

Li Ching Wo Adrian

Chosen characters: Auggie and Via

Q1:

The siblings Auggie and Via are, in many ways, the main characters of this book. Via, who is Auggie's elder sister, shouldered much of the responsibility needed for protecting Auggie at a young age, especially from bullying from other kids. Constantly looking out for Auggie puts stress on Via, so their relationship isn't always smooth.

When they were young, Via loved Auggie a lot and didn't criticise him for anything. Their parents praised Via for being "the most understanding little girl in the world". The only place where Via could shrug off her burden was with her grandmother, where she finally experienced the life of a "normal" person. This was when a change came over her, as after weeks of normal life, she understood why others perceived Auggie as a horror.

After she grew older, she felt that Auggie was getting more attention than he needed, and he needed to grow up. Auggie was too reliant on his family's care that he did not understand how to deal with others. Unlike her parents, Via saw a need to expose Auggie to the real world, so that he could learn and grow up.

Due to continued stress from her high school life, Via started feeling spiteful of her family. For example, she directly told her mother that she had been neglected to check on her when it was bedtime. The old Via would never have done that, and that surprised her parents quite a bit. She also had quite a few conversations with Auggie that were bordering on mean, from yelling at him for trying to quit school to criticising him for not telling her about Miranda's telephone call. Auggie of course retaliated, pointing out the weakness of friendship between Via and Miranda.

The most dramatic moment for me was when Via told Auggie that "not everything in the world is about you". Due to worry about the state of Daisy the dog, who was seriously ill, Via finally expressed her raw emotions to Auggie. It shocked him, but he was soon preoccupied with Daisy's illness. I think this was a good time to tell Auggie to "grow up", when he wouldn't immediately throw a tantrum and would have time to reflect on that.

Although it seems that Auggie is totally reliant on his elder sister, the truth is not so. Indeed, it is a two-way relationship. On many occasions, Via needed Auggie's emotional support, for example when Daisy died. Via also loves Auggie very much, as is seen when Auggie gets home from camp and Via can't wait to get back home. These incidents prove that in fact Via does not see Auggie as a real burden, rather as a privilege as well as a responsibility.

Via shares a special bond with Auggie from birth, as is seen when Via loves

Auggie immediately when he was born, and felt protective of him over their childhood, even standing up against adults who so much as stole one more glance. In the end, they mended their relationship, and Auggie became a lot more independent over the course of events described in the book, easing Via's burden. All in all, their relationship is a loving one, which still stands sturdily after turbulence.