



a mango-shaped space

book by
wendy mass

screenplay by
tamar halpern



Thirteen year old
Mia has
some problems.

Her cat is sick.
She's failing math.

Her family
doesn't get her.
Her best friend
is mad at her
about everything.

AND...

Mia
sees
sound.



In Mia's world, music looks like this



pop



classical

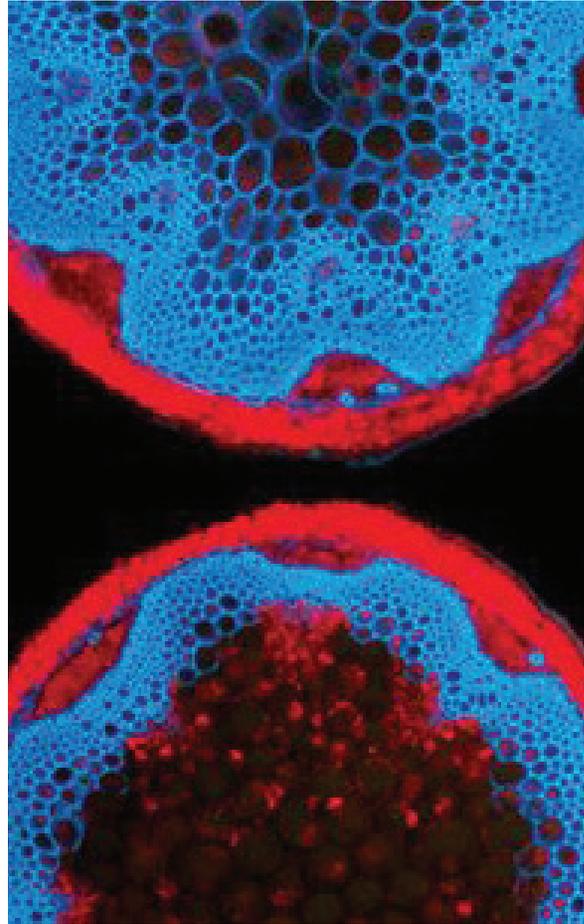


rock

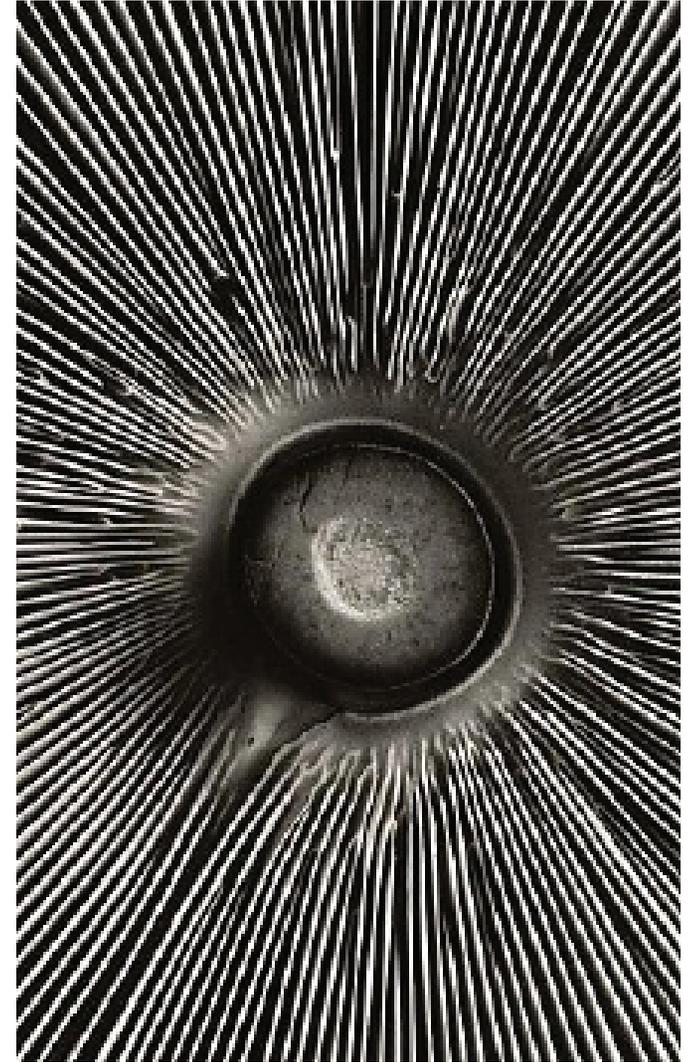
Seeing sounds complicates life



bird song



AOL dial up



door slam

And it also makes
life sweeter.
Her beloved cat
Mango is her
world. She loves
his orange shapes
when he purrs.





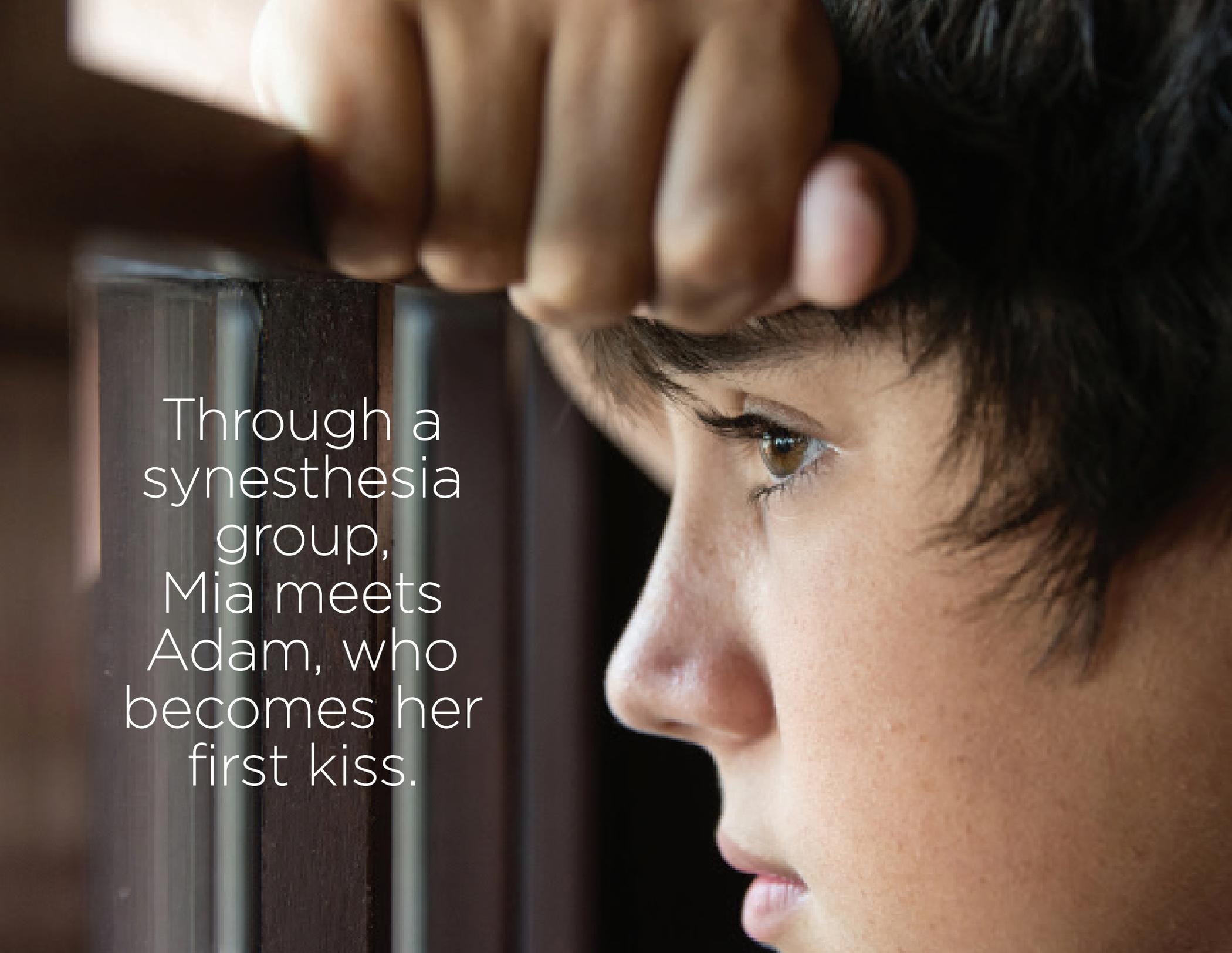
Convinced she's a freak, Mia keeps this secret to herself as her grades start failing.

Not even her best
friend Jenna knows.
And they tell each
other *everything*.



And then Mia's world turns upside down.
She finds out she's not crazy. She has
synesthesia.





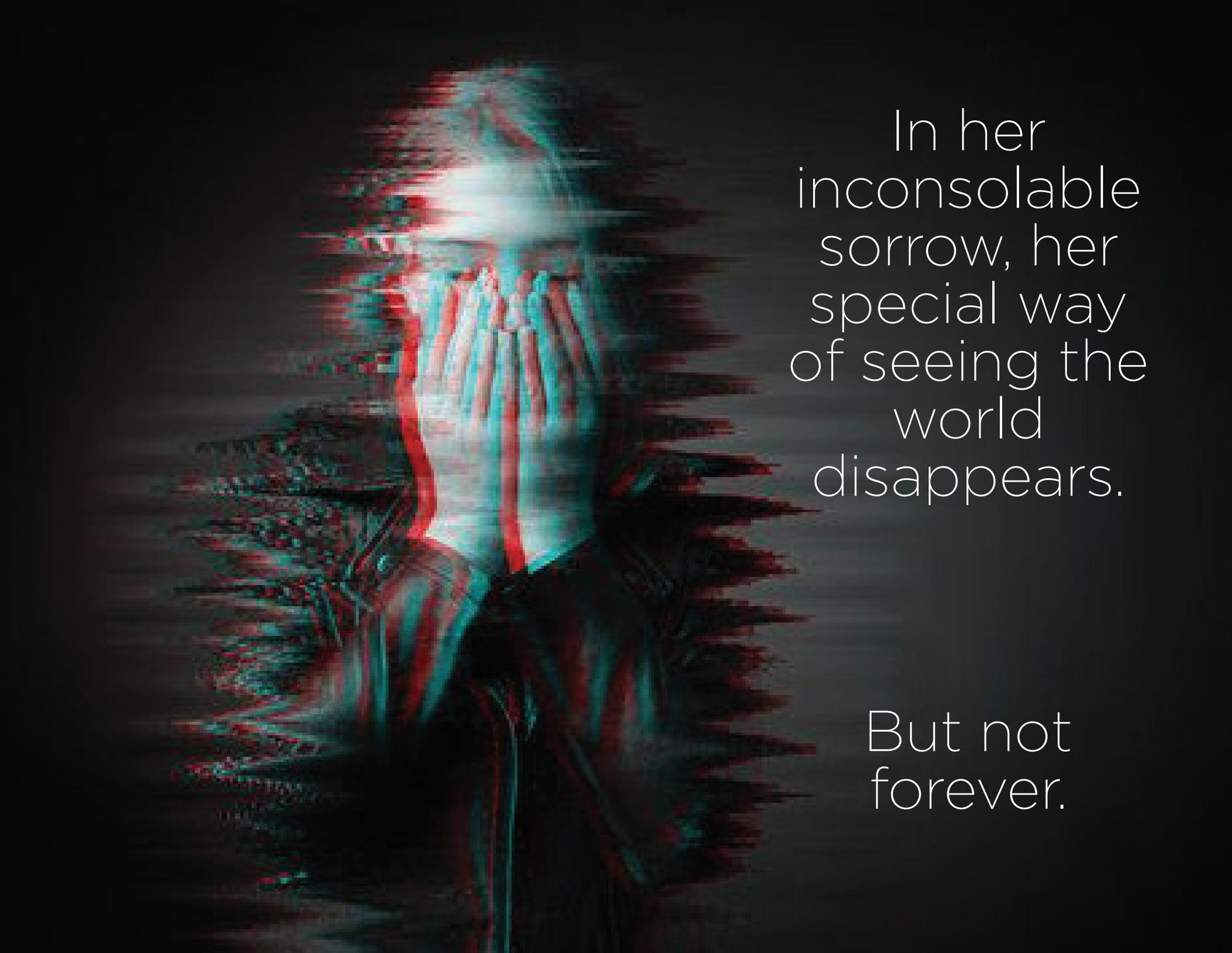
Through a
synesthesia
group,
Mia meets
Adam, who
becomes her
first kiss.



When Jenna finds out Mia was keeping a secret, she's hurt and angry. Their friendship starts to break apart.



Then the worst
thing happens.
Mango gets sick
and dies in
Mia's arms.

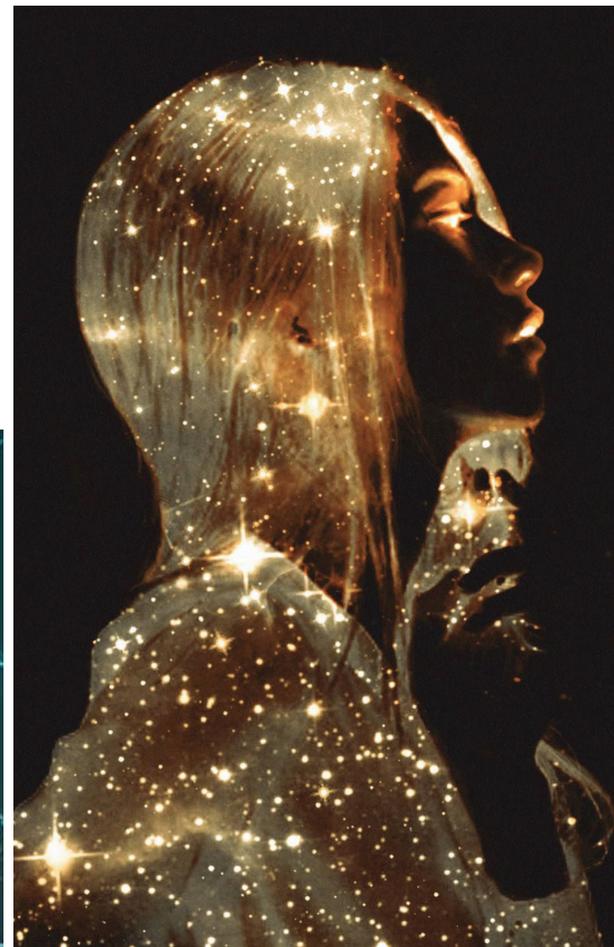
A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark coat, stands in a dark, rainy street. She has her hands pressed against her face, covering her eyes and mouth, suggesting a state of deep grief or despair. The background is dark and blurry, with some lights visible in the distance. The overall mood is somber and melancholic.

In her
inconsolable
sorrow, her
special way
of seeing the
world
disappears.

But not
forever.

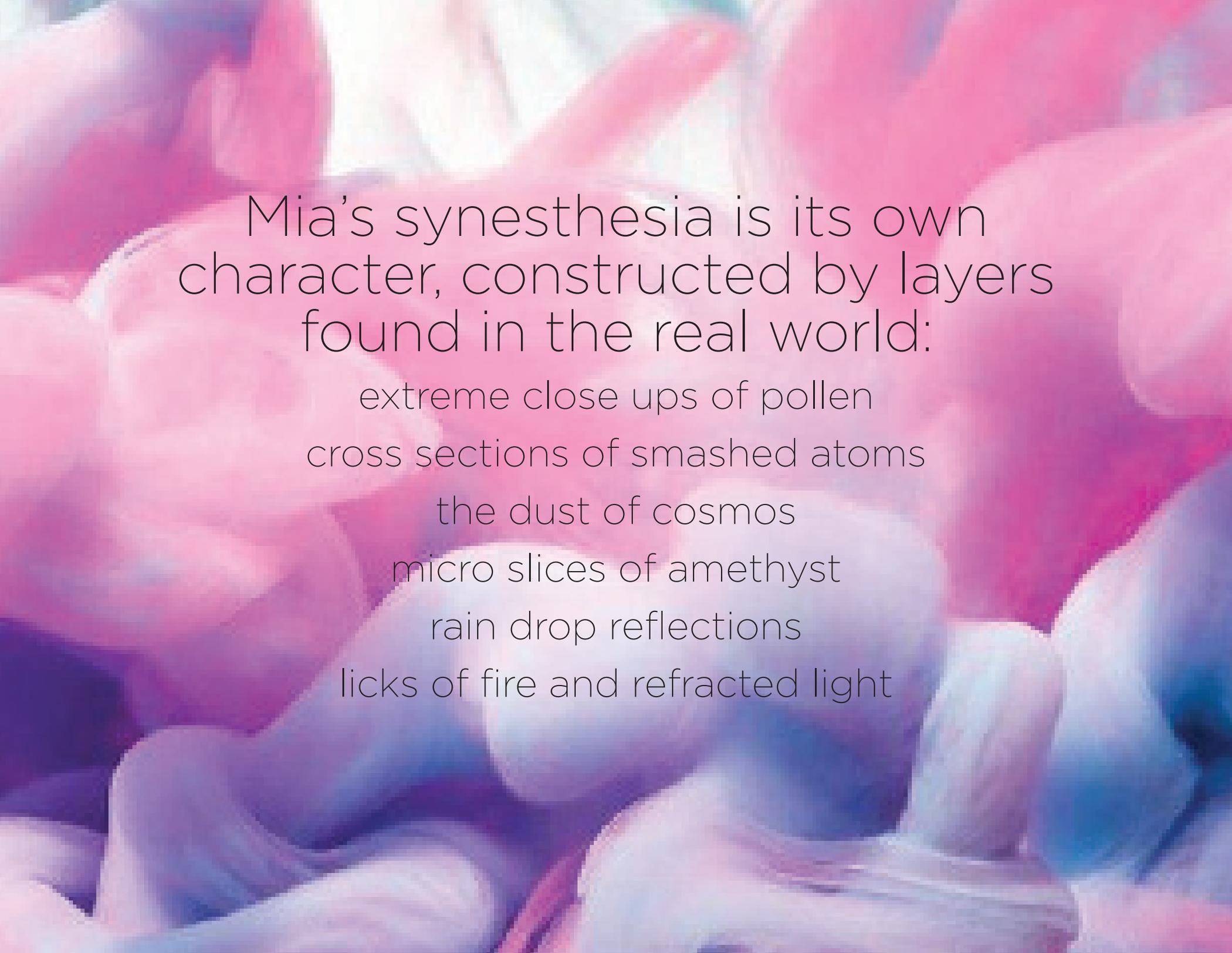


As a director with synesthesia, I know Mia's world.





Using CGI, I'll bring visual explosions of color, light, movement, and texture to this grounded story of teen angst and joy.



Mia's synesthesia is its own
character, constructed by layers
found in the real world:

extreme close ups of pollen

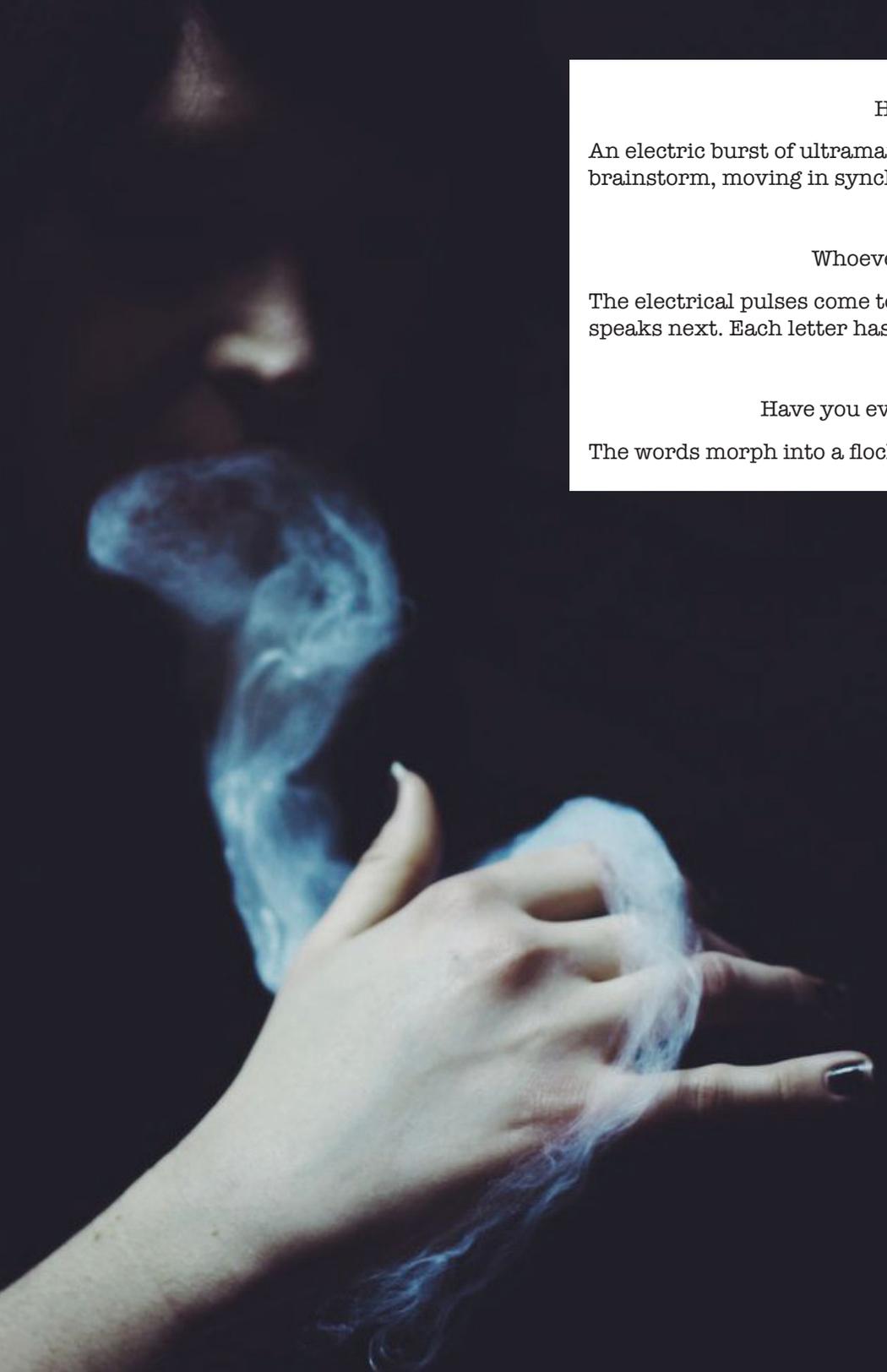
cross sections of smashed atoms

the dust of cosmos

micro slices of amethyst

rain drop reflections

licks of fire and refracted light

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a glowing, ethereal blue shape that resembles a brain or a complex, organic form. The background is dark, making the blue glow stand out. The hand is positioned in the lower right, with fingers gently cradling the glowing object.

MIA
Hello...

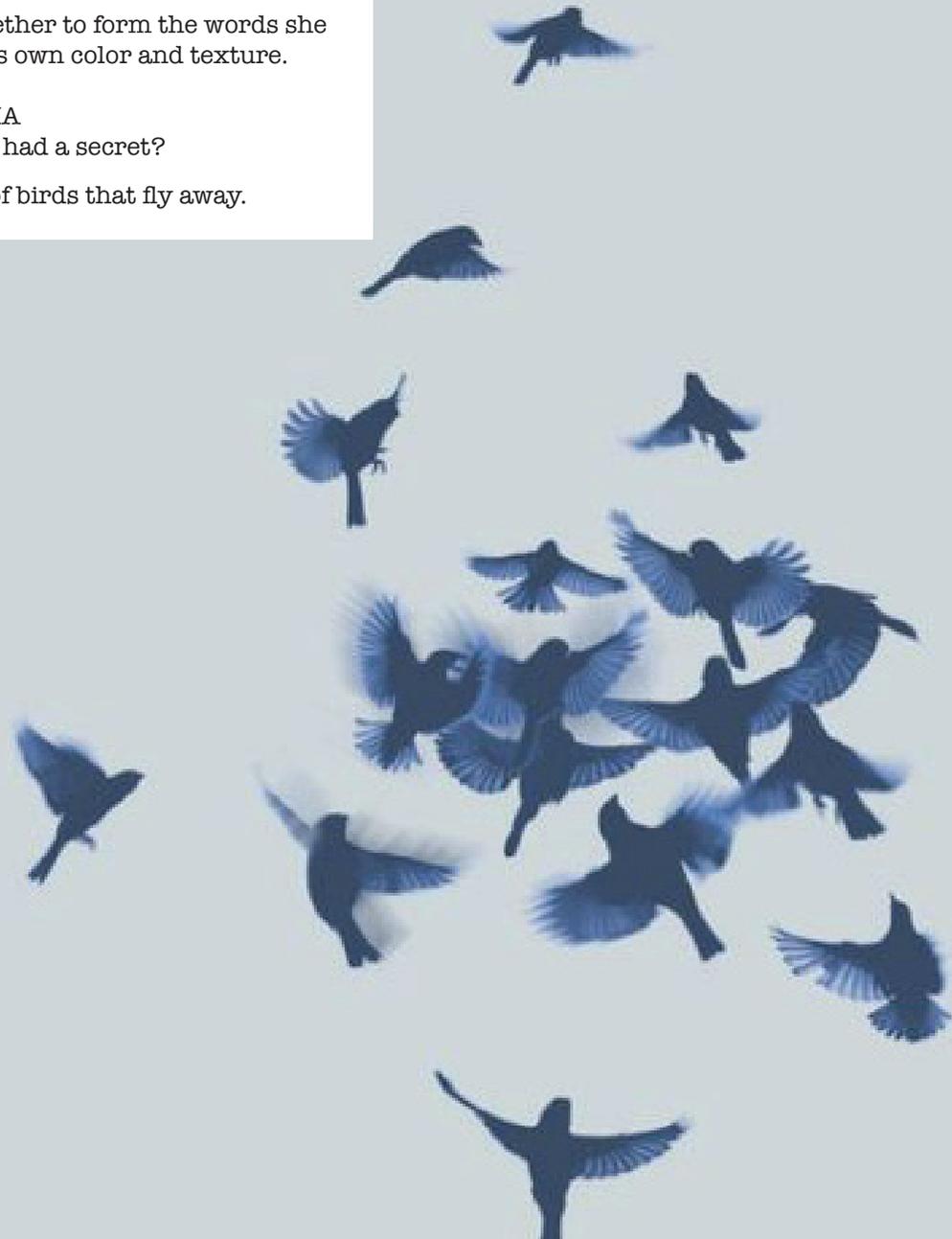
An electric burst of ultramarine blue flickers like a
brainstorm, moving in synch with her words.

MIA
Whoever you are...

The electrical pulses come together to form the words she
speaks next. Each letter has its own color and texture.

MIA
Have you ever had a secret?

The words morph into a flock of birds that fly away.





My vision reflects the themes that made the book so successful, namely real tween problems which will be explored through real performances. From cinematography to wardrobe through sound design, the world will be genuine and authentic.



Mia's world



TONAL COMPS

Mia's character - a wise, wry girl with a lively inner world - informs the look and feel. Grounded in truth, it's tonally akin to *Wonderstruck*, *Wonder* and *Stargirl*. Add the heart of *Paper Moon* and *Because of Winn Dixie* to edge closer to my vision. *Pen15* has shown that audiences love seeing teen life in the 1990's.



Wonderstruck



Stargirl



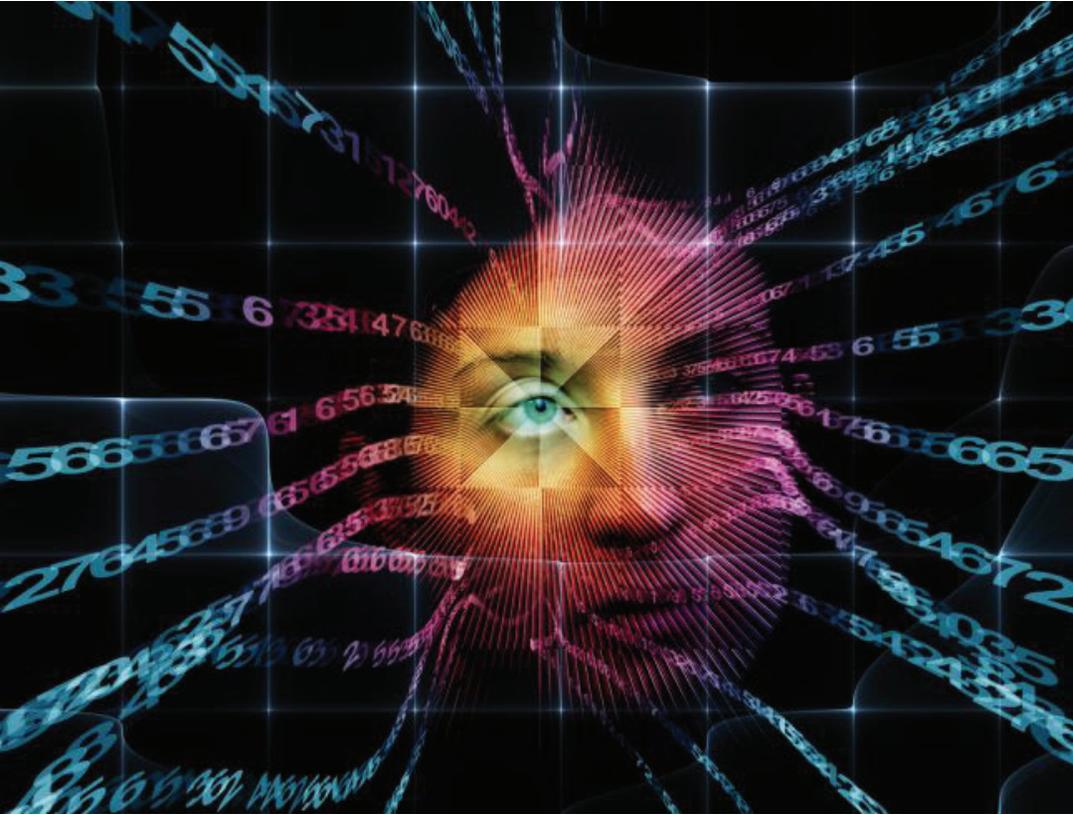
Paper Moon



Because of Winn Dixie



Wonder

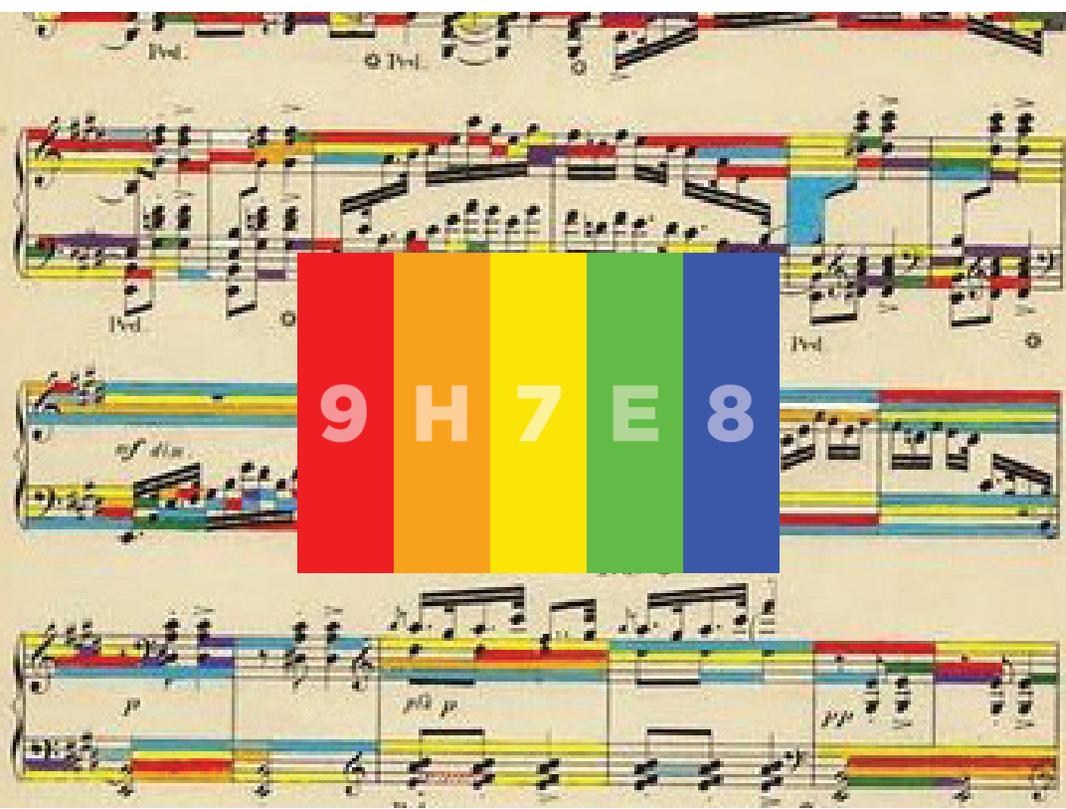


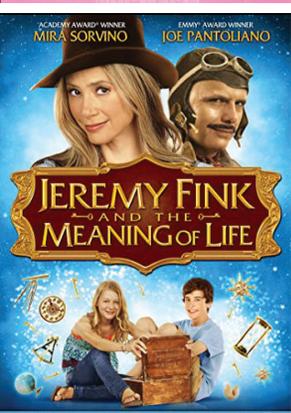
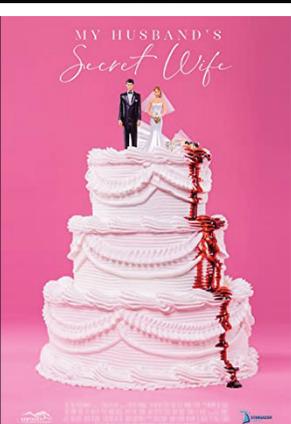
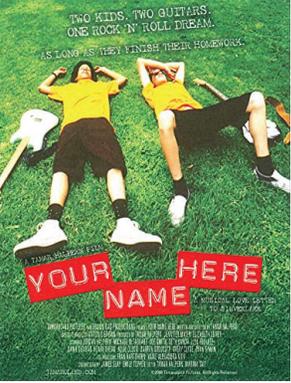
SYNESTHESIA

is an involuntary condition that blends combinations of touch, hearing, sight, taste and smell to create increased communication between sensory regions of the brain.

Synesthetes hear color, feel sound and taste shapes.

Researchers report one in 2000 people have a form of Synesthesia, but most Synesthetes are unaware it's an identified condition.





TAMAR HALPERN

www.TamarolandPictures.com

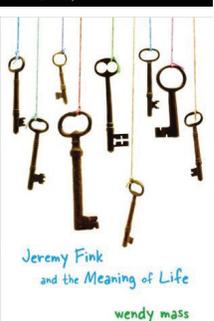
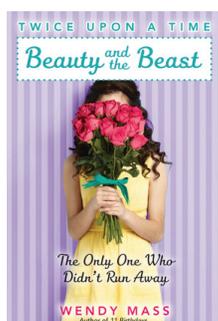
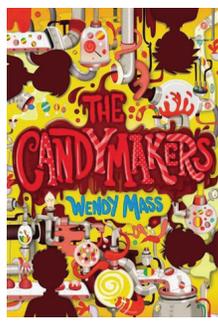
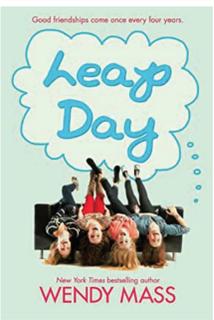
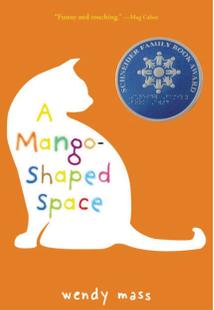
Tamar Halpern has written and directed nine features, with a focus on adapting books and true stories. Her film *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life*, based on Wendy Mass's book, stars Mira Sorvino and Joe Pantoliano. Previous work includes *Shelf Life*, "a whip-smart film" (*Variety*) starring Betsy Brandt of *Breaking Bad*, which released on Netflix.

She has directed dozens of commercials, VR, and shorts like *Death Taxes and Apple Juice*, starring three children and winning 16 awards. Her documentary about LA artist Llyn Foulkes was called "undeniably fascinating" by *Variety* and "a joy to watch" by *The Hollywood Reporter*, and released on Netflix.

Diving in the thriller genre, Tamar has written and directed five features for A&E. Recently, she was hired to adapt a book by SE Hinton (who wrote *The Outsiders*) and is attached to direct. Her script about the intrepid journalist Nellie Bly is optioned by Darren Aronofsky's Protozoa Films and Sobini Films. Her script *Ezzy Fish*, also about synesthesia, was on the Black List, a Nichol's semi-finalist, an IFP/NY top ten and in Film Independent's Director Lab. She holds an MFA in Film Production from USC and loves working with kids.



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WENDY MASS

www.WendyMass.com

Wendy Mass is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 29 novels for children and young adults. Her books have been translated into 26 languages and nominated for 91 state book awards. Her first novel, *A Mango-Shaped Space*, is now in its 33rd printing. It won the Schneider Family Book Award by the American Library Association and continues to top recommended children's book reading lists here and abroad. The first to explore the fascinating world of Synesthesia, it has been translated into Korean, Japanese, Chinese (simple and complex), Indonesian, French-Canadian, and Portuguese. Circulated in thousands of elementary and middle school libraries, *Mango* is used in school curriculums and the annual Battle of the Books competitions. Wendy's novel *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life* was made into a feature film starring Mira Sorvino, Michael Urie and Joe Pantoliano. Written and directed by Tamar Halpern, the film won many festival awards before being released across streaming platforms. Wendy lives with her family in New Jersey. Her first graphic novel (about virtual reality) will be published in 2022.

“Wendy Mass is a writer to watch.”
- Judy Blume

CHARACTERS

MIA (13): Pragmatic and dry humored, Mia tries to blend in and hide her strange view of the universe.

JENNA (13): Mia's best friend. Chirpy with an infectious personality and lots of opinions.

MIA'S MOM (late 40's): An iron fist in a velvet glove, she juggles conflicting family personalities while working as an astronomer.

MIA'S DAD (late 40's): A helicopter mechanic who worries about his kids and just wants to keep the peace. The kind of dad we all wish we had.

BETH (16): Mia's older sister. Blue mohawk, newly vegan and a distinct dislike of Mia's introverted behavior.

ZACH (10): Mia's younger brother. A whiz-kid of facts and an avid online gamer of whatever he can find with 1997 dial up, when this story takes place.

DR. WEISS (50-70's): A brilliant and eccentric neurologist who is thrilled to work with Synesthesia because it's the least worrisome thing that can happen to a brain.

ADAM (15): Cocky and charming, he meets Mia in a Synesthesia support group and briefly tries to become her boyfriend, convincing her that Synesthesia makes her superior, like him.

ROGER (13): Shy and unassuming, his colorblindness brings him and Mia together in the most surprising of ways.