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WONDER

R.J. PALACIO

LEVEL

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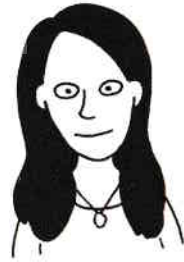
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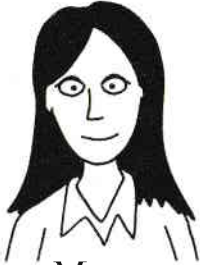
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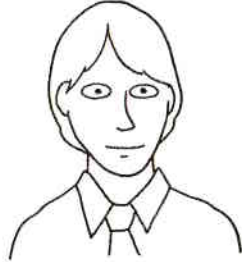
August



Via



Mom



Dad



Jack



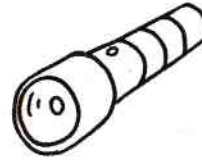
Summer



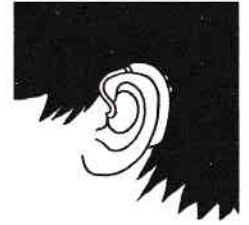
Miranda



Justin



flashlight



hearing aid



high-five



hug



mask



medal



puppy



violin

Note about the story

R.J. Palacio's parents came from Colombia, but she was born in New York, in 1963. She worked as an artist for many years, drawing pictures for books and book covers. The idea for *Wonder* came to her one day when she was in an ice cream store in New York with her two sons, and they were standing next to a boy with a very different face. Her younger son looked at the boy and started to cry because he was frightened. Palacio was worried, and she and her sons left the store quickly. When they got home, she was angry with herself because she did not talk to the boy. She did not show her sons that there was nothing to be afraid of.

She started to think about the boy, and asked herself questions about his life every day. She wrote *Wonder* to try to answer those questions. *Wonder* was made into a movie in 2017.

Before-reading question

- 1 Look at the cover of the book, then look quickly at the pictures in the book. Which sentences are true, do you think?
 - a August lives on a farm.
 - b August lives with his grandparents.
 - c August has an easy life at school.

*Definitions of words in **bold** can be found in the glossary on pages 77–80.

CHAPTER ONE

Why I didn't go to school

August

I know I'm not an **ordinary*** ten-year-old **kid**. I do ordinary things. I eat ice cream. I ride my bike. I have an Xbox. And I feel ordinary inside. But ordinary children run away from me in the playground. And ordinary people **stare** at me in the street or at the supermarket.

I walk down the street and people look at me, and then they look away.

My older sister, Via, doesn't think I'm ordinary. She gets angry if people talk about me or if they stare at me. She shouts at them. She loves me, but she doesn't think I'm ordinary.

Mom and Dad don't think I'm ordinary, either. They think that I'm **extraordinary**.

I think I *am* ordinary, but nobody sees it.

Mom is beautiful, and so is Via. And Dad is handsome. My name is August. What do I look like? I'm not going to tell you. But it's worse than you think. Here's something not ordinary about me: I have never been to school. People think

I haven't been to school because of the way that I look. But it isn't that. It's because I've been in hospital a lot—twenty-seven times in ten years. I've had a lot of **plastic surgery** and other things. So, my parents didn't send me to school. Mom taught me at home.

My last visit to hospital was eight months ago, and I don't have to go back for two years.

One day this summer, I heard my parents talking about schools.

"What are you talking about?" I asked.

"Do you think you're ready for school?" asked Mom.

"No," I said.

"I can't teach you much more," she said. "You know I am bad at **math**."

"What school?" I asked.

"Beecher Prep. Near our house."

"I really don't want to," I said.

"OK," said Mom. "We'll talk about it later."

I didn't want to go. But I knew Mom was right. And she is really bad at math.

In the summer vacation, we went to the school to see the school **principal**, Mr. Tushman.

"Hi, Mr. Tushman, nice to see you again," said Mom. "This is my son, August."

Mr. Tushman **shook** Mom's hand, and then mine.

"Hi, August," said Mr. Tushman. He looked at me. Not many people do that. "I'm very happy to meet you. Your mom and dad have told me a lot about you."

