



R.J. Palacio

Wonder

MY NAME IS AUGGIE

(Fragment of the book 'Wonder', translated by Tamara Kunić from English to Croatian)

August (Auggie) Pullman is ten-year-old kid who lives with his parents and older sister Via in New York. He was born with a facial deformity that prevented him from going to a mainstream school—until now. He's about to enter fifth grade at Beecher Prep, and if you've ever been the new kid, then you know how hard that can be. The thing is Auggie is just an ordinary kid, with an extraordinary face. But can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, despite appearances?

I know I'm not an ordinary ten-year-old kid. I mean, sure, I do ordinary things. I eat ice cream. I ride my bike. I play ball. I have an X-Box. I guess stuff like that makes me ordinary. Inside I feel ordinary. But I know ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. I know ordinary kids don't get stared at wherever they go.

If I found a magic lamp and I could have one wish, I would wish that I had a normal face that no one ever noticed at all. I would wish that I could walk down the street without people seeing me and then doing that look-away thing. Here's what I think: the only reason I'm not ordinary is that no one else sees me that way.

However I'm kind of used to how I look by now. I know how to pretend I don't see the faces people make. We've all gotten pretty good at that sort of thing: me, Mom and Dad, Via. Actually, I take that back: Via's not so good at it. She can get really annoyed when people do something rude. Like, for instance, one time in the playground some older kids made some noises. I don't even know what the noises were exactly because I didn't hear them myself, but Via heard the noises and she just started yelling at the kids. That's the way she is. I'm not that way.

My name is August, by the way. I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse.

Next week I start fifth grade. Since I've never been to a real school before, I am pretty much totally and completely petrified. People think I haven't gone to school because of the way I look, but it's not that. It's because of all the surgeries I've had. Twenty-seven since I was born. The bigger ones happened before I was even four years old, so I don't remember those. But I've had two or three surgeries every year since then (some big,



some small), and because I'm little for my age. I have some other medical mysteries that doctors never really figured out, I used to get sick a lot. That is why my parents decided it was better if I didn't go to school. I'm much stronger now. The last surgery I had was eight months ago, and I probably won't have to have any more for another couple of years.

Mom home schools me. She used to be a children's-book illustrator. She draws really great fairies and mermaids. However her boy stuff isn't so hot. She once tried to draw me Darth Vader but it ended up looking like some weird mushroom-shaped robot. I haven't seen her draw anything in a long time. I think she's too busy taking care of Via and me.

I can't say I always wanted to go to school because that wouldn't be exactly true. What I wanted was to go to school, but only if I could be like every other kid going to school. Have lots of friends and hang out after school and stuff like that.

Even though Beecher Prep is just a few blocks from our house, I've only been on that block a couple of times before. In general, I try to avoid blocks where there are lots of kids roaming around. On our block, everybody knows me and I know everybody. I know every brick and every tree trunk and every crack in the sidewalk. I know Mrs. Grimaldi, the lady who's always sitting by her window, and the old guy who walks up and down the street whistling like a bird. I know the deli on the corner where Mom gets our bagels and the waitresses at the coffee shop where all call me "honey" and give me lollipops whenever they see me. I love my neighborhood of North River Heights, which is why it was so strange to be walking down these blocks feeling like it was all new to me suddenly. Amesfort Avenue, a street I've been down a million times, looked totally different for some reason. Full of people I never saw before, waiting for buses, pushing strollers.

We crossed Amesfort and turned up Heights Place: Via walked next to me like she usually does, and Mom and Dad were behind us. As soon as we turned the corner, we saw all the kids in front of the school—hundreds of them talking to each other in little groups, laughing, or standing with their parents, who were talking with other parents. I kept my head down.

"Everyone's just as nervous as you are," said Via in my ear. "Just remember that this is everyone's first day of school. Okay?"

Mr. Tushman was greeting students and parents in front of the school entrance. I have to admit: so far, nothing bad had happened. I didn't catch anyone staring or even noticing



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me. Only once did I look up to see some girls looking my way and whispering with their hands cupped over their mouths, but they looked away when they saw me notice them. We reached the front entrance.

"Okay, so this is it, big boy," said Dad, putting his hands on top of my shoulders.

"Have a great first day. I love you," said Via, giving me a big kiss and a hug.

"You, too," I said.

"I love you, Auggie," said Dad, hugging me.

"Bye."

Then Mom hugged me, but I could tell she was about to cry, which would have totally embarrassed me, so I just gave her a fast hard hug, turned, and disappeared into the school.