

Maisha Maryam

The ability to make a connection with those around us is an ability that is accessible by all. But to properly build a relationship and offer the best of what you have is something that only a handful are able to achieve. A great example of this is shown by the two main characters of the book *Wonder*, August "Auggie" Pullman and Olivia "Via" Pullman, who are siblings in this literary masterpiece written by R.J. Palacio. They show that no matter what the odds are against them, they are still able to keep each other company, even when there are monstrous things otherwise called problems clouding their worlds. Their relationship is like no other brother-sister relationship, but rather it is extraordinary. However, it isn't Auggie's mandibulofacial dysostosis which makes it different but rather the love between the two siblings that really makes it stand out.

Via describes the relationship between her and Auggie as if he were a celestial object, using the idea of a cosmos to get her idea across. "August is the Sun. Me and Mom and Dad are planets orbiting the Sun. The rest of our family and friends are asteroids and comets floating around the planets orbiting the Sun," she says on page 1 of part 2. This quote shows that Via has admitted the nature of how her family and friends work - Auggie being the centre of attention, while his family members help him, and their family friends support them throughout the process. Via gives off a tone as if she understands that he needs help because of what he has to suffer with. However, she mentions that "the galaxy is changing." This shows that Via is now struggling to keep up with this idea, and throughout the book, we realise she is struggling with high school, but her parents are helping Auggie out because it is his first time going to school, which means that Via has to handle most of it on her own.

Although Via does understand that Auggie might need help sometimes, Auggie mentions how he gets appalled by the fact that no one really knows he is as ordinary as any other child on the inside. "Via doesn't see me as ordinary. She says she does, but if I were ordinary, she wouldn't feel like she needs to protect me as much," he says on page 4 of part 1. This shows that although Via is a very caring sister and is very understanding, Auggie wishes she wouldn't be so bothered by the fact that he was "different" from other children simply because of his mandibulofacial dysostosis. Auggie, clearly, wants to be treated like a normal child, and it is evident that although Via does say she sees him as a normal child, there is technically still that vibe from her behaviour that indicates that she thinks of him as someone who needs to be protected all the time, which Auggie realises as the novel progresses, is not the case.

As the novel moves onward, Via struggles to keep up the norm her family has always followed of prioritising Auggie's needs before everyone else's, and this is because she has many problems to tackle while being in high school. Via faces lots of issues with friendship, as her friends change drastically to make a new image for themselves in high school, leaving her behind; while on the other hand, Via is struggling with shaping her own identity, as no one knows about Auggie's existence - her "deformed brother" was the thing that basically defined who she was. As she mentions "the galaxy is changing" on page 1 of part 2, we realise that Via is struggling just as much as Auggie is, as she feels bad for not telling anyone about an important aspect of her life (i.e. Auggie) and at the same time, she is also tired of everything she has had to face ever since she became Auggie's older sister. Auggie, too, has been facing a lot of issues, as it is not easy for him to accept he is the odd one out, and at one point, when Auggie talks about his problems to Via, it also strengthens the bond they have, although Via still maintains her independence.

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Overall, Auggie and Via's relationship can be defined as a very dynamic relationship because they go through a lot of ups and downs throughout the novel and end up on a fairly happy note towards the end.

Book - There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom by Louis Sachar

Characters - Bradley and Carla

"Hello Bradley," said Carla. "It's a pleasure to see you today." A faint smile graced her withered lips as she remembered the first day she saw Bradley years and years ago, when he was just a little kid, and she was just a young woman in her early twenties.

"Hi Carla," said Bradley. "I appreciate coming to see you." He chuckled as he sat down in the worn out red couch in Carla's office in Willow Bend School.

"Dear, dear Bradley, what brings you here after so many years?" She pushed her glasses up her nose to get a clearer sight of Bradley.

"I came to collect," said Bradley, "and return." He pulled a book out from his paper sack, and Carla stifled a gasp as she saw the familiar yellow book with the words *My Parents Didn't Steal an Elephant* across the cover.

She opened the book to the first page.

*I hate tomato juice.*

Smiling, she turned to the next page, and an envelope fell out.

Opening the envelope, she took out a letter and read:

*"Dearest Carla,*

*It was an honor to have you as my counsellor in the darkest days of my childhood, and you have changed me, to a person much better than the one I was.*

*Thank you for caring for me, and teaching me things that I could not have learnt without you.*

*After you left our school, our family moved to Canada, where people welcomed me with open arms and accepted my flaws, and I never felt more belonged. Of course, I never forgot Jeff and we have never lost contact. He now lives in America, I think.*

*I still live in Canada to this day, with my wife Michelle and my two kids Michael and Brianne, which brings me back to my purpose of writing this letter to you.*

*Brianne has just been born on the 21st of February, and is to be christened in April. However, we haven't found a suitable godmother for her, and I thought you would be the perfect godmother figure for her.*

*Enclosed in the envelope is an airplane ticket to Canada and a family picture of us, so you can get a tiny glimpse of her before you get here. Our address is written at the back.*

*Of course, if you don't want to be her godmother, it would be totally fine, although we would be a little disappointed, for Michelle really wanted to meet you.*

*See you soon!*

*Love,*

*Bradley”*

Carla glanced up and said, “It would be my plea-” but stopped shortly after.

There was no one in the room. Bradley must’ve left while she was reading the letter.

Looking around the room, she found that the little red rabbit with the broken ear gone, and a little note was taped to the desk where the rabbit originally was.

She opened the note.

Scrawled across the tiny sheet of paper in Bradley’s writing, were the words “*I take that as a yes. Michelle will be delighted. ~ B.*”

She smiled and put her glasses on top of her curly white hair. It was time for her to retire anyways.