

"INVISIBLE?"

By

Ethelyn Boddy

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Twelve year old WILLIAM, not handsome or ugly, fat or thin, tall or short, stands alone at the kitchen table, looking down at some bold faced literature. William's finger traces the lines on the instruction sheet.

"To make your first day at Dewpoint Middle School a happy and rewarding beginning of a year filled with discovery, follow these guidelines..."

Which evidently is his intention, for he gathers up his notebook and the guidelines.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS STOP - MORNING

William, with eyes reminiscent of the Amish boy in "Witness", allows the CLAMORING HORDE OF 11 TO 13 YEAR OLD STUDENTS to surge around him as they get into the bus. William is dressed in keeping with the current styles, but not conspicuously so.

INT. BUS - MORNING

William watches the students as they jostle one another and crowd back to get their seats, taking no notice of William.

EXT. BUS IN FRONT OF SCHOOL BUILDING - MORNING

Students are spilling out of the bus. William looks at the exterior of the large, formidable school building and trudges toward it. Other students, displaying a "know where they're going" attitude, walk by him, or around and past him.

No one seems to see him.

INT. DEWPOINT MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY HALL - MORNING

The PRINCIPAL stands at the podium. The audience is peopled with the clamoring horde and William.

PRINCIPAL

It's wonderful to see all you eager students here today ready to begin your studies.

(the Principal playfully joins the groans from the audience)

Seriously, we hope you like your stay at Dewpoint. It can be as rewarding as you choose to make it. Do well in your Computer classes, your English, your History, and your Math.

The ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL joins the Principal at the podium.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

(aside to Assistant Principal)

Go forth and multiply.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

You will find your schedule in the materials that were sent to you this past week.

INT. A HALL IN DEWPOINT MIDDLE SCHOOL - MORNING

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL (V.O.)

Look for the room number to your first class.

William walks along the hall and compares the schedule in his hands with the numbers on the rooms.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

Students, seated at tables, are folding and fitting book covers on their texts. One GIRL folds hers swiftly, efficiently and neatly. A KLUTZ hands her his book and cover. She does it, too.

William haltingly imitates the girl, although no one notices him. After a few tries, William, neither skillfully nor awkwardly, cover his book. The results are okay, but not notable.

INT. ANOTHER CLASSROOM - MORNING

Students are seated in rows at individual desks. THE TEACHER stands at the front of the room.

TEACHER

Just tell us your name and about yourself, so we can all get acquainted.

A collage of students announcing name and "I spent the summer in Canada", "I like to party--kind of a party animal", etc. Until we get to the STUDENT SEATED BEHIND WILLIAM.

STUDENT SEATED BEHIND WILLIAM

(with quite a bit of eye rolling and cutesy nose wriggling)

I'm Helen Dudley. I like to swim. I enjoy being on the swim team, you know, and right now, I'm having like way too much trouble in dance class, because I don't really have, like, any time to practice, but I really love the dance class anyway.

William opens his mouth to take his turn, but the STUDENT IN FRONT OF WILLIAM speaks up without the teacher or anyone else noticing the omission. William simply closes his mouth and watches the others.

STUDENT IN FRONT OF WILLIAM

My name is George.

TEACHER

(all sweet and smiley)  
Do you have a last name?

STUDENT IN FRONT OF WILLIAM

Yeah.

TEACHER

Would you like to share it with us?

INT. HALL - NOON

William is walking along the heavily populated hall. He carries three thick texts, all in those self-applied book covers. He finds his hall locker. Students are crowded around the locker near his. They are chatting and laughing.

Several point and jeer at the NERDY BOY who drops his books. Nerdy Boy picks the books up and shoves them into his back pack. William observes the other students, but he is unnoticed. He puts his books in his locker.

INT. CAFETERIA LUNCH LINE - NOON

William puts his lunch plate on his tray and pushes it along. At the end of the cafeteria line, he hands over his lunch card. It is punched and returned. No words are exchanged, nor is he acknowledged in any way by any of the SERVERS or the CASHIER.

He seats himself at a corner table. He is alone.

He watches the other students in the cafeteria as they gather in companionable clusters. ONE GROUP is a fashion statement for The Gap. A FREAK GROUP is a vote for heavy metal. A FEW NERDY TYPES adjust their thick-rimmed glasses and compare notes. All impart a feeling of having found their niche and are where they belong. They belong.

INT. BOY'S REST ROOM - AFTERNOON

As William washes his hands, he pulls out a paper towel from the dispenser and wipes them, he looks at the TWO BOYS jostling one another playfully. They do not see William although he is standing in plain sight.

INT. GYM - AFTERNOON

William and a group of OTHER BOYS are seated on the first row of bleachers. The P.E. Teacher stands on the gym floor before them. God love him, he looks just the way people think P.E. Teachers look, even though they seldom do. He's got the whistle around his neck, and is wearing sweats.

He briskly and swiftly delivers his top-sergeant soliloquy while the students reflect various responses of fear, eye rolling, grinning, approving nods of disgust. William's features very slightly reflect each of these responses as he looks at the other boys' reactions. All of the other boys' attentions are directed elsewhere. They do not see William.

P.E. TEACHER

Now listen up. You've got your list of supplies. We wear regulation gym clothes here. And you should get them washed regularly.

(MORE)

P.E. TEACHER (CONT'D)

I don't want any of that "I couldn't find my shorts" or "The dog ate my shirt". When gym time comes, I want you dressed and reporting right here. Be sure you get the no mark soles on your shoes. If there are any streaks on this floor, you'll be here after school scouring it up. Remember we are no a pantywaist class. I want school spirit and enthusiasm. Don't ever think about cutting this class, ever. Because I'll find you.

(each ever is emphasized by a sharp point to the students to the left of William and to his right)

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - AFTERNOON

William is seated at the computer screen. He watches the screens of other students as they hotmail messages to one another. A NAMBY-PAMBY INSTRUCTOR is droning some instructions, but no one is listening. William has a blank screen.

EXT. BUS IN FRONT OF SCHOOL BUILDING - AFTERNOON

The BUS DRIVER has his left hand on the steering wheel and his right hand on the door-opening crank as William enters the bus. William pauses as he looks for a possible place to sit. Students are behind him waiting to board. William only hesitates for a split second, but it's long enough to prompt the Bus Driver.

BUS DRIVER

(snarling directly at William)

Move along. You're in the way.

William almost smiles, almost sobs, then quickly recovers with a look of defiance and swaggers towards the back of the bus.

FADE OUT.