



# NOTHING LIKE THAT

## by Malcolm Duffy



My name's Isla, which is like an Island that's been worn away by waves.

I'm 9, which is like the number 6 showing off with a headstand.

I'm in a wheelchair, which is like a seat that goes places.

I live in a terraced house, which is like a small slice of street.

My mum is nice, like a teacher who never shouts.

My dad's called Tom, like the sound you get when you hit a bongo once.

My brother Gavin's like the sun - nice, but sometimes you have to avoid him.

Not much happens to me, like a story with the exciting bits removed.

Then Dad got made redundant, which is like a holiday you don't want.

There was silence, like when someone dies.

Mum and Dad mumbled, like people in church making secret prayers.

They were sad, like being weighed down by invisible rocks.

Our place was filled with boxes, like we were living in a post office.

Everything in our house disappeared, like we were in a magic show.

We moved to a different town, like people looking for adventure.

Our house was small, like they'd picked the wrong size.

My new school made me nervous, like my courage had run away.

I was the only one in a wheelchair, like a jigsaw piece in the wrong puzzle.

Some kids stared at me, like I'd stepped out of a spacecraft.

Some kids avoided me, like I had Covid.

Some kids made jokes about me, like they were training to be funny.

I felt sad, like a polar bear looking for ice.

I wanted to stay home, like someone afraid of the outside.

Mum said be strong, like a nine year old superhero.

But I felt weak, like my muscles had been removed.

Then a girl appeared, like a stranger in a movie.

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She was called Matilda, like the book.

She talked to me, like I had a working brain.

She kept inviting me to her house, like I lived there.

We made funny videos, like you do.

We connected, like she had the password to me.

She never mentioned the wheelchair, like it wasn't there.

She was kind.

And there's nothing like that.



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