Hello,

Sorry I missed the last few nights. I had to go up to Newport, RI to see my son Michael. I love visiting him in Newport because I get to ride around town on a scooter. Below are a few pix of a Regatta I ran into at Fort Addams. This is how the kids in Newport start their school year; NOT BAD. There had to be over 500 boats. The kids were seven to twelve years old. Just a great town to visit!

In this part of Wonder we get to meet Justin! Boyfriends are not my cup of tea – I’m just sayin’

**Wonder - Part Five: Justin**

Justin's part is introduced with a quote from *The Elephant Man*, a play written by Bernard Pomerance that is based on the life of Joseph (sometimes called John) Merrick. John Merrick was a real person who lived in the 1800s. When he was two years old, growths began to appear on his face. As he grew older, his appearance continued to change until, according to Wikipedia, "His skin appeared thick and lumpy, he developed an enlargement of his lips, and a bony lump grew on his forehead. One of his arms and both feet became enlarged." His head grew to be 36 inches around.
The name "The Elephant Man" comes from John Merrick's time in a carnival freak show where people paid to look at "freaks." He was advertised at "The Elephant Man." He eventually did leave the freak show, but died in a hospital at the age of 27.

In one line of the play, John Merrick says the words quoted at the beginning of Justin's section.

"Sometimes I think my head is so big because it is so full of dreams."
Part Five

Justin

Sometimes I think my head is so big because it is so full of dreams.
— John Merrick in Bernard Pomerance’s The Elephant Man

Olivia’s Brother

the first time I meet Olivia’s little brother, I have to admit I’m totally taken by surprise.
I shouldn’t be, of course. Olivia’s told me about his “syndrome,” has even described what he looks like, but she’s also talked about all his surgeries over the years, so I guess I assumed he’d be more normal-looking by now; like when a kid is born with a cleft palate and has plastic surgery to fix it; sometimes you can’t even tell except for the little scar above the lip. I guess I thought her brother would have some scars here and there. But not this. I definitely wasn’t expecting to see this little kid in a baseball cap who’s sitting in front of me right now.

Actually, there are two kid sitting in front of me: one is a totally normal-looking kid with curly blond hair named Jack; the other is August.

I like to think I’m able to hide my surprise. I hope I do. Surprise is one of those emotions that can be hard to fake, though, whether you’re trying to look surprised when you’re not or trying to not look surprised when you are.

I shake his hand. I shake the other kid’s hand. Don’t want to focus on his face. Cool room, I say.

Are you via’s boyfriend? he says. I think he’s smiling.

Olivia pushes down his baseball cap.

Is that a machine gun? the blond kid asks, like I haven’t heard that one before, and we talk about zydeco for a bit, and then via’s taking my hand and leading me out of the room. As soon as we close the door behind us, we hear them laughing.
Justin talks about how cool it is that Olivia makes things like earrings our of pieces of circuit boards or dresses out of t-shirts, or bags out of old jeans. For Valentine's Day she gets him a messenger bag made out of old floppy disks.

Justin explains how he traded his baroque violin for an eight-string hardanger fiddle. They look pretty similar, but do you notice the biggest difference?
We learn that Olivia and Justin are trying out for a role in the play *Our Town*. We also learn that, according to the grapevine, the drama teacher had been planning to do *The Elephant Man*, but at the last minute he changed his mind. Wonder why...?

Justin walks with Jack to the bus stop. He says Jack’s "got a gravelly voice, like a little tough guy. he kind of looks like one of those little-rascal kids in old black-and-white movies, like he should be wearing a newsboy cap and knickers."

![Hardanger Fiddle](image-url)
At the end of his part, Justin says his mind is full of thoughts that won't turn off. One of them is the elements of the periodic table which he's supposed to be memorizing. Each box on the Periodic Table shows one element.

Eventually, calmer thoughts soothe Justin "like a flatted third on a major chord." That's basically the difference between a major chord and a minor chord (or so I'm told BY CELLO TEACHER).