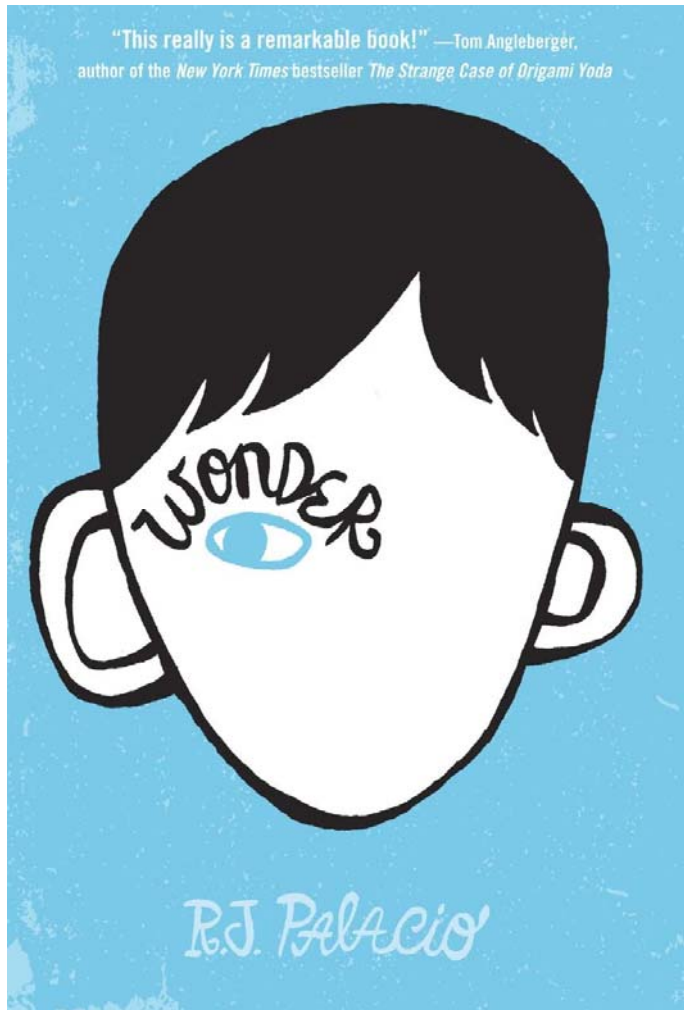


# Reader's Theater of Wonder by R.J. Palacio



*Cover Art by Tad Carpenter*

## Written & Directed by

**Edward Edwards**

**Director**

**Santa Monica, California**

**Annette Manganello**

**Nancy Webb**

**Teachers**

**St. Patrick School**

**White Lake, Michigan**

**Dede Dankelson**

**Board of Directors**

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**Dallas, TX 75240**

**214-570-9099 or 800-535-3643**

Reader's Theater of Wonder by R.J. Palacio

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## **Scene 1 – Introduction - Auggie**

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 Xbox. Stuff like that makes me ordinary. I guess. And I feel ordinary. Inside. 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.

My name is August, by the way.

## **Scene 2 – Car Ride - Narrator, Auggie, Mom, Dad & Via**

**Narrator:** Driving home late at night, Auggie and Via are asleep in the backseat as Mom and Dad discuss sending Auggie to school.

**Mom:** We can't keep protecting him. We can't just pretend he isn't going to wake up tomorrow and this isn't going to be his reality, because it is, Nate, and we have to help him learn to deal with it. We just can't keep avoiding situations that.....

**Dad:** So sending him off to middle school like a lamb to slaughter.....

**Auggie:** What's a lamb to slaughter?

**Dad:** Go back to sleep Auggie.

**Auggie:** Everyone will stare at me at school.

**Mom:** Honey, you know if you don't want to do this, you don't have to. But we spoke to the principal there

and told him about you and he really wants to meet you.

**Auggie:** What did you tell him about me?

**Mom:** How funny you are, and how kind and smart. When we told him you read DRAGON RIDER when you were six, he was like, “Wow, I have to meet this kid.”

**Auggie:** Did you tell him anything else?

**Mom:** I told him about all your surgeries, and how brave you are.

**Auggie:** So he knows what I look like?

**Dad:** Well, we brought some pictures from last summer in Montauk. We showed him pictures of the whole family. And that great shot of you holding that flounder on the boat.

**Auggie:** You were there too?

**Dad:** We both talked to him, yes. He's a really nice man.

**Mom:** You would like him.

**Auggie:** Wait, so when did you meet him?

**Mom:** He took us on a tour of the school last year.

**Auggie:** Last *year*? So you've been thinking about this for a whole year and you didn't tell me?

**Mom:** We didn't know if you'd even get in, Auggie. It's a very hard school to get into. There's a whole admissions process. I didn't see the point in telling you and having you get all worked up about it unnecessarily.

**Dad:** But you're right, Auggie, we should've told you when we found out last month that you got in.

**Mom:** In hindsight, yes, I guess.

**Auggie:** Did that lady who came to the house that time have something to do with this? The one that gave me that test?

**Mom:** Yes, actually. Yes.

**Auggie:** You told me it was an IQ test.

**Mom:** I know, well, that was a white lie. It was a test you needed to take to get into the school. You did very well on it, by the way.

**Auggie:** So you lied?

**Mom:** A white lie, but yes. Sorry.

**Auggie:** What's a lamb to slaughter?

**Dad:** I shouldn't have said that. It's not true. Here's the thing: Mommy and I love you so much we want to protect you any way we can. It's just sometimes we want to do it in different ways.

**Auggie:** I don't want to go to school.

**Mom:** It would be good for you Auggie.

**Auggie:** Maybe I'll go next year.

**Mom:** This year would be better, Auggie. You know why? Because you will be going into fifth grade, and that's the first year of middle school—for everyone. You won't be the only new kid.

**Auggie:** I'll be the only kid who looks like me.

**Mom:** I'm not going to say it won't be a big challenge for you, because you know better than that. But it'll be good for you, Auggie. You'll make lots of friends. And you'll learn things you'd never learn with me. When we took the tour, you know what they had in their science lab? A little baby chick that was just hatching out of its egg. It was so cute! Auggie, it actually kind of reminded me of you when you were a little baby... with those big brown eyes of yours.....

**Auggie:** I don't want to go.



**Mom:** How about this? Can you at least meet Mr. Tushman before making up your mind?

**Auggie:** Mr. Tushman?

**Mom:** He's the principal.

**Auggie:** Mr. *Tushman*?

**Dad:** I know, right? Can you believe that name, Auggie? I mean, who on earth would ever agree to have a name like Mr. Tushman? Auggie, you know, you should go to that school just so you can hear his name said over the loudspeaker! Can you imagine how funny that would be? Hello, hello? Paging Mr. Tushman! Hi, Mr. Tushman! I see your running a little *behind* today! Did your car get *rear-ended* again? What a *bum* rap! It could be worse though. Mommy and I had a professor in college called Miss Butt.

**Auggie:** Is that for real?

**Mom:** Roberta Butt. Bobbie Butt.

**Dad:** She had huge cheeks.

**Mom:** Nate!

**Dad:** What? She had big cheeks is all I'm saying. Hey, hey, I know! Let's fix them up on a blind date. Can you imagine? Miss Butt, meet Mr. Tushman. Mr. Tushman, here's Miss Butt. They could get married and have a bunch of little Tushies.

**Mom:** Poor Mr. Tushman, Auggie hasn't even met the man yet, Nate!

**Via:** Who's Mr. Tushman?

**Auggie:** He's the principal of my new school.

**Scene 3 – School Tour - Narrator, Auggie, Mom, Mr. Tushman, Jack, Charlotte & Julian**

**Narrator:** Auggie's Grand Tour at Beecher Prep

**Mom:** Hi, Mr. Tushman, it's so nice to see you again.  
This is my son August.

**Mr. Tushman:** Hi, August. It's a pleasure to meet you.

**Auggie (*looking down*):** Hi.

**Mr. Tushman:** So, your mom and dad have told me a lot about you.

**Auggie:** So what have they told you?

**Mr. Tushman:** Well, that you like to read, and that you are a great artist. And you're into science, right? So, are you ready to take a tour?

**Auggie:** You mean we're doing that now? You didn't tell me we were taking a tour.

**Mr. Tushman:** It'll be fine, Auggie. I promise.

**Auggie:** Do they call you Mr. T?

**Mr. Tushman (*smiling*):** Do you know who Mr. T is?  
**(*in a funny voice*)** *I pity the fool.* Anyway, no. No one calls me Mr. T. Though I have a feeling I'm called a lot of other things I don't know about. Let's face it, a name like mine is not so easy to live with, you know what I mean?

**Auggie (*laughing*):** I know exactly what you mean. Mom and Dad had a teacher called Miss Butt.

**Mr. Tushman:** Now that's bad. I guess I shouldn't complain.

I thought it would be a good idea for you to meet some students who'll be in your homeroom this year. I figure they could take you around the school a bit, show you the lay of the land, so to speak.

**Auggie:** I don't want to meet anyone.

**Mr. Tushman:** It'll be okay, August. These are nice kids, I promise. Come on in, kids. Thanks so much for coming, guys--especially since school doesn't start until next month. Have you had a good summer? **(*They all nod*)** Great, great. So, guys, I wanted you to meet August, who's going to be a new student here this year. And since you're all in the same homeroom, I thought it would be nice if you got to know each other a little before school started. Okay? So, kids, this is August. August, this is Jack Will.

**Jack:** Hey.

**Mr. Tushman:** This is Julian.

**Julian:** Hey.

**Mr. Tushman:** And Charlotte.

**Charlotte:** Hi, August, Nice to meet you.

**Auggie:** Hi.

**Mr.Tushman:** Great! Okay, so why don't you guys get going?

**Julian:** This is our homeroom. We have Ms. Petosa. They say she's okay for homeroom, but she's really strict if you get her for math, though.

**Charlotte:** That's not true, my sister had her last year and said she's totally nice.

**Julian:** Not what I heard, but whatever.

**Julian:** This is the science lab. Go inside if you want. Nothing much to see. That's the incubator. That big black thing is the chalkboard. These are the desks. These are chairs. Those are the Bunsen burners. This is a gross science poster. This is chalk. This is the eraser.

**Charlotte:** I'm sure he knows what an eraser is.

**Julian:** How would I know what he knows? Mr. Tushman said he's never been to a school before.

**Charlotte:** You know what an eraser is, right?

**Jack:** Hey, can you talk?

**Auggie (*mumbling*):** Of course!

**Jack:** Okay, let's get out of here.

**Charlotte:** Let's go to the performance space next.  
We put on a play every year.

**Julian (*sarcastically*):** I don't think he's going to want  
to be in the school play.

**Jack:** Let's just go to the library now.

**Julian:** Why is your hair so long?

**Auggie: (*shrugs*)**

**Julian:** Can I ask you a question?

**Auggie: (*shrugs*)**

**Julian:** What's the deal with your face? I mean were  
you in a fire or something?

**Charlotte:** Julian, that is so rude!

**Julian:** I'm not being rude. I'm just asking a question. Mr. Tushman said we could ask questions if we wanted to.

**Charlotte:** Not rude questions like that. Besides, he was born like that. That's what Mr. Tushman said. You just weren't listening.

**Julian:** I was too listening! I just thought maybe he was in a fire too.

**Jack:** Geez, Julian, just shut up.

**Julian:** You shut up!

**Jack:** Let's just go to the library already. (*Whispers to Auggie*) Julian is such a jerk.



**Scene 4 – First Day - Narrator, Auggie, Jack, Julian & Mr. Browne**

**Narrator:** First Day of school.

**Jack:** What's up?

**Auggie:** Hey, Jack.

**Charlotte:** Hey, August

**Auggie:** Hi, Charlotte.

**Julian:** So, August. Why do you have that tiny braid in the back of your hair?

**Auggie:** It's from Star Wars.

**Julian:** So, are you into Star Wars, August?

**Auggie:** Yeah, I guess.

**Julian:** Who's your favorite character?

**Auggie:** Jango Fett.

**Julian:** What about Darth Sidius?

**Mr. Browne:** Okay everybody write this down at the very top of the first page in your English notebook: P R E C E P T. Okay, so who can tell me what a precept is? Does anyone know?

*(Looks around – no response – smiles, nods, continues)*

PRECEPTS = RULES ABOUT REALLY IMPORTANT THINGS

**Jack:** Like a motto?

**Mr. Browne:** Like a motto! Like a famous quote. Like a line from a fortune cookie. Any saying or ground rule that can motivate you. Basically, a precept is anything that helps guide us when making decisions about really important things. *(Pause)* So what are some really important things?

*(Seated students call out: Rules, Schoolwork, Homework)*

**Mr. Browne:** What else? Just call things out.....

***(Seated students call out: Family, The Environment, Our World, Sharks—because they eat dead things in the ocean!)***

**Mr. Browne:** Okay, but no one's named the most important thing of all. WHO ARE WE? US! Right? What kind of people are we? What kind of person are you? Isn't that the most important thing of all? Isn't that the kind of question we should be asking ourselves all the time? What kind of person am I? Did anyone happen to notice the plaque next to the door of this school? Anyone read what it says? Anyone?

***(Pause – no response)***

It says: Know Thyself. And learning who you are is what you're here to do.

**Jack:** I thought we were here to learn English!

***(Students Laugh)***

**Mr. Brown:** Oh yeah, and that, too! Here is my September Precept: WHEN GIVEN THE CHOICE BETWEEN BEING RIGHT OR BEING KIND, CHOOSE KIND.

Okay, so, everybody from now on, at the beginning of every month, I'm going to write a new Mr. Browne precept on the chalkboard and you're going to write it down in your notebook. Then we're going to discuss that precept and what it means. And at the end of the month, you're going to write an essay about it, about what it means to you. So by the end of the year, you'll have your own list of precepts to take away with you.

Over the summer, I ask all my students to come up with their very own personal precept, write it on a postcard, and mail it to me.

**Charlotte:** People really do that?

**Mr. Browne:** Oh yeah! People really do that... even years after graduating. It's pretty amazing! But, anyway, next summer seems a long way off, I know. So, everybody relax a bit while I take attendance, and then when we're finished with that, I'll start telling you about all the fun stuff we're going to be doing this year **(points to Jack)**—in *English*. **(Students Laugh)**

**Scene 5 – The Lunch Room - Narrator, Auggie  
Summer & Girl 1**

**Narrator:** Lunch.

**Girl 1:** “Oh, sorry, but somebody else is sitting here.”

***(Auggie goes to mic & Summer walks up)***

**Summer:** Hey, is this seat taken?

**Auggie:** Uh, no.

**Summer:** Ugh, I should have brought a sandwich like you did.

**Auggie:** Yeah.

**Summer:** My name is Summer, by the way. What’s yours?

**Auggie:** August.

**Summer:** Cool.

**Girl 1 (*walking toward Summer*):** Summer! Why are you sitting here? Come back to the table.

**Summer:** It was too crowded. Come sit here. There's more room.

**Girl 1 (*walks away*):** Never mind.

**Summer:** (*confused and shrugs*)

**Summer:** Hey, our names kind of match.

**Auggie:** (*looks confused*)

**Summer:** Summer? August?

**Auggie:** Oh, yeah.

**Summer:** We can make this the "summer only" lunch table. Only kids with summer names can sit here. Let's see, is there anyone here named June or July?

**Auggie:** There's a Maya.

**Summer:** Technically, May is spring. But, if she wanted to sit here, we could make an exception. There's Julian. That's like the name Julia, which comes from July.

**Auggie:** *(looks at Summer in silence)*

**Auggie:** There's a kid named Reid in my English class.

**Summer:** Yeah, I know Reid, but how is Reid a summer name?

**Auggie:** I don't know. I just picture, like, a reed of grass being a summer thing.

**Summer (*being serious*):** Yeah, okay. But if someone doesn't have a summer name and wants to sit with us, we'll still let them if they're nice, okay?

**Auggie:** Okay. Even if it's a winter name.

**Summer (*give a thumbs up*):** Cool beans.



## **Scene 6 – School - Narrator, Auggie & Jack**

**Narrator:** At school with Jack.

**Auggie:** I walked to classes with Jack. One time, this huge 8<sup>th</sup> grader who was zooming down the stairs accidentally bumped into us and knocked me down. As the guy helped me stand up, he got a look at my face, and he just said, “Whoa!” For some reason, me and Jack started cracking up.

**Jack:** That guy made the funniest face!

**Auggie:** I know, right? He was like, whoa!

**Jack:** I swear, I think he wet his pants! *(gets serious)*  
Do you ever want to beat those kids up?

**Auggie *(shrugs)*:** I guess. I don’t know.

**Jack:** I’d want to. I think you should get a secret squirt gun or something and attach it to your eyes

somehow. And every time someone stares at you, you would squirt them in the face.

**Auggie:** With some green slime or something.

**Jack:** No, no: with slug juice mixed with dog pee.

**(pause - serious gain):** Are you always going to look this way, August? I mean, can't you get plastic surgery or something?

**Auggie (pointing at his face):** Hello? This *is* after plastic surgery!

**Jack:** Dude, you should sue your doctor!

## **Scene 7 – Summer’s House - Narrator, Auggie & Summer**

**Narrator:** Auggie visits Summer at her house.

**Auggie:** Are your parents divorced? I’ve never seen your Dad at drop off or anything.

**Summer:** Oh, no, he was a platoon sergeant. He died a few years ago.

**Auggie:** Wow, Summer. I’m sorry.

**Summer:** Yeah, it sucks. I really miss him a lot.

**Auggie:** Yeah, wow.

**Summer:** Have you ever known anyone who died?

**Auggie:** Just my grandmother.

**Summer:** You ever wonder what happens to people when they die?

**Auggie:** Not really. I mean, I guess they go to heaven? That’s where my Grans went.

**Summer:** I think about it a lot. I think when people die, their souls go to heaven but just for a little while. Like that's where they see their old friends and stuff, and kind of catch up on old times. But then I actually think the souls start thinking about their lives on earth, like if they were good or bad or whatever. And then they get born again as brand-new babies in the world.

**Auggie:** Why would they want to do that?

**Summer:** Because they get another chance to get it right. Their souls get a chance to have a do-over.

**Auggie:** Kind of like when you get a makeup test.

**Summer:** Right.

**Auggie:** But they don't come back looking the same. I mean, they look completely different when they come back, right?

**Summer:** Oh yeah. Your soul stays the same but everything else is different.

**Auggie:** I like that. I really like that, Summer. That means in my next life I won't be stuck with this face. Hey, I might even be handsome! That would be awesome, wouldn't it? I could come back and be this good-looking dude and be super buff and super tall. (Summer laughs)

**Summer:** Hey, Auggie can I ask you a question?

**Auggie:** What? You want to know what's wrong with my face?

**Summer:** Yeah, I guess. If it's okay for me to ask.

**Auggie:** The main thing I have is this thing called man-di-bu-lo-facial dys-os-tosis—which took me forever to learn how to pronounce, by the way. But I also have this other syndrome thing that I can't even pronounce. And these things kind of just morphed together into one big superthing, which is so rare they don't even have a name for it. I mean, I don't want to brag or anything, but I'm actually considered something of a medical wonder, you know. That was a joke. You can laugh.

**Summer:** You're funny, Auggie.

**Auggie:** Yes, I am. I am cool beans.

## **Scene 8 – Deeds are Monuments - Auggie**

**Auggie:** Mr. Browne's precept for October was: YOUR DEEDS ARE YOUR MONUMENTS.

The homework assignment was to write a paragraph about what the precept means to you or how you feel about it. This is what I wrote.....

*This precept means that we should be remembered for the things we do. The things we do are the most important things of all. They are more important than what we say or what we look like. The things we do outlast our mortality. The things we do are like monuments that people build to honor heroes after they've died. They're like the pyramids that the Egyptians built to honor the pharaohs. Only instead of being made out of stone, they're made out of the memories people have of you. That's why your deeds are like your monuments. Built with memories instead of stone.*

## Scene 9 – Halloween Costumes - Narrator, Auggie & Summer

**Narrator:** Halloween plans.

**Summer:** So what are you going to be for Halloween?

**Auggie:** Boba Fett

**Summer:** You know you can wear a costume to school, right?

**Auggie:** No way, really?

**Summer:** So long as it's politically correct.

**Auggie:** What, like no guns and stuff?

**Summer:** Exactly.

**Auggie:** What about blasters?

**Summer:** I think a blaster's like a gun, Auggie.

**Auggie:** Oh man...., (*shakes head*) Boba Fett has a blaster.



**Summer:** At least, we don't have to come like a character from a book anymore. In the lower school that's what you had to do. Last year I was the Wicked Witch of the West from *The Wizard of Oz*.

**Auggie:** But that's a movie, not a book.

**Summer:** Hello? It was a book first! One of my favorite books in the world, actually. My Dad used to read it to me every night in the first grade.

**Auggie:** So, what are you going to be?

**Summer:** I don't know yet. I know what I'd really want to go as, but I think it might be too dorky. You know, Savanna's group isn't even wearing costumes this year. They think they're too old for Halloween.

**Auggie:** What? That's just dumb.

**Summer:** I know, right?

**Auggie:** I thought you didn't care what those girls think.

**Summer:** *(shrugs)*

**Auggie:** So, what dorky thing do you want to dress up as?

**Summer:** Promise not to laugh? A unicorn.

**Auggie:** *(smiles and holds in a laugh)*

**Summer** *(giggles)*: Hey, you promised not to laugh!

**Auggie:** Okay, okay. But you're right: that is too dorky.

**Summer:** I know! But I have it all planned out: I'd make the head out of papier-mâché, and paint the horn gold and make the mane gold, too.... It would be so awesome.

**Auggie:** Okay. Then you should do it. Who cares what other people think, right?

**Summer:** Maybe what I'll do is just wear it for the Halloween Parade. *(snaps fingers)* And I'll just be, like, a Goth girl for school. Yeah, that's it, that's what I'll do.

**Auggie:** Sounds like a plan.

**Summer:** Thanks, Auggie. You know, that's what I like about you. I feel like I can tell you anything.

**Auggie:** Yeah? *(gives thumbs up sign)* Cool beans.

**Scene 10 – Halloween - Narrator, Auggie, Via, Julian, Jack & Miles**

**Narrator:** Halloween. Via knocks on Auggie's door.

**Via:** Hey. How's your stomach?

**Auggie:** I'm still nauseous.

**Via:** You sure you're not up for the Halloween Parade?

**Auggie:** Positive.

**Via:** You want to tell me what's up?

**Auggie:** No.

**Via:** Is it school?

**Auggie:** Yes.

**Via:** Teachers? Schoolwork? Friends? Did someone say something?

**Auggie:** People always say something.

**Via:** Tell me what happened.

**Auggie:** This morning I decided not to wear my Boba Fett costume. It was a lot of work to put the costume on, and Dad was waiting, so I threw on the Bleeding Scream costume from last year.

I was starting to think this was going to go down as one of the most awesome days in the history of my life, but then I got to homeroom. The first costume I saw as I walked inside the door was Darth Sidius. I knew right away it was Julian, of course. He was talking to two mummies, and they were all kind of looking at the door like they were waiting for someone to come through it. I knew it wasn't a Bleeding Scream they were looking for. It was a Boba Fett.

I was going to sit at my usual desk but I found myself walking over to a desk near them, and I could hear them talking.

***(Auggie sits down and Julian, Miles & Jack come to the mic)***

**Miles:** It really does look like him.

**Julian:** Like this part especially..... ***(putting fingers on cheeks & eyes of his mask and dragging them down)***

**Miles:** Actually, what he really looks like is one of those shrunken heads. Have you seen those? He looks exactly like that.

**Julian:** I think he looks like an orc.

**Miles:** Oh yeah!

**Julian:** If I looked like that ***(laughing)***, I swear to God, I'd put a hood over my face every day.

**Jack (*sounding serious*):** I've thought about this a lot, and I really think..... if I looked like him, seriously, I think I'd kill myself.

**Julian:** You would not.

**Jack:** Yeah, for real. I can't imagine looking in the mirror every day and seeing myself like that. It would be too awful. And getting stared at all the time.

**Julian:** Then why do you hang out with him so much?

**Jack:** I don't know. Tushman asked me to hang out with him at the beginning of the year, and he must have told all the teachers to put us next to each other in all our classes, or something. I mean, the thing is: he always follows me around. What am I supposed to do?

**Julian:** Just ditch him.

**Auggie:** I don't know what Jack answered because I walked out of the class without anyone knowing I had been there.

***(Jack, Julian & Miles return to their seats – Via & Auggie return to mic)***

**Via:** Sometimes kids are stupid. I'm sure he didn't mean it.

**Auggie:** Then why would he say it? He's been pretending to be my friend all along. Tushman probably bribed him with good grades or something. I bet he was like, hey, Jack, if you make friends with the freak, you don't have to take any tests this year.

**Via:** You know that's not true. And don't call yourself a freak.

**Auggie:** Whatever. I wish I'd never gone to school in the first place.

**Via:** But I thought you were liking it?



**Auggie:** I hate it! I hate it! I hate it! I hate it!

**Via:** What are you planning on telling Mom and Dad?

**Auggie:** They said I could quit whenever I wanted to.

**Via:** But you've never been the kind of kid who quits things. That's not like you. You're going to have to tell Mom and Dad why. Then Mom will call the school and everyone will know about it. Auggie, are you really going to let a couple of stupid kids keep you from going back to school? I know you've been enjoying it. Don't give them that power over you. Don't give them that satisfaction.

**Auggie:** They have no idea I even heard them. Via, it's okay. I know what I'm doing. I've made up my mind.

**Via:** But this is crazy, Auggie! You have to go back to school. Everyone hates schools sometimes. I hate school sometimes. I hate my friends sometimes.

That's just life Auggie. You want to be treated normally, right? This is normal! We all have to go to school sometimes despite the fact that we have bad days, okay?

**Auggie:** Do people go out of their way to avoid touching you, Via? (*pause*) Yeah, right. That's what I thought. So don't compare your bad days at school to mine, okay?

**Via:** Okay, that's fair. But it's not a contest about whose days suck the most, Auggie. The point is we all have to put up with the bad days. Now, unless you want to be treated like a baby the rest of your life, or like a kid with special needs, you just have to suck it up and go. (*pause*)

You don't have to say a word to those kids. August, actually, it's so cool that you know what they said, but they don't know you know what they said, you

know? You don't have to talk to them ever again, if you don't want. And they'll never know why. See? Or you can pretend to be friends with them, but deep down inside you know you're not.

**Auggie:** Is that how you are with Miranda?

**Via:** No. I never faked my feelings with Miranda.

**Auggie:** So why are you saying I should.

**Via:** I'm not! I'm just saying you shouldn't let those little jerks get to you, that's all.

**Auggie:** Like Miranda got to you.

**Via:** Why do you keep bringing Miranda up? I'm trying to talk to you about your friends. Please keep mine out of it.

**Auggie:** You're not even friends with her anymore.

**Via:** What does that have to do with what we're talking about?

**Auggie:** She *called* the other day.

**Via:** What? And you didn't tell me?

**Auggie:** She wasn't calling you. She was calling me. Just to say hi. To see how I was doing. She didn't even know I was going to a real school now. I can't believe you hadn't even told her. She said the two of you don't hang out as much anymore, but she wanted me to know she'd always love me like a big sister.

**Via:** Why didn't you tell me?

**Auggie:** I don't know.

**Via:** Well, I'm telling Mom and Dad about Jack Will if you stop going to school. Tushman will probably call you into school and make Jack and those other kids apologize to you in front of everyone, and everyone

will treat you like a kid who should be going to a school for kids with special needs. Is that what you want? Because that's what's going to happen. Otherwise, just go back to school and act like nothing happened. Or if you want to confront Jack about it, fine. But either way, if you.....

**Auggie:** Fine. Fine. Fine.

**Via:** What?

**Auggie:** Fine! I'll go! Just stop talking about it already. Can I please read my book now?

**Via:** Fine! (*pause*) Did Miranda say anything else about me?

**Auggie:** She said to tell you she misses you. Quote unquote.

**Via:** Thanks.

## Scene 11 – The Punch - Narrator, Jack & Julian

**Jack:** First of all, you do get used to his face. The first couple of times I was like, whoa, I'm never going to get used to this. And then, after about a week, I was like, huh, it's not so bad.

He's a really cool dude. I mean, he's pretty funny. He's pretty smart. Now that I know him, I would say that I actually do want to be friends with August. At first, I admit, I was only friendly because Mr. Tushman asked me to be especially nice and all that. But now I would *choose* to hang out with him. He laughs at all my jokes. And I kind of feel like I can tell August anything. Like he's a good friend. Like, if all the guys in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade were lined up against a wall and I got to choose anyone I wanted to hang out with, I would *choose* August.

It's so weird because one day, me and August were friends. And the next day, whoosh, he was hardly talking to me. And I haven't the slightest idea why.

So, this is kind of messed up. And it's all August's fault.

Then during Science class as Ms. Rubin was explaining the science project all of a sudden this picture flew into my head, this memory. It's so weird how it all just came to me in this flash. Someone in homeroom had dressed up in a Bleeding Scream costume on Halloween. I remember seeing him a few desks away from me. And then I remember not seeing him again.

Oh man. It was August!

I felt like I was going to puke.

**Julian:** Looks like you and your best bud are partners.  
*(pause)* Hello, earth to Jack Will?

**Jack:** Shut up, Julian.

**Julian:** You must be so bummed you got stuck with him. You should tell Ms. Rubin that you want to switch partners. I bet she'd let you.

**Jack:** No she wouldn't.

**Julian:** Ask her.

**Jack:** No, I don't want to.

**Julian:** Ms. Rubin?

**Jack:** No, Julian!

**Julian:** Could we switch partners if we wanted to?

**Jack:** No, it's okay, Ms. Rubin. Bye!

**Narrator:** Jack quickly heads out the door and Julian runs after him.

**Julian:** Why'd you do that? We could have been partners. You don't have to be friends with that freak if you don't want to be, you know.

**Narrator:** Jack punches Julian right in the mouth!



## **Scene 12 – The War - Narrator, Jack & Charlotte**

**Narrator:** Charlotte leaves a note inside Jack’s locker, “Meet me in room 301 right after school. Come by yourself!”

**Jack:** Sup?

**Charlotte (*nervous*):** Hey. Look, I feel bad about what’s going on and I just wanted to tell you what I know. Promise you won’t tell anyone I talked to you?

**Jack:** Promise.

**Charlotte:** So Julian had this huge holiday party over winter break. I mean, *huge*. My sister’s friend had had her sweet sixteen at the same place last year. There were like 200 people there, so I mean it’s a *huge* place.

**Jack:** Yeah, and?

**Charlotte:** Yeah, and..... well, pretty much everybody in the whole grade was there.

**Jack (*joking*):** Not everybody.

**Charlotte:** Right, not everybody. Duh. But like even parents were there, you know. Like my parents were there. You know Julian's mom is the vice president of the school board, right? So she knows *a lot* of people. Anyway, so basically what happened at the party was that Julian went around telling everyone that you punched him because you had emotional problems.....

**Jack:** *What?!*

**Charlotte:** And that none of it would have happened in the first place if Tushman hadn't forced you to be friends with Auggie. He said his mom thinks that you, quote unquote, snapped under the pressure.....

**Jack:** No one bought into that, right?

**Charlotte:** That's not even the point. The point is he's really popular. And, you know, my mom heard that his mom is actually pushing the school to review Auggie's application to Beecher.

**Jack:** Can she do that?

**Charlotte:** It's about Beecher not being an inclusion school. That's the type of school that mixes normal kids with kids with special needs.

**Jack:** That's just stupid. Auggie doesn't have special needs.

**Charlotte:** Yeah, but she's saying that if the school is changing the way they usually do things in some ways.....

**Jack:** But they're not changing anything!

**Charlotte:** Yeah, they did. Didn't you notice they changed the theme of the New Year Art Show? In

past years 5<sup>th</sup> graders painted self-portraits, but this year they made us do those ridiculous self-portraits as animals, remember?

**Jack:** So big freakin' deal.

**Charlotte:** I know! I'm not saying I agree I'm just saying that's what she's saying.

**Jack:** I know, I know. This is just so messed up.....

**Charlotte:** I know. Anyway, Julian said that he thinks being friends with Auggie is bringing you down, and that for your own good you need to stop hanging out with him so much. And if you start losing all your old friends, it'll be like a big wake-up call. So basically, for your own good, he's going to stop being your friend completely.

**Jack:** News flash: I stopped being his friend completely first!

**Charlotte:** Yeah, but he's convinced all the boys to stop being your friend—for your own good. That's why nobody's talking to you.

**Jack:** You're talking to me.

**Charlotte:** Yeah, well, this is more of a boy thing. The girls are staying neutral. Except Savanna's group, because they're going out with Julian's group. But to everybody else this is really a boy war.

**Jack:** (*nods*)

**Charlotte:** Is it okay that I told you all this?

**Jack:** Yeah! Of course! (*lying*) I don't care who talks to me or not. This is all just so dumb.

**Charlotte:** (*nods in agreement*)

**Jack:** Hey, does Auggie know any of this?

**Charlotte:** Of course not. At least, not from me.

**Jack:** And Summer?

**Charlotte:** I don't think so. Look, I better go. Just so you know, my mom thinks Julian's mom is a total idiot. She said she thinks people like her are more concerned about what their kids' class pictures look like than doing the right thing. You heard about the Photoshopping, right?

**Jack:** Yeah, that was just sick.

**Charlotte:** Totally. Anyway, I better go. I just wanted you to know what was up and stuff.

**Jack:** Thanks Charlotte.

**Charlotte:** I'll let you know if I hear anything else.

**Scene 13 – Camping - Narrator, Auggie, Mom, Jack, Eddie, Girl 1, Girl 2, Boy 1, Boy 2, Miles, Henry & Amos**

**Narrator:** Auggie returns home from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade nature retreat.

**Mom:** I missed you so much, Auggie. Are you hungry?

**Auggie:** Starving. Can I have a grilled cheese?

**Mom:** Of course.

**Auggie:** So do you want to hear about the bad part or the good part first?

**Mom:** Whatever you want to talk about.

**Auggie:** (*pauses to think*) It got really dark when they turned off the lights and the movie started. We were watching the movie, then Jack nudged me.....

**(Mom sits down – Jack joins Auggie at the mic)**

**Jack:** Dude, I've got to pee.

**Jack:** Ah man the line for the toilet is too long.  
Forget this, I'll just find a tree.

**Auggie:** That's gross, Jack. Let's just wait.

**(6 students approach the mic – 4 boys & 2 girls)**

**Eddie:** What school are you from?

**Jack:** Beecher Prep!

**Girl 1 (*shrieking*):** Oh my God!

**Boy 1 (*shouting*):** No way! No freakin' way, man! No  
freakin' way!

**(6 students laugh, push each other & cover their eyes)**

**Jack:** Let's get out of here.

**Eddie:** Wait wait wait! Oh man! Oh man!! What  
happened to your face?

**Girl 2:** Stop it, Eddie.



**Eddie:** I didn't know we were watching *Lord of the Rings* tonight! Look, guys, it's Gollum!

**(6 students start laughing loudly)**

**Boy 2:** No man, it's Alien!

**Eddie:** No no, no, man. It's an orc!

**(more laughing)**

**Jack:** Leave him alone, okay?

**Eddie:** Make me.

**Jack:** What's your problem, dude?

**Eddie:** You're boyfriend's my problem!

**Auggie:** Jack, let's just go.

**Eddie:** Oh man, it talks!

**(everyone bumps into one another – Jack falls backward)**

**Auggie (steps between Jack and the others):** Look, we're a lot smaller than you guys.....

**Eddie:** Are you talking to me, Freddie Krueger? I don't think you want to mess with me, you ugly freak.

***(Amos, Miles & Henry approach the mic)***

**Henry:** Yo, dude. What's up, man?

**Amos:** Leave them alone, dude.

**Eddie:** Are you a freak, too?

**Boy 1:** They're all a bunch of freaks!

**Amos:** Come on, guys, let's go. Mr. Tushman's waiting for us.

***(Eddie grabs Auggie's hood and yanks so hard he falls down)***

**Henry:** *(pulls Auggie up by the sleeve and yells)*  
"Run!"

**Miles:** I think we lost them! Amos?

**Amos:** I'm right here!

**Miles:** We can stop!

**Auggie:** Jack!

**Jack:** Whoa! I'm here. I can't see a thing!

**Henry:** Are you sure we lost them?

**Auggie:** Henry? You were the one pulling me by the arm?

**Henry:** Yeah. Shh! Let's listen! (*pause*) We lost them.

**Jack:** Whoa! That was intense!

**Miles:** What happened to the flashlight?

**Amos:** I dropped it!

**Jack:** How did you guys know?

**Miles:** We saw them before.

**Amos:** They looked like jerks.

**Auggie:** Amos! You just rammed into him!

**Amos** (*laughing*): I know, right?

**Jack**: Yo, dudes. That was really cool of you guys to come back for us. Really cool. Thanks.

**Amos**: No problem.

*(everyone high-fives each other)*

**Amos**: You're one brave little dude, you know that?

*(everyone but Auggie sits down – Mom joins Auggie at the mic)*

**Auggie**: So that's what happened. Except for the last night, I had an awesome time.

**Mom**: No, sweetie, don't let them do that to you. You were there for more than 48 hours, and that awful part lasted one hour. Don't let them take that away from you, okay?

**Auggie**: Mom? Am I always going to have to worry about jerks like that? Like when I grow up, is it always going to be like this?

*(pause)*

**Mom:** There are always going to be jerks in the world, Auggie. But I really believe, and Daddy really believes, that there are more good people on this earth than bad people, and the good people watch out for each other and take care of each other. Just like Jack was there for you. And Amos. And those other kids.

**Auggie:** Oh yeah, Miles and Henry. They were awesome too. It's weird because Miles and Henry haven't even really been very nice to me at all during the year.

**Mom:** Sometimes people surprise us.

**Scene 14 – Dad’s Confession - Narrator, Auggie & Dad**

**Narrator:** Dad drives Auggie to 5<sup>th</sup> grade graduation.

**Auggie:** Hey, is my tie on straight? (*Dad adjusts tie*)

Does my hair look okay?

**Dad:** Perfect. You look great, Auggie.

**Auggie:** Via put some gel in it this morning. It doesn’t look too puffy?

**Dad:** No, it’s very, very cool, Auggie. I don’t think you’ve ever had it this short before, have you?

**Auggie:** No, I got it cut yesterday. I think it makes me look more grown-up, don’t you?

**Dad:** Definitely! Look at you, Auggie! Look at you, looking so grown-up and spiffy. I can’t believe you’re graduating from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Auggie:** I know, it’s pretty awesome, right?

**Dad:** It feels like just yesterday that you started.

**Auggie:** Remember I still had that *Star Wars* braid hanging from the back of my head?

**Dad:** Oh my gosh, that's right.

**Auggie:** You hated that braid, didn't you, Dad?

**Dad:** Hate is too strong a word, but I definitely didn't love it.

**Auggie:** You hated it, come on, admit it.

**Dad:** No, I didn't hate it. But I will admit to hating that astronaut helmet you used to wear, do you remember?

**Auggie:** The one Miranda gave me? Of course I remember! I used to wear that thing all the time.

**Dad:** Good God, I hated that thing.

**Auggie:** I was so bummed when it got lost.

**Dad:** Oh, it didn't get lost. I threw it out.

**Auggie:** Wait. What? Dad! You threw it out?!

**Dad:** I couldn't stand seeing that thing cover your face anymore.

**Auggie:** Dad, I loved that helmet! It meant a lot to me! I was bummed beyond belief when it got lost. Don't you remember?

**Dad:** Of course I remember, Auggie. Oh, Auggie, don't be mad. I'm sorry. I just couldn't stand seeing you wear that thing on your head anymore, you know? I didn't think it was good for you. Come on, Auggie, please try to understand. You were wearing that helmet all the time. And the real, real, real, real truth is: I missed seeing your face, Auggie. I know *you* don't always love it, but you have to understand... *I* love it. *I love* this face of yours,



Auggie, completely, and passionately. And it kind of broke my heart that you were always covering it up.

**Auggie:** Does Mom know?

**Dad:** No way. Are you kidding? She would have killed me.

**Auggie:** She tore the place apart looking for that helmet, Dad. I mean, she spent like a week looking for it in every closet, in the laundry room, everywhere.

**Dad:** I know! That's why she'd kill me! Wait a minute, Auggie. You have to promise me you will *never* tell Mommy anything about this.

**Auggie:** Let's see, I'll be wanting that new Xbox when it comes out next month. And I'll definitely be wanting my own car in about 6 years, a red Porsche would be nice, and.....

**Dad:** Oh boy, oh boy. You really have grown up.

## **Scene 15 – Graduation - Narrator & Mr. Tushman**

**Narrator:** The graduation ceremony is held in the Beecher Prep Upper School auditorium.

**Mr. Tushman:** We are all gathered here together, all your families, friends, and teachers, to celebrate not only your achievements of this past year, but your endless possibilities.

When you reflect on this past year, I want you all to look at where you are now and where you've been. You've all gotten a little taller, a little stronger, a little smarter..... I hope.

But the best way to measure how much you've grown isn't by inches or the number of laps you can now run around the track, or even your grade point average—though those things are important, to be sure. It's what you've done with your time, how you've chosen to spend your days, and whom you have touched this year. That, to me, is the greatest measure of success.

There's a wonderful line in a book called the *Little White Bird* by J. M. Barrie. He writes, "Shall we make a new rule of life... always try to be a little kinder than is necessary?"

Kinder than is necessary. Because it's not enough to be kind. One should be kinder than needed. Such a simple thing, kindness. A nice word of encouragement given when needed. An act of friendship. A passing smile.

Children, what I want to impart to you today is an understanding of the value of that simple thing called kindness.

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. *\*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. (\*optional excerpt)*

**Scene 16 – Precepts - Boy 1, Girl 1, Boy 1, Boy 2, Mr. Browne, Dad, Mom, Via, Jack, Summer & Auggie**

**Narrator:** Precepts.

**Boy 1:** Your deeds are your monuments. --Inscription on an Egyptian tomb

**Girl 1:** Have no friends not equal to yourself.

--Confucius

**Boy 1:** Audentes fortuna iuvat. Fortune Favors the Bold. --Virgil

**Boy 2:** It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers. --James Thurber

**Girl 1:** Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much. --Blaise Pascal

**Girl 2:** What is beautiful is good, and who is good will soon be beautiful. --Sappho

**Boy 1:** Just follow the day and reach for the sun! The Polyphonic Spree, “Light and Day”

**Mr. Browne:** Do all the good you can,  
by all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as you ever can.

John Wesley’s Rule

**Dad:** All you need is love. --The Beatles

**Mom:** To thine own self be true. --*Hamlet*, Shakespeare.

**Via:** It’s not enough to be friendly. You have to be a friend.

**Jack:** Keep calm and carry on!

**Summer:** If you can get through middle school without hurting anyone's feelings, that's really cool beans.

**Auggie:** Everyone in the world should get a standing ovation at least once in their life because we all overcometh the world.

**[End]**