

WONDER



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GIUNTA

Text:

Wonder

By R J Palacio



Plot:

Part One of Wonder is told from August “Auggie” Pullman’s point of view. Auggie was born with a genetic syndrome that gives him tiny ears, low eyes, and a misshapen mouth and jaw. By the time he is twelve, he has endured twenty-seven surgeries. Auggie lives in New York City with his parents, his sister, Olivia or “Via,” and his dog, Daisy, and until the novel begins, he has been homeschooled. Mom wants Auggie to go to school, but Dad worries. Auggie meets the principal and three students—Jack, Charlotte, and Julian— who give him a tour of the school. On his first day, Auggie faces a barrage of shocked reactions and surprised looks. Julian teases and provokes Auggie. The English teacher, gives his students a precept about kindness and Auggie becomes good friends with Jack and a girl named Summer. However, on Halloween, Auggie overhears Jack telling others that he wishes Auggie would stop following him around. Hurt and rejected, Auggie questions whether he should be in school.

Part Two is told from Via’s point of view. Since Auggie’s birth, she has had to take a back seat. After returning from a few weeks away, she sees Auggie as others see him for the first time. As Via enters high school, she feels estranged from her former best friends, Ella and Miranda. Auggie confides to Via what Jack said, and they agree school is hard for everyone, but Via encourages him to “suck it up.”

In Part Three, told from Summer’s point of view, she explains that she chooses to be Auggie’s friend despite criticism. Auggie learns that Summer’s father died. They talk about death and agree that maybe people get to come back with new faces. They talk openly about Auggie’s appearance. When Jack later asks Summer why Auggie is upset with him, she gives him a hint.

Part Four is told by Jack. He recalls meeting Auggie for the first time. He is used to Auggie’s face and genuinely likes him as a friend. Finally, he understands why Auggie has been upset with him and feels guilty that he lied to others. When Julian calls Auggie a “freak,” Jack punches him and apologizes to Auggie. The boys are friends again. Julian’s mother tells Mr. Tushman that Auggie doesn’t belong at Beecher Prep, but he disagrees. Jack goes to Auggie’s house to work on a project where he meets Via and realizes that she knows about what he said. Via introduces them to her boyfriend, Justin.

Part Five is told by Justin. Although unsettled when he meets Auggie, he likes Via and her family, especially compared to his parents, who are divorced and rather absent. At school, Justin is cast as the lead in *Our Town*, and Via is cast as understudy. When Justin witnesses Julian and others teasing Jack one day, he tells the boys to leave Jack alone. He learns that Miranda and Via were once close friends, and Via confesses that she hasn’t told her parents about the play because she doesn’t want them to bring Auggie. She is ashamed that she feels embarrassed by her brother.

In Part Six, Auggie’s point of view returns. He cringes through the science fair as people react to seeing him for the first time. Julian puts mean notes in Auggie’s and Jack’s lockers, but Auggie notices that students are accepting him more. When Auggie gets hearing aids, life improves dramatically. However, when he learns that Via doesn’t want him to go to her play, he angrily explodes. Meanwhile, the family dog dies which saddens the whole family, but draws them closer together. Auggie attends Via’s play with his parents, and they are delighted when she plays the lead and gets a standing ovation.

Part Seven is told by Miranda. At summer camp, before high school, she lies and tells people that she has a brother with a deformed face to increase her popularity. Miranda’s parents are divorced and distant, but she feels safe with Via’s loving family. However, Miranda changes that summer, both in appearance and in attitude. She is cast as the lead in *Our Town*, but on opening night, when she sees Auggie in the audience and realizes that no one has come to see her, she pretends to be sick so that Via can play the lead. After the play, Miranda hugs Auggie and the Pullmans invite her for dinner.

Part Eight returns to Auggie. When his class, minus Julian, goes to the Boarwood Nature Retreat for three days, he feels both excited and afraid. He enjoys nature walks, campfires and horseback riding. However, he meets a group of seventh graders in the woods who say awful things. A fight breaks out. Jack and several other boys defend and protect Auggie. Auggie gets hurt and loses his hearing aids.

When Mom picks him up the next day, Auggie says that he had a great time except for the last night. Dad brings home a new puppy. Back at school, Auggie has become a hero along with Jack and the other boys who defended him in the woods. Julian has become irrelevant, and Auggie learns that Julian won’t return to Beecher Prep the following year. When Dad drops Auggie off for his fifth-grade graduation, Dad admits that he is the one who threw away Auggie’s space helmet years ago. Auggie feels angry but forgives him. During the ceremony, Auggie wins the Henry Ward Beecher Award for his strength and kindness and receives a standing ovation. As the Pullmans walk home, Auggie thanks his mother for sending him to school, and his mother thanks him for being such a wonder.

Genre:

Narrative – Contemporary
Realistic Fiction, Adventure,
Modern Classic.

Tense:

Primarily past tense - The story unfolds chronologically, recounting a sequence of events that took place in the past which allows the author to present a completed narrative, offering the reader a view of events that have already transpired.

Structure:	Contemporary novel told by six different narrators which allows the reader to see different viewpoints. The book starts with Auggie and then the reader gets to see how other people see Auggie. This helps the reader to think about how characters are affected by the actions of others and encourages the readers to think about how they treat others. Palacio tells Justin's story without capital letters e.g.: "olivia and i are sitting on her front stoop. she's helping me with my lines. it's a warm march evening." This helps to create a unique voice for Justin's narration making him seem more laid-back.	Theme/s:	<p><u>The difficulty of kindness</u> - The novel interrogates what it means to be kind, and the sacrifices one must make for the sake of kindness. However, while the novel certainly positions kindness as always being the right choice, it also goes to great lengths to underscore the ways in which choosing to act kindly can sometimes be an extremely difficult choice even for Auggie himself, sometimes.</p> <p><u>Independence and Growing Up</u> - At ten years old, August is on the brink of adolescence. Because he's so young and because he has an usually close relationship with his parents due to his medical condition, he begins the novel relying heavily on his parents for support and guidance. As August matures over the course of the novel and spends more time in the company of other kids his own age, however, he gradually begins to desire more independence.</p> <p><u>Status and Bullying</u> - For August and the other kids at Beecher Prep, status and popularity are of the utmost importance. Wonder is peppered with kids' observations about their social structure, how status and hierarchy function in their world at school, and what the consequences of being popular or unpopular are on the student body.</p> <p><u>Identity & Self-Acceptance</u> Wonder explores adolescence as a unique period of time in which teens/tweens have the ability to experiment with their identities. By looking at the ways the adolescent characters attempt to define themselves, either by changing their appearance or by liking certain things, as well as examining the degree to which those characters are defined by others.</p> <p><u>Parenting and Guidance</u> - August comes into contact for the first time with professional teachers and with parents other than his own and those of his long-term childhood friends. Through August's observations of these adults, the novel interrogates both how adolescents view adult presences in their lives, as well as what role adults should play in the lives of their children and students. Ultimately, Wonder proposes that parents and teachers have a great deal of responsibility to guide children through life, while also suggesting that they have power to affect how and how easily their children grow up.</p> <p><u>Being true to oneself; Courage; Discrimination</u></p>	
Familiarity of content:	Auggie was born with a genetic syndrome that gives him tiny ears, low eyes, and a misshapen mouth and jaw. By the time he is twelve, he has endured twenty-seven surgeries. Having been home-schooled until the story begins, New York born Auggie heads to middle school for the first time.		Perspective:	First-Person The point of view shifts several times to show you the same events from different perspectives. We hear from August, Via, Jack, Summer, Justin, and Miranda.
Other language choices:	<p><u>Wistful</u> - <i>If I found a magic lamp and I would 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.</i> When someone's big wish is simply to be ordinary, we realise that he is anything but. In Auggie's case, he has a serious facial difference—and he wishes all the time that he didn't.</p> <p><u>Humour</u> - Rather than remember the trauma of Auggie's birth, his mom tells the story in a way that makes him and Via laugh every time. Dad also makes jokes to put Auggie at ease. Since the Pullmans use humour as a tool to navigate the trickier parts of the lives, the book has plenty of funny moments.</p> <p><u>Confessional</u> - The narrators are all very open. They may not want everyone in the world to know everything they are feeling, but they certainly want us understand why they do the things they do; they want to be heard and understood, to figure out why they are or are not liked, and how this relates to the bigger questions of who they are and what life is all about.</p> <p><u>Figurative Language</u> including metaphors, similes and personification are used in the book to enrich the storytelling but the novel is not lyrical in style (e.g. 'the universe was not kind to Auggie Pullman').</p>		Explanations:	<p>Cleft – a split or indentation in something</p> <p>Extraordinary – highly unusual or exceptional or remarkable</p> <p>Gauge – judge tentatively or form an estimate of</p> <p>Genetic – occurring among members of a family usually by heredity</p> <p>Implant – fix or set securely or deeply</p> <p>Monument – a structure erected to commemorate persons/events</p> <p>Palate – roof of the mouth, separating the cavities of the mouth and nose</p> <p>Precept – rule of personal conduct</p>
Vocabulary:	Accommodate, alignment, adjust, craniofacial, defect, deed, forewarn, illuminate, nauseous, mortality, plaque, principal, quip, sarcastic, syndrome, verge		Diversity:	Auggie is a young white American boy born with a rare craniofacial condition that necessitated multiple major surgeries.
Other links:	Wonder (2017 Movie) Final Trailer – “You Are A Wonder” – Julia Roberts, Owen Wilson - YouTube Wonder by R.J. Palacio - BBC Bitesize		Wonder's Best Scenes - YouTube Wonder Summary - BookBrief	