

Wonder Study Guide

Wonder by R. J. Palacio

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Plot Summary

"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio tells the story of ten-year-old August. The boy was born with a face that horrifies most who look upon it. Over the years, he had countless surgeries, so he was home-schooled. Now, he's about to enter the fifth grade in a regular school. This story is told from his perspective as well as from his sister's, her boyfriend's and friends' perspectives.

August goes to check out the school before he attends, and he meets some students. Two are nice, but one is somewhat mean to him. The first day of school is all right. Most people don't want to be near him, but his new friend, Jack, stays near him during classes. A girl named Summer joins him at lunch.

Even though many of the kids stay away from him and seem scared to touch him, August enjoys school. He's a good student and excels in his classwork. Halloween is Auggie's favorite holiday. With everyone in costume, his face is covered, and he's as close to "normal" as he ever gets. During his first Halloween at school, he overhears Jack tell the others that he doesn't really want to be friends with Auggie. This puts a distinct rift in the relationship.

As Auggie struggles to fit in socially at school, his sister is trying to figure out who she is and where she stands at home and in high school. Her old friends have left her, and she has a new boyfriend.

Jack realizes that Auggie overheard what he said, and he misses his friend terribly. They make up and become friends again, although the other kids start being mean to Jack as a result of the friendship.

The entire fifth grade goes on a retreat, and while they are there, strange kids bully Auggie. Several of his classmates stand up for him, and it creates a new bond among them. Word gets out around school regarding the situation, and everyone begins to get along. Auggie fits in like he never has before. Other kids see how smart and funny he is.

Meanwhile, back at home, Via is learning a lot about herself and her own capacity to love. She reconnects with Miranda, her former friend, and also reconnects with Auggie. The two had spent less time with each other as they struggled with the changes in their lives.

At the end of fifth grade, Auggie and his classmates celebrate their graduation. It's a joyous time, and Auggie shows that he is really growing up. The principal talks with the people at the graduation about the importance of being kinder than necessary. He emphasizes the power of friendship. When it's time to give out awards, Auggie gets the most prestigious award. Everyone cheers him on and gives him a standing ovation. On the way to a party, he thanks his mom for making him go to school. She thanks him for being such a wonder.



Part One: Auggie

Part One: Auggie Summary

"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio tells the story of ten-year-old August. The boy was born with a face that horrifies most who look upon it. Over the years, he had countless surgeries, so he was homeschooled. Now, he's about to enter the fifth grade in a regular school. This story is told from his perspective as well as from his sister's, her boyfriend's and friends' perspectives.

Starting school isn't easy since the kids and teachers have a hard time looking at Auggie. Still, he enjoys it and thinks he has a goof friend. On Halloween, he discovers that his friend isn't really his friend, and it crushes him.

Part One: August

Ordinary - Ten years old, the main character is not an ordinary boy. He feels ordinary on the inside, but people respond to him as if he is not ordinary. August doesn't look normal.

Why I Didn't Go To School - Auggie is about to start the fifth grade, but he has never been in a school before, and he's petrified. He hasn't been able to go to school since he had so many surgeries. He can't say he always wanted to go to school, because he only wanted to go if he was like other kids with lots of friends.

How I Came to Life - About two months before he was born, the doctors realized something was wrong with Auggie's face. However, they didn't realize how bad it was. After he was born, they wouldn't let his mother see him at first. She said that the first time she saw him, all she saw was how pretty his eyes were. He came from a family of beautiful people.

Christopher's House - Auggie was upset when his best friend, Christopher, moved away. They used to spend many hours playing Star Wars games. One day Auggie learned that his parents were thinking about putting him in a regular school.

Driving - Mom tells Auggie that the principal is eager to meet him. Dad tries to cheer him up by teasing him about the name of his new principal, Mr. Tushman.

Paging Mr. Tushman - When Auggie goes into the school, he finds out that he is not only meeting the principal but some kids as well. The school is small, and it smells like a hospital.

Nice Mrs. Garcia - Auggie and his parents follow the principal into the school and meet his secretary. She pastes a fake smile on her face as she greets Auggie, then looks away, distracting herself. Still, she seems nice, and Auggie decides that he likes her.



Jack Will, Julian, and Charlotte - While they are in the principal's office, they begin to hear some children's voices coming closer. Students walk in, and he introduces three students to August. They greet him then quickly look away. Mr. Tushman asks the students to give Auggie a tour of the school. He goes off with them, alone.

The Grand Tour - As they tour through the school, Julian leads. He shows August the homeroom and talks about different teachers. He blocks the doors somewhat, and Jack tells him to let Auggie into the classrooms. As Auggie walks by, Julian moves away so Auggie doesn't touch him.

The Performance Space - Charlotte continues talking incessantly as they walk down the hallways. Julian asks him what happened to his face, and Charlotte gets upset since Julian is being so rude. Jack whispers to Auggie that Julian is a jerk.

The Deal - The students join the adults, and Auggie gives his mom a signal, telling her that he is ready to leave. Auggie tells Mr. Tushman that everyone was really nice.

Home - When Auggie gets home, he runs to his room and throws himself on the bed. He's both happy and sad. His dog, Daisy, jumps up on the bed and licks him. Mom comes in to talk with him, and he tells her that the kids were okay. Mom thinks Julian seemed especially nice, but Auggie tells her that he was the least nice. He tells her that he really liked Jack, and that Jack defended him. Mom tells him he doesn't have to go to school if he doesn't want to, but he tells her that he wants to.

First-Day Jitters - Auggie is very nervous on the first day of school, and his sister reassures him. When he gets to the school, he sees Mr. Tushman greeting students and parents in front of the entrance. Things are going well so far. His parents have a hard time leaving him.

Locks - Thanks to the tour, Auggie knows exactly where to go for homeroom. Charlotte greets him, but Julian ignores him. Jack sits down next to him. The teacher gives them assigned seats. A boy named Henry is assigned to sit next to Auggie, and Henry isn't happy about it.

Around the Room - The teacher talks to the students and asks everybody to introduce themselves and say two things that they want other people to know about them.

Lamb to the Slaughter - When it's August's turn, he tells the class that he has a sister named Via and a dog named Daisy. The students don't have any questions for him at first, and Julian asks why he has the braid on the back of his hair. Auggie admits that is from Star Wars. Julian asks him who his favorite character is, and Auggie replies that it's Jengo Fett, Julian asks him about Darth Sidious. Auggie knows he's talking about the fact that that character had a face that got burned by Sith lightning, and his face became totally deformed.

Choose Kind - After class is over, Auggie hurries to the next room. The only student who sits next to him is Jack. The teacher glances at Auggie at one point, but doesn't react. He teaches the kids about precepts. After questioning the students a bit, he says the



most important precepts is "who we are!". He tells the students that they are going to have a brand-new section in the notebooks for his precepts. Auggie realizes that he really will enjoy school matter what happens.

Lunch - Via warned Auggie that lunch in middle school is tough for everyone, but he hadn't realized it would be as difficult as it is. Nobody wants to sit with him.

The Summer Table - A girl comes over to join him. She introduces herself, saying that her name is Summer. They decide to make it a "Summer only" table. Only kids who have summer names can sit there.

One to Ten - Mom asks Auggie how he feels on a scale of one to 10. It started after he had his jaw surgery. After school, she asks him about the day, he tells her it's a five. He tells her that the kids are very nice. It makes him kind of cross to have his mom questioning him.

Padawan

That night Auggie cuts the little braid off the back of his head. His dad is happy about it, but his sister seems angry. As his dad talks with Auggie, he asks if it really was an okay day. Auggie tells him it really was. He tells them it was even better than okay. His father is happy for him. Dad asks if he is mad at Mom. She comes in and talks about the parade then tucks her son in. Mom asks Dad to checking on Via. Mom reads from "The Hobbit," and Auggie suddenly finds himself crying. He asks his mom why he has to be so ugly.

Wake Me Up when September Ends - The rest of the month is difficult. Auggie isn't used to waking up so early or taking quizzes. The kids stare at him a lot, and they talk about him. He knows that they aren't doing any of these things in a mean way. The kids in his class got used to his face after a week, but it takes longer for the other kids in school.

Jack Will - Auggie hangs out with Jack in many of his classes. They talk together and laugh together. Sometimes they get in trouble in class because they are talking and laughing.

Mr. Browne's October Precept - "Your deeds are your monuments." That's the precept Mr. Browne highlights. For homework the students have to write about what they think a precept means.

Apples - Auggie's birthday is October 10. He invites many of the children at school to his party, but only five people from school come. Christopher comes from Connecticut. Auggie still has fun as they all bowl together.

Halloween - Summer asks Auggie what he's going to be for Halloween, and she tells him they can wear costumes to school. He says he is going as Boba Fett. Some of the kids in the class don't plan on dressing up. They are too old to dress up for Halloween, but Summer and Auggie disagree with them. Summer is planning to dress up as a unicorn.



School Pictures - Auggie tries his best to get out of picture day at school. He avoids getting his portrait taken, but he can't get out of the class picture.

The Cheese Touch - Auggie has noticed for a while that nobody touches him. He feels like the Cheese Touch in "Diary of a Wimpy Kid." He is the moldy cheese.

Costumes - Halloween is Auggie's favorite holiday. With everybody in costumes and masks, nobody notices him. When he was younger, he used to wear an astronaut helmet everywhere he went. He even wore it during the summer. One day he couldn't find it anymore. This year, the stores didn't have the costume he wanted, and his mother spends several weeks creating a costume for him.

On the morning of Halloween, Via has a crying meltdown. Dad is late for work and getting stressed. He is going to take Auggie to school, but Auggie can't get his costume on quickly enough. He doesn't want to make his father more upset so he puts on a different costume. He throws on the Bleeding Scream costume from last year.

The Bleeding Scream - Walking to his locker Halloween morning is absolutely awesome. When he gets to homeroom he sees a costumed person he knows belongs to Julian. At first Auggie goes to sit at his regular desk, then changes his mind. He goes near Julian and his friends so he can hear them talk. A mummy mentions that Tushman asked him to hang out with Auggie at the beginning of the year then put him in all his classes. That's why he hangs out with him so much. He says Auggie follows him around. Julian tells him to ditch him. Auggie leaves before he hears the response from Jack, the mummy. He can't stop himself from crying.

Names - Auggie knows all the horrible names other people call him. He finds himself in the second-floor bathroom. After he stops crying, he goes to the nurse and pretends he is sick so his mother comes to pick him up. The nurse says a stomach bug is going around. He gets out of going to school the next day and decides he isn't going back to school again.

Part One: Auggie Analysis

Ordinary - The first section of the book introduces the main character from his own perspective. He feels like an ordinary boy, but he knows that he isn't. He has a deformity that's very hard to accept socially. His family loves him for who he is, even as they try to protect him. His name is August.

Why I Didn't Go to School - About to start fifth grade, Auggie has never been to a real school. His deformity is so bad that many people think he is home-schooled because he looks so terrible. This implies that he is running away from who he really is. This is not the reason, however. The reason is much more practical. He has been home-schooled during his life because he had so many surgeries. The boy is not completely friendless. Still, things are changing. His closest friend from when he was young has moved away.



How I Came to Life - With the trauma of his face, the story of Auggie's birth could be perceived as a horrible event. Even his own mother wasn't allowed to see him at first. However, when the parents tell the story, they make it humorous. Auggie loves to hear the story of his birth, even though it involves people rejecting his looks.

Christopher's House - Auggie's best friend Christopher moved to Connecticut. Happy times with him are contrasted with upsetting news Auggie learns. His mom thinks he should go to regular school.

Driving - Even though Auggie is stressed about everything that's going on in his life, he finds comfort as he rests on his sister's lap. Later he hears his father mention that his going to school is like a lamb to slaughter. He doesn't understand this, but he does know that he is worried about school. His parents reassure him. They talk openly, and his parents work as a team to support him yet show they think he should go to school. Dad uses humor to comfort him.

Paging Mr. Tushman - When Auggie meets Mr. Tushman, the experience isn't as traumatic as it could have been. He didn't know he was going to meet other students so he wasn't very nervous. Mr. Tushman put him at ease.

Nice Mrs. Garcia - Auggie meets the secretary and discovers that she is a very nice woman. Still, she has a hard time looking at him and averts her eyes whenever possible. This shows the reader that Auggie can feel rejected even by people with the best intentions. He understands what is going on and has seen it before, but it still hurts. He doesn't appreciate her fake smile.

Jack Will, Julian, and Charlotte - Mr. Tushman is very approachable. This is shown by the way he answers questions Auggie has for him as they talk in his office. Some kids come in. Jack Will shakes his hand then looks away, and Julian does the same. Charlotte avoids touching him by waving, but she still smiles as she greets him.

The Grand Tour - The kids take him on a tour of the school. His mother and father are left behind so they can't protect him. The other kids are nice for the most part, but Julian isn't as nice as the others.

The Performance Space - The kids tour the performance space, and Charlotte raves about it. Julian points out that Auggie probably wouldn't want to be on stage. He puts Auggie down for being homeschooled, showing prejudice. Charlotte defends Auggie. Julian confronts Auggie about his face, and Jack defends Auggie. It's obvious that Julian is going to be a problem once Auggie starts school.

The Deal - In front of the adults, Julian acts as if everything is fine. Auggie gives his mom a signal that he is ready to leave, and she respects it. He doesn't tell her about the hardships of the tour. Even though it was tough for him, he tries to protect his mother.

Home - Back at home, Auggie heads for his room where his dog licks his face. The dog shows no prejudice or repulsion, accepting him as he is without judgement. Mom comes in to talk. She thinks Julian was nice, but listens to her son and doesn't argue when he



tells her that Julian was the least nice. As the chapter ends, the decision to go to school is Auggie's. He decides to go.

First-Day Jitters - Auggie heads to school, literally surrounded by the love and support of his family.

Locks - The tour proved itself helpful as Auggie finds his way to homeroom without difficulty. He greets Jack. There is an empty seat next to him, and the teacher asks a student to sit there. He is reluctant to sit next to Auggie. August notices the teacher's hesitation when she first sees him, but after that all her interactions with him are natural and genuine. Her smile wasn't forced and fake like the secretary's. She reminded him of Mon Mathma in Star Wars. This is good since he loves Star Wars. Auggie doesn't help the boy next to him with the lock, even when he is struggling because he feels a bit upset that the boy tried to put distance between them when he initially sat down next to him. This shows that Auggie judges others just as they judge him.

Around the Room - The kids in the classroom have to share two pieces of information about themselves. This gives both Auggie and the reader insight into the students and what's important to them.

Lamb to the Slaughter - Earlier in the book Auggie's dad referred to Auggie's situation as "like a lamb to the slaughter." Auggie didn't know what it meant, but he looked it up. He felt the validity of the statement when he had to introduce himself to the class. Instead of addressing his own facial deformity or his home-schooling past, he only shared that he had a sister named Via and a dog named Daisy. The students didn't ask him any questions. Everyone avoided the main issue. At the last minute, Julian asked a question and publicly insulted Auggie, referring to a damaged Star Wars character.

Choose Kind - In the next class, Jack once again sits next to Auggie. No-one else does. This teacher, Mr. Browne, doesn't even falter when he sees Auggie. He introduces the students to the concepts about precepts. These are things that really important things. The teacher points out that "Who we are" is most important. This is a major theme in the book—acceptance of and appreciation for who we are. After this class, Auggie is certain he is going to like school.

Lunch - Lunch is torture for Auggie, but he has braced himself for this since his sister warned him that it's hard for everyone. He knew it would especially bad for him since he can't eat neatly.

The Summer Table - A girl comes and joins him, and they share a bond. She is very natural around him and stands up for him in front of her friends without making it look like some sort of charity mission. Auggie has a real friend.

One to Ten - Medical procedures are so common in Auggie's life that he and his mom share a language of measure based on the hospital charts. He tells his mom about his day and about meeting Summer. Joking, yet somewhat serious, he likens their friendship to Beauty and the Beast.



Padawan - After Julian's remarks, Auggie cuts off his braid. His family members have different reactions to what he did. His dad talks with Auggie, and it shows a close relationship. Mom comes in, and Dad greets her. Both parents make time for both siblings, showing what a cohesive family Auggie lives in. The parents spend time with the kids, and the kids are comfortable sharing their real emotions in front of the parents. This is shown by the way Auggie breaks down and cries, and his mother holds and comforts him.

Wake Me Up when September Ends - Auggie, used to homeschooling, has difficulties adjusting to the school schedule. The kids at school gradually get used to seeing him, but it takes a long time. They don't make fun of him, but it's obvious to him that they don't feel comfortable with him around. They avoid looking at him when they can.

Jack Will - Auggie and Jack share many classes, and they become friends.

Mr. Browne's October Precept - In Auggie's homework assignment, he shows what is important to him. He writes about actions really showing who a person is.

Apples - When Auggie has his birthday party, most of the kids he invites don't come. Still, several friends from school do come, and his best friend who moved away travels back to visit. The day ends up fun.

Halloween - Summer and Auggie talk about Halloween costumes. Some kids are starting to think they are too old to celebrate Halloween, but both Summer and Auggie think this is ridiculous.

School Pictures - Auggie is very aware of how he looks, and he does his best to get out of picture day. Still, he gets stuck being in the class picture.

The Cheese Touch - In this chapter Auggie writes that he notices the other students don't want to touch him. He equates it to the cheese touch from the popular kids novel "Diary of a Wimpy Kid." Using symbolism, he is the rotten cheese.

Costumes - This is a big holiday for Auggie since he can dress up and live life as a "normal" person. His mother knows how much the holiday means to him. He plans to go out as Boba Fett, and they can't find a costume so she spends a lot of time making one for him.

The morning of Halloween is a disaster. Dad is in a rush so Auggie feels like he has to change his costume plan.

The Bleeding Scream - No-one recognizes him in school. It's wonderful at first. Then, because he isn't recognized, he hears kids talking about him and is betrayed by Jack, who he thought was a friend.

Names - Instead of confronting his situation head-on, Auggie pretends he is ill. Even though he loves Halloween, he skips the trick-or-treating. He feels so horribly about what Jack has done.



Part Two: Via

Part Two: Via Summary

A Tour of the Galaxy - Via feels as if August is the sun and the rest of family members orbit around him. The only one that doesn't is the dog, Daisy, because to her everyone seems alike. Via sees to how this works, and she understands it. She sees all the hardship Auggie goes through, and doesn't feel she has it right to complain. She also tries to make sure she doesn't take up her mom and dad's attention on petty details. This year, however, things seem to be changing.

Before August - Via doesn't really remember life before August. She doesn't even remember when he came home from the hospital. People tell her that she said that he didn't look like the doll she had been given, but after she got used to him, she never touched or mentioned the doll again.

Seeing August - Seeing how people reacted to August confused Via and made her mad. When she was 11 she went to stay with Grams in Montauk for four weeks while August was having his jaw surgery. It was strange to go out without anyone noticing them or pointing or staring at them. Grams was a special woman who enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren. For a brief second, after Via came home after her visit with Grams, she saw Auggie the way other people saw him. Two months after the visit, Grams died. On her last day with Grams back in Montauk, Grams told Via that she loved the more than anyone else in the world.

August Through the Peephole - In this chapter, Via describes August. She doesn't know what he really knows and what he doesn't about his situation and how people perceive him. She wishes she knew and that she could ask him. She feels that it's time for him to grow up and realize that he isn't normal.

High School - In grade school everybody knew about August. In middle school, people knew about him, but not until after they got to know Via in general. In high school, Via is free to be herself. She is Olivia, and nobody needs to know about her like that home. The reality of high school is nothing like she thought it would be.

Major Tom - Of the three girls, Miranda was always the sweetest with August. She always included him in conversations, and she called him Major Tom. They would sing "Space Oddity" by David Bowie together.

Via is surprised when Miranda doesn't call her when she gets home from camp. She doesn't see her best friends until the first day of school, and she is shocked. Miranda looks very different. The dynamics of their group shifted - a point that is obvious at lunchtime.

After school, Olivia is supposed to go home with Miranda and her mother, but she makes up an excuse and goes home by herself. She doesn't tell her family what



happened. She asks Auggie about his first day, and he is angry because he is playing a game and doesn't want to answer her questions. She asks if people were mean, and he gives her a sarcastic reply to the first time ever.

The Padawan Bites the Dust - Via is upset when she discovers that Auggie cut off his Padawan braid. She doesn't know why she is upset, though. Mom asks her if she wants to tell her what's up when she tucks Via in. Via isn't ready to talk about it yet, and Mom says she will come back later. She forgets. Dad comes in and says Mom is with Auggie, who had a rough first day. Via tells Dad that Miranda and Ella were acting like jerks.

An Apparition at the door - In the middle of the night, Via gets up and sees her mother in the hallway outside Auggie's door. She wonders if her mother ever stands outside her door like that.

Breakfast - Via asks mom if she will pick her up from school. Dad says she can take the subway home. Mom protests that realizes something is going on, and she doesn't know what because she forgot to go back to talk with Via the night before. She feels horrible.

Genetics 101 - In this chapter, Via highlights both sides of her family, explaining their roots. No one in the gene pool has any obvious signs of having what August has. He has what is called a multifactorial inheritance. The doctors were able to identify one of the "single nucleotide deletion mutations" that contributed to his abnormal looks. Both her parents carry the mutant gene, and so does Via.

The Punnett Square - Studying genetics, Via figures the odds of having a child like Auggie and decides not to have children.

Out with the Old - Via stops hanging out with Miranda and Ella. Sometimes Miranda would ask how August was doing than ask Via to tell him she said hello, but Via never does. It isn't because she wants to hurt Miranda. It is just because August is in his own world these days, and sometimes they don't even see each other.

October 31 - Grams died the night before Halloween. This makes it a sad time of year for Via even though she knows that it's Auggie's favorite time of year. The morning of Halloween Via wakes up thinking about Grams, and she gets very sad and weepy. She just wants to stay home and cry. After Dad takes August to school, Mom and Via talk and cry together. They decide to watch a movie together, but Mom gets a phone call from school. She has to leave to go pick up August, who is sick.

Trick or Treat - August isn't up to going trick or treating. Via goes to talk with him, and she realizes something is up beyond sickness. He tells her what happened during the day, and she comforts him. She encourages him to go to the parade, and she can tell he is feeling better.

Time to Think - Auggie wants to quit school, but Via talks with him and encourages him to go back. He talks with her about her friendship with Miranda and lets her know that Miranda called the other day. She was checking in on him. She tells him to tell Via that she misses her.



Part Two: Via Analysis

A Tour of the Galaxy - Part two opens with the story from Via's perspective. She understands that in her household everything revolves around Auggie. She comes across as very sensitive, humble girl. When others compliment her on how she treats her brother and accepts her role in the family, she doesn't understand. She doesn't think it's anything special because she understands how much her brother goes through and feels sympathy for him. The situation has made her very self-sufficient, but there are times and she really wishes her parents focused a bit more on her. She feels that now things are beginning to change a bit.

Before August - For Via, there doesn't seem to be a life before August. She knows that she is well loved, especially when she looks back at pictures.

Seeing August - Via really loves her younger brother, and she's always there to protect him. It makes her angry when people look at him differently, and she doesn't think about the situation from their perspective. One summer she spent some time away from him, and when she came back, for a brief second, she saw him as other people did. Although the title of the chapter is "seeing August" it could just as easily been entitled "Seeing Via."

August Through the Peephole - Even though the family members are very close to each other, there are some things that are not addressed head-on. Via has no idea what August knows about himself and about other people, and she is hesitant to ask him. He is a very unique person, and Via has enough insight to understand that while they are trying to make him normal, he will never be normal. She thinks it's time for him to own up to that for good or for bad.

High School - Now that things are changing in the world, Via is looking forward to high school where nobody knows about her actual life except her best friends. They won't tell anyone else. The chapter ends with the sentence that it was nothing like she thought it would be. This foreshadows great change.

Major Tom - One of the first signs of change occurs over the summer, although Via doesn't realize it at first. Her two best friends seem to have grown up and changed without her. She doesn't fit in with them anymore.

After School - Just as she is hesitant to talk with Auggie about his situation in life, Via is also reluctant to talk to her best friends about the changes that have occurred over the summer. She avoids confrontation and finds a way home on her own. This is consistent with the self-reliant way she has grown up. Things are changing at home as well. Auggie doesn't want to talk with her, and he begins to use sarcasm. Via almost seems to admire that.

The Padawan Bites the Dust - It has been a tough day for everyone, and Via really wants to talk to her mother. Once again, she is upstaged by Auggie who takes up their



mother's time. Even though her father comes in to talk with her, Via is upset that her mother forgot to come back for her.

An Apparition at the Door - Via observes her mother outside Auggie's door. Even though she has been upset with her mother, her first reaction is wondering if her brother is okay. Mom comes over and kisses her and tucks her in. Via wonders if her mother has ever stood outside her door, showing that she yearns for some attention, too.

Breakfast - So much is going on that Mom isn't aware of all that is going on in Via's life. Via confronts her with this over breakfast. Her father sticks up for Via and points out to the mother that their daughter is growing up.

Genetics 101 - In this chapter, Via addresses the genetic background of the family and shows that she is well aware of the effect genetics has on her own progeny.

The Punnett Square - This knowledge of genetics has made Via decide to never have children.

Out with the Old - Instead of mourning about her past, Via moves on, enjoying the smart kids crowd. Miranda still tries to be part of her life by asking about August. Via seems to be drifting away from him as well.

October 31 - Halloween is a very special day for Auggie. In contrast, the day that brings up sad memories for Via. She was extremely attached to Grams, and Halloween reminds her of her grandmother's death. She bonds with her mother over the loss of the grandmother. Finally she's getting some time and attention, but then her mother is called away once again because Auggie needs her.

Trick or Treat - While the other members of the family seem to take Auggie's illness at face value, Via feels as if there's something more to it. They talk, and she gets down to the root of the problem. She encourages him to keep moving on with his life just as she was forced to move on with hers.

Time to Think - Auggie and Via have a discussion about friendships and facing things that are unpleasant. Via is surprised to find out that Miranda is still in touch with August. She learns that her former friend misses her, and that makes her feel good.



Part Three: Summer

Part Three: Summer Summary

Weird Kids - Summer doesn't understand why people question why she sits with August Pullman at lunch. He's a really nice kid. She knows he looks weird, but he's just a kid.

The Plague - She admits that August's face takes some getting used to. Summer sits with him because he is fun. One day as she plays foursquare, she finds out about the Plague, and she thinks it's really dumb.

The Halloween Party - Savannah, a popular girl, invites Summer to her Halloween party. Summer is very excited. When she gets there, the popular crowd tells her that she could hang out with them if she stopped hanging out with August. Summer calls her mom to pick her up.

November - When August comes back to school, he acts strangely. Summer attributes it to the stomach bug. When she talks with him about working on school projects together after school, he tells her that she doesn't have to be his friend. He knows that Mr. Tushman talk to her. She doesn't know what he's talking about. They argue then make up.

Warning: This Kid Is Rated R - Summer has warned her mother about Auggie's face. When he comes over, she still seems shocked. Auggie discovers that Summer's father is dead. The two talk a bit about death, and Auggie wonders if he might be handsome in an afterlife. Summer asks him about his face, and he explains what happened scientifically.

The Egyptian Tomb - Summer and Auggie hang out a lot together in school and out of it as they work on their projects. At the final presentation Summer and Auggie dress up as mummies. Jack comes over to her and asks Summer if the other mummy is Auggie. He asks if she knows why August is mad at him, and she says yes, but she can't tell him. She does give him the hint, "Bleeding Scream."

Weird Kids - This chapter offers insight into Summer's character. While other kids seem to think Auggie is weird, Summer views them as weird. She can't understand why they let Auggie's looks be a barrier between them.

The Plague - Summer is the type of girl who acts on what she says. When she learns about the Plague, she thinks it's stupid. Her friend thinks so, too. However, while her friend still avoids touching things Auggie touched, Summer doesn't.

The Halloween Party - Even though Summer is very secure in who she is, she still has an interest in being popular. That's what she's excited about going to the Halloween party. She stays true to herself, however, when the popular kids turn against Auggie.



She leaves the party and goes to the holiday parade. At the parade, Summer notes that there isn't any unicorn. This shows some regret for what could have been.

November - At school Summer notices that Auggie is acting strangely. He confronts her about their friendship, showing that they are comfortable telling each other anything. They fight, but make up.

Warning: This Kid Is Rated R - Summer's life isn't that easy. Her father is dead. This opens discussion between Auggie and Summer regarding the afterlife. Although it's a serious topic, they are able to joke a bit about it. Summer develops a greater appreciation for Auggie's sense of humor.

The Egyptian Tomb - Jack is trying to figure out what went wrong between him and Auggie. He comes to Summer for help, knowing that she is close to Auggie. She isn't willing to betray her friend, but she also wants to help the situation. She compromises by offering a hint.

Part Three: Summer Analysis

Weird Kids - This chapter offers insight into Summer's character. While other kids seem to think Auggie is weird, Summer views them as weird. She can't understand why they let Auggie's looks be a barrier between them.

The Plague - Summer is the type of girl who acts on what she says. When she learns about the Plague, she thinks it's stupid. Her friend thinks so, too. However, while her friend still avoids touching things Auggie touched, Summer doesn't.

The Halloween Party - Even though Summer is very secure in who she is, she still has an interest in being popular. That's what she's excited about going to the Halloween party. She stays true to herself, however, when the popular kids turn against Auggie. She leaves the party and goes to the holiday parade. At the parade, Summer notes that there isn't any unicorn. This shows some regret for what could have been.

November - At school Summer lies to Savannah so she doesn't upset the popular crowd. She notices that Auggie is acting strangely. He confronts her about their friendship, showing that they are comfortable telling each other anything. They fight, but make up.

Warning: This Kid Is Rated R - In this chapter, the reader understands more about Summer and her background. Her life isn't that easy. Her father is dead. This opens discussion between Auggie and Summer regarding the afterlife. Although it's a serious topic, they are able to joke a bit about it. Summer develops a greater appreciation for Auggie's sense of humor.

The Egyptian Tomb - Jack is trying to figure out what went wrong between him and Auggie. He comes to Summer for help, knowing that she is close to Auggie. She isn't

willing to betray her friend, but she also wants to help the situation. She compromises by offering a hint.



Part Four: Jack

Part Four: Jack Summary

The Call - In August Jack's parents got a call from Mr. Tushman. They wanted to know if Jack would be willing to go into the school to meet a new boy. As he learned more about the boy, Jack knew exactly who it was.

Carvel - Jack remembers seeing August when he was five or six years old. He was honestly scared by the looks of the other boy and felt horrible about it. He had seen him several times around the neighborhood since then.

Why I Changed My Mind - At first Jack doesn't want to do it. Then, he talks with his brother and sees his brother's reaction to August. It makes Jack feel bad. Jamie is usually a nice kid, and seeing August made him want to run away. Jack couldn't imagine living like that—with people always running away.

Four Things - Jack discovers that it is possible to get used to August's face. He also realizes that August is a really cool dude who is pretty funny. He's also very smart. Now that Jack knows August, he genuinely wants to be friends with August.

Ex-Friends - At first Jack doesn't understand what Summer means by "Bleeding Scream." He also doesn't understand how one day he and August are friends, and the next day they aren't. Now he has the chance to hang out with more people. He doesn't really like hanging out with them, and he really did enjoy hanging out with August.

Snow - Right before Thanksgiving break they have a snow day. Dad takes Jamie and Jack to the park to go sledding, and Jack finds an abandoned sled. He fixes it up, and discovers that it is the fastest sled he has ever ridden. He wants to tell August about it when they get back to school, but he doesn't.

Fortune Favors the Bold - This is December's precept. The students are supposed to write about something brave they have done, and Jack thinks the greatest thing he ever did was to become friends with August, but he knows he can't write that. He wonders what August writes about. He realizes the boy has lots of things to choose from.

Private School - Even though he goes to private school, Jack's parents are not rich. He hears Julian bragging about going to Paris over Christmas. Julian also mentions that he got a new sled. As they talk about sleds, Miles mentions that he left his old sled at Skeleton Hill, but some hobo came and took it away. Jack realizes that it was the sled he picked up. He is the hobo.

In Science - Jack really detests science class. It was all right when he and August were still friends, but now it's bad. The teacher is talking about a science fair project. During class he suddenly realizes what Summer was talking about. August had been right



behind him when he was saying all those awful things about him. The realization makes Jack feel as if he is going to throw up.

Partners - After this realization, he doesn't hear what the teacher is saying. Julian tells him that Jack is partners with August. He tells Jack that he should get out of it by telling the teacher that he wants to change partners. When Julian starts to speak to the teacher for him, Jack interrupts, saying it's okay. Julian tells him that he doesn't have to be friends with that freak, and Jack punches him right in the mouth.

Detention - Mr. Tushman is telling Jack how serious the situation is. He could be expelled from school. Instead, they are going to suspend him. His mom doesn't understand, but Jack doesn't want to explain what happened and get the others in trouble.

Seasons Greetings - When they get home, there are holiday cards from Julian's family and August's family. Jack notices that there is no picture of the family enclosed in the card from Auggie's family. He tells his mom that Julian's mom actually Photoshopped August's face out of the class picture when she got it and gave a copy to a couple of other moms. His mother thinks that's awful. Jack explains why he punched Julian and also told her about what happened at Halloween.

Letters, Emails, Facebook, Texts - This chapter is filled with letters from Jack, Mr. Tushman, Julian's mother, and from Auggie's parents. It ends with text messages between Jack and Auggie. They end up friends again.

Back from Winter Break - When Jack gets back to school he finds that things have changed once again. Now he seems to have some form of the Plague. It's Julian's payback. The guys won't talk to him, but the girls seem normal. Nobody wants to sit with Jack at lunch.

The War - Charlotte finally gives Jack the inside scoop regarding what has gone on. Julian had a big party over Christmas break. He talked with others and said being friends with Auggie is bringing Jack down. He convinced all the boys stop being his friend—for Jack's own good.

Switching Tables - Summer invites Jack to join August and herself at lunch the next day.

Why I Didn't Sit with August the First Day of School - Jack knows he is a hypocrite. He couldn't bring himself to sit with August in the cafeteria on the first day of school. Now he fills August and Summer in regarding the situation with Julian. Jack mentions how weird it feels to have people not talking to him and pretending he doesn't exist. Auggie smiles and tells him, "Welcome to my world."

Sides - Summer shares a list Charlotte made. It shows who is on Jack's side, who is on Julian's side, and who is neutral. Summer tells Jack that she thinks Charlotte likes him. They joke around about dating.



August's House - The first time August invites Jack to his house, Jack is nervous. He wonders if his friend has told his parents about the Halloween incident. Jack meets Daisy and sees all of the neat things that Auggie has. They discuss the science project, and August wants to do one that's pretty difficult. Jack has no interest in science so he doesn't care. Via comes in and meets Jack. He realizes that Via knows all about the Halloween incident. Via says that she has a friend coming over in a few minutes, and she wants Auggie to meet him. Jack realizes that Via hates him.

The Boyfriend - The sister comes back in with a guy named Justin. He seems nervous at first. They find out that he is a fiddler, and his case looks like a machine gun.

Part Four: Jack Analysis

The Call - In this section, the reader sees a bit about Jack's home life. His mother gets a phone call asking if Jack will go to school to meet Auggie. Through the conversation, the reader understands that she is very empathetic. She won't force her son into anything, but she encourages him to be nice. Jack is honest with her, and he doesn't want to go meet August.

Carvel - Jack remembers the first time that he saw August, and it was a traumatic experience for him. He knows that he hurt August even though he didn't mean to, but he really struggles to act normally when August is around. He knows this from the other times he has seen August around the neighborhood.

Why I Changed My Mind - This chapter is heavy on psychology. Jack finds out that Julian is going to the school. He lets his mother know that Julian is a phony who is trying to be popular all the time. His mother points out that at least he is agreeing to help August out. Jack rethinks about the entire situation, especially after he talks with his brother, and he changes his mind about going to help August. The conversation shows that the family is close as mother and two sons discuss the situation. It also shows that Jack thinks his brother is a nice kid, and that he's really willing to think about other people's emotions as he considers how August might really feel as he goes through life. His desire to make things better for August overrides his fear and repulsion.

Four Things - As Jack really gets to know August, he realizes that they truly are friends and he really appreciates the boy.

Ex-Friends - Jack has a hard time figuring out what happened with the friendship. Now that Auggie isn't hanging out with him, there is a hole in his world. Jack feels betrayed and angry. Now he has a chance to hang out with the popular kids, but he discovers this isn't what he wants. The boy who once was fearful of getting to know August now finds that he would rather have Auggie in his life in the popular people.

Snow - Once again the author shows the cohesiveness of Jack's family, Jack's father takes him sledding. They find a sled that Jack takes home and restores. The sled is symbolic. It was junk that was thrown out by someone who didn't appreciate it. Jack found it, cared for it, and discovered that it was a treasure. This is similar to his



relationship with Auggie. Others don't take the time to know Auggie, but Jack does. He finds out that what other people didn't appreciate ended up being something wonderful in his life. He wants to share the excitement of fixing up the sled with Auggie, but Auggie isn't his friend anymore.

Fortune Favors the Bold - The precept that they focus on in the month of December gets Jack thinking about how brave August is as he faces everyday life.

Private School - Although he attends private school, Jack's family is not wealthy. He is different from any of the other kids at school, especially Julian who is very wealthy. Still excited about his sled, he wants to tell others about it, but finds them making fun of the "hobo" who took it. Jack walks away, embarrassed that he is the hobo.

In Science - Science is a tough subject for Jack, and he finds his mind wandering. During class he suddenly realizes what Summer was talking about and realizes how much she heard August. The realization hits physically and he wants to puke.

Partners - In this chapter, Jack is faced with a decision. He can remain Auggie's partner or go with the popular Julian. He makes his choice by selecting Auggie then punching Julian, which seems very out-of-character for the empathetic young boy.

Detention - Even though he is in serious trouble, Jack doesn't want other kids to get into trouble. The principal knows Jack's true character and is willing to work with him to lighten the punishment.

Sentence - When Jack gets home and opens the Christmas cards, the contrast between Julian's family and August's family is obvious. Jack's mother is there with him, and the two have a discussion about people as they really are. Jack is comfortable enough to tell her what really happened in school.

Letters, Emails, Facebook, Texts - This section is made up of a series of notes from parents, kids and the principal. It shows everyone's stance on Auggie's situation. The kids' attitudes reflect the parents' attitudes. Auggie and Jack re-establish their friendship.

Back From Winter Break - Back at school, Jack get a clearer understanding of what life is like Auggie is as the boys in school avoid him.

The War - Charlotte is there to explain things to Jack regarding popularity. She wants to help them, but she also doesn't want to be seen with him.

Switching Tables - Jack is rejected once again at lunch. Even now the popular people are shunning him. Up to this point he hasn't gone to join Summer and Jack. Now he makes the switch official, preferring it to sitting by himself.

Why I Didn't Sit with August the First Day of School - Jack is a nice guy, but he is also human. He shows his awareness of his weakness in character in this section. Calling himself a hypocrite, he explains why he didn't sit with August on the first day of school.



August doesn't put him down. Instead, he jokingly welcomes Jack to his world. It's a joke, but it is also a bit serious.

Sides - Friendship has turned into a competition, and this chapter shows who is siding with whom.

August's House - When Jack first goes to Auggie's house, he's excited about all the games and equipment Auggie owns. Auggie doesn't act as if it's a big deal, although they are obviously different economic levels. August is more focused on talking about science, well Jack just wants to play games. Jack is a bit uncomfortable when he realizes that Via knows what he did to Auggie at Halloween.

The Boyfriend - Now that Jack and August are friends, Jack sometimes forgets how people react when they first meet August. He is reminded when Justin comes into the room.



Part Five: Justin

Part Five: Justin Summary

Olivia's Brother - Justin meets August for the first time, and even though Olivia warned him about her brother, he is still shocked. He tries to pretend he isn't and that everything is all right. She wants to believe that, he thinks.

Valentine's Day - Justin finally meet Olivia's parents, and they all go out to eat together. He is so nervous, his tics show up. Justin notices the way the waiter responds to August but pretends not to notice. Olivia's parents ask him questions about his play, and he isn't used to that because his own parents don't do that. He decides he really likes her family.

OUR TOWN - Justin auditions for the school play at Olivia's prodding. He gets the lead role. Miranda gets the female lead—not Olivia. She seems happy with her role as understudy, though. Olivia says she doesn't like people staring at her. It's six week until the play.

Ladybug - Olivia helps Justin with his lines. She shows him a ladybug that landed on her and says it's good luck. She tells him to make a wish then sets it free.

The Bus Stop - Justin is about to leave, and Olivia's mom asks if he will walk Jack to the bus stop. They go off, and Justin watches Jack go into the grocery store. He notices some boys bullying Jack. Jack tries to act as if nothing has happened, and then he tells Justin about everything that's going on at school. Justin realizes that it's all about the boy's friendship with August. After Jack gets on the bus, Justin acts like a tough guy and tells the bullies not to mess with Jack. He taps his fiddle case, which looks like a machine gun.

Rehearsal - Justin gets to know Miranda better and realizes that he likes her. Miranda asked him if he knows Olivia's brother, and he is surprised to know that she knows about him. She tells him that she and Olivia used to be good friends. She also tells him that she was the one who gave Auggie the helmet years ago.

Bird - The next day, Justin asks Olivia why she hadn't told him that she used to be friends with Miranda. She starts tearing up and says that she is an awful person. She doesn't want Auggie to come to the play. Justin realizes how fragile she is.

The Universe - Miranda comments that the universe was not kind to ugly. Justin thinks about this and comes to the conclusion that while the universe might not be kind, it doesn't abandon us completely.



Part Five: Justin Analysis

Olivia's Brother - The section of the book written from Justin's point of view lacks capital letters and punctuation such as quotes around spoken sentences. Justin addresses what it's like to meet Auggie for the first time even when warned. He wants to impress Via because she means a lot to him, but the entire situation is a bit intimidating. By the end of the section, he realizes everything is going to be alright.

Valentine's Day - When Justin gets nervous, he has tics. He knows they aren't pleasant to see, just as Auggie's face isn't pleasant to look at. Still, with a bit of effort, both can be overlooked. Justin finds that he fits in very well with the family and enjoys spending time with them. He is not embarrassed to be seen in public with them. The family is very different from his own, and he really enjoys being with the family.

OUR TOWN - Justin is willing to try new things when Via encourages him. Because of her, he tries out for the school play and is surprised to find out that he gets the lead.

Ladybug - Via and Justin continue spending time with each other. They both wish on a ladybug but don't share the wishes with each other.

The Bus Stop - In this section, Justin gets a glimpse of what it's like to be Auggie's friend, even when Auggie isn't around. He sees how Jack is bullied, even though Jack doesn't come right out to say that he is being picked on because he chose to be friends with Auggie. Justin is learning about himself. He has the lead in the play, which is new, and now he finds himself acting as if he is a hitman as he talks to the younger kids and tells them to stop bullying Jack.

Rehearsal - Miranda and Justin get to know each other more. He realizes he is wrong in thinking that she is like the people she hangs out with. He also discovers that at one point she was close to Via and Auggie. She asks Justin if he is okay with Auggie, and at first he doesn't realize what she's talking about. She points out that universe is not kind to the boy.

Bird - Justin is annoyed at Via for not telling him about her friendship with Miranda, but as he talks with her, he realizes that she is very fragile. She deals with many things in life and feels emotional pain from it all. He comforts her.

The Universe - Justin thinks about the universe and what it did to Auggie, but he's able to think past his initial anger at the unfairness. He realizes that people like Auggie are also protected. Everyone has some cross to bear, and it seems as if Auggie has a lot of love and support that others don't have. The last sentence in this section refers to the universe taking care of all it's birds. This is interesting because Justin compared Via to a fragile bird in the previous chapter.

Part Six: August

Part Six: August Summary

North Pole - Jack and Auggie's science project is a success. That night all the parents walked by Auggie's table and saw him. He's used to people having a hard time seeing him, but it's overwhelming when it all comes at once. Jack's parents and Auggie's parents stick close to the table.

The Auggie Doll - In February the "war" at school gets worse. By March the girls and some of the guys are getting sick of it. Julian starts a rumor that Jack has hired a "hit man" to "get" him. This makes people laugh at Julian behind his back. Auggie notices that the Plague game has stopped and people are starting to joke around with him. People are even nice about the hearing aids he recently started wearing.

Lobot - Since he was very little, doctors had told Auggie's parents that someday he might need hearing aids. In October, the doctor told him it was time. He couldn't wear normal hearing aids since his ears were so misshapen. He hates how the hearing aids look and doesn't want to wear them. The doctor turns them on.

Hearing Brightly - After he puts them on, Auggie can hear so much better that it is worth it. The kids at school are really nice about it, and Auggie realizes that his worries are for nothing.

Via's Secret - Shortly after spring break ends, Mom and Via get into a fight because Via hasn't told her about the play.

My Cave - At dinner, Auggie asks about the play. Mom says it isn't for kids his age. Auggie knows what's really going on and accuses them of lying. He knows that Via doesn't want her new high school friends to know about him. He runs to his room and is surprised when his mother doesn't show up. Via comes in quickly.

Goodbye - She tells him to come quickly because Mom needs to talk to him. Daisy is sick and has to go to the emergency vet. They say goodbye to the dog, knowing she might have to be put down. After Mom leaves, Auggie and Via hug and cry together.

Daisy's Toys - Justin comes over, and they talk about how Daisy has been sick. When the parents come home, they know Daisy is gone. Together, they gather her toys. That night Auggie goes into his parent's room and sees his dad crying. He had never seen him cry before. Mom is talking with Via, and Auggie put himself to bed.

Heaven - Auggie gets up during the night and goes to his parent's room. Mom explains that Via is trying to adjust to a new school. She isn't ashamed of him. Auggie asks his mom about Heaven and wonders if Daisy is sleeping in Heaven and dreaming of him. He wonders what it would feel like to not have a face matter, just like it never mattered to Daisy.



Understudy - Via brings home three tickets for the play, and they never bring up the fight again. They look at the program then the play begins. Via is the main character.

The Ending - Auggie loves the play, and Via does an amazing job acting. The audience rises to its feet, and Auggie thinks everyone should have a standing ovation at least once in their lives. Auggie gets separated from his parents in the crowd. He is confused and feels a bit dizzy when suddenly Miranda comes up to him, hugs him and greets him.

Part Six: August Analysis

North Pole - The science fair is a scary success for August. His project goes well, and his friend is happy, but it's very difficult for him to be in the spotlight. His parents and the parents of his friends stand around keeping him company. He realizes how similar kids are to their parents just as Jack noticed that before when he was looking at the Christmas pictures.

The Auggie Doll - The kids at school are beginning to open up and accept Auggie as a person. They're getting tired of the meanness.

Lobot - After all the surgeries he has been through and all the difficulties he has faced, one thing that Auggie still really dreads is having to wear hearing aids. The moment comes where he has to wear them, and he is vehemently against it.

Hearing Brightly - The hearing aids are amazing, and Auggie is no longer against him. He finds out that all his worries were for naught as the children in school easily accept them and don't tease him.

Via's Secret - Life in Auggie's household has been pretty smooth, but things are starting to change. Mom and Via have a big fight.

My Cave - Things get even worse as Auggie realizes that his mother and sister are lying to him. He confronts them on it and lets them know that he is very aware of what is really happening. He expects Mom to come and comfort him, but nobody shows up.

Goodbye - The family that was torn apart over the arguing joins together as a cohesive unit while they deal with Daisy and her illness.

Daisy's Toys - Justin comes over, and the kids talk and comfort each other. Justin is like a member of the family. Auggie realizes that he has been so wrapped up in his own world that he hadn't realize what was really going on with Daisy. She has been showing signs of problems for a while. That night everyone seems to be busy dealing with their grief and with their own problems. Auggie shows that he is growing up by not demanding attention and by tucking himself in. He grieves for Daisy in his own way, imagining that she is licking his face as he falls asleep.



Heaven - During the night Auggie goes into his parents' room for comfort. He talks with his mom about heaven and dreams of the day when his face won't matter. Daisy was very special because she never cared what he looked like. Now that unconditional love is gone.

Understudy - Although they don't talk about the fight they had, Via shows that she feels sorry for what happened by bringing home tickets for everyone for the play. Auggie is delighted to go, and he learns more about the theater. He asks his dad not to call him by his nickname anymore, and he sits back to enjoy the play—his first grown-up play. It makes him feel smart. It gets even better when his sister steps onstage even though she's an understudy.

The Ending - Via does a wonderful job acting and gets a standing ovation. Auggie hadn't known what that was, but he thinks it's fantastic. He thinks everyone should have a standing ovation at least once in their life. After the play, all the focus is on Via and the other cast members. Auggie gets lost in the crowd until he is rescued by Miranda, who he hasn't seen in ages.



Part Seven: Miranda

Part Seven: Miranda Summary

Camp Lies - Miranda's parents get divorced the summer before ninth grade. She rarely sees her father after that, and her mother becomes a stranger. Miranda doesn't want to go to camp that summer, but her mom insists that she go away. She hates camp, and finds herself making up stories about her life. She tells the people there that she has a dog named Daisy and that she has a little brother who is deformed. When Miranda gets home from camp, she calls to make plans with Ella, but she doesn't call Via.

School - At school, Miranda doesn't see Via much. When Miranda sees Via's name on the sign-up sheet for drama, she writes her name on the list. One day she goes to class early and finds out that they are going to do "The Elephant Man." Miranda talks the teacher out of it. Miranda doesn't mean to beat Via when they compete for the role of Emily Gibbs.

What I Miss Most - One of the things that Miranda misses most about her friendship with Via is her family. She loves the parents, and she was never afraid of Auggie even when she was little. Miranda talks with him on the phone she discovers that he's going to a regular school. She asks him to tell Via hi for her and to tell her that she misses her.

Extraordinary, but No One There to See - On opening night, neither of Miranda's parents could come to the play. Her boyfriend couldn't come, either. She is a good actress, and she knows she will perform well. However, as she looks out through the curtain, she sees Via's family walk in. She tells Mr. Davenport that she is ill and can't perform. Via is called in, and Miranda helps her get ready. Via asks why she is doing this, but Miranda doesn't have a chance to answer.

The Performance - The play goes very well, and the only time Miranda feels regret is when the audience comes to their feet. It's a bittersweet moment for her. She notices Auggie looking lost a bit later and goes to greet him.

After the Show - The family invites Miranda to join them after the play. Via encourages her, and Miranda feels happy for the first time in a very long time.

Part Seven: Miranda Analysis

Camp Lies - Miranda gets her first taste of popularity while she is at camp. Ironically, it's a result of lies she tells. When she gets home from camp, she calls Ella, but she does not Via. Her family is drifting away from her, but she doesn't want the closeness of friendship that she would get from Via. Miranda feels somewhat guilty for lying during the summer, especially since she pretended that Auggie was her brother.



School - Even though the distance and the friendship between Miranda and Via originated with Miranda, she really misses her former friends. Her boyfriend doesn't really respect her and her interests. Miranda signs up for that theater group because she notices that Via has her name on the sign up sheet. Publicly she isn't Via's friend, but her ties to the family are not completely broken. Behind the scenes, she tries to protect them by talking with the drama teacher about the play he had initially planned.

What I Miss Most - Miranda really misses spending time with Via's family. She has missed out on a lot since she stopped being friends with Via. This shows just how many changes are occurring in Auggie's household.

Extraordinary, but No One There to See - In this section Miranda shows that she still has a very kind and sensitive heart. She realizes that nobody special is there to see her on her opening night. This also shows how lonely she is. She gives up the spot she works so hard for in order to give Via a chance on the stage.

The Performance - Via doesn't let her down and performs brilliantly. This doesn't make Miranda jealous. She's just happy for her former friend. Still, she finds the standing ovation bittersweet. Later, Miranda notices how lost Auggie looks and goes to rescue him.

After the Show - When she is with Via's family, Miranda feels much happier. The rift in their friendship is over due to her own actions and kindness as well as due to Via's ability to forgive.



Part Eight: August

Part Eight: August Summary

The Fifth-Grade Nature Retreat - Every year in the spring, the fifth-graders go away for three days and two nights to Broarwood Nature Reserve in Pennsylvania. Auggie has never had a sleepover anywhere. He's a bit nervous, but he's also really excited.

Known For - Auggie asks for a new duffel bag that doesn't have Star Wars stuff all over it. He doesn't want to be known for his obsession with Star Wars.

Packing - Mom helps him pack, and Auggie gets some sleepover tips from his mother. He tells her he's trying to change his image.

Daybreak - The next day he wakes up very early, and he thinks he sees Daisy in the shadows by his bed. Auggie takes a stuff animal out of his back and leaves it on the bed. He leads and over his mother with it.

Day One - Everyone is in a good mood on the bus, and the ride seems to go fast. They settle into cabins, have lunch, then go on a two-hour guided nature hike through the woods. It begins to rain, and Auggie puts up his hood to protect his hearing aids. That night he clears up and at the campfire. He loves it.

The Fairgrounds - The next day is very fun, too. In the evening they go to the fairgrounds where they are going to watch a film on a giant movie screen. Other schools join them.

Be Kind to Nature - Everyone begins to cheer as an announcer begin speaking. When they announce the movie, "The Sound of Music," Auggie is happy. It's Via's favorite movie of all-time. Other kids from other schools begin to boo.

The Woods Are Alive - Jack tells Auggie that he has to pee at one point during the movie. There are huge lines for the toilets so they decide to go into the woods. Miles, Henry, and Amos are just coming out of the woods as they enter. Jack and Auggie hear strange sounds like snaps then smell something like firecrackers.

Alien - As they head out of the woods, the two walk into a group of kids they don't know. The kids make fun of him. Amos, Miles, and Henry come up behind the other kids and tell them to leave Auggie alone then they start fighting.

Voices in the Dark - They run away until the mean kids are no longer around. Jack tells the other guys it was really cool for them to come back for them. They all high-five—even Auggie. Jack notices Auggie's hearing aids are gone. Auggie begins to cry, and the other guys comfort him and tell him he is brave. Amos puts his arm around him and comfort him just as his dad would have done.



The Emperor's Guard - The boys try to find the hearing aids, but it is too dark. They go back to the movie and note that the bullies are gone. Auggie settles down to watch the film. He realizes that the other boys surrounded him as they walked through the group kids. It was as if he had his own emperor's guard.

Sleep - That night Auggie has a hard time sleeping as he reflects on the day. He knows something has changed. The other boys tell the group what had happened, and the teachers find out. He finally understands what his dad meant when he said "like a lamb to the slaughter."

Aftermath - Mom greets Auggie with a hug, and he doesn't shake it off. As they begin to walk away, Mr. Tushman gives Auggie a quick, tight hug, but he doesn't say anything.

Home - When Auggie gets home he tells his mother that he is fine. He tells her a bit about the trip. Auggie asks if he is always going to have to worry about jerks like that, and Mom says there are always going to be jerks in the world. However, there are good people to watch over each other as well. Dad and Via come home, and they have a surprise. It's a cute little puppy.

Bear - The puppy is named Bear. Auggie stays home from school the next day to play with him. Via stays home, too. They enjoy the day.

The Shift - Auggie notices that there is a big change in the way things are when he goes back to school the next day. Auggie isn't known for what he had always been known for. Now he is known for what happened on the retreat. He and Jack are popular, and Julian is out of the loop.

Ducks - Auggie finds out that Mr. Tushman knows a lot more about what has been going on than he had originally thought.

The Last Precept - "Just follow the day and reach for the sun!" The teacher ends the year with this precept and asks the kids to come up with their own precepts over the summer.

The Drop-Off - Auggie finds out that his father was the one who got rid of the helmet. It makes him mad, but his father asks him to please try to understand. His father missed seeing his face. Auggie finds out that mom doesn't know what happened to the helmet.

Take Your Seats, Everyone - Jack and Auggie take their seats, and Summer comes over and greets them. Auggie realizes that Jack has a crush on Summer. They look at the program, and Auggie asks what the award presentation is about.

A Simple Thing - During the ceremony, Mr. Tushman talks about the importance of being kinder than necessary.

Awards - Mr. Tushman announces a final award given to honor students who have been notable or exemplary throughout the year. He talks about courage, kindness, friendship, and character. He gives the award to August.



Floating - As August goes up to get the award, people cheer him on and call out to him. He feels as if he is floating. The crowd gives him a standing ovation.

Pictures - At the reception after the graduation, everyone seems to want to have their picture taken with Auggie. Everyone is laughing, and Auggie feels as everyone is trying to get close to him.

The Walk Home - They walked back home, and Auggie notices his mom hanging back a little. He thanks her for making him go to school, and she thanks him for being himself. She tells him he is a wonder.

Part Eight: August Analysis

Part Eight - August

The Fifth-Grade Nature Retreat - August has been showing subtle signs of growing up from letting go of his nickname to tucking himself in at night. Now he is ready to go to sleep over for the first time.

Known For - He continues showing how he is changing by leaving Star Wars paraphernalia behind. He wants to be known for something different.

Packing - Even though he is growing up, Auggie is still very close to his mom. He is able to show his insecurities as he talks about sleeping elsewhere. Together they come up with strategies to help him cope while he's away.

Daybreak - Auggie wakes up early on the day of the trip. He sees shadows in the corner that remind him of Daisy, and it makes him feel happy. He is okay with the changes occurring in his life. Auggie shows he is ready to step out on his own as he leaves Baboo behind with a note for his mom.

Day One - The trip goes better than expected, and Auggie is having a wonderful time along with the other children.

The Fairgrounds - Auggie is very busy and having a terrific time with his friends. They go to the fairgrounds to watch a film and everyone is in a celebratory spirit.

Be Kind to Nature - Auggie is excited that they are going to watch one of his sister's favorite films. However, some other kids from other schools aren't as happy about it. They are very disrespectful. This is a foreshadowing that something bad is about to occur.

The Woods Are Alive - Jack and Auggie go off into the woods, and hear strange sounds and smell strange smells.

Alien - Some kids come upon them in the woods and begin to ridicule Auggie for the way he looks. He is used to it and encourages Jack to get away when Jack tries to



defend him. The other kids get more aggressive. Then Amos, Miles, and Henry—kids who were mean to Auggie themselves at one point—come up to defend him.

Voices in the Dark - The incident brings about a change amongst the boys. Even when Auggie breaks down and begins to cry, the other kids no longer ridicule him. Instead, they comfort him and tell him how brave he is. Standing up for their classmate has unified them.

The Emperor's Guard - Auggie begins to see the changes that have occurred over the year. He has gone from the kid nobody wanted to touch in the Plague to someone who is guarded and protected by his classmates.

Sleep - The boys who helped Auggie and Jack aren't the only ones who have changed. As the story circulates, Auggie realizes that there are more people who support him. Still, it is hard for him to live as a victim.

Aftermath - Auggie is given a lot of non-verbal support, which he appreciates.

Home - Back at home, Auggie talks with his mom about the trip. His mom is honest with him, and they realize that there are always going to be bullies in life. However, there are also good people who help stand up against the bullies. The good from the trip outweighs the bad. As that chapter concludes, Via and Dad come in with a little puppy. It's a symbol of a new beginning.

Bear - Everyone loves the puppy, and Via and Auggie reconnect as they play with the puppy.

The Shift - Things are different back at school, and Auggie realizes that Julian no longer holds all the power.

Ducks - The principal talks with Auggie and looks for symbolism in his self portrait. There isn't any. Sometimes a picture is just a picture.

The Last Precept - As the school year ends, Mr. Browne encourages the students to come up with their own personal precepts.

The Drop-Off - Driving to graduation, Auggie and his father have a serious talk. It's obvious that Dad loves Auggie for who he is. He also respects the fact that Auggie is growing up.

Take Your Seats, Everyone - Everyone is getting ready for the graduation ceremony. August hangs out with the other students and chats with them, showing that he really is one of them. No one harasses him.

A Simple Thing - The speech at the graduation revolves around being kinder than necessary. Kindness is something that Auggie always has to struggle with as people come into contact with him. The entire school has had to learn how to accept him and look beyond the obvious ravages of Auggie's face.



Awards - When Auggie unexpectedly receives the greatest award, the auditorium is filled with support for him.

Floating - When his sister was in the play, Auggie had thought that everyone should have a standing ovation at least once in their life. This is his opportunity to have one.

Pictures - For a child who tries to avoid getting his photo taken on picture day, who had no picture on a Christmas card, and he was Photoshopped out of the class picture, graduation day is an amazing day. Everyone is going out of their way to try to get pictures with him in it. Far from the Plague scene, it now appears as if everyone wants to touch him, be near him, and photographed with him. It feels very good.

The Walk Home - As they walk to the party, Auggie takes time out to thank his mom for all she has done. She turns the thanks around to him and lets him know what a wonder he is.



Characters

August

This character is a ten-year-old who was born with a several facial abnormality. He spent his younger years going through one surgery after another. People on the streets are shocked to see the boy, but those who know him well see him as a bright, funny boy with a sweet heart.

Auggie loves Star Wars, and he isn't in a hurry to grow up. He knows that others cringe when they see him, and he understands why. Still, he wants to be like other children. He appreciates relationships such as the one he has with Jack Will, and the hurt cuts deep when he feels he is betrayed. He is unwilling to face the issue head-on. This is true-to-character for the boy who mumbles and keeps his head down while walking through the hallway.

Via Pullman

This character is Auggie's sister. She is older than he is, but she doesn't remember life without him. Ever since he was born, he needed a lot of attention, but she never felt jealous of him. Instead, she felt compassion for him.

Very protective of her brother, this character got very upset at people when they acted shocked when they saw him. One summer she spent time alone with her grandmother. For the first time she saw what it was like to live without people constantly staring and talking behind her back. The next time she saw her brother, she saw him as other people did for a split second.

When she entered high school, she appreciated the fact that no-one knew about her brother. Things were changing, and she was trying to figure out who she was. In the end, love for her family overpowered her insecurities.

Nate Pullman

This was Auggie's father. He and his wife are very close to their children.

Isabel Pullman

This character is Auggie's mother. She and her husband are very close to their children.



Summer Dawson

This girl sits with Auggie on the first day of school because she feels bad for him. They become very good friends.

Jack Will

This character became Auggie's friend, then said mean things about him. Losing Auggie's friendship was hard on him.

Miranda

This character was one of Via's best friends until high school when they drifted apart. She really cares about Auggie.

Ella

This character was one of Via's best friends until high school when they drifted apart. They don't re-connect in this book.

Lawrence Tushman

This character is the vice principal at the school. He is a kind, fair man who really understands the heart of each student.

Christopher

This was Auggie's best friend. He moved away but came back for visits.

Mrs. Garcia

This character is Auggie's homeroom teacher.

Mr. Browne

This character is Auggie's English teacher. He challenges the kids to think of precepts.

Darth Daisy

This is the name of Auggie's dog. She never notices Auggie's face and loves him unconditionally.



Grans

This character is Auggie and Olivia's grandmother on the mother's side. She has a big impact on Via's life.

Julian

This is a rich boy who bullies Jack and Auggie.

Justin

This is a Zydeco player who begins dating Via. He loves her family.

Amos

This character is a boy in Auggie's class who becomes a good friend.



Objects/Places

Beecher Prep

This is the new school Auggie started attending in fifth grade.

Connecticut

This is where Auggie's best friend moved.

North River Heights

This is where the Pullmans live.

Montauk

This is where Auggie's grandmother lives. Via visits her there during a special visit.

Space Helmet

This is what Auggie wears for a couple of years when he was younger. He loved it, but it disappeared one day.

Carvel

This is where Jack first saw Auggie when they were both much younger.

High School

This is where Via went. She didn't tell people she met here about her brother.

Camp

This is where Miranda went during the summer. She made up lies about her life while she was here.



Henry Ward Beecher Medal

This is the award given to honor students who have been notable or exemplary in certain areas throughout the school year.

Jango Fett

This is a Star Wars costume Auggie really wants to have.

Pennsylvania

This is where Auggie goes on a class trip. He has a wonderful time until he is bullied.

Hearing Aids

With all the difficulties Auggie faces, he is most concerned about having to have these. He realizes that they change his life for the positive, and he worried for nothing.

Spud Lamp

This is what Jack and Auggie make at school. It's a big success.

Fiddle

This is what Via's boyfriend has. It looks like a machine gun when it's in a case.

Themes

Who We Are

When Mr. Browne talks to the students about precepts, he says the most important precept is "who we are." This is a prominent theme throughout the book. When people look at Auggie, they often react in repulsion or fear. They don't see right through to his heart at first. Those who take time to get to know him soon learn that they don't really notice his face anymore. Instead, they see a really smart boy who is very funny.

At one point in the story Miranda comments that the universe has been very unkind to Auggie. Justin thinks long and hard about that and realizes that it seemed as if the universe gave a bit of a bonus to those it gave a harsh deal to. In Auggie's case, his disfigurement was balanced by a loving family and very loyal friends.

When the reader looks closely at the main characters, the reader might note that "who they are" equates to flawed beings. Miranda's parents are broken up and distancing themselves from her, Justin's parents don't seem to care about him, and Jack's parents struggle financially. Even Julian, the rich kid with everything, is flawed. His parents don't teach or model empathy. In fact they are bullies themselves.

Auggie has an obvious flaw that people see. Others have less obvious flaws such as Justin's nervous tics. Acceptance of oneself must occur so that acceptance of others follows.

Bullying and Other Mean Acts

This book takes a unique approach to bullying and dealing with hurt feelings. There are some obvious bullies in the book such as Julian and Eddie. However, the book also shows that there are other ways to bully, even if it's inadvertently. For example, Jack remembers when he was younger and saw August for the first time. Jack was out with his babysitter and his brother. Worried that the young boy would blurt out something inappropriate, the babysitter hurried them away. Later she pointed out how wrong that was. She felt very badly about it saying, "Sometimes you don't have to mean to hurt someone to hurt someone."

When Julian and the others started leaving mean notes on Jack and Auggie's lockers, the two retaliated by sending sarcastic notes back. They weren't outright bullying, but were still harassing the other kids.

The bullying and meanness even extended to the parents. In the name of "helping the school," Julian's mom photoshopped Auggie out of the class pictures and wrote letters to the principal, trying to get Auggie removed from the school.



To counteract meanness, the principal spoke at graduation, highlighting kindness. He didn't just tell people to be nice to each other. He spoke about the power of friendship, and he encouraged everyone listening to make the world a better place by acting a little kinder than necessary.

Growth in Friendship

Friendship was another major theme in the book. As the story begins, Auggie is not friendless. He has had some friends since he was very little. This is significant because when they were little, the kids didn't notice that he looked different. His best friend moved away.

Mr. Tushman asked some kids, known for their kindness, to come in and befriend Auggie. Jack knew that adults saw Julian differently than kids did so he went in to help Auggie out. As he got to know the other boy, he realized that he wasn't just doing him favors. Jack really did like being Auggie's friend. When he said some things he shouldn't have and lost Auggie's friendship, he truly regretted it.

Summer went to sit with Auggie on the first day of school because she felt badly for him as he sat all alone. She recognized the fact that his face looked different, and he was a messy eater, but she didn't let these facts faze her. She remained a loyal friend, even when others tried to get her to break off her friendship.

Even as Auggie struggles with his social standing, Via has struggles of her own. Her two best friends have drifted away, and she has to settle into a new social set. She ends up with a group that is scholastically inclined. Later, her friendship with Miranda is restored.



Style

Point of View

"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio is written in multiple points-of-view. Each vantage has its own section and its own style. The parts from August's view point are direct and tend to show only his thoughts and feelings. When Summer talks, the sections are more concise, and the vocabulary is a bit more advanced. Via's section is insightful, and Jack's section shows what's going on from the vantage of someone who sees multiple sides of an issue. Justin's section really stands out since his section is devoid of capital letters and quotation marks for speech. Miranda address the past and shows relationship changes. The book opens with August's point-of-view, shifts to others, comes back to August, shifts back to others, and ends with August.

Setting

This book takes place in an urban setting. This is a critical part of the storyline because it shows how Via can attend a school where no-one knows about her brother. It also emphasizes what August must go through as he constantly meets new people. Even as he tries to come to terms with who he is as he is growing up, Via is also gaining independence. This is shown in her parent's disagreement over whether or not it is safe for her to own a metro card and travel alone as she comes home from school.

August's class goes to Pennsylvania on a field trip. The trip to the country is unique for him. The joy of nature is diminished by the bullying that follows him from other schools. Still, the wonder of the trip allows the joy to override the negative.

Language and Meaning

"Wonder" uses simple language, aside from a few medical terms. This is appropriate since it is a book about a fifth grader and will most likely appeal to readers of the same age. There are a few references to games and toys kids today are familiar with, which might make this book a bit outdated in the future.

The author does not utilize traditional capitalization rules when it comes to section headers. Sometimes prepositions are capitalized, and sometimes they aren't. Words such as "is" and "My" are capitalized.

Structure

"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio opens with a title page, a copyright, a dedication, and an epigraph before a table of contents. The book is divided into eight sections, varying in length from around 20 pages to over 80 pages. Part I is told from August's point-of-view,

Part Two is from Via's point-of-view, Part Three is from Summer's point-of-view, Part Four is from Jack's point-of-view, Part Five is from Justin's point-of-view, Part Six is from August's point-of-view, Part Seven is from Miranda's point-of-view, and Part Eight is from August's point-of-view. The book ends with an appendix, acknowledgments and permissions.



Quotes

I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse.
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 3).

Mr. Browne's September precept: When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind.
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (pp. 47-48).

I wish every day could be Halloween. We could all wear masks all the time. Then we could walk around and get to know each other before we got to see what we looked like under the masks.
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 73).

"It just feels so weird," I said, "to not have people talking to you, pretending you don't even exist." Auggie started smiling. "Ya think?" he said sarcastically. "Welcome to my world!"
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 176).

the universe was not kind to auggie pullman. what did that little kid ever do to deserve his sentence?
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 204).

Funny how sometimes you worry a lot about something and it turns out to be nothing.
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 215).

I think there should be a rule that everyone in the world should get a standing ovation at least once in their lives.
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 231).

I love this face of yours, Auggie, completely and passionately. And it kind of broke my heart that you were always covering it up."
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 291).

" ' Shall we make a new rule of life ... always to try to be a little kinder than is necessary?' "
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 299).

If every single person in this room made it a rule that wherever you are, whenever you can, you will try to act a little kinder than is necessary— the world really would be a better place.
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 301).

And if you do this, if you act just a little kinder than is necessary, someone else, somewhere, someday, may recognize in you, in every single one of you, the face of God."
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 301).

Everyone in the world should get a standing ovation at least once in their life because we all overcometh the world. —Auggie
"Wonder" by R. J. Palacio (p. 313).



Topics for Discussion

Why did people have a hard time meeting Auggie? How did they often react?

Compare the way Auggie's family saw him with the way others saw him.

How did Jack's feelings toward Auggie grow throughout the book?

Describe the change in the attitudes of Auggie's classmates throughout the year. Do you feel this was realistic? Why or why not?

How did Auggie, himself, grow throughout the book?

Put yourself in Via's shoes. How do you think it would feel to have a sibling like Auggie? What did you admire about her, and what did you think she should change?

How can Auggie's story benefit readers?