

All the Bright Places Study Guide

All the Bright Places by Jennifer Niven

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Plot Summary

Violet Markey and Theodore Finch meet on the ledge of the bell tower of their school, both contemplating suicide, in the novel “All the Bright Places” by Jennifer Niven. Finch, who has long been labeled a freak by his classmates, recognizes Violet’s pain as she tries to deal with the loss of her sister in a car accident. Finch, meanwhile, struggles against a mental illness where he is one moment on top of the world and the next in a depression so deep he can’t even leave his house. Themes of dealing with death and loss, the stigma of mental illness, bullying and the power of love are all addressed through the course of the novel in which these two teens try to help one another through problems bigger than they are.

It is on the anniversary of her sister’s birthday that Violet finds herself balanced on the ledge of the bell tower at her high school. Her sister, Eleanor, had been killed in a car wreck just nine months prior. Finch, who had believed he was in the bell tower alone, talks Violet off the ledge and back into the building. The students watching believe it was Violet who saved Finch instead of vice versa. Neither Finch nor Violet tells them any differently. Later in the day, when Finch notices Violet’s embarrassment when she drops her books and draws attention to herself, he makes a ruckus to draw the attention away from her. He later asks her, in class, to work as his partner on a Geography project. That evening Finch reaches out to Violet through Facebook. He sends her a quote by author Virginia Woolf and Violet responds by sending him a quote in return. The two start a tentative friendship and Violet agrees to work as Finch’s partner.

As Finch uses his humor and patient love to help Violet overcome her grief, he faces a misery of his own. Finch suffers with an undiagnosed mental illness that a school counselor identifies near the end of the novel as bipolar disorder. Finch alternates between being full of energy with an active mind; to sinking into a darkness and depression so deep he cannot remember what took place during those times. He describes himself as being Asleep through these dark times and dreads another episode. Violet is a virtue in his life that helps him to stay Awake.

When Violet learns Finch tried to overdose, and has attended a suicide support group, she becomes worried about him especially because his behavior has become more and more unusual. She confronts him about his illness, hoping to help him but instead sends him on the run. Violet tries to reach out to him through his friends and family but none of them seem really concerned. They pass his behavior off as just the way he is and show little concern until they begin getting goodbye emails and texts from him. It is Violet who finds Finch’s car and clothes beside the Blue Hole, a place they visited during their Geography project. It is assumed Finch intentionally drowned himself.

After his funeral, Violet decides to visit the remaining places they’d marked to see for their project. At each site, she discovers that Finch had been there as well before his death, leaving things behind to show his progress. The final site on their map is a location with which Violet is not familiar. She searches the place out and discovers a tiny chapel built to memorialize people killed in automobile accidents. In a Bible at the

front of the chapel, Finch has left the sheet music and lyrics for a song he has written about her. The song lyrics speak of Finch's love for her and the difference she made in his life even though she wasn't able to save him.



Part 1: Finch: I am Awake Again – Violet: 154 Days Til Graduation

Summary

In the first section narrated by Theodore Finch entitled “I am Awake Again. Day 6.” Finch wonders if today is the day he should die. He describes being awake only six days after doing what he calls “Sleeping” through the holidays. He’s balanced on the ledge of the bell tower at his school. One of the boys on the grounds points up but Finch realizes he isn’t pointing at him, but instead a girl on the other side of the tower. Finch talks to Violet, and convinces her to step back over the railing. After she’s safe, Violet does the same for him. The crowd below assumes it was Violet who saved Finch.

Because Finch is on probation, he’s required to attend weekly counseling sessions along with meeting other requirements. In that day’s meeting, Mr. Embry asks Finch why he was on the bell tower. Finch tries to joke with Mr. Embry as he asks Finch if he was trying to hurt himself and explains how his death would affect the friends and family he left behind. He orders Finch to take a blood test and meet with him twice weekly from that point forward. While he knows Mr. Embry thinks he wants to die, Finch thinks to himself that he wants to live but also that he doesn’t want to go to sleep again. For Finch, getting on the bell tower was a way of taking control of his life.

In this section of the novel, Finch addresses one of the stigmas of mental illness. Even at his young age, he has realized that people don’t generally have much sympathy for a disease that doesn’t have visible symptoms. This is why he had his sister tell his guidance counselor and teachers that he had the flu. He knows this physical illness is easier for people to relate to and understand.

Violet Markey narrates the following section. In this section “154 Days til Graduation,” Violet is in the office of her school counselor after the incident on the bell tower with Finch. Mrs. Krensey doesn’t say anything right away about the bell tower incident but instead asks Violet how she’s been sleeping. Violet lies and says she hasn’t been having bad dreams. Violet has missed the entrance deadline for NYU, the college she’d wanted to attend. She also isn’t writing, and has given up her online magazine, a hobby that had once been her passion. After Eleanor died in a car crash, Violet feels her words have dried up. The counselor questions if she’s driven or ridden in a car since the accident. Violet has done neither of these. She’s also given up all of her extracurricular activities with the exception of orchestra. When the counselor tells Violet she is a survivor and should be further along in her healing, Violet gets up and walks out of the room.

In Russian literature, Violet’s ex boyfriend asks through a handwritten note if she were the one who saved Finch. She writes back that she just happened to be there. At the end of the class, Violet stays after class because the teacher has assigned a ten-page



paper that Violet doesn't feel she can write. Without her even having to ask, the teacher tells Violet to turn in whatever she feels she can handle.

Analysis

This novel is narrated by two very different, and very disturbed, teens. Theodore Finch is described as the school freak who is on probation for fighting. Violet, on the other hand, was a cheerleader and member of the student council with plans to attend New York University after her high school graduation. The two meet each other on the ledge of the school's bell tower as each of them are apparently contemplating suicide. Finch admits in his narration that death is constantly on his mind. Violet doesn't mention anything about considering death, but it seems to be that was her intent when she went to the tower.

Some important themes introduced in the beginning of this novel include those of mental illness, bullying, and dealing with death and loss. From the description that Finch gives of himself, it seems that he is suffering with some form of undiagnosed mental illness. He describes times, which he calls being "Asleep" where he blacks out and does not remember things for days, weeks or in the case of his last blackout, months. He explains how he missed nearly five weeks of school in the fall semester and has no memory of Thanksgiving or Christmas. During his "Awake" periods, he describes not being able to sleep because his mind runs so fast. Finch said he went to the bell tower not so much because he wanted to die, but because he wanted to find some way to get control of his life. His idea of getting control of his life is keeping the "Asleep" periods from coming.

Violet, on the other hand, is dealing with a loss in her life. It appears that Violet's sister, Eleanor, to whom she was very close, died in a car wreck. Even though the prescription is too strong for her, Violet wears Eleanor's glasses. These glasses seem to represent to Violet a part of Eleanor that she can keep with her. As she describes it, Violet feels as if she is able to see through Eleanor's eyes when she wears the glasses. Since her sister's death, Violet has lost interest in most of her pastimes. She's stopped cheerleading. She's dropped off the student council. Even though she'd once seen writing as her dream career, Violet has lost the desire and ability to write since her sister died. She's also stopped contributing to a very popular online magazine that she and her sister created together. The counselor asks Violet if she is punishing herself and although Violet says she isn't it is obvious that she is. Her methods of punishing herself go far beyond cutting her hair into bangs because they are unattractive. Violet seems to have no desire to live any longer. She uses her sister's death as an excuse to avoid having to try to write again. Violet even avoids driving or riding in automobiles. As it has been nine months since her sister's death, Violet is not progressing well in learning to live with the loss of her sister.

The next theme that is mentioned in this section of the novel is that of bullying. Finch is a student who stands out at school. He does things that are out of the ordinary. For this reason, his students call him Theodore Freak. Although Finch is strange, it appears he's



also highly sensitive to the cruelty of the students. As he considers jumping, he thinks that if he were dead, he wouldn't have to hear the taunts any longer. What is perhaps more surprising is that of the students on the ground, instead of showing any concern for Finch, they encourage his attempt, calling him names and egging him on even as he stands on the ledge. Finch is unable to jump, however, because he feels he must save Violet. Notice that once they are off the ledge, the students think that Violet saved Finch instead of vice versa. Violet thanks Finch in private and gives him a kiss on the cheek, but does not let others know how things actually happened.

Notice in this section that when Finch's guidance counselor mentions that Finch's mother had called the school telling them Finch had the flu as the excuse for his five-week absence, Finch knows the caller was really his sister, Kate. He indicates his mother was too busy to be bothered with his illness. It seems strange that a teen would be able to miss five weeks of school without his mother knowing unless that mother was just completely out of touch with her children. Notice the difference in the reaction that Violet's mother has when Violet tells her she's having nightmares. She immediately gets Violet help in the form of a school counselor. Even with the differing reactions from the parents, however, both teens still wind up thinking about death.

Discussion Question 1

How has Eleanor's death affected Violet's life? Why does Violet refuse to move on after this death?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the symptoms of Finch's mental illness as given so far in the novel. With what disorder do you think he suffers? Support your answer with examples from the novel.

Discussion Question 3

Compare and contrast Violet and Finch. How are their school statuses, home lives and mental statuses similar? How are they different?

Vocabulary

permanent, conducting, congregation, bequeath, milling, offense, excel, consistency, intact, defeats, arresting, rickety, technically, probation, involuntarily, refrain, altercations, expulsion, predictable, deflector, nonnegotiable, suitability, etched, escort, literally, socialized, lopsided, protesting, racism, consumption, extenuating



Part 1: Finch: Day 6 (Still) of Being Awake

Summary

In his U.S. Geography class, Finch learns Hoosier Hill is the highest spot in the state of Indiana, his home state. Finch suggests the class should be allowed a field trip to see that spot. The teacher allows Finch's comment but makes it plain the comment wasn't appreciated. As the teacher continues talking about the sights in Indiana, Violet comes in late and accidentally drops her books. Finch knocks his own books off the desk and turns his chair over, taking the focus off Violet. After Finch has collected his books, Mr. Black explains the members in the class will be working in two-person teams to visit and report on at least two wonders of Indiana. Finch asks the teacher if they can pick their own partners, then announces he wants to partner with Violet. Violet tries to get off with a lighter assignment but Mr. Black refuses to go easy on her. Finch remembers the car wreck that killed Violet's sister and realizes this is why she doesn't want the attention she's getting.

Gabe Romero and four other popular kids are waiting for Finch outside the classroom. Romero, who is also called Roamer, warns Finch not to look at him again. Roamer shoves Finch's books out of his hands, much like a fifth grader would do. Finch keeps himself under control.

Later, in the parking lot, Finch's friend Charlie asks where he was during winter break. Finch answers vaguely that he was around. He hasn't told Charlie, or his other friend, Brenda, about his Asleep periods. He sees Violet in the parking lot and realizes he's falling in love with her because of the way she smiled at him in Geography class. At home Finch types of a description of that day's suicide attempt. He lists how close he came to actually jumping, some information about jumping as a form of suicide and reasons why he didn't go through with his attempt.

In an attempt to learn more about Violet, he searches for her on the Internet. He finds the EleanorandViolet.com site that Violet and her sister created, and the newspaper article about the girls' car accident. Finch reads the details of how Violet's sister was killed, but she survived with only minor injuries. He logs onto Facebook and sets up an account with the sole intent of sending her a friend request. Violet later accepts his request and sends him a message asking why he ambushed her in class. Finch responds that he wants them both to get off the figurative ledge they are on and get on with their lives. He doesn't get a response, but sends her a message saying he's there if she wants to talk. Finch admits to himself he's glad to still be alive that day as he would be missing this new friendship if he weren't. He makes up a list of guidelines for their project and sends them to Violet. These guidelines include the requirement that they leave something behind at each of the places they visit.



Analysis

This one long section of the novel is completely narrated by Finch. During this section, he learns more about Violet as the reader learns more about Finch and his home situation. Also in this section a new theme, the power of love, is introduced while three other themes, bullying, dealing with loss, and mental illness are developed.

After school on the day they met one another on the bell tower, Finch admits to himself that he's falling in love with Violet because of the way she smiled at him in class after he distracted the other students from her embarrassment when she dropped her books. The new love gives Finch a reason to be happy he did not kill himself that day. He seems intent on using their new friendship to try to motivate Violet to move beyond her grief.

Developing the theme of bullying, Finch shares with the reader that he and Roamer have been enemies since elementary school. Apparently it was because of Roamer that Finch threw the chair at the blackboard, the incident that got him put on probation. Roamer seems insistent on getting on Finch's nerves as he tries to pick a fight with Finch for looking at him, something a spoiled child would do. Finch recognizes the childishness of Roamer's actions and struggles to hold back his anger.

Meanwhile, it becomes obvious why Finch's mother calls him Tenderhearted Theodore. Finch quickly recognizes it is because of her lingering grief over her sister's death that Violet does not want attention called to her. Although his teacher believes he's only creating a disturbance, Finch is actually taking the attention off Violet's clumsiness when he drops his own books. Notice that after he reads the newspaper article detailing the accident that killed Violet's sister he got "a black feeling settling in the pit of my stomach." (p. 37) He's already witnessed Mr. Black denying Violet's request for less work because of the death of her sister. He heard the teacher tell her she needs to "get back on the camel." (p. 31) In his Facebook post to her, Finch tells her it's time they both get off the ledge. He uses the term the ledge figuratively as a point to which they can both relate. When they were physically standing on the ledge of bell tower it was hard to move or even nod one's head without the danger of losing balance and falling over. Even though they're down from that physical ledge, they are both still on the ledge emotionally as any little move or change in emotions or circumstances threatens to capsize them completely.

Developing the theme of mental illness in this section of the novel, Finch says he likes Charlie and Brenda because they don't force him to explain his odd behavior. While this works well for Finch because he doesn't want to tell anyone what is going on with him, it also doesn't give his friends the information they need to be able to tell if anything is really wrong with him. Notice that although he did get on the ledge of the bell tower, neither of his friends seem that concerned about his behavior. Charlie did climb up to the tower after him, but it seems he just passed off Finch's actions as something he did regularly with no real cause for worry.



Discussion Question 1

In what ways is the lack of concern showed about Finch's strange behavior patterns by his friends and family troubling? Why does Finch like this lack of concern?

Discussion Question 2

Consider Finch's guidelines for wandering. Do you think these guidelines are good? Why do you like them?

Discussion Question 3

Why do you think that Finch is so attracted to Violet? He describes her as being very pretty, but there is also something deeper. What is it? Use examples from the book to explain your answers.

Vocabulary

reimburse, finale, infamous, invincible, purgatory, implemented, apprehensive, subpar, splendor, sarcastic, predictable, humiliation, obscure, delve, grenade, toxic, aberration, compose, cringe, ambushed, geocaching



Part 1: Violet: 153 Days Til Graduation – Finch: Day 8 of the Awake

Summary

In her next section of narration entitled “153 Days to Graduation,” Violet is going to what she believes is a sleepover at Amanda Monk’s house. The sleepover turns out to be a drinking party with both boys and girls attending. Remembering the last party she attended was the one where her sister was killed in a wreck on the way home, Violet feels sick to her stomach but gets outside before she throws up. As she heads back to her house, she runs into Ryan Cross. He also holds bad memories for her as she had kissed him in the snow at the party before her sister was killed.

At home, Violet tells her parents the party was a bad idea. Later, Violet checks her Facebook page and discovers that Finch has videoed himself singing a song and playing guitar. At the end of the video, he asks her to confirm if she’s still alive. Violet sends him a message requesting he remove the video. He does so, telling her there’s no chance anyone else saw it as he has no other Facebook friends. Finch manipulates her into letting him come over to talk by threatening to talk to her at school while she’s with her friends or during class. When she realizes what she’s done and tries to discourage him from coming, she doesn’t get an answer.

In Finch’s section of narration entitled “Day 7 of the Awake,” as Finch drives his mother’s minivan, which he has nicknamed Little Bastard, to Violet’s house, he thinks about the Italian poet Cesare Pavese. In one of his journals Pavese described love being the great manifesto. Love gives one the urge to keep living and matter, Pavese had written. Five months later, the poet killed himself. Finch can relate to the poet’s desire to matter. As he nears a goal of pushing the car to 100 miles per hour, Finch feels more alive than he ever has. He finally stops, the car in a ditch.

At Violet’s house, she is waiting for him on the front steps. He tries to get her to talk about herself but she refuses, asking only what he wants of her. Finch asks why she was on the ledge and if she’s okay. Violet doesn’t answer for a while. But then she tells him she wasn’t really thinking when she went up to the bell tower, just went where her legs were taking her. When she realized where she was, she was scared. She tells Finch that day was the anniversary of her sister’s birthday, the first since the wreck. She feels nothing really matters any more, every thing a person does is just to fill time until they die. Finch tells her that while one is alive, they may as well make the time they have matter. When Violet asks Finch why the other kids call him a freak, he lies and tells her it was because he was so small in grade school. More truthfully, he tells her it is because he does things that other kids think are strange. Before Violet goes back inside, he asks how she got into the bell tower since it is kept locked. She smiles and admits she picked the lock.



After he leaves Violet's house, Finch goes on his nightly run. He tries to outrun all the derogatory names he's been called all of his life. He swears to himself this time with Violet will be different. He vows to stay Awake. Finch takes a detour on his run and goes to the A Street Bridge where the stone guardrail is still broken. Down in the old riverbed, he finds broken pieces of the car, along with a bent license plate. He takes the plate and runs until his mind stops working.

In Violet's section of narration "152 Days to Graduation," Violet tries to sort through the notes she and her sister made for the webzine EleanorandViolet. The domain name is expiring and Violet is faced with the decision of renewing it or letting it go. She reads the last entries the two made in their blog, and then deletes the notes and everything else related to the webzine.

In Finch's section "Day 8 of the Awake," Finch and his sister drive to their father's new house for their required weekly visit. It will be the first time Finch has seen his father since Thanksgiving. It will also be his first time meeting Josh Raymond, the boy who is the son of his father's new wife. No one is sure if the boy is Finch's father's son or not. Kate has told their father that Finch had not been to the family dinners because he's been participating in a study away program. His father doesn't get notices from school when Finch is in trouble because Finch told the principal his father was killed in a hunting accident. At the table, Finch pretends to be a vegetarian just to irritate his father. Later, at home, Kate lashes out at the stupidity of them having to pretend like they like one another. Finch advises his sister that people prefer it when you pretend. He asks Kate if she remembers Eleanor Markey. She does, but didn't know her well.

Upstairs in his room, Finch writes his journal entry about his opinions of suicide by poisoning. He sends Violet a message on Facebook that includes a quote from Virginia Woolf's suicide note. Violet sends him back a quote from Woolf. They go on like that until he sends a quote Violet doesn't recognize and asks what book it is from. "The Waves," Finch replies. After a few more shared quotes, Violet adds another guideline for their wanderings. They must walk or ride bikes to their destinations. Finch agrees but when he suggests she do the writing, she doesn't answer back. Finch gathers the sleeping pills he'd taken from his medicine cabinet and flushes them down the toilet. He feels he needs to keep an eye on Violet.

Analysis

As the relationship between Violet and Finch develops, the power of love becomes a more important and more easily recognizable theme. As Finch drives to Violet's house, he feels more alive than he ever has, a feeling that he attributes to this new affection he has for Violet. Later, as he considers killing himself by taking an overdose, Finch decides not to as he believes he needs to be around to keep an eye on Violet.

References to literature become important in this section of the novel. These two extremely intelligent teens begin their communications with each other through the words of others. Finch starts the trend without even recognizing it as he sends Violet a



Facebook message with a quote by Virginia Woolf included. They continue sharing quotes from the author until Violet acknowledges and agrees to his wandering guidelines. Notice also Finch's use of the quote by Cesare Pavese in which he declares love to be the great manifesto. Pavese is apparently one of the writers that Finch admires as he will continue to refer to the man and his thoughts of love throughout the novel. Note also an emphasis on words as Finch tries to run away from all of the negative things he's been called in his life. As he runs he fills his mind with positive thoughts and words.

Also in this section of the novel Finch's obsession with death and suicide becomes obvious. He writes in his journal about suicide, the different forms of suicide, who killed themselves in what ways and his critique of that form death. Even after the experience he's had with Violet, Finch still considers taking a lethal dose of sleeping tablets. It is only after he talks to Violet through Facebook that he remembers he needs to stay alive to look after her.

As Finch is looking after Violet, the reader should continue to notice the lack of people who are looking after Finch. His sister, Kate, seems to be the one most involved in his care and she seem more interested in covering up Finch's troubles than trying to get him help. Finch's father is completely unaware of the problems his son is having as not only his daughter is lying to him but he also doesn't get any notifications from school as Finch has told them his father is dead. As Finch has already been defined as a troublemaker it seems some employee at the school would verify his story but no one does.

Notice that although Finch and his father seem very different, there are also some similarities. The most obvious their tendencies to over do things. As Finch drives to see Violet, he pushes his car to go 100 miles per hour. At his father's house, Finch indicates that his father is grilling thirty-five pounds of meat (for six people) in January. Finch may be exaggerating the amount of meat his father is cooking but the example shows they share the same extreme nature. Finch's father also shares his son's tendency to behave violently. Unlike Finch, it appears his father found a productive outlet for his violence through his career in hockey.

Notice that as Violet is haunted by bad memories of the car accident, Finch seems drawn to the accident. During one of his runs, he visits the scene of the wreck and finds the license plate from the car. He seems to deeply empathize with the pain that Violet is feeling, almost as if he is feeling that pain himself. In fact, in one of his journal entries Finch discusses his opinion of suicide by poisoning. He considers this too easy a way to die but writes that after a life of having felt emotions so much and so deeply that a quick and easy death might be a relief. He obviously understands the idea of feeling other's pain and being able to relate to it, but this ability to empathize is taking its toll on Finch. At one point, he tells Violet that he can recognize a cry for help, such as the one she sent out when she went out on the ledge of the bell tower. Finch encourages Violet to begin writing again and get out of the shelter she has created for herself.



Finch's spell of driving 100 miles per hour and his feeling of being completely alert and alive may be a spell of mania, perhaps giving the reader a clue to the disorder with which he suffers. A disorder called bipolar disorder is characterized by periods of mania or hyper energy, Finch's periods of being Awake, followed by periods of depression, the times that Finch refers to himself as being Asleep. It is apparent that Finch dreads and deeply dislikes these periods of depression. He swears to himself that he will not allow himself to go back to a period of being Asleep.

Finally, in this section of the novel the theme of bullying is addressed briefly. The reader senses a sadness in Finch as he searches for a good answer when Violet asks him why the other students call him names. To himself he thinks that he really doesn't know why the kids don't like him. Although he's stressed the need for Violet to tell him the truth about her situation, notice that Finch doesn't tell her the truth about his own.

Discussion Question 1

How satisfactory of a job is the school, his family and his friends doing in taking care of Finch's well being? Why do they show so little concern about his odd behavior?

Discussion Question 2

Why do Violet and Finch use quotes from Virginia Woolf to communicate with one another? What is the significance of this form of communication?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss death and suicide as it is portrayed in the novel. Do you think Finch is a character who would take his own life? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

intentional, barricaded, orgiastic, equivalent, deduce, manifesto, valiantly, precise, gallant, embankment, souvenir, decipher, salvage, revamp, obligatory, colossal, pretentious, gauntlet, bigoted, genetically, swivels, relic, languid, melancholy, archives, stupefying



Part 1: Violet: 151 Days Til Graduation – Violet 151 Days Til Graduation (part 2)

Summary

In Violet's section of narration entitled "151 Days til Graduation," a story in the school's gossip website features Violet's actions of saving Finch from the bell tower. She notices the girls from the school's newspaper read and shake their heads at the bad example of journalism. Violet wonders if she should try to be friends with them. Instead of doing anything, she picks the lock and goes back to the bell tower where she sits on the steps and reads.

In Finch's section "Day 9," Finch decides to ditch his '80s persona and change up his look. He has Charlie and Brenda meet him at the Goodwill store. Brenda accuses him of trying to dress to please Violet, and rages about Violet and girls like her until Finch reminds Brenda about the wreck that killed Violet's sister. Finch decides he should be badass, the kind of person who cusses whenever he wants to. He chooses a worn out leather jacket and Brenda brings him a pair of black Beatles boots. Back at school, some kids don't recognize him. One girl leads him to the cafeteria. He begins speaking with an English accent, pretending he's a new student. He thinks about the world he'd like to create with no name calling and no hating but that idealized world crashes in U.S. Geography when he sees Ryan Cross with his hand on the back of Violet's chair.

After class, Finch reminds Violet they need to start their project and suggests Hoosier Hill as their first destination. Amanda mentions the article in the gossip paper asking Finch if he is the guy that Violet saved. Finch ignores Amanda and suggests to Violet that they leave now. Roamer tells Finch he should ask Violet's boyfriend. Violet says Ryan isn't her boyfriend and tells Finch she can't skip class. He tells her he'll wait for her in the parking lot after class.

In Violet's second section of narration entitled "151 Days til Graduation" Violet is looking for Finch, holding the handles of her sister's old bike, when Brenda and Charlie point out where Finch is. Brenda threatens Violet not to break Finch's heart. A quote from "The Waves" comes to Violet's mind as she looks at Finch. She refuses to get in his car so he drives slowly to his house while she rides behind, to get his bike.

He suggests she leave her bag in his room. Once there, she asks about his wall filled with Post-It notes and scraps of papers. He says they are words and phrases for future songs. She listens as he talks about the word "obelisk" which he says is his favorite. He asks if she'd ever heard Mr. Black's phrase "get back on the camel" before. She says no and he adds it to his wall.

During the eleven-mile ride to Hoosier Hill, Violet remembers her old self, whom she refers to as "Violet Unremakey-able." They are not particularly impressed by Hoosier



Hill. Violet is most struck by the electric chills she gets when Finch touches her. Violet comments that the spot is one of the ugliest she's ever seen. Finch says he used to feel that way but realizes there must be something of beauty in it as so many people have chosen to live there. They jump from the high point, leave their geocaching treasure and take some pictures.

Back at Finch's house Finch tells Violet he wanted to do the project with her because she smiled at him. He describes the real smile she gave him during class reached her eyes, not the fake smile he's seen her use so often. At dinner Violet's parents ask for information about her project. She tells them she's working on it with a boy from class, and then changes the subject before her father can ask for more information. Back upstairs, Finch has sent her a quote from "The Chronicles of Narnia." Violet responds with one from the same book. As she looks at her calendar, she thinks that day has been the best she's had in a while.

Analysis

While their love affair is still in the friendship stages Violet and Finch are both benefiting from the positive feelings that just knowing a person wants to be with them can bring. As she watches her old friends make fun of and gawk at the gossip article about her and Finch in the Bartlett Dirt, she wonders what she ever had in common with them. In this same line of thinking, Violet had previously asked Finch why he chose her as his partner. This is one of the times that Finch allows himself to be honest with Violet. He tells her that it is because she smiled a real smile at him. Notice in this section this is the first time that Finch's friends, Brenda especially, have shown any real interest in keeping him safe. Brenda believes Violet still fits the cheerleader personality and tries to discourage Finch from being around her. She also goes so far as to threaten Violet not to break Finch's heart.

Finch and Violet continue to focus on words and literature in this section of the novel. Notice that when Finch asks Violet to join him for a wandering that evening, he uses the words from the book "The Waves" by Woolf "'Come,' I say, 'Come.'" (pp. 76 and 87) that the two had shared previously through Facebook to remind Violet of their connection and encourage her to go with him. When Finch enters the U.S. Geography room to find Ryan Cross hitting on Violet, he borrows Woolf's words "all gold, flowing" to describe Ryan. It is as if the picture of Ryan and Violet together reminds Finch that he's never had good luck with girls like Violet. While reading "Wuthering Heights" in the stairwell, Violet relates to the passage that describes how the world would be a "mighty stranger" (p. 80) without a particular man in it. Violet relates in terms not of a man who is missing from her life, but instead in terms of the loss of her sister. She seems to have lost her identity and her grasp on her place in the world, as well as her best friend.

Notice in this section that since her sister's death, Violet has not ridden in or driven a vehicle. Finch recognizes this as an inability to get past her sister's death and tries, very gently, to get Violet to ride with him. He doesn't pressure her when she refuses, but offers the opportunity. Later, at Finch's house Violet feels a pang of envy when she sees



the way that Finch gets enjoyment out of working with and manipulating words and ideas. Knowing she had been a good writer in the past, he suggests to her that she be the one to write down the notes for their wanderings. Unlike the vehicle, where he prodded gently, Finch gives Violet no excuse for refusing to do the writing. Finch is very insightful as he recognizes the areas in which Violet is struggling and reaches out to her in a way that is friendly and non-threatening.

The idea of bullying is important in this section of the novel as *The Bartlett Dirt*, a school gossip blog carries an untrue story about the circumstances of the day that Violet and Finch wound up on the bell tower together. The story paints Violet as the hero and Finch as the crazy student who was trying to kill himself. Even though they aren't named, pictures of both Violet and Finch are included with the article. To defame a student in the way that has been done in this public article is irresponsible and cruel. As the title of the article refers to Finch as being "crazy" it can only be assumed that more derogatory language was used to describe him in the body of the article. The students seem to increase their heckling of Finch after this article is made public as they call him names and make fun of him openly during class as he tries to make arrangements with Violet concerning their project.

Discussion Question 1

How is the article about Violet and Finch in the *Bartlett Dirt* a form of bullying?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think that Finch decides to remake himself? What do these frequent remakes indicate about him?

Discussion Question 3

In what ways is Finch both gentle with Violet and her emotions, but firm at the same time? Give examples from the novel to support your discussion.

Vocabulary

unruly, annihilated, unnervingly, regentrified, liberating, intimidate, saunters, fluent, capricious, stealthy, remnant, propulsion, apocalypse, summit, epic, altitude



Part 1: Finch: The Night of the Day My Life Changed – Part 1: Violet: 147-146 Days to Freedom

Summary

In Finch's section "The Night of the Day My Life Changed," Finch eats, and shares his day, with his mother and Decca at dinner. Because she looks tired he even volunteers to clean up after dinner. Later that night Finch draws a bath and goes underwater pretending he is in a lake. Finch thinks of Woolf quotes while he's underwater. He holds his breath as long as possible before coming back up.

In Violet's section "148 Days to Graduation," the Bartlett Dirt has named Finch as number one on the top ten list of suicidal students. In response, the real school paper has information about suicide and what to do if one feels suicidal but no one pays attention to that paper. During class, Amanda asks Violet how awful it is to be working with Finch. When she says it isn't bad, Amanda assumes she likes Finch. Ryan asks Violet to the movies. She says she will let him know. Finch comes into class late. He walks past Violet's desk and puts down a plain, gray rock. Ryan calls Finch a freak and pretends to be hanging himself. When she has a chance Violet looks at the bottom of the rock. Finch has written "your turn" on the bottom.

That night at supper Violet's parents ask about the bell tower incident. They say a reporter has called wanting to do a story about her bravery. Violet brushes off the comment but doesn't tell the truth. Her mother asks about a spring break trip to New York. Even though Violet is lying when she says it would be great, she feels her parents know she's lying. That night, Violet has another nightmare. When she wakes up she thinks that before the accident she would have written something to get the memory of the dream out of her system. Since Eleanor's death, she feels as if she's cheating on her sister when she writes. She winds up talking to Finch on the computer. Finch asks her to meet him at the Quarry, and then says he'll meet her at her house.

In Finch's section "Day 13," Finch goes to Violet's house and throws rocks at her window but she won't come out. He spends the rest of the night writing a list of how to stay Awake.

In Violet's section "147-146 Days to Freedom," Finch is waiting outside Violet's house when she comes outside. He asks her to tell him what happened the night of the accident. She says she'll tell only if he'll tell how he got the scar on his stomach. He tells a story about someone cutting him with a guitar pick. Because they are getting so close to school Violet tells him she wants the truth, and refuses to tell him her story. When he asks about Saturday, she says she has plans.



On Saturday, Violet calls the reporter. When she suggests that Violet's act of saving Finch's life might have given her closure about the accident, Violet hangs up on her. At the movie with Ryan, Violet thinks wandering with Finch would have been more fun than this. Violet makes up stories about constellations, her excuse for getting out of Roamer's car and away from Ryan's busy hands. Ryan kisses her and she again thinks back to the night of the accident. She tells Ryan she has a curfew and he walks her home.

Analysis

The theme of bullying is continued in this section as Finch's fellow students torment him through gossip articles as well as word of mouth. He is listed as number one on a list of students most likely to commit suicide on the Bartlett Dirt, a gossip blog. Even Ryan, the boy known as mister nice guy at school, calls Finch a freak and pretends to be hanging himself when Finch comes into class bringing Violet the gift of the rock.

Violet continues to fumble about as she tries to deal with her sister's death. She realizes she isn't able to write because she feels like she's cheating on her sister when she does though she isn't exactly sure why. She still won't ride in a car, in fact, Ryan walks her to a drive-in movie. Being with Ryan brings back memories of the night her sister died and she asks Ryan to take her home early. A reporter calls her wanting to do a story on her act of saving Finch from the bell tower. When the reporter asks if Violet got closure from her sister's death by saving Finch, Violet hangs up on her, offended by the question and angry anyone could think the two incidents were similar. Notice in this section this is the first time that Violet has indicated she's felt bad about the impressions she's leaving by lying about the one who was really planning on killing themselves that day on the bell tower. She feels badly for Finch that her lie has opened him up to so much fresh criticism.

Through the rest of the novel keep Finch's list of activities to do to stay Awake, as he will be doing more and more of these things as he draws closer and closer to a depressive period in his disorder. Notice he's listed ten items that he plans to use to keep himself Awake. One of these is Violet.

Sadly, Finch foreshadows the way he will die in this section of the novel. As he relaxes in the bathtub, he goes underwater to see how long he can hold his breath. While he's under, he thinks about the writer Woolf who killed herself by drowning after three major breakdowns. She ended her life because she did not want to face a fourth breakdown. Consider her feelings as compared to the idea that Finch does not want to be Asleep again and is doing everything in his power to avoid it.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think that Violet does not come clean about the fact it was Finch who saved her instead of the other way around?



Discussion Question 2

How should you react if you have a classmate, friend or family member who you believe is suicidal? Where might they turn for help?

Discussion Question 3

Consider Finch's list of things to do to stay Awake. Choose one or two of these things and discuss how it might work to keep him grounded.

Vocabulary

ravenous, disconcerted, endurance, thrashed, tubercular, occurrence, closure, seething, incurring, eccentric, duplicate



Part 1: Finch: Day 15 (I am Still Awake) – Finch: Days 16 and 17

Summary

In Finch's section "Day 15 (I am Still Awake)" Finch goes to Violet's house early the following Saturday and her parents invite him to join them for breakfast. After they eat, Finch asks Violet to humor him and sit inside his van. She does so. She buckles the seatbelt and closes her door when told. He leans in across the driver's seat and asks if she's okay. She agrees to ride with him. He takes it slow, regularly asking how she's doing. He talks to distract her asking about the accident, and then about her sister.

When they reach their destination, Finch finds that Violet has brought him to the Bookmobile Park, which he declares is the coolest thing he's ever seen. Finch meets Faye Carnes, the lady who owns the bookmobiles, then searches each trailer looking for one book in particular. Finch buys the books Violet has selected and tries to get Carnes to keep the change. He later slips a twenty into an old cash register in one of the bookmobiles. Finch runs back to the car and is surprised when Violet passes him. This time when he passes her their notebook, she doesn't fuss about writing in it.

In Violet's section "145 Days to Liberation," Finch takes Violet to an old, abandoned factory building. People have written in chalk on the side of the building what they hope to do before they die. They both write some of their wishes then Finch adds he wants to kiss Violet Markey. Violet at first thinks she doesn't want him to kiss her, and then changes her mind. He just grins at her and tells her he won't kiss her now. Back in the van, Finch jokingly tells Violet his wish doesn't mean he likes her. They go to the Quarry where they dance. Violet joins the joke and tells Finch she doesn't like him either.

In Finch's next section "Day 15 (Still)" Finch and Violet make up epitaphs for people they know. Finch says he wants his to indicate he was in search of the Great Manifesto. When she asks what that means, he shares with her the quote from Pavese. Violet asks why he wasn't at school Friday and he partially lies, telling her he had a headache. He thinks about how his brain fires so fast sometimes that he can hear and feel everything. He can see the blinding colors of his headache. His sister thinks it's the result of a brain injury from their father using him as a punching bag.

At home later, Finch check the voicemail on the home phone and deletes a message from Mr. Embry asking where he was Friday. In his room, he thinks about suicide by hanging. He finds it interesting another term for hanging is the Long Drop. He feels this term also describes what it is like for him to go from Awake to Asleep. He knows the warning signs, one of which is space seeming to take on different proportions. At one point he talked to Romero about his strange feelings. Romero told his parents and the word eventually got to Finch's parents who accused him of making up stories. He remembers it was that experience that earned him the name Theodore Freak. He's



learned it's important to pretend to be like everyone else. Feeling a change in the space in his room, he decides there is too much room in his room and begins rearranging the furniture. No one comes to check on him despite the noise he's making. He wonders what would have to happen for someone to come upstairs.

In Finch's next section "Days 16 and 17" he tells Mr. Embry during their next session that he hasn't been thinking about hurting himself. He's learned that is best. When Mr. Embry brings up the article in the Bartlett Dirt Finch feels like he's betrayed his real feeling when his response comes out snarky and his voice cracks. He mentions he's been seeing a girl and how happy she's making him.

The following day Finch runs around the school building meeting Violet after each of her classes so he can walk her to the next one. During one of his running sessions, he accidentally runs into Roamer, pushing him into Amanda. He runs before Roamer can do anything to him. Violet tells him he's driving her crazy and he gets the feeling she afraid someone might see her with him. He throws at her that she's more friendly when its just the two of them. He moves close when she asks if he acts the way he does because this behavior is expected or if is really the way he is. As he leans closer she closes her eyes. The principal jerks him by the collar and sends both of them to detention. Violet is angry about her stint in detention and tells the teacher it is Finch's fault she's there.

Analysis

Following the example set by Mr. Black, Finch tells Violet he plans to give her an encouraging push to get back out into life. Notice he uses a variation of Mr. Black's description of getting back on the camel. He already tried to get her to ride in the car with him once but she refused. He tries again, this time using her own nature against her. When he accuses her of being a delicate doll no ones want to push too hard for fear of breaking her, she feels she has to prove him wrong. The only way she can do this is by getting in the car. Once in the car, she agrees to ride with him, a big step for her in overcoming her fear.

Also in this section, Violet opens up to Finch about the circumstances of the wreck. She had told her sister to take the A Street Bridge on their way home. She feels guilty because she wonders if they might not have had the accident if they'd gone a different way, or if she'd insisted on her sister letting her drive. Later, at the factory, note that some of Violet's wishes for her life are to stop being afraid and to be able to write again.

While Violet appears to be improving, thanks to the loving way that Finch is handling her, Finch seems to be on a downhill slide. He's still thinking about suicide and contemplates hanging himself. When his guidance counselor asks if he's been thinking about hurting himself, Finch says no because this is the easiest response. He isn't even truthful with Violet about what is going on with him. In dealing with his mental illness, Finch has learned that being truthful with the wrong person has dire consequences. Apparently the hate between him and Roamer began when Finch told Roamer he was



able to feel sound and hear headaches. Up until this point the two had been friends. After the comments get out at school, Finch is called Theodore Freak for the first time. The name stuck.

Notice that even as a young child, Finch's parents didn't pay much attention to him. They accused him of telling stories and apparently never questioned him about his experiences or took him to a doctor. His sister Kate believes he has the strange sensations because his father beat Finch when he was little. Notice in this section that Finch describes one of the warning signs that an Asleep period is coming on is a change in the way he perceives space. In his room he begins to feel the space is strange and too large. The reader must wonder if he is feeling one of his Asleep periods coming and is fighting to keep it away.

Meanwhile Finch and Violet continue to build their relationship around their shared love of books and words. Violet takes Finch to a Bookmobile Park where he searches for one book in particular. He cannot find the book, but the title for which he's looking isn't mentioned in the text of the novel.

Notice in this section of the novel that even though Finch tries to hide his real feelings from his guidance counselor, he believes he gives away how badly the suicidal top ten list bothered him when his voice cracks when he tries to respond to Embry's mention of it. Finch notes that Embry is the only adult in his life who really pays attention to him.

Discussion Question 1

Why is it significant that Finch is able to persuade Violet to ride in the car with him?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think Finch is not truthful with Violet when it comes to his own feelings and emotions? What is he trying to hide? Why is he trying to hide it?

Discussion Question 3

What has been learned about the relationship between Finch and Roamer during this section of the novel? How does it explain their present dislike for one another?

Vocabulary

exaggerating, mastermind, faze, abandoned, epitaphs, contemplate, calibrated, judicial, invincible, snarky, listless



Part 1: Violet: 142 Days To Go – Finch: Days 23, 24, 25...

Summary

In Violet's narration "142 Days To Go" Finch throws rocks at Violet's bedroom window at 2 a.m. Even though she's mad she gets dressed and goes with him. He takes her to Bookmarks, the town's bookstore. He looks for the same book he was unable to find at the Bookmobiles. The bookstore doesn't have the book either but he settles on Dr. Seuss. The two wind up reading from the book "Oh the Places You'll Go" and dancing in the store. Afterward, they climb the Purina Tower where they look out over the town. She expresses her worry to him that she might have come to the end of her writing life. He tells her some things have a natural end but she won't know unless she tries to write again. When he takes her home, Violet wants Finch to kiss her but he doesn't.

In Finch's section "Day 22 and I'm Still Here," at their father's house for Sunday dinner Rosemarie tells Finch, Decca and Kate that their father is in the basement. Finch knows right away his father is in one of his moods. He goes downstairs. When Finch asks his father to come up for dinner he slams his beer down so hard that the bottle shatters. He slams Finch against the wall. Finch runs before his father can catch him again. At the dinner table his father remembers himself and acts properly in front of his new family. When her mother asks about dinner Finch only tells her he's going out, and leaves. She's shocked because he told her he loved her before he left. He starts the van and sits in the garage for a short time with the door closed, thinking about death by carbon monoxide. As he thinks about his family perhaps being overcome by the fumes as they try to save him, Finch opens the garage door. Even though he feels high for a while, he reminds himself he only saved his family from him.

Finch has gone to a place called French Lick to drink water said to have healing powers. The next morning when he was not better, one of the employees suggested he go to Mudlavia. That's where he's headed now. The burned resort is crumbling and ruins but Finch finds the spring. He not only drinks the water, but also floats in it, letting it cover him. He fills a bottle to take back home.

At home, Kate warns him that Decca is in a bad mood. She thinks it has something to do with Josh Raymond. Finch goes to talk to her and finds her cutting words out of books. He realizes she's cutting out the bad words and phrases as she wants to keep these where she can keep an eye on them. Before he leaves her room he cuts out words and spells out on her pillow "Make it Lovely" (p. 166). In his room, something is different but he can't put his finger on what it is. He takes a shower and then wraps up in his comforter with Decca's discarded books. He wants to keep the warmth and light as close to him as possible.



In Violet's section "138 Days to Go" Violet uses her bulletin board and Post-It notes to brainstorm ideas about a new webzine. She takes a picture and sends it to Finch but gets no response.

In Finch's section "Days 23, 24, 25..." Finch doesn't remember everything that happened the previous night. He tries to read but the words blur so he starts organizing. He buys paint and paints his room blue. With the new color, he begins to feel more at ease. He sends Violet a message.

Analysis

Finch's struggle against the painful effects of his mental illness intensifies in this section of the novel. He has indicated that one of the signs that a period of being Asleep is coming is that spaces seem to be out of proportion. As he looks at his bedroom, Finch feels that something is different. It seems he's become so focused on noticing the changes in his perceptions that even the smallest change gets his attention. Note also that in a previous chapter Finch indicated one of the things he could do to stay Awake was to organize things. After he's noticed the changes in his room, and then can't read because the words blur on the page, Finch begins organizing, fighting off the dark moods he feels are coming.

In a middle of the night trip, Violet and Finch go to a bookstore. Again, they bond over literature, this time a Dr. Seuss book about traveling. It is from this book that the title of the novel "All the Bright Places" comes. On top of the Purina Tower Violet is jealous when Finch is able to describe more adequately than she the view from the tower. She wishes that she had his brain. She doesn't realize, however, the same thing that gives Finch his superior intelligence is also responsible for the deep, dark moods he suffers regularly.

Notice the interaction between Finch and his father. It has already been noted that Finch might have inherited his mental illness from his father. As Finch's father is described in solitude from his new family, angry in the basement, it seems similar to Finch's withdrawal from his family and friends. Finch recognizes right away that something is wrong when his step-family seems upset when he and his sisters come for their visit. Even though he probably knows what will happen, Finch volunteers to go down to get his father to come to dinner. Finch's father throws him against the wall. After he gets his frustration out on his son, Finch's father goes upstairs and acts normally around his family.

Discussion Question 1

Why does Finch volunteer to go down to talk to his father even though he probably already knows what will happen?



Discussion Question 2

In what ways does the Dr. Seuss book that Violet and Finch read together fit the story of the couple's friendship?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the significance of Decca's intent to cut all of the bad words and phrases out of books so she can keep an eye on them. How does this differ from Finch's desire to surround himself with the positive?

Vocabulary

relics, confiscated, vortex, heist, terrain, categorically, deliberate, demise, braying, hypothermia



Part 2: Violet: 135, 134, 133 Days to Go – Finch: Day 28

Summary

In Violet's section of narration "135, 134, 133 Days to Go," Finch has been out of school for one week. Rumors are circulating the old fashioned way that he's tried to kill himself. The Bartlett Dirt has been shut down. Violet asks Charlie if he's heard from Finch but Charlie doesn't seem too concerned. When Finch does return to school, he's dressed differently. A fire alarm sounds that day and Finch whispers to Violet to meet him in the student parking lot. They run to the river where Finch shows Violet a rare hooded crane. Unfortunately, they are followed by Ryan, Roamer and another boy from school. Roamer and Finch wind up fighting but only Roamer is throwing punches. Finch is only protecting himself. Circumstances change and Finch holds Roamer's head under the water. Violet tells Finch to let Roamer go as Ryan and the other boy try to pull him off. When Violet orders him a second time to let the boy go, Finch picks him up and drops him on the bank. He walks off. Violet rides her bike to Finch's house but he doesn't answer when she knocks on his bedroom door.

In Finch's section "Day 27 (I am Still Here)," Finch tries to read but he can't bring the words into focus. He almost calls his guidance counselor. He considers telling his mom what is going on but knows she'll only offer him an Advil. He thinks about the Cardinal he accused his parents of killing because they wouldn't let it come live inside with them. It flew into their window one last time and killed itself. Finch wonders if that was on purpose. He goes out for a run.

In Violet's section "133 Days to Go," Violet's parents are disappointed when they learn she's skipped several periods at school. Violet lashes out at her parents, then goes to her room. Later, Violet's mother comes to her room and asks her about the webzine ideas she has tacked up on her bulletin board. When Violet explains she only has germs of ideas her mother quotes from the author Pearl Buck that "growth contains the germ of happiness" (p. 189) and helps her daughter brainstorm for the new project. Before bed Violet sends Finch a Facebook message. As she starts to mark that day off her calendar, she suddenly realizes life will go on, even after graduation. She folds up the calendar and throws it into the back of her closet. She goes to Eleanor's room and puts her glasses back on the dresser. She thanks her sister for the loan but tells her the glasses are ugly. She believes she can hear her sister laughing.

The next section of narration is also Violet's. In this section "Saturday" Finch is eating breakfast with her parents again. Her parents have decided the two can continue to work on the project but have set out some rules. They also ask for Finch's contact number. Finch writes the information neatly, Violet notices, unlike his regular writing. She wonders what part of him is real. Finch talks to her parents and includes the book "For Whom the Bell Tolls" in his conversation as he points out the author knew he was



going to die and chose to live fully. Violet's dad quotes from an ancient Vedic hymn and is surprised when Finch finishes the quote.

In Finch's next narration "Day 28" he describes the trip he and Violet take to visit a man who has made two roller coasters in his backyard. On the way home, Violet writes furiously in her notebook. She tells Finch she likes him because she can talk to him. Finch tells Violet he likes everything about her. When she raises an eyebrow at her he drives to the next exit and stops the car. The stop is in the parking lot of a library where Finch gets her out of the car and kisses her. They make out in the back of the van until Finch realizes Violet is a virgin.

At home it is the first time Finch has not thought of a way to commit suicide that day. But there is a space of time he can't remember from the time he's sitting at his computer and the time he's out running. He thinks of how he wants to be an easy person so he doesn't have to worry those around him. He wants to die being known as the boy Violet Markey loves.

Analysis

As would be expected for a couple that began their relationship quoting Virginia Woolf to one another, Finch and Violet kiss for the first time in the parking lot of a library. Notice how much progress Violet has made in her healing because of the patient love that Finch has shown her. She's given up wearing Eleanor's glasses and she's even started writing again. She's working with her mother to create a new web magazine. Significant also is Violet's act of putting her calendar away. She's been counting down the days to graduation but she realizes one night that life will go on after graduation. This realization seems to both scare and excite her.

Notice the continued references to literature in this section of the novel. Pearl S. Buck, Ernest Hemmingway's novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls," and the lines of a Vedic hymn are all included in this section. Buck's quote as said by Violet's mother relates to Violet as she grows out of her stage of grief for her sister. It is this growth that is bringing Violet's germ, or beginning, of happiness back. It is from this quote that Violet decides to take the name for her magazine germmagazine.com. Notice the other two book references are ones known by Finch. They both refer to death. Finch compares his philosophy of life to the character in "For Whom the Bell Tolls" who knows he has only a few days to live. Finch plans to live his life to the fullest, he explains. Remember the Vedic hymn that Finch completes, as the line will be significant later on in the novel.

Consider also that although Finch does not think about killing himself in these sections of the novel, he seems to be moving toward a point of desperation in his life. As he struggles to read and make the words come into focus, he considers calling his guidance counselor but decides not to. He doesn't tell his mom as he reasons she won't understand what he's trying to tell her. In a portion of the novel he blacks out and wakes up in the next town over, realizing he's run all that distance without even realizing it.



Even though Principal Wertz has shut down the gossip site, the Bartlett Dirt, it doesn't stop rumors from circulating about Finch. After he's away from school for a week, Violet is hearing rumors ranging from a successful suicide attempt to institutionalization. She talks to Charlie but he can tell her nothing except that's how Finch is. Just as Violet is about to be really concerned, Finch reappears at school. Roamer picks a fight with him. After taking several punches without hitting back, Finch holds Roamer's head underwater. As Violet tries to get him to stop she indicates that Finch looks at her as if he doesn't know who she is.

Discussion Question 1

Why do you think water soothes Finch?

Discussion Question 2

Why is it significant that the school principal ordered the Bartlett Dirt be taken down? What affect does the absence of this site have on the students' ability to bully Finch?

Discussion Question 3

What might Finch's counselor and mother have been able to do if he'd told them he was having trouble? Who might have been best for Finch to share his problems with? Why doesn't he share with Violet?

Vocabulary

composes, proportion, impending, hover, ruminates, careening, centrifugal, euphoria



Part 2: Finch: Day 30 (and I Am Awake) – Finch: The First Warm Day

Summary

In Finch's section "Day 30 (And I Am Awake)" Charlie tries to talk to Finch about his strange behavior but Finch is evasive. After gym, Roamer threatens Finch. Finch counts as he tries to control himself even as Roamer slams him against the lockers then punches him in the eye and nose. Finch wishes he could go back in time to the eighth grade before he talked to Roamer. He wishes he could live in the time he felt normal with Violet. He realizes he is afraid of time, and of himself. The coach walks in on Roamer beating Finch. Later, at his locker, Finch finds that Violet has put the Hoosier Hill rock on top his books.

In Violet's section "February 2" Violet is able to report to her guidance counselor that she's writing again, riding in a car again and even sleeping well. Ryan tells Violet he's asked Suze out, and then tells her about Roamer beating on Finch. At lunch she sits with Brenda and her group instead of Amanda and her regular gang. Brenda whispers to Violet that Gabe Romero is poison. The two toast the declaration.

In her section "The Weekend" Violet begins to look forward to the Someday when she and Finch will make love. The following day, Finch leaves a gift for Violet at her house, a pair of swimming goggles. She sends Finch a Facebook message asking what they are for. He tells her they will use them on the first warm day.

In Finch's section "The First Warm Day" the two travel to Prairieton to the Blue Hole on the first warm day. Numerous rumors about the pool of water abound including the idea it is bottomless and that the bottom is like a black hole in the sky that sucks you into a different universe. They strip to their underwear and jump into the pool from a rock ledge. They swim down until Violet tugs his hand, telling him she needs air. They play on the surface for a while then Finch goes off to search for the bottom of the pool again. He only returns to the surface again when he thinks of Violet. When he finally resurfaces, she's crying and angry. He knows she's not just responding to her fear of him dying as she is to the leftover feelings of her sister dying. He encourages her to get them out.

Finch kisses her, and then pushes her away. He tries to explain what a mess he is, how he may not be able to stay with her. He feels he isn't being fair to her by letting her love him when he may not be around to return that love. He finally tells Violet it was his father who was responsible for the scar on his abdomen. When Finch tells her he's no Ryan Cross, Violet lets him know that Ryan is a kleptomaniac.



Analysis

Notice in this section that Violet is now narrating more sections of the novel than Finch. Where at first they alternated sections, now Violet is sometimes narrating sections back-to-back. This could symbolize the difficulty Finch is having in writing, reading and communicating as his brain slowly moves toward a period of depression.

Roamer's intense hatred toward Finch seems to become even more threatening as Roamer threatens to kill Finch, then beats him up in the locker room. His bullying nature makes him continue to hit Finch even when Finch doesn't fight back. As is the case for most people who are bullied in school, Finch blames the cruel way he is treated on himself. He thinks that if he had not shared with Roamer his strange abilities, Roamer would never have become his enemy and perhaps Theodore Freak would have never existed. It could be because of the way that Roamer has reacted to Finch that Finch is afraid to tell Violet what is going on inside him. She is his closest friend and he is afraid by telling her how unusual he is, she will think he is a freak as well. When he mentions to her at the Blue Hole that he practices holding his breath, he is afraid she'll think that is strange, but she doesn't.

Also in this section, Finch realizes he is most afraid of himself. He is afraid of going to Sleep again which can be translated to mean he is afraid of his mental illness and the effect that it has on his life. Notice that as he's swimming toward the bottom of the Blue Hole, he thinks about suicide by drowning. His only motivation to return to the surface is Violet.

The relationship between Finch and Violet seems to climax during this section of the novel. It is in this section that he is more truthful than he's even been with her about the abuse he suffered at the hands of his father and his own troubles. Notice that he tells her that he can't promise that he'll stay around because he is messed up. Violet reminds him that she is broken as well. When he tries to compare himself to Ryan Cross, she tells him that Ryan is a kleptomaniac. This encounter stands as a small lesson that everyone, even those who seem to have everything together, have problems.

Discussion Question 1

Why is it significant that Violet reminds Finch that everyone has problems?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss Finch's feelings and thoughts as he searches out the bottom of the Blue Hole. Do you think he intended to go as far as he did?



Discussion Question 3

Consider the fight between Roamer and Finch. How does Roamer hope to take advantage of the fact that Finch will be expelled if he's caught fighting? What do you think about the coach's response to seeing the fight? Was the punishment appropriate?

Vocabulary

incarcerated, explicative, groveling, urgent, peripheral, mannerisms, expedition, impending, sinuous, kleptomaniac



Part 2: Violet: The Day Of – Violet: The Week After

Summary

In Violet's section "Spring Break" Violet and her parents travel to NYU as they had planned. As her parents discuss her future, Violet wonders where Finch fits into this future. She sends him a new Woolf quote on Facebook.

In his section "Day 64 of the Awake" at his father's house Finch visits Josh Raymond in his room. Among the jumble of battery operated toys in the cavernous room, Finch spots his old stick horses. Finch controls his anger when Josh tells him that his dad got them for him. Finch tells Josh about some stick horses he had, not letting on those are his, named Midnight and Scout. Josh says the names are cool and Finch agrees to let him use them. When they leave Josh's room, Josh takes Finch's hand. His dad encourages Finch to bring Violet to the house, infuriating Finch in the process. Finch decides to walk home.

Finch gets in his car and drives, and then runs because he doesn't feel he's driving fast enough. He finds himself at a nursery and even though it isn't open, he knocks on the door of the nearby house. He tells the woman it is an emergency and he needs some flowers for his girlfriend. The woman's husband helps him pick out some flowers then he and his wife wrap them in a refrigerated bucket. They won't let him pay for them. The man drives Finch back to his car. He seems to understand when Finch says he left it behind because it didn't go fast enough. It is late when he gets to Violet's house she comes out when he texts her. She's been crying because the snow reminds her of Eleanor's death. When he gives her the flowers, she thanks him for bringing her the spring.

In his next section "Days 65 and 66" Finch feels as if he is being sucked into a vortex. Even though he thinks about everything that he has going for him in his life, the vortex pulls even harder. He notices Violet is watching him carefully. He accidentally tells Mr. Embry about the relationship between him and his dad. Embry reminds Finch he though his father had died in a hunting accident. Finch tries to right his mistake and says the new family came before he was killed. Finch accidentally recites out loud the suicide note of Vladimir Mayakovski.

Embry asks Finch if he's thought about suicide again, and then asks what he knows about bipolar disorder. Finch knows only that bipolar is a label given to crazy people. He stands up quickly scaring Embry but Finch puts out his hand in a gesture of friendship. Embry pulls Finch closer and reminds him that he is not alone.



Finch snaps the next day when Roamer walks by and calls him a freak. He slams to boy against the locker and chokes him. It takes four people to pull him off. As Finch is pulled away, he tells Roamer he will never call him a freak again.

In her next section “March 10” Violet gets a strange call from Finch wanting her to leave now to go with him to see the nest houses. He tells her he’s been expelled. Violet notices he’s talking too fast and says he’ll go alone when she asks if he can wait until she gets out of school.

Analysis

This section of the novel reaches a climax in the theme of Finch’s mental illness, as he appears to be losing control of himself. There are several things that demonstrate Finch’s increasing lack of control. First, he allows himself to be more emotional than he’d planned when his counselor asks him about the suicide top ten list. Finch believes his unintended emotional response betrays how badly the article really made him feel. He’s been trying hard to cover up the hurt caused by the way the other students are treating him. Finch also allows himself to completely lose control when Roamer calls him a name. Instead of counting and trying to let his anger pass, Finch snaps. It takes four people to pull him off Roamer as Finch vents all his anger on the boy who’s caused him so much grief.

In this section of the novel, Finch’s guidance counselor suggests to him that he might have bipolar disorder. Instead of seeing a diagnosis as a good thing, Finch runs from the idea that he is about to be labeled again. He recognizes the symptoms that his counselor describes as fitting his father’s behavior as well as his own. Finch, however, doesn’t want to live his life saddled with the diagnosis of a mental illness even though it may be the only way he’ll really get any help.

Finch gives several indications in this section of the novel that he doesn’t plan to be around much longer. He feels he is being pulled deeper and deeper into the vortex of his depression, the Asleep period of which he is so afraid. One day while driving Finch feels the need to get flowers for Violet even though it is a holiday and no nurseries are open. As part of his explanation for why he needs the flowers that day so badly, he tells the nursery owner he doesn’t know where he will be in the spring. This could mean he doesn’t know if he will be Asleep, somewhere else physically, or no longer living. Additionally, after his encounter with Roamer, Finch tells the Roamer he’ll never call him a freak again. This could be seen as a threat that Finch plans to do something to Roamer to keep him from calling him a freak, or that Finch just won’t be around.

Finally, in this section, Finch shows his love to Violet at the very point she needs it most. It is close to the anniversary of the car wreck in which her sister was killed and it is snowing again. Violet hates the snow, especially since it was snowing the night of the accident. When Finch brings her the flowers, he notices she’s been crying. It can only be assumed she’s been thinking about her sisters. Finch’s act of bringing her a reminder of spring makes her remember times will get better. Spring will come again.



Discussion Question 1

Why does Finch tell the lady at the nursery that he doesn't know where he will be by spring?

Discussion Question 2

What does Finch do in this section of the story that makes you think he might be considering suicide?

Discussion Question 3

What might have been different if Finch had been more open to a diagnosis of a mental illness instead of just running away? Why does he want to escape the idea of being labeled again so badly?

Vocabulary

conviction, implanted, rummage, cavernous, hypomania, psychotic, superficial



Part 2: Violet: Spring Break – Violet: March 10

Summary

In Violet's section "Spring Break" Violet and her parents travel to NYU as they had planned. As her parents discuss her future, Violet wonders where Finch fits into this future. She sends him a new Woolf quote on Facebook.

In his section "Day 64 of the Awake" at his father's house Finch visits Josh Raymond in his room. Among the jumble of battery operated toys in the cavernous room, Finch spots his old stick horses. Finch controls his anger when Josh tells him that his dad got them for him. Finch tells Josh about some stick horses he had, not letting on those are his, named Midnight and Scout. Josh says the names are cool and Finch agrees to let him use them. When they leave Josh's room, Josh takes Finch's hand. His dad encourages Finch to bring Violet to the house, infuriating Finch in the process. Finch decides to walk home.

Finch gets in his car and drives, and then runs because he doesn't feel he's driving fast enough. He finds himself at a nursery and even though it isn't open, he knocks on the door of the nearby house. He tells the woman it is an emergency and he needs some flowers for his girlfriend. The woman's husband helps him pick out some flowers then he and his wife wrap them in a refrigerated bucket. They won't let him pay them. The man drives Finch back to his car. He seems to understand when Finch says he left it behind because it didn't go fast enough. It is late when he gets to Violet's house she comes out when he texts her. She's been crying because the snow reminds her of Eleanor's death. When he gives her the flowers, she thanks him for bringing her the spring.

In his next section "Days 65 and 66" Finch feels as if he is being sucked into a vortex. Even though he thinks about everything that he has going for him in his life, the vortex pulls even harder. He notices Violet is watching him carefully. He accidentally tells Mr. Embry about the relationship between him and his dad. Embry reminds Finch he though his father had died in a hunting accident. Finch tries to right his mistake and says the new family came before he was killed. Finch accidentally recites out loud the suicide note of Vladimir Mayakovski.

Embry asks Finch if he's thought about suicide again, and then asks what he knows about bipolar disorder. Finch knows only that bipolar is a label given to crazy people. He stands up quickly scaring Embry but Finch puts out his hand in a gesture of friendship. Embry pulls Finch closer and reminds him that he is not alone.

Finch snaps the next day when Roamer walks by and calls him a freak. He slams to boy against the locker and chokes him. It takes four people to pull him off. As Finch is pulled away, he tells Roamer he will never call him a freak again.



In her next section “March 10” Violet gets a strange call from Finch wanting her to leave now to go with him to see the nest houses. He tells her he’s been expelled. Violet notices he’s talking too fast and says he’ll go alone when she asks if he can wait until she gets out of school.

Analysis

This section of the novel reaches a climax in the theme of Finch’s mental illness, as he appears to be losing control of himself. There are several things that demonstrate Finch’s increasing lack of control. First, he allows himself to be more emotional than he’d planned when his counselor asks him about the suicide top ten list. Finch believes his unintended emotional response betrays how badly the article really made him feel. He’s been trying hard to cover up the hurt caused by the way the other students are treating him. Finch also allows himself to completely lose control when Roamer calls him a name. Instead of counting and trying to let his anger pass, Finch snaps. It takes four people to pull him off Roamer as Finch vents all his anger on the boy who’s caused him so much grief.

In this section of the novel, Finch’s guidance counselor suggests to him that he might have bipolar disorder. Instead of seeing a diagnosis as a good thing, Finch runs from the idea that he is about to be labeled again. He recognizes the symptoms that his counselor describes as fitting his father’s behavior as well as his own. Finch, however, doesn’t want to live his life saddled with the diagnosis of a mental illness even though it may be the only way he’ll really get any help.

Finch gives several indications in this section of the novel that he doesn’t plan to be around much longer. He feels he is being pulled deeper and deeper into the vortex of his depression, the Asleep period of which he is so afraid. One day while driving Finch feels the need to get flowers for Violet even though it is a holiday and no nurseries are open. As part of his explanation for why he needs the flowers that day so badly, he tells the nursery owner he doesn’t know where he will be in the spring. This could mean he doesn’t know if he will be Asleep, somewhere else physically, or no longer living. Additionally, after his encounter with Roamer, Finch tells the Roamer he’ll never call him a freak again. This could be seen as a threat that Finch plans to do something to Roamer to keep him from calling him a freak, or that Finch just won’t be around.

Finally, in this section, Finch shows his love to Violet at the very point she needs it most. It is close to the anniversary of the car wreck in which her sister was killed and it is snowing again. Violet hates the snow, especially since it was snowing the night of the accident. When Finch brings her the flowers, he notices she’s been crying. It can only be assumed she’s been thinking about her sisters. Finch’s act of bringing her a reminder of spring makes her remember times will get better. Spring will come again.



Discussion Question 1

Why does Finch tell the lady at the nursery that he doesn't know where he will be by spring?

Discussion Question 2

What does Finch do in this section of the story that makes you think he might be considering suicide?

Discussion Question 3

What might have been different if Finch had been more open to a diagnosis of a mental illness instead of just running away? Why does he want to escape the idea of being labeled again so badly?

Vocabulary

conviction, implanted, rummage, cavernous, hypomania, psychotic, superficial



Part 2: Finch: Days 66 and 67 – Violet: March 20

Summary

In Finch's section entitled "Days 66 and 67" Finch drives to New Harmony to discover the nest houses are gone. Back at home that night, Finch believes he disappears when he looks at himself in the mirror. In the morning, Finch listens to the messages on his home phone. He erases one from Mr. Embry. In the closet, Finch thinks to himself he is a broken, a fraud and impossible to love. After dinner he takes half a bottle of sleeping pills. When he feels a haze of blackness over him, like being Asleep, he gets up and gags himself, trying to throw up the pills. He runs to the hospital where he tells the emergency room staff what he's done and asks them to get the pills out of him. After the procedure, the nurse brings him information to fill out. Finch leaves the hospital when she steps out of his room.

In his next section "Day 71" Finch attends a support group for teens who have attempted or are thinking about suicide. He notices some of the kids have vacant looks in their eyes. He wonders what medicine they are taking. A girl comes in late and Finch is surprised to recognize Amanda Monk. She introduces herself as Rachel, a bulimic who has tried to kill herself twice with pills. By the end of the meeting Finch desperately wants to get away from the desperation and stigmatization he feels coming from these students. As Demetrius talks about medicines available, one boy says that although he's glad he's not dead, his medicine makes him feel as if everything that made him unique is gone. After the session, Finch tells Amanda he won't tell anyone her secret. When Amanda tells Finch he's not the only freak he realizes it's the nicest thing she's ever said to him.

In Violet's "March 18" section after not hearing from Finch for three days, Violet borrows her mother's car and drives to his house. She meets Finch's mom and talks with Kate for a while before she's directed to go on upstairs. When Finch opens the door she wants to ask if he doesn't want to see her anymore but instead asks how he is. He offers to show her his fort and takes her to his closet. She notices a computer, guitar, pens, Post-It notes, a picture of her and a license plate. They take turns writing out bad words and destroying them, then writing good words and posting them on the wall. Finch makes up a song out of the good words. He and Violet have sex, then Violet notices that Finch zones out for a bit. He writes some more words including the phrase "Violet is life" on pieces of paper. Finch shares with Violet that he sometimes gets into black moods that he can't shake. Violet tells him those moods are normal. He tells her about the cardinal and explains that his first black mood came after its death. Violet asks if he's ever talked to his parents or Kate about the moods. He says he's talking to a school counselor. Violet sees an energy bar and water and realizes Finch is living in the closet. He asks Violet to keep his secret.



Finch's section "Day 75" includes only a quote by Cesare Pavese and Finch's statement that he is in pieces.

In Violet's "March 20" section Amanda tells Violet she's seen Finch at a support group for people who've thought about suicide. She stays the rest of the school day because she has a test but then goes straight to Finch's house. No one appears to be home and there's no answer when she throws rocks at Finch's window. She does get in touch with him through Facebook and he invites her to his house the next day at 6 p.m. for his birthday.

Analysis

The theme of bullying takes on a different tone in this section of the novel as Finch meets the gossipy bully Amanda at the support meeting he attends for those who have thought about or attempted suicide. It seems that her gossiping and laughing is the coping mechanism that Amanda has developed to help her cover up and deal with her own insecurities and feelings of worthlessness. She has actually tried to kill herself twice.

It is Amanda who tells Violet about seeing Finch at the meeting. Notice that Amanda must want to help Finch as she wouldn't be able to tell Violet she'd seen Finch there without admitting she was at the meeting. That's not the kind of information Amanda wants to be public knowledge.

The theme of mental illness is developed in this section of the novel as Finch attends the group session. Although the sharing and information is meant to make those who have thought about suicide or tried to commit suicide feel better, Finch only feels worse as the meeting progresses. He feels sorry for the kids who have been picked on and bullied all of their lives just because their brains work differently from others. One kid talks about how his medicine makes him feel empty, not the kind of information Finch is wanting to hear. He'd gone to the meeting only because he'd tried to overdose on sleeping pills. He'd hoped to feel the valiant acclamation Cesare Pavese felt but only feels like he does when he is Asleep.

Filling out the section on the power of love, notice how Finch is treating Violet in this section of the novel. He mentions at one point that he tries to stay even and normal around her but his efforts wear him out. He tries to avoid her as much as possible to avoid worrying her. Violet, however, interprets his avoidance as a lack of interest or lack of love. She thinks she's done something wrong. Notice how Finch opens up to her more about his disorder and the way it makes him feel than he has to anyone else so far. She's worried when she realizes he's living in the closet and even more so when Amanda tells her about the suicide meeting.



Discussion Question 1

What do you think is Amanda's motivation for telling Violet about seeing Finch at the suicide support meeting?

Discussion Question 2

In what ways does the suicide support meeting make Finch feel worse? Are there any ways in which he feels better after the meeting?

Discussion Question 3

What do you think Finch means by his Day 75 narration where he quotes Cesare Pavese?

Vocabulary

erratic, sidles, stigma, chauffeur, claustrophobic



Part 2: Violet: March 21 and Beyond – Part 3: Violet: April

Summary

In Violet's "March 21" narration Violet tells Finch she needs to talk to him but he distracts her by taking her into the closet, which he has painted with pictures of the planets and stars. They glow by a black light installed in the ceiling. He points out the Jupiter and Pluto are aligned making the room a permanent Jovian-Plutonian gravitational chamber. Violet realizes how much she's worried about Finch, but also how much she loves him. As his birthday present, Violet gives Finch a first-edition copy of Woolf's *The Waves*. He tells her it was the same book he'd been looking for. Finch talks about how being sucked into a black hole would be the coolest way to die. Violet tells Finch he's the best friend she's ever had, then starts crying with all the worry she's felt coming out. She tells Finch that Amanda told her about the suicide group meeting. She begs him to tell her what she can do to help. He pulls away telling her not to try to save him just because she couldn't save Eleanor. He lashes out at her telling her he's not a compilation of the labels people have branded him with or even his moods. He's a person and he's turning into the person whom he didn't want Violet to meet. He coldly tells her the closet suddenly seems too small. She helps him out, leaving and slamming the door behind her.

At home, she tells her parents exactly what happened with her and Finch on the ledge of the bell tower. She tells them that Finch is on that ledge now, symbolically, and needs someone to talk him down. Violet's mom calls Finch's mom and her father calls a psychiatrist he knows. They tell her she's done the right thing by telling them the truth.

In bed that night Violet believes she's dreaming the sound of rocks hitting her window. She doesn't get up at first but when she wakes up fully she gets up and sees nothing but an empty street. The next day Violet's mother continually tries to get in touch with Mrs. Finch. The psychiatrist gets Decca on the phone who tells him that Finch isn't in his room or in his closet. She sends Finch a text apologizing. She doesn't get an answer.

The next day in school, Mr. Black asks how their geography projects are coming. Violet texts Finch to let her know he's okay. When she still hasn't heard from him by Tuesday, she goes to his house to look for him. He isn't there. When she questions Decca downstairs, she says her brother has a habit of going away but always comes back. She wonders of all the people who have told her this about Finch have ever wondered that something might be wrong with him.

In his section "Day 80 (A Muthaf#@*ing World Record)" Finch wonders which of his feelings are real and which of the variations of him is the real him. He feels the only version of himself he ever liked is going away. He thinks about the cardinal's death and



feels responsible even though he knows he and his family probably couldn't have stopped it. He thinks of Pavese who said people remember moments and thinks of all the moments he remembers. All of his moments include Violet.

In Violet's section "The Rest of March" Violet gets a text from Finch informing her that all the days they spend together were perfect days. She begs Finch to call her as he's become a missing person but he only texts back that he's been found. Violet's mother finally gets in touch with Mrs. Finch who tells them not to worry as Finch has promised to check in every week. Violet begins to get strange text messages from Finch, and then he stops sending messages.

In Violet's section "April" she and her parents go to visit the scene of Eleanor's death on the anniversary of the wreck. There is a license plate embedded in the ground surrounded by flowers. Violet knows Finch was responsible. At home she finally comes up with a catch phrase for her magazine "Germ Magazine, You Start Here."

Violet is angry at Finch because Finch has left her and at herself for being so easy to leave. On April 10 she buys a new map so she can finish their project. She visits the Rotary Jail Museum but feels like a tourist. As she drives, she looks for Finch's SUV. Ryan asks her out again and she says yes but only as friends. Ryan is nice, normal and solid. She lets him kiss her goodnight, then answers when he calls the following morning. She spends an evening dancing with her girlfriends, then spends the night with Brenda. When Violet checks her email she has fifteen emails from girls wanting to contribute to her site. As she reads the emails out loud Brenda comments on her popularity.

Analysis

Violet faces a terrible dilemma in this section of the novel as she realizes that Finch has problems that are too difficult for her to help him with. He begs her to keep his secret, just as he kept hers, but somehow she knows he needs help. Because of her decision to not be quiet about Finch's despair, Violet feels like Finch disappears because he is angry with her. She tries to get her parents involved in helping her to help Finch but when they get in touch with Mrs. Finch and she assures them nothing needs to be done, they feel they have no choice but to follow her wishes.

Even as hard as Finch is struggling with his mental illness, he still manages to pull himself together for a birthday dinner with Violet. Symbolizing their night together under the stars on the Purina Tower, he covers the walls and ceiling of his closet with cutouts of the planets and stars that are illuminated by a black light. He points out that Pluto and Jupiter are in alignment, the basis of the Jovian-Plutonian theory, an April Fools farce he told her about during their time together on the tower and a concept they associate with the feeling of their lovemaking.

Consider Finch's speech to Violet just before she leaves the closet. He tells her he wants to be considered a person, not just a compilation of symptoms. This statement



shows how badly the bullying has taken its toll on Finch through the years despite his work to hide his pain. Since the eighth grade, he's lived under the title of the freak. He's learned that by sharing his troubles, or even the abilities he has that make him unique from other people, cause him to be singled out and put in a box because of that label. Finch wants Violet to treat him just as a person. With each person's individual personality quirks and differences, even though they may not be as severe as Finch's, it is very difficult to overlook labels and see the person behind those labels.

Notice and remember the odd text messages that Finch sends to Violet. Though these messages are very cryptic and seem to make no sense, they will later have great meaning to Violet when she realizes to what he is referring in each of the messages.

Discussion Question 1

What do you think of Finch's disappearance? What do you make of all the strange text messages he sends Violet?

Discussion Question 2

What affect does Mrs. Finch's lack of concern about her son have on Violet's parents? What might your parents do if you had gone missing at that age?

Discussion Question 3

What does Brenda's comment about Violet's popularity mean?

Vocabulary

indefinitely, epic, remnants, maelstrom, literally, periodically, epilogue, permanence



Part 3: Violet: April 26 – Violet: May – Weeks 1, 2 and 3

Summary

In the section “April 26” Kate comes to Violet’s house asking if she’s seen or heard from Finch. He didn’t check in with his family on Saturday as usual and they’ve gotten a strange email. She lets Violet read the note that has the tone of a goodbye letter. After Kate leaves and Violet goes upstairs, she finds a message on Facebook from Finch. The message from Finch is made of quotes from Woolf. Violet responds but doesn’t get an answer back. Brenda and Charlie have also gotten strange messages from Finch. Violet realizes something is wrong.

Violet drives to Finch’s house. She tells Kate that she, Brenda and Charlie have all gotten strange emails from Finch. As Kate and Violet try to piece together what Finch might be trying to tell them through his strange messages, Kate tells Violet that Finch had been accepted to NYU. Violet searches Finch’s room for clues he might have left behind. She discovers two new lines of Post-It notes she didn’t notice last time. Rearranging the letters, she makes two lines “There was nothing to make him last a long time” and “Go to the waters if it suits thee there.” Violet calls Mrs. Finch to Finch’s room to tell her where Finch might be and why she thinks he’s there. Mrs. Finch is surprised to see the room is blue. Instead of going herself, Mrs. Finch asks Violet to look for Finch.

In “April 26 (Part Two)” Violet goes looking for Finch because she believes she betrayed his trust and is the reason he’s missing. She also believes she would be the one he would want to come. She finds Little Bastard parked on the side of the road and walks to the blue pool of water. At first, the place seems deserted, but then she sees Finch’s clothes on the bank. His phone, glasses and car keys are in his boots. Their wandering map is in his jacket pocket. She searches for Finch but deep inside knows he is dead.

Violet finally gives up and calls 9-1-1. The sheriff and ambulance crew arrive and people begin diving for the body. When they bring it up, Violet says she does not recognize it and refuses to make an identification. Mrs. Finch picks up on the first ring and Violet tells her Finch has been found and that she’s sorry. The sheriff takes the phone from Violet.

In her “May 3” narration Violet prepares for Finch’s funeral. She thinks her face reflects her inner feelings of guilt, loss and death. Her parents are angry with Mrs. Finch. At the funeral, all of Finch’s family members are crying. Brenda stares at the crying students from school, including Roamer, who carry on like paid mourners. The family is choosing to treat Finch’s death as an accident instead of a suicide. Violet thinks how angry she is with Finch for leaving her when he knew she’d just begun to heal from losing her sister. Charlie calls the mourners a bunch of phonies while Brenda says she hopes Finch is



somewhere flipping them all off. Finch's parents come to hug Violet. Her parents escort her away. Later at home Violet sits in her closet and wonders why she wasn't enough to keep Finch alive.

In the section "May — Weeks 1, 2, and 3" students in the school mourn Finch's death. A tribute to him is set up near the principal's office. She knows all the messages left there are fake. The Wednesday after Finch's funeral Amanda joins Violet at the lunch table where she sits with Brenda and her crew. Amanda apologizes for calling Finch a freak and says she's broken up with Roamer. Brenda walks away angrily.

She meets with Mr. Embry because he was Finch's counselor. Embry describes Finch as a good but messed up kid who needed more help. He says he feels responsible but realizes there wasn't more anyone could do to help, especially since Finch took such great pains to hide his troubles. He gives her a book about surviving suicide. It indicates that if she can accept the fact her life is forever changed; she will begin to find peace.

At school there is an assembly featuring a program on protecting one's self and teens on drugs. Charlie tells Violet the video about the teens on drugs is being shown because a rumor going around school reported Finch had been on drugs when he died. He, Violet and Brenda are the only ones who know this isn't true. Violet leaves the auditorium and throws up in one of the trashcans outside. Amanda is already in the hallway and Violet asks her the reasons behind her suicide attempts. Later that day when Mr. Black attempts to lighten Violet's load by letting her turn in an unfinished project, Violet is determined to turn in a finished product. She writes a letter to Finch asking him why she couldn't save his life. As she looks at her bulletin board and the tag line she's come up with her webzine named Germ she begins looking for the map she took from the pocket of Finch's coat. There are five places left on the map. Finch has numbered them in the order he'd planned on them visiting the sites.

Analysis

After Finch is found, drowned in the Blue Hole, his parents choose to pretend his death as an accident and not suicide. As family member who were generally unconcerned about Finch and the trouble he was having, it was probably easier for them to deal with the idea of an accident instead of admitting his death was intentional. There are a multiple of reasons to think his death was intentional. He deeply dreaded going to Sleep again. Even on days spent with Violet during which he was happy and felt a purpose in living, he would still often consider killing himself after he was at home, alone. When he attends the suicide support group, Finch swears to himself that if he were to seriously attempt suicide, he would not fail.

Notice that although Finch's letter to Violet may seem like just a bunch of scattered phrases, in retrospect, they do contain clues to what he is planning. The first lines address the idea that Finch's circumstances are changing in a way he doesn't want them to change. The "blue" is going away and the "moment" is changing. He knows even though he has fought hard, he can't keep a period of Sleep away. He doesn't want



to suffer through another of these. Notice also that Finch chooses lines from Virginia Woolf, not only one of the couple's favorite authors, but also one who killed herself because she felt she was going mad again and couldn't stand the idea, much like Finch must be feeling.

Remember that when Finch was expelled from school, Violet indicated that the teachers and other students hadn't even seemed to notice he was gone or questioned his absence. At his death, however, the entire student body responds with a sickening outcry of grief. The same people who bullied him relentlessly and caused him untold mental and emotional torment now act as if they are sad he is no longer there. A tribute is set up to honor him but Violet recognizes it for what it is and wants to destroy all of the fake words of sorrow. At the funeral, Roamer and his crew attends and carries on as if they had lost their best friend. Violet is sickened and Brenda angered. Violet is also angry with Finch's family members who accept the condolences of the crowd. Violet feels the family who has been so dismissive of Finch in the past doesn't deserve to be consoled. It seems that in cases of death where a family was unaware of what was going on with their loved one, or people who really didn't think about the consequences of their bullying actions, they try to make their behavior up to that person after they have died. Although it is too late at that point, they seem to at least make themselves feel better.

Notice in this section that there is a change in Violet from the attitude of a victim to that of determination. She has come a long way in her healing despite the new challenges she faces. Just as the suicide help book that Embry gave her, Violet realizes that her life has been changed permanently. There will be no going back to the person she was before she lost Eleanor, or the person she was before she lost Finch. Unlike her painful struggling through the months after Eleanor's death, Violet has learned from Finch that she is not the kind of person who wants special treatment. When Mr. Black, the teacher who refused to take it easy on Violet because of her sister's death, offers Violet an easy out on her project because of Finch's death, Violet refuses to take it. She wants to complete the project that she and Finch started together.

Discussion Question 1

What else, if anything, could Violet have done for Finch?

Discussion Question 2

Why do you think that Finch's parents prefer to refer to his death as an accident instead of a suicide? Do you think this change in wording actually makes the grieving any easier? Why or why not?



Discussion Question 3

Discuss the message that Violet has gotten from Finch. What do you think he is trying to tell her if anything?

Vocabulary

sequence, hoax, guttural, mousy, condolences, curt, tributes, designation, graphic, logical



Part 3: Violet: Remaining Wanderings 1 and 2 – Violet: June 20

Summary

In “Remaining Wanderings 1 and 2” Violet visits the shoe trees. For years people have been leaving pairs of shoes hanging by their laces from these trees. Violet leaves a pair of her shoes and a pair of Eleanor’s. On the highest branch of the tree she sees Finch’s pair of shoes with the fluorescent laces hanging. At the World’s Biggest Ball of Paint, she learns that Finch visited and painted the ball the color violet.

Back at home Violet tells her parents she needs them to start talking to her about Eleanor again. She’s tired of feeling like her sister didn’t exist. She doesn’t want them to pretend any longer. By the time they are finished, they are all crying and hugging one another.

In “Remaining Wanderings 3 and 4” Violet visit the remains of the Pendleton Park Drive-In. Among the graffiti on the old screen are Finch’s words “I was here.” She finds a can of red spray paint as if Finch had left it for her and writes “I was too.” Her next stop is at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Monastery. Here she finds where Finch has put their rock from Hoosier Hill in the hand of Jesus. She exchanges it for a butterfly ring she has brought. The friar tells her the room in which she found the rock is called the Ultraviolet Apocalypse.

That night, Violet, Brenda, Charlie, Ryan and Amanda meet at the top of the Purina Tower where they hold a memorial service for Finch. Each of the teens says something about Finch as they light a candle for him. Brenda chooses a quote from author Herman Melville, and then plays the music that Finch loved from a recording on her phone. Brenda begins to dance and soon the others join her. Later Violet is unable to sleep so she studies the map, looking for the location of the last wander. As she studies it, she realizes it is a place that Finch chose alone.

In the section “The Last Wandering” the trip to Farmersburg is difficult for Violet because she has to pass the Blue Hole on her way there. She has to ask around quite a bit to find the place Finch has indicated in his puzzle like text. She has to retrace her steps to find the bend in the road that leads to Taylor Prayer Chapel. She reads from a laminated page the history of the tiny church that indicates it was built as a memorial to people who have lost their lives in traffic accidents.

She notices a white envelope tucked inside the Bible. A section of scripture mentioning the stars has been underlined. When she pulls out the envelope, it has her name on it. Inside the envelope are three sheets of paper. One has music notes while the other two are covered in the words of song lyrics. These song lyrics speak to Violet how important she was to Finch and how much he loved her and to person he was around her. From



his offerings, she learns it isn't what one takes in life, but what he leaves behind that matters most.

Analysis

Where the previous section of the novel was about pain and grief, this section of the novel is about healing. Just as Finch had helped to walk Violet through the pain she felt after her sister's death, he helps walk her through his own death. It makes his death or the circumstances of his death no less tragic and no less senseless, but leaves Violet feeling as if his death weren't all her fault.

As Violet begins to visit the final wanderings they'd marked out on their map, she realizes Finch had already been to each place. Remember that he'd noted that it was too stressful for him to be around Violet the closer he gets to his period of being Asleep as he had to struggle to keep himself and his emotions even. He'd visited the places and left messages for her to know he was thinking of her when he was there, even though she wasn't with him physically. Notice also that the cryptic text messages he'd sent Violet during the last few days of his life match up with clues he's left her at each of the places they'd planned to visit.

Violet's biggest surprise, and biggest confirmation there was nothing else she could have done to help him stay alive comes in the last wandering, a trip that Finch planned without Violet's knowledge. She finds herself in a tiny chapel built to honor victims of car accidents, like Eleanor. He leaves for her a song he has written about her and the difference she made in his life and leaves it in the Bible in the chapel.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss Violet's realization that it isn't what one takes in life that matters, but what he leaves behind. What does this mean? How does it relate to Finch?

Discussion Question 2

How do the text messages that Finch sent to Violet make sense when seen in the light of this section of the novel? Discuss what Finch was trying to show Violet through his messages.

Discussion Question 3

Consider the song that Finch writes for Violet. How does it help her heal?

Vocabulary

expectant, grottoes, laminated, lethal, voluptuous, arid



Characters

Theodore Finch

Theodore Finch is one of the main characters and serves as one of the two narrators for this story. He is a senior at Bartlett High School in Indiana. Since eighth grade his classmates have called him a freak because he talked to one of his friends, Gabe Romero, about being able to feel sound and see headaches. Although he most likely suffers with a mental illness called bipolar, or manic-depressive disorder, none of his family members have ever taken him for a consultation with a doctor. His parents accuse him of telling stories about his strange abilities, while his older sister believes Finch's strangeness is because their father beat him regularly when he was younger.

At the time of the novel Finch has just come out of one of his depressive periods, which he refers to as being Asleep. On his first day back at school he climbed to the school's bell tower to see if he had the courage to jump from it. He tells himself he went to the tower to feel he was in control of his life again. When standing on the ledge of the tower Finch realizes he is not alone on the tower but that a girl, who was once a cheerleader, is there with him. Using his humor, he talks her off the ledge and gets her back to safety. Because he's believed to be so strange, the kids on the ground assume the girl, whose name is Violet, saved him. Violet and Finch are the only ones who know the truth. Finch does some research on Violet and learns her sister was killed in a car wreck less than a year ago. He starts a Facebook page with the sole intent of forging a friendship with Violet. He arranges for them to work on a U.S. Geography project together and with his help, she starts riding in cars and even writing again, two things she'd been unable to do since her sister was killed.

Although Finch helps Violet learn to deal with her grief and anger, he is caught up in the fear that he will go into another depressive state. Although he tries to fight the depression he knows is coming, he is unable to keep it away. After leaving some things for Violet to find in the final places they were to visit for their Geography project, Finch kills himself by drowning in the Blue Hole, a lake rumored to have no bottom.

Violet Markey

Violet Markey is a main character and one of two narrators for this novel. She is also a senior at Bartlett High School. In the opening section of the novel, Violet has climbed to the bell tower at her school with the intent of jumping off. She later tells Finch she was in a daze and had not really thought about what she was doing until she was on the ledge and realized how scared she was. Violet had been involved in a car wreck nine months ago in which her sister was killed. Violet is still grieving for her sister and has been unable to move on with her life. The day of the bell tower incident was the anniversary of her sister's birthday.



As the novel continues, Violet accepts Finch's attempts to forge a friendship. She falls in love with him as he teaches her how to deal with the grief and guilt she's feeling because of the loss of her sister. As the two get closer, Violet begins to notice Finch's strange behavior, especially as he gets closer and closer to one of his depressive states. When she learns from a friend that Finch has overdosed on pills and attended a suicide support group meeting, Violet tries to talk Finch into getting help. Unfortunately, Finch runs when Violet shows her concern for him and tells her her intent to get him help. His family and friends do not have contact with him for several weeks before Violet discovers that he has drowned himself in the Blue Hole, one of the unique places in Indiana the two had visited together.

Charlie Donahue

Charlie Donahue is Finch's best friend. He is one of those who accepts Finch for who he is and doesn't tell him he's weird or a freak. On the day that Finch climbs to the bell tower Charlie follows him telling him he can't kill himself on pizza day. Charlie believes Finch's problems lie in the fact he isn't having enough sex. When Finch asks Charlie to help him rework himself, it is Charlie who chooses the jacket that Finch begins wearing as part of his badass persona. Although he's good at sports, Charlie refuses to join a sports team and fill the black stereotype. He instead chooses chess, yearbook and euchre club as his extracurricular activities. He attends Finch's funeral and comments on how phony all the other grieving students are. Charlie is one of the people that Violet includes in her memorial service for Finch on top of the Purina Tower.

Brenda Shank-Kravitz

Brenda Shank-Kravitz is another of Finch's close friends. She is the one who brings him the black Beatles boots to go with his badass Finch costume. Brenda is odd herself. Her hair is dyed pink and red, and she wears a nose ring. She is not afraid to speak her mind or show her true feelings. When Brenda first learns Finch has a crush on Violet, she discourages him, telling him he will get hurt. She threatens Violet, warning her not to break Finch's heart but then softening the blow by offering condolences to Violet for the loss of her sister. Brenda is one of the girls that Violet invites to create material for her new webzine. Brenda is the only one who notices the change in Violet after she and Finch have slept together. By the end of the novel Violet considers Brenda her closest friend. At Finch's funeral, Brenda is openly angry at the way the people who used to be cruel to Finch are now crying because he's gone. She also attends the memorial service for Finch that Violet holds on the Purina Tower.

Gabe Romero

Gabe Romero, who is also called Roamer, was Finch's best friend from elementary school. The friendship ended, however, when Finch asked Romero when the two were eighth graders if he was able to see headaches. Romero told all the kids at school



about the strange things Finch said he could do and began calling Finch Theodore Freak. In high school, Romero and Finch are sworn enemies. Finch is on probation at school because he threw a chair and broke a chalkboard because he was so angry at something Romero had done. Through the course of the novel Romero continues to pick at Finch, trying to get him to his breaking point. Finch tries to contain his anger but is not as successful as he'd like to be. In one fight Finch holds Romero's head under water until those around him manage to pull him away. In another, he almost succeeds in choking Roamer. This fight gets Finch expelled from school. At Finch's funeral, Romero is one of those who were cruel to Finch but cries at his funeral as if he'd lost someone special.

Amanda Monk

Amanda Monk is a snobby cheerleader who attends school at Bartlett. She is one of the students who bullies and picks at Finch relentlessly. Finch is in for a shock when he attends a meeting for students who have survived a suicide attempt and finds Amanda there. She is a bulimic who has tried to kill herself twice. She was formerly one of Violet's best friends but after Eleanor's death, she realizes she and Amanda don't have as much in common as she had once thought. Their friendship is rekindled, however, when Amanda shares with Violet that Finch was at the suicide support meeting and that he had tried to kill himself. Amanda is one of the people whom Violet includes in the memorial services she holds for Finch.

Linda Finch

Linda Finch is the mother of Kate, Theodore (Finch) and Decca. Since she's gotten divorced, she works two jobs leaving her too tired to pay much attention to her children. Although Finch describes his mother as being inattentive, he loves her because he knows how hard her marriage to his father was. He doesn't tell her about the problems he's having as he knows that she won't understand. When Finch's family and friends begin getting strange messages from Finch, she asks Violet to go looking for him. Violet's parents are angry with Mrs. Finch not only because she paid so little attention to her son but also because she forced Violet to be the one to find him.

Mr. Embry

Mr. Embry is the guidance counselor assigned to Finch at school. Although Finch won't open up to the man and talk about his troubles, he says that Mr. Embry is the only adult who really pays attention to him. It is Mr. Embry who suggests to Finch that he has bipolar disorder. After Finch's death, Mr. Embry tells Violet that Finch was a good-but-screwed-up kid who should have gotten more help. He also tells Violet it is almost impossible to help someone who tries as hard as Finch did to hide what he was going through.



Decca Finch

Decca Finch is Finch's younger sister. She is the one most upset by their father's remarriage and his new son, who is about her age. One night when Decca seems especially upset Finch reaches out to Decca by leaving the words "make it lovely" on her pillow. That night she had been cutting the mean, ugly words and phrases out of books to have where she could keep an eye on them. Finch understands her desire to weed out the unhappiness and cruelty and keep it where she can watch to make sure they don't attack her unexpectedly.

Ted Finch

Ted Finch is father to Kate, Theodore (Finch) and Decca Finch. He was abusive to both Linda Finch, his ex-wife, and Finch. Although Finch won't tell Violet right away, he later admits that his father was responsible for the scar on his stomach. In his younger days, Ted was a hockey star. From his behavior it seems possible that Finch inherited his mental illness from his father who shows signs of being bipolar as well.

Kate Finch

Kate Finch is Finch's older sister. She is perhaps more aware of Finch and his problems than any other member of the family. Instead of getting him help, however, Kate provides Finch with excuses for his behavior and keeps others from knowing exactly what is going on with her brother.

James Markey

James Markey is Violet's father. After Violet and Finch stay out all night together James refuses to let Finch see his daughter again. After he learns how inattentive Finch's parents were to his problems, he is angry with them and wishes he could give them a piece of his mind.

Sheryl Markey

Sheryl Markey is Violet's mother. She is an author who tries to encourage her daughter's writing even though she doesn't have the courage to push her as hard as Finch does. After Finch encourages her to give writing a try again, Violet works with her mother to put together a plan for a new webzine.



Eleanor Markey

Eleanor Markey is Violet's older sister. Eleanor was killed in a car wreck nearly nine months prior to the time setting of this novel. Violet describes Eleanor to Finch as having been her best friend.

Ryan Cross

Ryan Cross is Violet's ex-boyfriend. He is considered the all-American, good guy of Bartlett High School. Although Ryan wants to get back together with Violet, she can't stand to be with him because he reminds of the night that her sister was killed.

Josh Raymond

Josh Raymond is the slightly spoiled son of Ted Finch's new wife. It is unsure if the boy is actually Ted's son or not.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Ledge

Although it is also a setting, the ledge of the school's bell tower becomes a symbol for Finch and Violet of their grief and thoughts of suicide. At one point in the novel Finch encourages Violet to get off of the ledge of grief she's created for herself. In another section, Violet tells her parents Finch is on the ledge, meaning he's in trouble and needs their help.

EleanorandViolet.com

EleanorandViolet.com is the website of the web magazine that Violet and her sister published together. When she gets a notice the domain name is about to expire, Violet puts all her notes and information concerning the magazine in the computer's trash can, and then empties the trash, symbolically killing the magazine just as Eleanor had been killed.

Eleanor's Glasses

After her sister dies, Violet wears Eleanor's glasses even though the prescription is too strong for her. Violet believes by wearing the glasses that she is symbolically being able to see things through her sister's eyes.

Virginia Woolf's Book "The Waves"

The first time that Violet and Finch communicate with one another using Facebook, Finch initiates the conversation with a quote by Virginia Woolf from her book "The Waves." Finch later looks for this book in both the Bookmobiles and at the bookstore at which his mother works but is unable to find it. During one of their last dates together after Finch has taken to his closet, Violet gives him a first edition copy of this book for his birthday.

An Ugly Gray Rock

Finch gives this gray rock, taken from Hoosier Hill, to Violet after their first wander together. They pass it back and forth until after his death. When Violet visits the last place they had decided together to see, she finds that Finch had placed this rock in the hand of a statue of Jesus.



Dr Suess' Book "Oh The Places You'll Go"

Finch and Violet read this book together early one morning when they visit the bookstore at which his mother works. The title for the novel "All the Bright Places" comes from this book. The two often sing the phrases of the book to one another. The book, with its theme of travel, correlates with Violet and Finch's wanderings.

Official Wandering Notebook

Finch pushes Violet to start writing again by continuing to insist that she write the notes in their official wandering notebook. It is through her beginning in this book that Violet is able to rekindle her love of writing.

Water from Mudlavia

Finch drinks the water from this supposedly healing fountain in hopes of healing himself of his mental illness and not having to go through a period of being Asleep again. His willingness to search out this "cure" indicates Finch does have the desire to get well.

Violet's Calendar

Before Violet becomes close friends with Finch, she uses a calendar to keep track of and mark off the days as they passed. Her goal is to get as many days behind her as possible because she wants them gone. After she meets Finch and begins to heal from her grief, she tears the calendar down as she realizes life is worth living.

The Jovian-Plutonian Gravitational Effect

After they make love for the first time, Finch tells Violet about the April Fools hoax called the Jovian-Plutonian Gravitational Effect in which people were told when two planets aligned they would be temporarily weightless. Finch describes this feeling as the one he has after he's been with Violet.

Blue Flash

The Blue Flash is a homemade roller coaster that Finch and Violet visit. The feeling they get from the coaster correlates with the way the two learn how to let go of their worries and enjoy life.



Our Lady of Mount Carmel Monastery

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Monastery is one of the last places Violet visits in her attempt to follow Finch's last steps. It is at this monastery that Finch has left the gray rock that he gave her when they started their wanderings. The rock is left in the hand of Jesus, perhaps a message to Violet she needs to leave her troubles, future and plans in the hands of a higher power.

Taylor Prayer Chapel

This tiny chapel is the final wander that Finch included without Violet's knowledge and led her to by including it on their map. This is the chapel that was built to honor victims of car accidents. Violet knows that Finch chose to lead her to this place for the peace it would bring Violet in dealing with her sister's death. He leaves an envelope for her tucked inside the Bible in this chapel.



Settings

Bell Tower of the High School

The bell tower of the high school is where Violet and Finch first meet. Finch has gone there to see what it might be like to consider jumping off the tower while Violet goes there because she is considering suicide.

Mr. Black's Room

Mr. Black's Room is the classroom where Finch and Violet have U.S. Geography. It is in this room that Finch sets Violet up to make her agree to work with him on a class project.

The A Street Bridge

The A Street Bridge is the bridge where Eleanor and Violet had their car accident. Eleanor was killed in the wreck. When Violet and her family later visit the scene of the car wreck, Violet sees that Finch has implanted the license plate from the car in the ground, surrounded by a small garden of flowers.

Hoosier Hill

Hoosier Hill, the highest point in Indiana, is one of the first places visited by Violet and Finch in their wanderings.

Blue Hole

The Blue Hole is a lake in Indiana rumored to have no bottom. After Finch sends strange emails to his friends and family, Violet visits this spot and finds his clothes folded by the bank. Emergency personnel later pull his body from the water. It is assumed he intentionally drowned himself in the lake.

Finch's Closet

Because he believes his room is too big, Finch winds up living in his closet in his attempt to avoid going to Sleep. Finch serves Violet a meal in the closet in honor of his birthday. They spend their last date together in this closet.



Golden Acres

Golden Acres is the cemetery where Finch is buried. It is at this cemetery that Violet and Finch's other real friends are offended because all of the other kids who bullied Finch so badly carry on like paid mourners because he is dead.

The Ultraviolet Apocalypse

The Ultraviolet Apocalypse is the name of the chamber in which Finch has left the gray rock in the hand of a statue of Jesus.

Taylor Prayer Chapel

Taylor Prayer Chapel is the name of the chapel to which Finch directs Violet. This chapel was built to honor the memory of people killed in car accidents.



Themes and Motifs

Dealing with Death / Loss

Death and dealing with loss is a major theme in this novel as Finch first helps Violet deal with grief from her sister's death, and then helps her to understand his death wasn't her fault. Along with Violet's reaction to both her sister's death and Finch's death, the reactions of other characters in the novel to death are also described. Constructive ways to deal with death are also discussed in the novel.

When Finch first meets Violet, she is at her most vulnerable, teetering physically at the top of a bell tower because she has not yet learned how to deal with the death of her sister. Even though she is hesitant, Violet accepts Finch's friendship and lets him help her overcoming the stumbling blocks that have been in the way of her emotional healing. She begins writing again. She begins riding in and driving cars again. She even manages to forgive herself and Eleanor for Eleanor's death.

When Finch kills himself, it seems possible that Violet might retreat into the same despair she lived in before the two met. Violet, however, seeks help from Finch's counselor who gives her a book that includes the idea that she needs to accept the fact that her life is forever changed. It is with these words that Violet realizes that living in grief won't bring Eleanor or Finch back. It is up to her to go on with her life and learn to live again.

Notice the forms of grief as described in the novel. Violet's parents try to go on with their life as if nothing had happened. It seems this is not ideal as Violet feels as if her sister is being forgotten and pushed out of their lives. After Eleanor's death, Violet tries to live in the past and not move forward. Although she felt like not moving on with her life was something she was doing out of respect for Eleanor, she was actually only hurting herself by refusing to move on. A more disturbing form of grief is shown by the school bullies who tormented Finch while he was alive but come to his funeral to cry and wail. Brenda is angry with the people, who she believes are fake in their mourning. However, these selfish people are probably mourning Finch's death in the idea that they are somehow making up for the cruel ways in which they treated him by doing so.

At the end of the novel, Violet finally speaks up to her parents about their refusal to talk about Eleanor. After Finch's death, Violet tells her parents she wants them to start talking about Eleanor again. Up to this point, they have not spoken of her, almost as if they are pretending they can avoid the pain of her loss by ignoring it. Violet speaks her mind, telling them the only thing they are accomplishing by not talking about Eleanor is forgetting the good things about her. Violet wants to be able to remember these good things and share her memories instead of having to bottle them up inside.



Mental Illness

The challenge of dealing with a mental illness is a major theme in the novel as Finch struggles with bipolar disorder. The novel not only describes the strange behaviors Finch exhibits and the strange things that he experiences because of his mental illness but also the way people treat him because he is so different. The novel additionally discusses the stigma suffered by those who have a mental illness. Finally, the hopelessness Finch feels because of his unpredictable moods and his resulting suicide is also discussed.

Finch most likely suffers with a mental illness referred to as bipolar disorder or manic-depressive disorder. He describes periods of high physical and mental energy, which he refers to as being “Awake,” interspersed with black periods or periods of being “Asleep.” He refers to these periods as being Asleep because he can’t even remember some of them because he was so depressed. At the young age of 17, he’s cycled through these phases enough that he knows when a period of Sleep is coming on. He knows the things he can do to help delay these periods, but because his troubles are mental and related to chemical imbalances, there is nothing he can physically do to keep his moods from cycling.

It is probably the stigma of being labeled with a mental illness that keeps Finch from trying to get help. When he was in the eighth grade, he learned the result of telling one of his friends what was going on in his mind. He got in trouble with his parents and has been branded a freak, a label that still haunts him nearly four years later. He’s found little sympathy from his parents who don’t seem to understand a person can be sick in a way that doesn’t show up on a thermometer or can’t be cured by an Advil. Because of the unwanted attention he got in the past by sharing his symptoms with someone he thought was a friend, he doesn’t even trust Violet to accept him if he were to tell her how he was feeling.

From the beginning of the novel, Finch has described his thoughts of suicide and acts that could be considered suicide attempts as actions to prove to himself that he is really still alive and in control of his life and his mind. He believes he should be able to have the power to keep himself from going to Sleep and feels that one of these ways is to prove to himself that he is in control and that he does enjoy his life. Unfortunately, as Finch gets closer and closer to a period of Sleep, he realizes that even the love of Violet cannot overcome the strength of his mental illness. Instead of trying to get help from people he doesn’t believe will understand him, Finch decides to kill himself.

Bullying

The consequences of bullying as well as the pain suffered by those who are bullies are both themes discussed in this novel. Ever since he had told a friend of the strange sensations he had of being able to see headaches, Finch has been labeled as a freak by his classmates. Even though they should have grown out of their childishness, his classmates continue to torment him, even in high school. Along with being bullied by his



classmates, Finch is also bullied by his father, who has beaten both him and his mother to the point they've had to be put in the hospital. Finally, Amanda Monk, one of the students who bullies Finch shows that often bullies torment others to cover their own sense of worthlessness.

Ever since Finch shared with Gabe Romero, his high school friend, the strange symptoms of his mental illness such as his ability to see headaches, Romero has tormented Finch by spreading rumors about him and calling him a freak. While Finch's odd behavior does keep him in the center of his classmates' attention, they continue to torment him in ways that are not acceptable. For instance, they never bother to learn the truth about the bell tower incident before they spread rumors that it was Violet who saved Finch instead of vice versa. Shortly after Finch is spotted in the bell tower, the students' gossip blog lists Finch as the most suicidal student in the school. Making matters worse, Romero, also called Roamer in the novel, seems to have a need to get Finch angry. Roamer calls Finch names to his face and does everything he can to get a rise out of him. Finch tries to control his anger until he finally breaks one day, choking the boy to the point it takes four people to pull him off. Because Roamer finally pushed Finch to his breaking point, Finch is expelled from school.

Along with the cruel behavior Finch receives at school, he's also bullied and abused at home. His father suffers with anger issues and at different points have hurt both Finch and his mother badly enough they had to be hospitalized. Finch finally admits to Violet that the scar on his stomach was put there by his father. Along with physically bullying his son, Finch's father has also mentally bullied him, calling him worthless and good for nothing. Now, his father has divorced his mother and married a new younger woman with a young son. Finch feels as if he has been discarded by his father. Though he empathizes with his mother, Finch knows his mother is neglectful of him. While this neglect is not technically bullying, the absence of attention is perhaps worse than negative attention. When Finch rearranges the furniture in his room and no one comes to check on him despite the noise he's making, Finch wonders what would have to happen for a member of his family to show some concern for him.

A final point to notice about bullies from this book is that those who bully others other feel worthless themselves. Amanda Monk, for instance, surprises Finch by being at the suicide support group that he attends. She is one of the main students who have bullied him, and spread rumors and gossip about him. Now, he learns that she is a bulimic who has tried to kill herself twice.

Power of Love

The power of love is a theme in the novel as both Finch and Violet try to use their love to save one another. Finch falls in love with Violet before he can stop himself. He reaches out to her in a constructive way as he tries to help her overcome the grief caused by the loss of her sister. As Violet heals, she begins to notice differences in Finch. Although she doesn't know the cause of his struggles, she tries to help him in the best way she can.



In helping Violet move past her grief, Finch is both supportive of and patient with Violet. He empathizes with her pain but recognizes that she has not been pushed hard enough to take hold of her life again. Finch starts by encouraging Violet to talk about the accident and talk about her sister. He also encourages Violet to start writing again and listens to her when she tells her reasons for not being able to write. Finch additionally helps Violet get over her fear of riding in a car by giving her more than just a gentle push in that direction. He appeals to Violet's sense of pride as he tells her that others haven't pushed her harder because they don't want to upset her.

Unfortunately, Violet's attempts to help Finch are not as successful as his attempts to help her. Even Finch had believed when he first met Violet that his love for her would be enough to keep him Awake. In the end, it is not so. When Violet realizes there is something seriously wrong with Finch, she does the only thing she knows to do. She first tries to talk to him about the problems he's having and begs him to get some help. When he refuses, she tells her family what is happening. Violet believes she is responsible for Finch's disappearance because she told her family he needed help. She doesn't realize that he leaves because of his fear of himself and his disease, which turns out to be stronger than her love can overcome.

Literature

In the beginning stages of their friendship, Violet and Finch use literature as a common point of interest. They express their emotions and feelings using the words of authors. Three main authors are included in this novel. These include Virginia Woolf, Dr. Seuss and Cesare Pavese.

It is through the words of Woolf in her book "The Waves" that Finch and Violet first begin to communicate with each other. The book becomes a symbol of their relationship as they continue to use quotes and phrases from it through their everyday conversation. Finch had looked for the book "The Waves" at both the Bookmobiles and later at his mother's bookstore. Violet finds a first edition copy of it and gives it to Finch as a birthday present. Finch's goodbye letter to Violet is composed in its entirety of quotes from that novel.

Because Finch is unable to find the book "The Waves" at his mother's bookstore, he and Violet wind up instead reading from a Dr. Seuss book. This book "Oh the Places You'll Go," is actually perfectly suited to Violet and Finch as they have been traveling to a variety of different, eclectic locations as they have developed their friendship. The name of the novel "All the Bright Places" comes from this Seuss book.

A final important author in the novel is Cesare Pavese. Finch has long been attracted to Pavese as the poet spoke of love as the Great Manifesto. Finch had hoped to find this Great Manifesto and believed he had in Violet. Unfortunately, Pavese had also committed suicide by taking pills, an act that Finch tries to repeat but when he realizes there is nothing valiant about what he's feeling, he goes to the hospital and has his stomach pumped. Later in the novel it is noted that although Pavese kept a journal up

until the end of his life, there was nothing in it that indicated why he'd chosen to kill himself. This is perhaps an indication that suicide is one of those things that just can't be understood by others.



Styles

Point of View

This story is told in the first person point of view of two narrators, Finch and Violet. Each character narrates short sections of the novel. These sections generally alternate between the two first person narrators. These sections use the first person pronouns of I, me and we in the narration. The first person point of view is important in the novel as the novel describes the changes in both Violet and Finch. Without the first person viewpoint from both characters there could be way to tell the magnitude of change that Violet has made in healing from her sister's death or the misery to which Finch descends as he struggles with his mental illness. The first person point of view is particularly important in developing Finch's story as there are many aspects of his disorder and his past that he does not share with anyone. If these sections of the story were told by anyone other than Finch, there would be no way to vocalize how he is feeling and what he is going through. On the other hand, if Violet were not allowed her own voice in the novel, the reader would not have the first hand knowledge of the emotions and feelings that one goes through when dealing with a loved one who is suffering with a mental illness. Violet's feelings of helplessness and uselessness in dealing with Finch could not have been adequately expressed by any other character.

Language and Meaning

Most significant about the language of this novel is the way Violet and Finch often communicate with each other through the words of others. They borrow the ideas and thoughts of writers like Virginia Woolf and Cesare Pavese to share what they are feeling. Woolf's novel "The Waves" is particularly important, as it becomes almost a symbol of the relationship between the two.

Otherwise, the novel is very well-written and easy to read. It uses the language of the typical teenager, making it an ideal book for young people. There are a few scattered uses of curse words and a few references to sex but nothing graphic. The most difficult part of the book is the raw emotion felt by Finch and Violet as they struggle through difficult times in life that ones so young shouldn't have to face alone.

Finch and Violet communicate through cell phone texts and Facebook nearly as much as they communicate through dialogue. The texts and Facebook messages can be differentiated as they are written in bold text. The thoughts of characters that are not spoken are in italics.

Structure

This novel is divided into three major parts. The first features Finch as he tries to help Violet overcome the grief she feels following her sister's death. The second part



involves Violet's attempt to help Finch overcome his dark mood. The third part details Finch's suicide and Violet's attempt to work through her fresh pain and loss. Through the first two parts of the novel Finch and Violet alternate narrating sections of the story. Each section is given a title that identifies the narrator and gives a time reference. Finch describes his time in terms of the number of days he's been Awake. Violet begins her sections by noting how many days she has left until school is finished. After Finch encourages her to throw away her calendar and enjoy each day her sections are titled with the date on which she writes them.

Notice that each of the three large parts of the novel are introduced in unique ways. Instead of a line introducing Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3, each part is introduced using images of Post-It notes. Part 1 is illustrated with one single note with an image of a bird (a finch) a plus sign and a flower (a violet). This is the section in which Finch reaches out to help Violet. Illustrating the second part of the novel is another Post-It note with the flower first, a plus sign, followed by the finch, indicating the time when Violet tried to help Finch. In Part 3, the Post-It note has only a violet on it. At this point, only Violet is narrating the sections of the novel as Finch has made up his mind to kill himself.



Quotes

I can't tell you what was different this time around, only that when I woke up, I felt deader than usual. Awake, yeah, but completely empty, like someone had been feasting on my blood."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: I Am Awake Again. Day 6. paragraph 6)

Importance: Finch describes how he feels after waking up from his last period of being Asleep. He desperately tries to avoid going back to this place where he is so miserable.

She is cheerleader popular — one of those girls you would never think of running into on a ledge six stories above the ground."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: I Am Awake Again. Day 6. paragraph 16)

Importance: When Finch notices Violet on the ledge, he is surprised that someone popular and attractive would think of killing herself.

It's my experience that people are a lot more sympathetic if they can see you hurting, and for the millionth time in my life I wish for measles or smallpox or some other recognizable disease just to make it simple for me and also for them."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: I Am Awake Again. Day 6. paragraph 83)

Importance: Finch identifies one of the main stigmas associated with mental illness. Because no one can see the symptoms of the disease, they don't understand and sympathize with those who are diagnosed with these types of disorders.

And here's something else he'd never believe — I'm fighting to be here in this shitty, messed-up world. Standing on the ledge of the bell tower isn't about dying. It's about having control. It's about never going to sleep again."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: I Am Awake Again. Day 6. paragraph 89)

Importance: As Finch talks to Mr. Embry he thinks about how his counselor would never believe that Finch was on the bell tower because he was symbolically taking control of his life. In this quote Finch describes how desperately he is trying to do whatever it takes to keep himself Awake and alive.

But I haven't touched the site since Eleanor died, because what would be the point? It was a site about sisters. Besides, in that instant we went plowing through the guardrail, my words died too."

-- Violet (Part 1: Violet: 154 Days til Graduation paragraph 22)

Importance: Although she had once dreamed of being a writer, once her sister dies, Violet feels as if she no longer has any words left.

But maybe, if I wear the glasses long enough, I can be like her. I can see what she saw. I can be both of us at once so no one will have to miss her, most of all me."



-- Violet (Part 1: Violet: 154 Days til Graduation paragraph 49)

Importance: Violet feels like if she wears her sister's glasses, she can learn to be more like her and symbolically see the world through her sister's eyes.

Tenderhearted Theodore, my mother always says. Too tenderhearted for his own good. It's meant as a criticism and I take it as one."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Day 6 (Still) of Being Awake paragraph 18)

Importance: Although Theodore believes his mother's comment that he is tenderhearted as a criticism, she doesn't realize how Finch's ability to empathize with others wears so much on him. The quote also gives a glimpse into Finch's relationship with his mother as he automatically assumes the things she has to say about him are considered criticisms.

They're the words I try to outrun, because if I let them in, they might stay there and grow and fill me up and in, until the only thing left of me is worthless stupid worthless stupid worthless stupid freak."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Day 7 of the Awake paragraph 65)

Importance: As Finch runs, he tries to get away from the derogatory titles he's heard thrown in his direction all of his life.

He pulls up his shirt and pats his stomach — still flat, but no longer a six-pack — shakes his head, and smiles at me, the smile of a man who has a new wife and a new son and a new house and two new cars and who only has to put up with his old, original kids for another hour or two."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Day 8 of the Awake paragraph 16)

Importance: As Finch visits his father, he feels as if his father is pleased with his new family and happy that he does not have to deal with his old, troubled family for very long.

Because people like you to pretend, Kate. They prefer it."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Day 8 of the Awake paragraph 30)

Importance: In this quote Finch shares with his sister the truth he has learned about people. They don't really want to know the truth, they prefer for a person to pretend that nothing is wrong.

But come to think of it, after a lifetime of feeling too much, maybe there's actually something to be said for fast and sudden."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Day 8 of the Awake paragraph 44)

Importance: As Finch considers the idea of death by poison, he thinks at first this type of death would almost be like taking the easy way out. As he thinks of all the emotional



pain he's dealt with during his life, he thinks perhaps a quick and easy death would be ideal.

I can swallow them right now, lie down on my bed, close my eyes, drift away. But who's going to check on Violet Markey to make sure she's not back up on that ledge?"

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Day 8 of the Awake paragraph 67)

Importance: Finch considers taking an overdose of sleeping pills but doesn't because he believes he is needed to look after Violet. She has become his reason for living.

In that moment I wish I could see it through his eyes. I wish he had glasses to give me."

-- Violet (Part 1: Violet: 151 Days til Graduation paragraph 81)

Importance: Just as Violet had believed that using her sister's old glasses allowed her to be able to see what her sister saw, she wishes she could borrow a pair of glasses from Finch so she could see the beauty he sees in Hoosier Hill, The place she had deemed the ugliest place on Earth.

I was the writer, not Eleanor, but there is something about the act of writing that makes me feel as if I'm cheating on her."

-- Violet (Part 1: Violet: 148 Days til Graduation paragraph 50)

Importance: Violet explains why she has been unable to return to writing - a previous passion of hers - since her sister's death.

Everyone around you is going to give you a gentle push now and then, but never hard enough because they don't want to upset Poor Violet. You need shoving, not pushing. You need to jump back on that camel. Otherwise you're going to stay up on the ledge you've made for yourself."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Day 15 (I am Still Awake) paragraph 14)

Importance: Finch tells Violet in his matter-of-fact way that he intends to push her to the point that she will learn how to live again despite her sister's death. He gives her this speech when she refuses to ride in the car with him. Violet, feeling she needs to prove to him that she is not the poor Violet he describes, gets in the van and rides with him.

She was upset, but she wouldn't let me drive. I was the one who told her to take the A Street Bridge."

-- Violet (Part 1: Finch: Day 15 (I am Still Awake) paragraph 36)

Importance: Violet finally tells Finch what happened the night that Eleanor died. She admits that she feels guilty because she was the one who instructed Eleanor to take the A Street Bridge.

But sometimes there are warnings. Sound, of course, and headaches, but I've also learned to look out for things like changes in space, as in the way you see it, the way it feels."



-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Day 15 (Still) paragraph 18)

Importance: Finch knows his illness well enough to recognize the warning signs that indicate to him that a black spell is coming.

One year later, I grew out of my clothes because, it turns out, growing fourteen inches in a summer is easy. It's growing out of a label that's hard."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Day 15 (Still) paragraph 19)

Importance: After Finch was labeled as a freak in the eighth grade, he indicates it doesn't seem to matter how big he gets or how old he gets, he can't grow out of the label the other children have put on him.

You know, you're a lot friendlier when we're by ourselves and no one's around to see us together."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Days 16 and 17 paragraph 44)

Importance: Finch confronts Violet in school one day accusing her of being two-faced; friendly when they are alone but snotty when she is afraid her friends will see.

Yes, that's it. Theodore Finch always knows what to say, better than I do. He should be the writer, not me. I feel jealous, just for a second, of his brain. In this moment, mine feels so ordinary."

-- Violet (Part 1: Violet: 142 Days to Go paragraph 38)

Importance: As they sit on top of the Purina Tower and Finch is able to perfectly describe what he sees, Violet is jealous of his intelligence. She doesn't realize that along with his intelligence comes emotional instability.

I hold up my hands and they're shaking, because my hands, like the rest of me, would like to kill my father. Ever since I was ten and he sent Mom to the hospital with a busted chin, and then a year later when it was my turn."

-- Finch (Part 1: Finch: Day 22 and I'm Still Here paragraph 19)

Importance: Finch is angry enough that he would like to kill his father and has wanted to kill his father ever since he watched him send him mom to the hospital, then a year later when he injured Finch badly enough he had to go to the hospital.

It's just one more moment they were cheated of, and one more I have to make up for because I'm all that's left."

-- Violet (Part 2: Violet: Spring Break paragraph 8)

Importance: As the only child who is left after Eleanor's death, Violet feels that she is responsible for making up for all of the experiences his parents are missing with Eleanor.



Some people call it manic depression. It's a brain disorder that causes extreme shifts in mood and energy. It runs in families, but it can be treated."

-- Mr. Embry (Part 2: Finch: Days 65 and 66 paragraph 37)

Importance: When Embry tells Finch that he believes Finch is suffering with bipolar disorder, he explains the disorder runs in families and can be treated.

It's exhausting trying to even myself out and be careful around her, so careful, like I'm picking my way through a minefield, enemy soldiers on every side."

-- Finch (Part 2: Finch: Day 71 paragraph 2)

Importance: Although Finch loves Violet, he describes how difficult it is for him to be around her and how much energy he uses trying to keep her from knowing how unstable he is.

A number of these kids have the slightly dull, vacant look of people on drugs, and I wonder what they're taking to keep them here and breathing."

-- Finch (Part 2: Finch: Day 71 paragraph 10)

Importance: Finch observes the kids who attend the group meeting for those who have thought about or attempted suicide and notices the empty look of those who seem to be taking drugs to keep them alive.

I'm Rachel, I'm seventeen, I'm bulimic, and I tried to kill myself twice, both times with pills. I hide myself away with smiles and gossip. I am not happy at all. My mother is making me come here. Secrecy is life."

-- Amanda Monk (Part 2: Finch: Day 71 paragraph 16)

Importance: The snobby Amanda Monk attends the suicide group meeting as Rachel. It turns out she is bulimic and covers up her pain with gossip.

I want to get away from these kids who never did anything to anyone except be born with different brains and different wiring, and from the people who aren't here to eat these bone char cookies and share their tales, and the ones who didn't make it and never had a chance."

-- Finch (Part 2: Finch: Day 71 paragraph 18)

Importance: The magnitude of pain that Finch feels from the other students who attend the Life is Life meeting makes him want to leave the room. He hurts for each of the students who have suffered and been bullied like he has been and for those who have killed themselves.

But I'm not a compilation of symptoms. Not a casualty of shitty parents and an even shittier chemical makeup. Not a problem. Not a diagnosis. Not an illness. Not something to be rescued. I'm a person."

-- Finch (Part 2: Violet: March 12 and Beyond paragraph 73)



Importance: Finch tries to explain to Violet that he doesn't want her to get caught up in the labels and circumstances that made him what he is and concentrate on and love him as a person.

But I didn't fall off, and that's thanks to him. Well, now he's up on that ledge. Not literally,' I say to my dad before he can jump for the phone. 'And we need to help him.'" -- Violet (Part 2: Violet: March 12 and Beyond paragraph 80)

Importance: Even though Finch has angered Violet's parents by accidentally keeping Violet out all night and they have learned about his history of anger issues, Violet begs them to help Finch because he helped her.

I want to say to her and Charlie and Brenda, to Kate, to his mom: Doesn't anyone care why he comes and goes? Have you ever stopped to think that something might be wrong with this?" -- Violet (Part 2: Violet: March 12 and Beyond paragraph 119)

Importance: As Violet tries to find where Finch has gone, she is disturbed because none of the people who say they care about Finch have taken the time to analyze his strange behavior and try to get him help.

I remember her smile and her laugh when I was my best self and she looked at me like I could do no wrong and was whole. I remember how she looked at me the same way even when I wasn't." -- Finch (Part 2: Finch: Day 80 (A Muthaf#@*ing World Record) paragraph 7)

Importance: As Finch thinks back on his best memories of Violet, he remembers that she accepted him, as shown by the way she looked at him, whether he was his best self or not.

Embedded in the ground is a license plate, one that suddenly looks familiar, and circling this is a small garden where someone has planted flowers. Finch." -- Violet (Part 3: Violet: April paragraph 1)

Importance: Although Finch had never told her, Violet realizes when her family visits the site where Eleanor was killed that Finch had been there as well. She'd seen the license plate in his closet. He has flattened it out and planted a small garden of flowers around it.

I was the one who pushed him out by talking to my parents and betraying his trust. He never would have left if it hadn't been for me. Besides, I tell myself, Finch would want me to be the one to come." -- Violet (Part 3: Violet: April 26 (Part Two) paragraph 1)

Importance: Because his mother doesn't want to be the one to go, Violet volunteers to go look for Finch. She feels she is responsible for him because she's the one who told people about his problems and caused him to run.



It is the face of a sad, lonely girl something bad has happened to. I wonder if my face will ever look the same again, or if I'll always see it in my reflection — Finch, Eleanor, loss, heartache, guilt, death.”

-- Violet (Part 3: Violet: May 3 paragraph 1)

Importance: As Violet now struggles with the fresh grief from Finch's suicide, she wonders if she will ever heal from the pain or if she will always be able to see it in her face.

I know what she's feeling. Here are these people who called him “freak” and never paid attention to him, except to make fun of him or spread rumors about him, and now they are carrying on like professional mourners, the ones you can hire in Taiwan or the Middle East to sing, cry, and crawl on the ground. His family is just as bad.”

-- Violet (Part 3: Violet: May 3 paragraph 6)

Importance: Brenda is angered by the people who hurt Finch so badly instead of trying to understand him or just letting him be as they cry and mourn his death at the graveyard. Violet compares them to people who have been paid a mourn a death.

The thing I realize is that it's not what you take, it's what you leave.”

-- Violet (Part 3: Violet: The Last Wandering paragraph 43)

Importance: After reading the letter that Finch has left for her, Violet realizes that what a person leaves behind, in the form of their memory is the most important thing one can do in life.