't.

In spite of these flaws, there were some funny and charming moments. I think some heavier editing might have resulted in a better book.

Lorraine says

It's difficult to read a book with flat, stereotyped characters and poor character development when you're teaching your English class what good character development should be.

The protagonist here, Birdie, is supposedly an old woman. However, the only way you know she's over 70 is because she keeps telling you. Nothing in her dialogue, very little in her thoughts or actions (other than what relates to her disease) reflects an old woman. The character keeps telling you she's old, because otherwise you'd forget. Even her old lady friends don't really "act" old.

Birdie's staying with her son, his second wife, and his teen son from his first marriage. Stereotypes abound! Husband and wife are workaholics who have no time for the boy and yell at him for every little thing he does wrong. At first you think the boy's a slacker-rebel-loser but nothing in his character reflects that. It's just the dumb parents. The step-mom hates Birdie's dog because it might ruin her stuff. They don't have time for Birdie, either. Yet she prays for them and prays for them. Then miraculously -- not through normal character revelation, but suddenly -- they all have change of hearts and get along wonderfully. Right.

I'm not even touching the silly hallucinations Birdie has of Huckleberry Finn. (perhaps the book's only redeeming quality was weaving in Huck's story with this one)

Yes, there's a slight charm about the book that made reading bearable for me, (hence the 2 stars instead of one) but this book just reinforces my belief that Christian fiction is crappy literature. It's okay, though, this book was free from LibraryThing's early reviewers.

Virginia Lincoln says

This was a lovely, quirky book written from the perspective of a 72-year-old woman with macular degeneration. People with this condition occasionally see things, including people, as clearly as if they had no vision loss. However, Birdie, the main character, doesn't just see things. She sees Huckleberry Finn and is able to interact with him. As the result of seeing plants and flowers growing on her stairs, she falls, breaks her ankle and ends up convalecing at her son's house where she has to live with her daughter-in-law and her grandson as well.

Things start off rocky and go downhill from there. Each vignette is lovely and funny at the same time. She realizes that things happen for a reason and that she was meant to come to her son's house to save them from themselves while Huck comes along for the ride.

Kathleen Ogden says

Loved this book! Interesting, realistic characters with unpredictable turns in the story. The writing is engaging and was so hard to put down to get a little sleep!

Ralph says

I am not a big fan of Christian Fiction, though, I have come across a few that have a good story without feeling like the religious part is being forced on the reader. This is one of those books, that don't force it on you, but make it clear that it is there. I enjoyed the author's way of sharing the story, as a first-person view, as if they were sitting down and telling you face to face (plus added details like exact conversations, etc.). The main character has AMD (Age-related Macular Degeneration) which I know nothing about, except how it is described in the book. I found it a bit odd that there was as much detail regarding the settings, since the person supposedly had a 'gray cloud' centered in their vision constantly. Either way, this character eventually has a hallucination (for lack of better word) that they interact with several times throughout the time frame of the story. Why it Huck Finn, I only guess due to events in the story (read it and you will see what I mean).

Character development was a bit lacking, and sometimes I felt I couldn't tell why the author included certain events that happened - as in I felt it did not help any for the story, but word count only. Clean, decent read for anyone looking for a general fiction quick read.

Dorrice says

Because my preferred fiction genres are either Amish romance or those of pioneer days, I almost passed this up till I noticed that the protagonist has AMD (age-related macular degeneration.) Since i am blessed (?) with the same affliction I decided to read it. Just a few chapters into the book as yet, and so far I like it.

I enjoyed the book no end. At first Birdie's seeing things made me uncomfortable, but after finding out that something called Charles Bonnet's Syndrome is possible in people with limited vision, I liked it better. Like so many books I have read recently by different authors, the ending came abruptly. I would prefer to have had the last chapter and the Epilogue tell the story with all its details.

Kelly says

I would recommend reading Seeing Things to all those who love a light, heartwarming Christian story. I look forward to reading other novels by Patti Hiil. I felt the author did justice in her description of the side effects from Birdie's macular degeneration. My mom has early onset md in her left eye, and has experienced many of the same situations that Birdie found herself in. By adding the literary character of Huckleberry Fin, Ms. Hill has made Birdie a character to remember. Birdie grew on me, and by a quarter of the way through, I felt I was reading about my grandmother. I loved Birdie's sense of humor, and her ability to laugh at herself. I prayed, laughed, and hoped for Birdie and her family and Birdie's quest to bring the whole family closer to God. A wonderful read.

Michelle says

Seeing Things is an entertaining story. The author's voice is strong and I loved how it sounded very "senior

citizen." I adored the main character, Birdie, and enjoyed getting to know her through her inner dialog. This entire story was incredibly creative and unique. I learned a few things about people with AMD as well. What I enjoyed most about this novel were the relationship dynamics and how realistic the author made the tension in Fletcher's family. Also, the whole issue about trying to help Birdie be safe was interesting because it's so common and most families will struggle with this issue regarding aging parents. The only thing that threw me off a bit was how things transitioned at the end. It seemed like more of a leap than a gentle progression toward resolution. It was too sudden. But I enjoyed the romantic tension between the old folks, so that more than made up for it. That theme was very well done. Overall, this was a good story and I'm glad I took the time to read it.

Mary says

Patti Hill knows how to capture and entertain her audience. This story was amusing as virtually seen through the eyes of a widowed grandmother who had to temporarily live with her son, grandson, and daughter-in-law because of a broken ankle and her failing eyesight (AMD).

Megan says

This was a fun read with strong characters and an even stronger message. Birdie Wainwright has macular degeneration with a large grey blur in the middle of her vision. If that were not enough she starts seeing things. It starts with flowers, but when the field of flowers is in place of her stairs, she takes a tumble and breaks an ankle. Her son brings her to his house to recover. Living in her sons house allows her a view of the troubles there. She makes new friends and develops a new way to pray for family. AND Huckleberry Finn makes frequent visits. Between her dog, her vision, and her hallucinations, she causes some trouble. But the Lord uses her to make some needed changes in her family's lives.

Seeing Things was the first of Patti Hill's work that I have read, but from the prologue I knew I would enjoy it. Hill's writing is unique and fresh like the first buds in spring, promising growth and entertainment. Each character down to the smallest of parts was believable and real. She has created some of the most three dimensional characters I have read in quite some time. Birdie's voice was solid and real. She reminded me a bit of my grandmother. The storyline flowed smoothly with a strong Christian worldview. The power of prayer and sacrificial love were strong themes in this novel, and I am sure to remember the example of how Birdie "lowered her family through the roof" to Jesus in prayer. I loved this book and I'm passing it on to my mom this week!

Ruby halliburton says

"Seeing Things" is a story about a lady in her seventies with macular degeneration and her family. Although she can't see things too well with her eyes she sees with her heart. It is a love story - loving, finding love, and renewing love. It also is a love story between Jesus and us.

Birdie showed this love to her son, daughter-in-law, grandson, and the housekeeper. All their lives were changed because of Birdie's prayers and love. She was aided by "Huck" a fantasy of her imagination.

Thoroughly enjoyable and enteraining while getting the dependencyon God and Jesus across. I am in my

seventies and three members of my family have macular degeneration and I can assure you her descriptions are extremely accurate.
