

## Daniel Siyuan DAI

*It had been 10 years since August Pullman first started school. As a child with severe craniofacial abnormalities, it hadn't been easy for him to fit in at Beecher Prep in the beginning. But after graduating with top grades in his class, August gained confidence and the respect of his peers. And now – he is a college student at UC Berkley.*

### The New Episode: Auggie and Via

I looked at the sky from my dorm window. Dawn was setting, and the sky turned blue, just like Via's eyes. Via was going to come after today's lecture at 8:00 pm and take me out for dinner. She said she had big news for me.

I wondered what that would be. Via's been super protective for me from the time I was little. After graduating from Columbia she remained in New York City. Bear, our dog who's very old now, lives with her because mom and dad wanted to do more traveling thing – you understand, the “empty nesters”.

The rest of the day flew by and almost nobody noticed my face. University's kind of cool; people were busy, a lot of exotic dudes; besides, even when there were those mean glances, I wouldn't be bothered, really. Chemistry was at 9 am, Physics at 10:30 am, then Lunch and Biochemistry for the rest of the day. Finally after the lecture, I headed outside and saw Via.

Via was leaning on the stone archway at the entrance with her husband Justin. They were dating since high school and eventually got married. Via said she was flying in for a conference. I was surprised to see Justin came as well. “Hey there Via! Hey Justin!” I said. “Auggie!” she cried out and hugged me, “It's been so long!” Then we headed for Rivoli, my favorite place to drown my stress, they have amazing Caesar Salad and pumpkin soup.

When we were having ice cream at the end Via spoke out, “Auggie”, her face looked strange: excited, nervous or even scared? “I'm going to have a baby, and you know, we had run some test, too bad Justin also carries that defective gene...”

My brain short circuited for 10 seconds, I meant totally blank! Throughout the years I had been researching on why I looked the way I looked, so did Via. With the autosomal recessive mutant gene we both carry, there would be one-in-four chance that our kids would look like – ME, if our spouses also carry the gene.

What first came to my mind was “How unfortunate! Poor Via and Justin!” But sense came back to me, and Via looked at me anxiously, seemed to be so eager to find out what I was gonna say. My sister, who had been my protector all along the way, was seeking confidence and strength from me now.

Then I smiled, “So I'm going to be Uncle Auggie. The baby's going to be so lucky to have loving parents like you and Justin. And an Obi-wan Kenobi uncle who will protect him! If that doesn't cheer you up! He or she will have 3 out of 4 odds to be ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL!”

Tears came down Via's cheeks, but her blue eyes were so shiny, like the morning sky. Justin gave her a firm hug and kiss, "Yes Auggie, you will make a **WONDERFUL** uncle..."