

**2016 Young Laureate Award (Intermediate Level)**

**Wonder by RJ Palacio, Q2**

**Title: An argument**

*Via*

Auggie really is one of a kind: his left eye is significantly lower than the other, and his nose is rather large for his face. Scars shoot from one direction to another around his lips; each a reminder of the surgeries he had taken since he was just a baby.

It is only natural that Auggie should take all the attention, while I solve my own problems independently. There is just simply no point in letting Mom worry about my little troubles when I am perfectly capable of overcoming them myself. Besides, she already has too much on her mind.

I had decided to not tell my parents about the play we were going to have at school after spring break ended. I felt terrible and Mom literally flipped when she found out.

“You’ve been really good at leaving me alone my whole life, so why you choose high school to suddenly be interested I have no idea...”

I held my hand over my mouth. Tears prickled my eyes and came flowing down in unbroken streams of emotion.

*Mom*

I was startled to find my daughter breaking down in front of me. She was usually so strong...

Sitting down on the bed, I wrapped my arms around Via’s shoulders and rocked her: as I had done every night before Auggie was born. A feeling of guilt washed through me when I had realized that what Via had said was only the truth. She let her whole life orbit around her little brother; and pretended that things were fine when they were not.

The sobbing slowly subsided and I tilted her chin up so that she would look at me. My heart ached to see such guilt and sorrow in her eyes.

“You are forgiven. But I am extremely disappointed in you. How could you not tell me about the school play? I’ve heard that it is a really big thing in your year. Did you really want us to miss out on it?” I whispered, trying to comb out the tangles in her dark hair.

“Because... I didn’t want people think of me as a girl with a deformed brother,” Via answered hesitantly.

I would have expected those words if it hadn't been Via sitting next to me. She loves her brother so much that those words would have been impossible to come upon her lips. Sad and puzzled at the same time, I let anger take hold of myself.

*Via*

Mom stood up and began pacing around the room. I have never seen her being this angry before: the usual smile that graced her face was gone, and was replaced by lips pressed into a thin line. Knowing that I had just rekindled the flame, I immediately regretted saying anything. I just wanted to disappear and find myself in another world: Middle Earth? Well, most preferably in its fourth age. Even if I were to swap places with Mary Bolkonskaya I would... though only after her long suffering.

I readied myself for the upcoming burst of rage before my heart could sink any lower.

Mom was now standing in front of me, arms crossed and all. It was her eyes that frightened me most, for they were hooded, which gave them a rather threatening expression. What scrape have I gotten into now?

*Mom*

Something changed in Via at that particular moment: her face was blank and emotionless.

I told her that I wanted an apology; and all I received was a brief glance before Via's gaze returned to the wooden floorboards.

"Olivia, look at me! You do know that this is not your brother's fault: it takes only one tenth of a second for a person to make a judgment of another, and such a judgment should stay until the person learns more about him. Underneath it all, you find naught but a smart boy with a kind soul. People stare because they fail to find beauty where there is an abundance of it."

"I thought that Auggie was just like any other boy," Via burst out.

Feeling as if I was about to scream, I decided to let the both of us calm down. Via is, after all only a child: a very confused child.

By: Sin Wai Ming Kate