

Because of Anya

By Margaret Peterson Haddix

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Ten-year-old girls don't wear wigs.

So why is Anya wearing one? That's what Keely wants to know. But when Anya's wig falls off in front of the whole class, Keely realizes what she really wants is to help Anya, even though she's not sure how—and even though it means she'll have to do something she's afraid of: stand up to her friends.

As for Anya, she just wants her hair to grow back, but no one can tell her whether it ever will. How can she learn to accept her disease when she can't even look in the mirror?

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Haddix (Among the Hidden) returns with a short but often informative tale of ordinary girls facing exceptional circumstances. "Could someone be beautiful with ugly hair? Or-no hair?" wonders 10-year old Anya as she confronts her image in her bedroom mirror. When the first small bald patch shows up on Anya's head, it seems like a small thing, but as the bald patches grow and her hair falls out in clumps, she's diagnosed with an auto-immune disease. At first she thinks. "Whatever alopecia areata was couldn't be too bad, because it was such a pretty name.... It should be one of the ladies in King Arthur's court." All too soon, however, she's wearing a wig, and her classmates Keely, Stef, Tonya and Nicole are wondering if she has cancer. Then the unthinkable occurs: her wig falls off during gym, seemingly pulled off by Stef, the most popular (and bossiest) girl in school. The humiliation is almost too much to bear but Keely, usually only too happy to follow Stef's lead, reaches out to her classmate; Anya gains the courage to accept her condition and the joys of unexpected friendship. Haddix successfully chooses two viewpoints, Anya's (victim) and Keely's (observer), to examine the effects of alopecia, but she oversimplifies Anya's and Keely's relationships to the other girls. The examination of the disease and its accompanying medical information, while useful, takes too much precedence over the development of the friendship. Ages 8-12.
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Review
"A poignant story of discovery." (*School Library Journal*)

"The author's sympathetic but not simplistic insight will engage readers." (*Kirkus Reviews*)

"Haddix's story is straightforward and compassionate without being preachy or maudlin." (*Denver Post & Rocky Mountain News*)

About the Author
Margaret Peterson Haddix is the author of many critically and popularly acclaimed YA and middle grade novels, including the Children of Exile series, The Missing series, the Under Their Skin series, and the Shadow Children series. A graduate of Miami University (of Ohio), she worked for several years as a reporter for *The Indianapolis News*. She also taught at the Danville (Illinois) Area Community College. She lives with her family in Columbus, Ohio. Visit her at HaddixBooks.com.

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Justin Tapscott:

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