

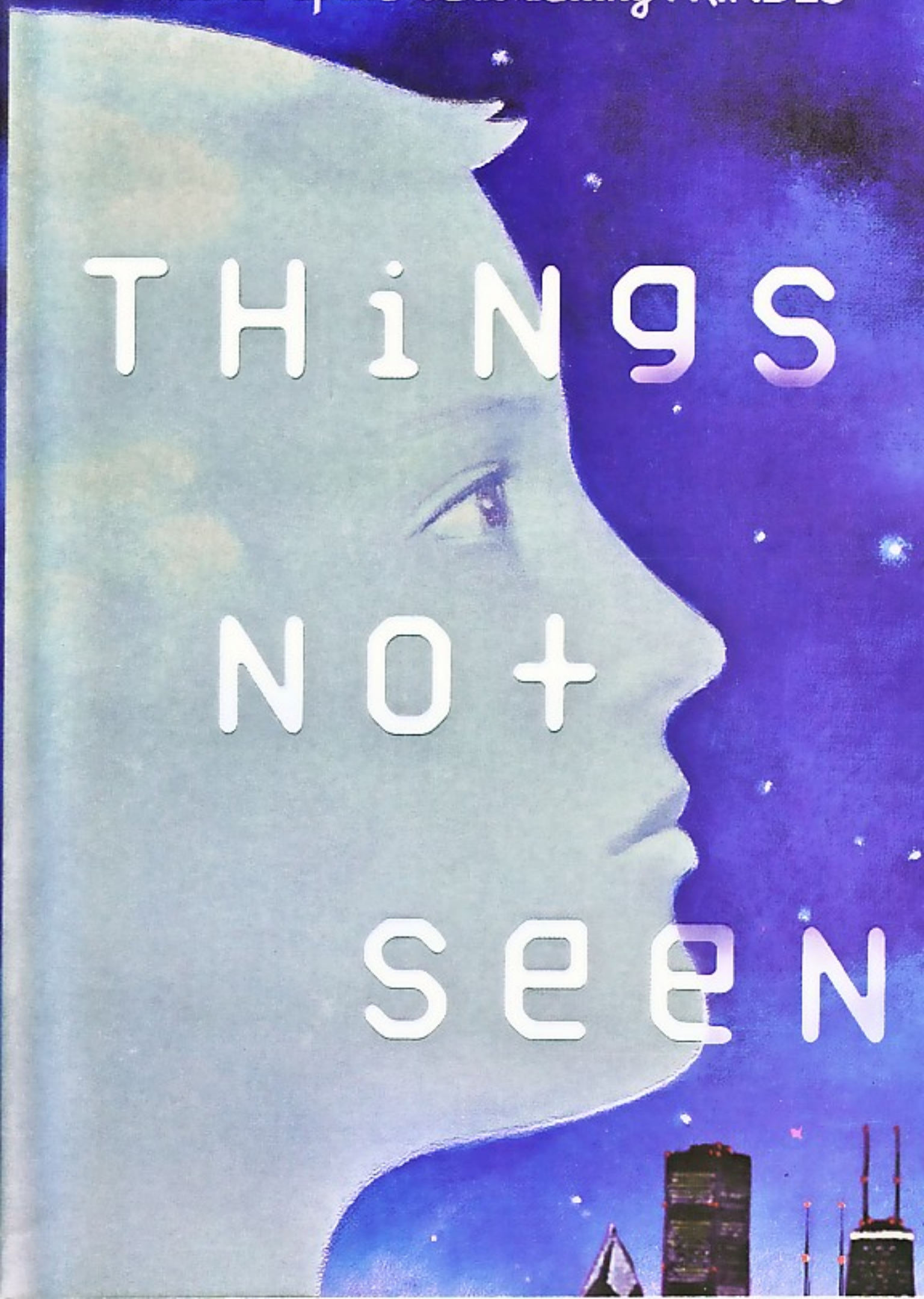
andrew clements

author of the best-selling FRINDLE

THINGS

NOT

SEEN





# ABOUT ME

**I**t's a Tuesday morning in February, and I get up as usual, and I stumble into the bathroom to take a shower in the dark. Which is my school-day method because it's sort of like an extra ten minutes of sleep.

It's after the shower. That's when it happens.

It's when I turn on the bathroom light and wipe the fog off the mirror to comb my hair. It's what I see in the mirror. It's what I don't see.

I look a second time, and then rub at the mirror again.

I'm not there.

That's what I'm saying.

I'm. Not. There.

I feel kind of dizzy, so I make my way back to bed because if I'm dreaming, bed is the place, right? And I wait to wake up. But I don't because I already am.

I feel my heart pounding in my chest. My breath comes fast and my mouth is dry. I lift my head off the pillow and see my shape on the bed. It's right there, under the covers. Then I pull off the electric blanket and the sheet.

Nothing.

So I go back to the bathroom, to the big mirror. And I'm still not there. The mirror is the mirror, and it is on

the wall, and I am not there in front of it. I think I am—I mean, I see the mirror, I see my towel wave through the air, I see the shower curtain jump when I punch at it. But I don't see me.

So I panic, and I wrap the towel around my waist, and I go to tell my mom and dad.

Which is not like me. I don't tell them much. I mean, they're okay in small doses, and they can be useful. Them knowing what I'm up to usually makes them less useful.

But they are smart, I give them that much, and this looks like a problem where smarts might count, so I'm headed for the kitchen. I know they'll both be there, because this is a work day, a school day, and on such a day in the Phillips house, eggs and toast hit the heat at seven-fifteen. Always.

I go down the hall to the stairs, and I stop. I'm scared of the stairs. Normally, I have good eye-hand coordination. I don't dork out, don't drop my tray in the cafeteria, trip on the stairs, nothing like that. But there's a problem this morning: no hands, no arms, no legs, no feet. I feel them, but I can't see them. I hang on to the banister and feel my way down like a three-year-old.

Then I'm in the kitchen doorway, my feet cold on the tile floor. Dad scrambles the eggs, Mom reads the paper. And I say, "Guys! I can't see myself!"

They glance at the door to the dining room, and Dad says, "Well, come on in here and let's see what's the matter."

And I say, "But that's what's the matter—I am in here!"



I can't see myself! You can't see me. I can't be seen—like, I'm invisible!"

Mom looks at Dad, and she smiles that "Kids!" kind of smile that I hate, then looks back to her paper. She turns on her Voice of Authority: "Stop messing around now, Bobby. You've only got twenty minutes before your bus. Disconnect the microphone or the walkie-talkie or whatever it is you're playing with, come hang up this wet towel, and then get in here and eat. Now."

Meet Professor Mom, also known as the Director. Her motto is, When in doubt, give an order. She's used to the timid little freshmen in her literature classes at the University of Chicago. She expects "young people" to jump when she barks at them.

I've been accused. I'm "messing around," goofing off. Again. So I pull out my chair, sit on it, grab my orange juice, glug it down, and thump the glass onto the place mat.

And now I've got their attention. Completely.

Dad stops stirring eggs and stares at my empty glass. Mom leans so far forward that she spills her own juice, and it drips into her lap. She doesn't notice.

Dad says, "This is a trick, right? Do something else."

So I pick up my spoon, lick it, and hang it on my nose—a pretty good trick even when your nose looks like it's there. The spoon hangs in midair.

"Bobby?" Mom's voice is squeaky. "Bobby, stop this." Another order.

"I'm not *doing* anything, Mom. It's just happening."

The spoon drops and jangles on the floor. It's a ce-



# invisible sight

**B**obby Phillips is your average fifteen-year-old boy. That is, until he wakes up one morning and can't see himself in the mirror. Not blind, not dreaming—Bobby is just plain invisible. There doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason for Bobby's new condition and even his dad the physicist can't figure it out. For Bobby, that means no school, no friends, no life. He's a missing person. Then he meets Alicia. She's blind, and Bobby can't resist talking to her, trusting her. But people are starting to wonder where Bobby is, and if he's even still alive. Bobby knows that his invisibility could have dangerous consequences for his family and that time is running out. He has to find out how to be seen again—before it's too late.

★ "A readable, thought-provoking tour de force, alive with stimulating ideas, hard choices, and young people discovering bright possibilities ahead."

—KIRKUS REVIEWS, STARRED REVIEW

"Clements's story is full of life; it's poignant, funny, scary, and seemingly all too possible. The author successfully blends reality with fantasy in a tale that keeps his audience in suspense until the very end." —SLJ



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