

Boy Proof Study Guide

Boy Proof by Cecil Castellucci

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Plot Summary

"Boy Proof," written by author, Cecil Castellucci, is a novel that tells the story of Victoria "Egg" Jurgen and her journey of self-discovery and acceptance.

In the first four chapters, the reader is introduced to the main character, Victoria Jurgen, who prefers to be called "Egg," as she has modeled her physical appearance and clothes after her favorite Sci-Fi character. She informs the reader that she has made herself intentionally boy proof because she enjoys her life the way it is. In these chapters, the reader also meets Victoria's mom, a currently out-of-work actress, Max Carter, an equally smart, unique and talented boy who is new to Victoria's school, her friends, Martin and Rue, who are dating, and Hasan, her classmate, Nelly Melendez and Victoria's dad, Sam Jurgen, a Hollywood "creature maker." Also in these chapters, the reader learns that Victoria seems threatened by Max's intelligence, that she argues frequently with her mom and that although she presents with a tough and confident exterior, Victoria seems to use this exterior to protect herself from feeling hurt that others do not understand or accept her.

Throughout chapters 5-14, Victoria and Max continue to build a connection based on their shared interests, although Victoria appears to be fighting hard against developing the friendship. The text suggests that, although she is resistant to his friendship, Victoria finds Max somewhat attractive. In chapters 8-10, Victoria's relationship with her mother is developed further, as is her continued struggle in math. Chapter 8 reveals that Victoria has a general "burning black feeling" inside, a force that appears to shape how she thinks about herself and interacts with others. Developing throughout these chapters as well is the relationship between Max and Nelly. Victoria finds herself being jealous of their relationship and she begins to rethink whether telling Max to leave her alone was a good idea or not.

In chapters 15-18, things begin to go downhill for Victoria. Max, who she thought was her friend, stole the idea from her photograph and turned it into an editorial cartoon without giving her credit, she finds out that her idol, Saba Greer, the actress that plays "Egg," is mean-spirited and nothing like her character and she finds out that, because her math grade continues to decline, she may not be valedictorian, an honor she's been working hard to achieve.

Chapters 19-24 develop the plot further in several different ways. Victoria discovers how much she enjoys making creatures and she decides to ask her friend, Rue, to be her math tutor. Although she continues to grow jealous of Nelly and Max's relationship, feeling that she is invisible, Victoria and Max spend time together and realize how much they have in common. He appears to see her for who she really is and he encourages her to transfer her passion for a movie to real life.

Chapters 25-28 provide a climax to the story when Victoria's relationships with others. Feeling led on by Max, Victoria shares her anger with him and, after he makes comments about Victoria's personality that are too close for comfort, they stop talking to



one another. Victoria also loses her friendship with Rue when she doesn't show up for tutoring and makes insensitive comments to Rue. Victoria is also suspended from the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, losing access to the one place where she had friends with common interests. Feeling the pain of true loneliness and realizing that what everyone said about her was right, Victoria decides to rethink her actions and perspective on life at the end of chapter 28.

Chapters 29-42 provide an ending to Victoria's story. Again consisting of several short chapters, Victoria finds that her friendlier, more positive approach to life is paying off. She is able to mend her relationship with Max, get back into the Science Fiction and Fantasy club, repair her relationships with Rue and her other friends, get involved in "real world" issues, accept and appreciate her mother for who she is; accept and appreciate who she truly is; including not using the name "Egg" anymore; realize her true love for making creatures; and make plans to pursue her passion after graduation and turn her friendship into a romantic relationship with Max. The story ends with Victoria focused on her present and looking forward to a bright future.



Chapters 1-4

Chapters 1-4 Summary

Chapter 1 introduces the main character of the story, Victoria. Her day begins with checking several online news stories. When she gets to school, she keeps to herself. She describes herself as having a shaved head, many earrings, colored-in eye brows and pale skin. Today she dresses in a long, white cloak, white pants and a white shirt. Victoria has made herself look like her favorite Sci-Fi character, Egg. She has a brief conversation with a new boy in class before heading to the movie theater to see her favorite movie, *Terminal Earth*, starring Zach Cross as Uno and Saba Greer as Egg. Once home, she and her mom, a currently out-of-work actress- have a small argument about why Victoria, who insists that people call her Egg, doesn't answer her cell phone. Victoria implies that she and her mother argue frequently and she thinks about how she would prefer to live with her dad. The chapter ends with Victoria dreaming about kissing Zach Cross.

In Chapter 2, the reader learns that Victoria's last name is Jurgen and that the new boy in school is Max Carter, son of filmmaker Flint Carter. Victoria quickly learns that Max is also gifted and, when he begins to outshine her in class, she begins to get angry. She has several confrontations with Max that day, one of them ending in her having to leave the class. During lunch, the reader is introduced to Martin and Rue, two of Victoria's friends who are also dating, and Hasan, another friend, all interested in Sci-Fi. In her last class with Max, Victoria notices that Max has drawn and described her in his notebook and she is angry when he will not let her see the drawing. Victoria spends the afternoon, as she does every Tuesday, with her dad, Sam Jurgen, a monster/alien/special effects master. The reader learns that he has won an Academy Award, which angers Victoria's mother, and that he is a good father but is child-like and singular-focused. When Victoria goes home, she gets into another argument with her mom and when her mom leaves for drinks with her agent, she gets online. She gets off again quickly, realizing there is no one to talk to that she shares interests with.

Chapter 3 finds Victoria at a meeting for the school newspaper, *The Melrose Lion*, as she is the paper's photographer. She is interacting with Nelly Melendez, a nice, pretty, athletic, and smart girl. Victoria tries to be nice to Nelly but realizes that Nelly's niceness towards her is mostly forced. Victoria realizes that she shouldn't try being friends with anyone because no one understands her. When the meeting starts, Max Carter is introduced as the paper's new editorial cartoonist. Victoria protests this to no avail and, after receiving her assignment, she leaves. When she arrives to the art installation she's been asked to photograph, Victoria realizes that Max followed her. As they talk, Victoria realizes that Max seems to understand her and she longs for more conversation with him. However, when he asks her to get something to eat, she declines. He encourages her to be more social and, as he walks away, she takes a picture of him.



In Chapter 4, Victoria notices that Max makes friends easily. She overhears him telling someone that he may be the valedictorian and Victoria takes this as a challenge but feels insecure when she does badly on a math test. Victoria meets with the dean of students, Dr. Gellar, to check on her status of being the school's valedictorian. She makes the case that Max should not be allowed to be valedictorian because he recently moved from a school in England and their system is different. Annoyed, Dr. Gellar states that Victoria is an excellent student but that valedictorian can't be decided until all grades are in. After attending the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club meeting at school, she goes to her internship at the American Cinematheque, where she learns that she will soon meet the real Egg.

Chapters 1-4 Analysis

The reader is introduced to the main character, Victoria Jurgen, in chapter 1. It is clear that Victoria, who prefers to be called "Egg," is an individual, as she has modeled her physical appearance and clothes after her favorite Sci-Fi character. She is immediately known to the reader as intelligent, witty and unique. Also in chapter 1, the reader briefly meets Victoria's mom, a currently out-of-work actress, and learns that she and Victoria argue frequently. In chapter 2, the reader meets Max Carter, an equally smart, unique and talented boy who is new to Victoria's school. Victoria clearly feels threatened by his intelligence, as she has been known as the smartest student in all of her AP classes, and their relationship gets off to a rocky start. Chapter 2 also better introduces Victoria's dad, Sam Jurgen, his job as a Hollywood "creature maker" and his relationship with Victoria. Through chapters 3 and 4, the reader gets to know Victoria better. Although she presents with a tough and confident exterior, the text suggests that she may use this exterior to protect herself from feeling hurt that others do not understand or accept her. Victoria's use of a fictional character may also suggest that she is not as comfortable with her true self. In general, Victoria appears to work hard at keeping others at a distance, including her family and friends.



Chapters 5-10

Chapters 5-10 Summary

Chapter 5 begins with Victoria spending time with her father in his creature shop. Victoria concentrates on creating alien and monster masks and clay creations and her father acknowledges her work as good. Later that day, Victoria is doing homework/drawing aliens at one of her favorite cafes, one she has chosen because there is little chance of seeing anyone she knows. She is interrupted by a girl asking her to participate in an art activity where everyone draws something and then gives it to someone else to color. It is then she runs into Max, who suggests that they color in each other's drawings. Victoria thinks about the importance of having her own space where no one will know her and, at that moment, Max expresses a similar feeling and they discuss both liking to work in the café environment. Victoria states that she likes not being seen and, although Max reminds her she's not invisible, she thinks that she feels that way.

In Chapter 6, Victoria is eating lunch in the student quad when she is approached by Max. Uninvited, he sits and begins talking to Victoria about her father, how much he admires his work and how he is not surprised at her talent to draw aliens. Despite Max's attempt to engage her in a conversation, Victoria brushes him off and tells him that she prefers to eat lunch alone. Respecting her wishes, Max leaves but says Victoria is a puzzle, which she finds aggravating. Later that night, Victoria has a dream about making out with Zach Cross again, only this time the world is ending. When she wakes up, she continues reading, unable to fall asleep.

At the beginning of Chapter 7, Victoria realizes that she has overslept and she arrives late to school. Making it even worse, she is late to her favorite class, AP Global History, taught by her favorite teacher, Mr. Gerber. Victoria feels embarrassed and exposed and she begins to cry. When Max asks her if she's crying, she denies it but he hands her Kleenex anyways. She notices that Max is leaving her alone, just like she asked him to. During math class that day, Victoria is having a hard time concentrating on her quiz. She notices math all around her and is able to make sense of it, except on paper. She realizes that she is going to fail another math quiz.

In Chapter 8, Victoria is on a field trip to the Museum of Television and Radio with the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, which includes several of her friends. Victoria's friend, Hasan, asks her to get his DVD collection of *The Nemesis* signed by her mother, as her mother played a sexy character on that show, but Victoria refuses. Victoria thinks about her mother's good looks and remembers a conversation where her mom encouraged her to celebrate her curves, as she purposely hides her body. Victoria notices that the museum has a lot of *Nemesis* merchandise. When she asks why, she is informed that the museum is hosting a 20th anniversary party/marathon for *The Nemesis* and that the original cast will be there. Feeling angry that her mother didn't tell



her about this, Victoria confronts her mother when she gets home, only to find out that her mother did tell her about the party after all.

Chapter 9 finds Victoria at home watching the news. When her mom enters the living room, Victoria goes to her room to start her homework. Her English homework is to identify her philosophy of life and she writes hers as 'they are destroying everything so what's the point?' Later that night, Victoria finds herself on her living room floor with a scraped knee after having a vivid nightmare. She makes herself some tea to sleep, knowing that she must sleep to pass her math test tomorrow. While drinking her tea, she goes online and is contacted by a stranger who turns out to be Max. He shares his philosophy of life with her and she is impressed by his intelligence. Although part of her wants to keep talking to him, Victoria signs off.

Chapter 10 starts with Max talking to Victoria at school. In the conversation, Max asks what she did over the weekend and she tells him that she went on a field trip with the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club. Instead of making fun of her, Max shares his love for Sci-Fi and they have a friendly conversation. Max also shows Victoria the editorial cartoon he did for the school newspaper and she tells him how good it is. She realizes that Max may consider them friends. At home, Victoria's mom offers her a job on her new Santa movie and, while Victoria accepts, she realizes that her mom doesn't know her and makes a comment to purposely upset her. Victoria has another nightmare and realizes that her nightmares are being caused by her worry that she will fail math, which can't happen.

Chapters 5-10 Analysis

Throughout chapters 5-10, which are relatively short, Victoria and Max continue to build a connection based on their shared interests which include history, drawing, liking to spend time alone and Sci-Fi, although Victoria appears to be fighting hard against developing the friendship that Max clearly would like to have. Victoria appears to have the need to protect herself from getting involved in friendships and romantic relationships however, in her relationship with Max, she appears to feel threatened by his intelligence and seems to no longer feel confident in her own, as there are several times in these chapters where Victoria discontinues conversations with Max for fear of how she may sound to him. The text throughout these chapters also suggests that, although she is resistant to his friendship, Victoria finds Max somewhat attractive. Another plot developing throughout these chapters is Victoria's continued struggle in her math class.

In chapter 7, Victoria reveals that she understands math until she has to put it on paper and, at the end of chapter 10, she reveals that she believes her nightmares are being caused by her worry that she will fail math. Victoria's struggle in math class appears to be contributing to her overall sense of feeling that she is losing her ability to do well in school. Also throughout these chapters, particularly in chapters 8-10, Victoria's relationship with her mother is developed further. While the reader does not have a perfect understanding of their relationship, Victoria makes it clear in chapter 10 that she



feels her mother is not interested in her life. This appears to be only one contributing factor to their mostly hostile relationship, however. As demonstrated through the book to this point, Victoria appears to have an overall feeling of anger and distrust in others and, as revealed in chapter 8, Victoria has a general "burning black feeling" inside with an origin that has yet to be fully identified.



Chapters 11-14

Chapters 11-14 Summary

In Chapter 11, Victoria is in the locker room before gym. She is waiting for the perfect time to change into her gym clothes, as she doesn't feel comfortable with her body. It's then that she hears Nelly and her friend, Inez, talking. Victoria hears Nelly tells Inez that she thinks Max is cute, cultured and mysterious and that she may ask him out because she enjoys their deep conversations. To her surprise, Victoria feels a painful jealousy when she realizes that Max has deep conversations with someone other than her. At her dad's shop after school, Victoria is not happy with the cast she made of her face. She decides to modify it to look like a bird slicked with oil in order to make a statement.

Chapter 12 begins with Victoria eating lunch in the student quad. She notices Max and Nelly sitting together and flirting and continues to feel pangs of jealousy. Victoria feels a moment of hope when Max walks towards her table but, as he passes by without looking at her, she realizes that he's doing exactly what she asked him to do- leave her alone. Victoria notices that maybe she doesn't really want that. At the student paper meeting later, Victoria continues to notice Max and Nelly flirting. After Nelly shoots down Victoria's idea for a new story and accepts Max's idea and offers to go along with Max on his story, Victoria leaves the meeting and heads for her favorite comic-book store. Once there, Victoria talks to her friend Martin and learns that Terminal Earth is being released on DVD sooner than she thought. She feels happy about this until Martin starts talking about Max and how he has great taste in comics. Victoria wonders how Nelly could truly appreciate Max, buys her comics and goes home. At home, Victoria finds herself arguing with her mother again when her mother, whose name has been revealed- Ursula Denton, suggests she uses her sewing talent to become a fashion designer and, later, when her mother invites her to be her date to a movie premiere. Victoria realizes that she and her mother are no longer close and she feels guilty for being to her mom.

Chapter 14 finds Victoria on the set of her mother's movie, Trouble at Santa Land, where Victoria has agreed to play an elf. Victoria notices that she and her father could do a better job with the makeup and masks and she tells this to her makeup artist and the producer. After lunch, the head makeup artist, Jacques, finds her in his trailer reapplying her nose. He confronts her about speaking badly of his work however, after a brief but tense conversation, Jacques tells her that her work is good and he invites her to help apply noses and ears to more extras.

In Chapter 14, Victoria goes to an exhibition with Max and Nelly in order to cover the school paper's new story about the Buns not Guns show. In the car, Victoria notices the chemistry between Max and Nelly and learns that Nelly has seen Max's stomach, as she is aware of a scar he has there. Max discusses living all around the world and says that he decided to finish his senior year in Los Angeles in order to settle down and experience having a real group of friends. Victoria feels that the night only gets worse



when they arrive to the show and Nelly and Max continue to flirt and go off into the crowd together. She gets the photos needed for the paper and, when she sees Max and Nelly dancing, she wonders how far their relationship has gone. Victoria notices Max looking around the crowd, though, and wonders if he's looking for her.

Chapters 11-14 Analysis

Chapter 11 introduces the possibility that Nelly and Max could date. It also brings further clarification for the reader about Victoria's feelings for Max, as she feels a painful jealousy when realizing that Max may have deep conversations with people other than her. The end of chapter 11 finds Victoria turning the cast of her face into a birdlike creature in her dad's shop and, although she says she will be making a statement with this piece, no other information is provided about it in chapters 12-14. In Chapters 12-14, however, Max and Nelly's relationship continues to develop. Although they are not officially dating, they seem to be expressing a clear interest and attraction to one another. Their continuous interactions cause Victoria to re-think her position on telling Max to leave her alone.

Despite her attempts to tell herself that she doesn't care about Max in that way and, although she doesn't yet think about it in these terms, it appears that Victoria is beginning to question her decision to make herself boy proof. Also revealed in these chapters, focused on specifically in chapter 12, is more background on Victoria's relationship with her mother. By this point in the book, it is clear that Victoria goes out of her way to be hurtful to her mother but that she also feels her mother doesn't "get" her." In chapter 12, Victoria says that she and her mother were close until they all of the sudden didn't understand each other anymore. Victoria reveals that she feels badly about the way she treats her mom but her behavior and thoughts regarding her mother have yet to change by the end of chapter 14.



Chapters 15-18

Chapters 15-18 Summary

In Chapter 15, Victoria is reviewing the pictures she took for the paper from the Buns not Guns show during lunch. Max approaches her and asks to look at her pictures. He focuses in on one picture and compliments Victoria however, in the school paper meeting later that day, Victoria sees that Max stole her picture and turned it into a cartoon, getting the cover of the paper and high praise from the staff. Although Max apologizes in the meeting, Victoria doesn't want to believe him. Later that night, he talks to her on the computer and apologizes again, saying that her photo was an inspiration to him. Although she remained mad at first, she finally tells him that she's over it and thinks to herself that nothing about her is inspirational.

Chapter 16 finds Victoria at the movie premiere she's been waiting for- the premiere where she will meet Saba Greer. She sees Saba surrounded by girls from the Egg fan site and Victoria decides to wait to introduce herself. As she's talking with her mom and producer Lark Austin, with her mom confirming that she will have a role in Lark's new movie, Saba approaches. Victoria realizes that Saba and Lark are a couple and, as Saba complains about her fans, Victoria realizes that Saba is nothing like Egg but that she is mean and cold. When Victoria meets Saba and is crushed by who Saba really is, she drinks four glasses of wine before taking two more and retreating somewhere to drink in peace.

In Chapter 17, Victoria is feeling a hangover while having an argument with her mom. When Victoria says she drank because Saba Greer was a horrible person, her mom tells her to get used to it because they will all be in Greece this summer while the movie is being filmed. Victoria rudely tells her mom that she wants to make her own decision about what she's doing this summer and her mom leaves. When Victoria gets on her computer, she sees everyone posting comments about how nice Saba Greer was. She also sees a question someone asked about Saba Greer being gay, but she decides not to reveal Saba's relationship with Lark.

In Chapter 18, Victoria lies to Martin and Rue by telling them that meeting Saba Greer was a good experience. She thinks about telling them that her mother is playing Hera in the new Lark Austin movie but decides she doesn't want to talk about it anymore. Later, she is called into Dr. Gellar's office because of her grades. Although she is struggling in math, Victoria says she will get a tutor and tells Dr. Gellar not to count her out of the valedictorian race yet.

Chapters 15-18 Analysis

Chapters 15-18 seem to bring a string of disappointments for Victoria. In chapter 15, Max compliments Victoria's photo but then steals it in order to create his editorial



cartoon for the school newspaper. Feeling that this photo was a huge step forward in expressing who she is, Victoria feels hurt and betrayed by Max. Although she remains angry with him for a while, however, eventually accepts his apology but doesn't seem to do so wholeheartedly. In chapter 16, Victoria meets her idol, Saba Greer, but quickly realizes that she is mean-spirited and nothing like her character, Egg. Crushed and highly disappointed, Victoria gets drunk afterwards and, the next day finds herself with a hangover.

In Chapter 17, Victoria has an argument with her mom and disrespectfully tells her mom that she may not go with her to Greece in the summer, that she may not go to college right away and that she wants to make her own choices. In chapter 18, Victoria continues to experience disappointment when the dean of students informs her that she is worried about Victoria's math grade. Victoria has to face the reality that she may not be valedictorian, something she's been working hard to achieve.



Chapters 19-24

Chapters 19-24 Summary

In Chapter 19, Victoria is at her dad's shop. He reminds her that he will be overseas for the next 6 weeks working on the new Dracula movie. After talking with her dad about how he knew he wanted to be in special-effects, Victoria begins working on a new project and finds herself wanting to freeze time because she is completely happy.

Victoria is entering her school in chapter 20 and Max catches up with her, asking her what's different about her today. Although she says "nothing," Max persists, asking her a series of questions trying to figure it out. He then asks her where her cloak is and she says that it's at home.

Chapter 21 starts with Victoria reading the news and feeling a growing sense that the world is going to end. She decides to focus on bringing up her math grade and asks her friend, Rue, to be her tutor and Rue agrees. After school, Victoria goes to the comic-book store and Martin gives her the shooting script of Terminal Earth. Victoria tells herself that she still likes the movie even though Saba Greer was not who she expected. Martin says that he heard Rue will be tutoring Victoria in math and he shares that everyone struggles with one subject, his being French. Victoria wonders why people's attempts to make her feel better only make her feel worse.

While in the school newspaper office, Victoria overhears Nelly and Inez talking about Max. Nelly says that she went to the King Kong Café with Max, the café where Victoria and Max colored in each other's drawings, and that, after coughing, Max spoke a phrase to Nelly in French about not concealing a cough or love. Nelly gushed about Max being romantic and then mentioned that he told her about the graphic novel he's writing. Inez says that Max is weird and, when they leave, Victoria thinks about how Nelly actually believes her feelings for Max are mutual, how Nelly doesn't know what a graphic novel is and how she doesn't know Max.

While chatting online late at night, Max asks Victoria if she wants to come along on a picnic with a large group of peers. She declines, telling him that she doesn't want to get in the way. When he questions what this means, Victoria says she's getting offline and Max says, "sweet dreams, weirdo." Victoria interprets this as meaning that Max cares about her and, ignoring the word 'weirdo,' she falls asleep thinking about the phrase "sweet dreams."

As Max and Victoria sit in history class at the beginning of chapter 24, Max tries to talk to Victoria. Victoria finally talks to him and agrees to go on the picnic. After school, Victoria and Max get to his car and find Nelly waiting. She says she can't go on the picnic with them because she has a call back for an acting job on a commercial. Nelly and Max have a small argument, as he feels that Nelly is selling out to big corporations by doing a commercial for something she doesn't believe in. They resolve the argument



and, as Nelly leaves, Victoria wonders if Max would change himself in order to be with Nelly. Once at the park, Victoria and Max engage in a conversation about how comfortable they feel with themselves. Max reveals that he wishes he could feel as comfortable with himself as Victoria does and Victoria reveals that she doesn't feel comfortable with herself. Max questions why Victoria puts her passion in a movie rather than in real life and Victoria wonders if she has the same feelings for Terminal Earth that she once had. Max encourages Victoria to have more faith in people and they share an intimate moment when he uses his thumb to get food off of her mouth.

Chapters 19-24 Analysis

Chapters 19-24 serve to develop the plot further in several ways and several of the chapters are fairly short. Chapters 19 and 20 seem to reveal more of Victoria's developing personality, as she discovers how happy she is creating creatures in her father's shop and she decides to no longer wear her Egg cloak. In chapter 21, Victoria asks her friend, Rue, to be her math tutor and, although her friend Martin tells her that everyone has an academic weakness, Victoria finds herself feeling worse. Chapters 22-24 develop the relationship between Max and Nelly and Max and Victoria. In chapter 22, Victoria hears Nelly talking about a date with Max and she realizes that Nelly will never be able to appreciate Max. This seems to support her growing jealousy and resentment about Nelly's relationship with Max and, in chapter 23, Victoria declines Max's offer for her to join him and others in a picnic.

However Max and Victoria's conversation in chapter 23 suggests that Max cares for Victoria, something she thought was out of the question. In chapter 24, Max's personality is developed further. He shares with Victoria that he feels uncomfortable with himself, and that, as a result of moving frequently, he has learned to become friends with others quickly but still feels lonely. Although Victoria knows how he feels and wants to trust him, she reveals little about herself except that she doesn't feel comfortable with herself either. Max encourages Victoria to take her passion for a movie and put it into real life, as well as to have more faith in people. The chapter ends with Victoria feeling vulnerable, perhaps because Max appears to understand her like no one else has.



Chapters 25-28

Chapters 25-28 Summary

At the beginning of Chapter 25, Victoria invites Max to see a special screening at the silent movie theater. He declines, however, because he promised to spend time with Nelly. Victoria continues to ask him and when Max finally says that he and Nelly are more than just friends, Victoria feels hurt and led on but tries to hide it. She tells Max that Nelly doesn't appreciate him and that she thought he liked people like her. Max says that he does like Victoria but that she has made herself unapproachable. When Max tries to talk to Victoria in class, he tries to tell her that he didn't mean to lead her on. Victoria tells him that he's just another shallow person after all and she pours coffee on his sketchbook, telling him that his graphic novel will likely be stupid. When Max tells Victoria that she's always angry and closed off from everyone, hiding her potential, Victoria knows he's right but doesn't respond. At lunch, Rue approaches Victoria to ask her where she was for tutoring the day before. When Victoria says that Rue spends all of her time in the library anyway and implies that she has no life, Rue begins to cry and tells Victoria that she will not help her with her math and that she will not try to be friends with her anymore. While Victoria is developing pictures later, Max tries to talk to her, but Victoria refuses to engage in the conversation, scared of what the result might be.

When Victoria enters the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club meeting, no one will say anything to her except for Hasan, who says that she kept valuable information from the club. Hasan reminds Victoria that it's a club rule to share any insider information they have about movies and TV shows they discuss and, because she didn't tell them that her mom will be playing Hera, Victoria is suspended from the club until she provides a good piece of information. Victoria asks if saying that Saba Greer and Lark Austin are in a relationship will count as insider information, Martin tells her that everyone knows because it's on the internet. Rue says that outing someone is cheap anyway and, after saying that she is cheap, mean and worthless, Victoria leaves school.

At the beginning of Chapter 27, Victoria realizes how empty her school day is now that Max, Rue, Martin, and Hasan do not talk to her. She reveals that she is also struggling to focus in school. At the Nemesis reunion later that night, Victoria notices how beautiful her mom looks and how important it is to her to be an actress. Also at the event, she sees Rue, Martin and Hasan. Victoria talks briefly with Hasan and apologizes again for keeping information from them and not inviting them herself to the event. She tells them that she misses talking to them and Hasan said that her apology might help mend their relationships if she meant it.

In Chapter 28, Victoria is having dinner with her mom, Lark Austin and Saba Greer. Victoria thinks about how this would have been a dream come true if she hadn't found out that Saba Greer was mean-spirited. She now finds Saba to be annoying and fake. Saba says that she's upset about the tabloids saying she's gay, as she is bi and was



planning on doing a publicity spread in a magazine about it. Lark says that the buzz from the tabloids is giving her good press for her upcoming movies, the Greek Mythology trilogies, in which Victoria's mom is starring as Hera. Victoria's mom tells Saba that new opportunities are often found when an opportunity is lost and Victoria makes a mental note to find that opportunity in her own life.

Chapters 25-28 Analysis

In Chapters 25 and 26, Victoria not only deals with her meaningful relationships begin destroyed but with hearing and processing some hard truths about herself. In Chapter 25, Victoria and Max have a fight when Victoria realizes that, despite their connection on the picnic, Max is continuing to pursue a relationship with Nelly. Victoria feels foolish for allowing herself to believe that Max liked her and for allowing herself to like Max and, unable to process this, her feelings of embarrassment turn to anger and she tells Max that he's not as deep as he acts and that his graphic novel will likely be stupid. However Victoria was not expecting Max to point out her imperfections so clearly when he said that she is always angry and allows her obvious passion to go to waste. Scared of what they both might say, Victoria refuses to talk to Max when he approaches her after their fight. Also in chapter 25, Victoria loses her friendship with Rue when she implies that Rue has no life and shouldn't have minded that Victoria never showed up for their tutoring session. Rue is the second person that day to point out that Victoria doesn't let others get to know her.

In Chapter 26, Victoria is suspended from the only club and the only friends that she's had and who share her interests. Partly because of her behavior towards Rue and partly because she didn't tell the club that her mom has a starring role in an upcoming sci-fi/fantasy movie, Martin and Hasan also discontinue their friendships with Victoria. Chapters 27 and 28, however, seem to imply that Victoria is realizing how her choices to this point have shaped her life and that she doesn't like the results. In Chapter 27, she notices for the first time how important it is to her mom that she be an actress and how much she misses her friendships with Martin, Rue and Hasan. In Chapter 28, as she eats dinner with her mom, producer Lark Austin and her former idol, actress Saba Greer, the reader sees that not only does Victoria decide to rethink her life, but she makes this decision based on a statement made by her mom, whose opinion she has not valued until now.



Chapters 29-32

Chapters 29-32 Summary

In Chapter 29, Victoria realizes that it has been 4 weeks since Max has talked to her, even though they sit next to each other in several classes. Victoria realizes that, while she thought she was lonely before, she was never lonely until now because no one talks to her at all. She attempts to engage Max in a conversation by asking him for a pen, however he doesn't say anything. Victoria sees it as progress, though, that he gave her a pen.

On the set of her mother's movie, *Trouble at Santa Land*, in chapter 30, Victoria takes a break from her role as an elf and from helping to apply makeup for extra actors to do her math homework. She realizes that she does not understand the homework and that she made a big mistake by losing Rue as her tutor. When returning from a bathroom break, Victoria sees Zach Cross, actor that plays Uno in *Terminal Earth*, writing in her math notebook. Zach tells Victoria that he found her mistake and proceeds to help her with her homework. Victoria tells Zach about her problem with the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club at school and he gives her some inside information about the new *Terminal Earth* movie.

In Chapter 31, Victoria sees the homeless man who sleeps outside of their school every morning in a new light. She decides to take pictures of him and, during the school newspaper meeting, she suggests using her photographs in a social commentary piece. Also giving her the cold shoulder while leaning on Max, Nelly says that she has the final say as editor and that Victoria should do what she's asked to do. When their teacher enters, everyone knows that Victoria could have the teacher force Nelly to look at the pictures but Victoria decides not to say anything. She thinks she notices Max about to stick up for her but isn't sure if it's just wishful thinking.

In Chapter 32, Victoria is taking a new approach at school- to be friendly. She makes a point to say hello to everyone and, even though no one returns her greeting, she doesn't care. At the meeting of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club later that day, Rue, Martin and Hasan aren't welcoming at first. They become more intrigued, however, when Victoria reveals several pieces of insider information about the new *Terminal Earth* movie. Although she is not able to reveal her source and she tells them that the information can't be verified, the club members decide to trust Victoria and allow her back into the club. When Martin calls her "Egg," she tells him that her real name is Victoria and she likes the way it feels to use her name.

Chapters 29-32 Analysis

Things seem to be changing in Victoria's favor in Chapters 29-32. In Chapter 29, Victoria realizes how true loneliness feels and she attempts to mend her friendship with



Max. Although he remains resistant, he does lend her a pen, causing her to believe that she is making some progress. In Chapter 30, Victoria meets Zach Cross and, after he helps her with her homework in math, a subject in which she continues to struggle, he provides her with insider information to help her get back into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club. In chapters 31 and 32, Victoria appears to be taking her life into her own hands and making some changes to herself. In Chapter 31, Victoria decides against arguing with Nelly about using her photograph in the school paper, even though she feels it would be relevant, and in Chapter 32, Victoria attempts to be more friendly overall and persists with her friends in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, earning her way back into the club, along with earning back their trust and their friendship. Victoria also reaches a new level of self-acceptance, as she tells her friends that they should stop calling her "Egg" and start using her real name, Victoria, a name she has come to appreciate.



Chapters 33-37

Chapters 33-37 Summary

Chapter 33 starts with Victoria, her mother and her math teacher, Ms. Weber, meeting in Dr. Gellar's office to discuss Victoria's failing math grade. Ms. Weber says that if Victoria makes a 55 on the statewide test, she will give her a 65 in the class. Victoria realizes that she will never be valedictorian and agrees to Ms. Weber's deal. Victoria finds Rue and asks her to reconsider being her math tutor for something in return. When Rue agrees to listen, Victoria tells her the payment plan, which is not revealed to the reader at this time. Later, in the school paper meeting, Victoria finds out that the piece she wrote with Max and Nelly won the statewide journalism contest and that the three of them and their teacher, Ms. Dicostanzo, will be going to the awards ceremony together. Although no one congratulates Victoria, she sees a hint of acknowledgement from Max.

Chapter 34 finds Victoria at her dad's shop. She tells him how much she's missed him and, when he says that he can't be her date to the awards ceremony, he reminds her of the difference between alone and lonely. Although she doesn't say so, Victoria thinks about how alone she feels. Her dad notices the sketches in her notebook and points out that her sketches could solve the problem of how to transform a vampire into a bat. He praises her for her sketches and Victoria feels good about doing something right.

In Chapter 35, Victoria meets Rue at the King Kong Café and gives her a full copy of the Greek Mythology trilogy script in exchange for Rue tutoring her in math. When Victoria sees that Rue bought her favorite latte for her without having to ask what her favorite is, Victoria commits to becoming Rue's true friend. Victoria also sees that Rue is very smart and finds that she is rooting for Rue to be valedictorian.

In Chapter 36, Victoria runs into a school janitor's strike on the way to the movie theater. She decides to skip the movies and begins taking pictures of and participating in the strike. Victoria likes the feeling that what she's participating in is real.

At the school newspaper meeting, Victoria presents her photos from the school janitor's strike. Nelly clearly doesn't want Victoria's picture to be the cover of the paper but, when Max suggests that it should be and that the staff should vote, Victoria is surprised to see that everyone on the paper's staff except Nelly voted for her. On her way to a science fiction festival after school, Max tells Victoria that her photo was nice. In a brief conversation, they agree that they are friends and Victoria is overjoyed.

Chapters 33-37 Analysis

In Chapters 33-37, Victoria continues to make progress in her friendships and in changing her overall attitude and approach to life. Although it is confirmed for Victoria in Chapter 33 that she will not be valedictorian, she decides to put this information into perspective and she does not allow herself to become upset by it. She continues to



focus on the positive things happening in her life and she continues to reach out to her friends, as evidenced in chapters 33 and 35 where she makes an effort to begin a real friendship with Rue.

Although Chapters 34-37 are relatively short, they further the story in important ways. In Chapter 34, Victoria's talent at sketching and creating creatures, as well as how happy she is while doing so, becomes clearer. Chapter 35 focuses on Victoria developing her relationship with Rue and her commitment to being a good friend. Chapter 37 focuses on Victoria and Max repairing their relationship. Although not yet what it used to be, they have a brief conversation and agree that they are friends. Victoria feels overjoyed by this and at the end of Chapter 37, it seems as though Victoria's efforts to change her attitude have started to pay off.



Chapters 38-40

Chapters 38-40 Summary

In Chapter 38, Victoria finds a sign for a protest on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) and she makes plans to go. Tired of takeout, she decides to stop by the market to get some good food to make for dinner. While making dinner at home, Victoria's mom comes in from work, sees what Victoria is making and they share a laugh about Victoria's ability to cook. They decide to have dinner together and Victoria enjoys having a real dinner where she and her mom are just themselves.

Victoria is spending time with her dad in his workshop in chapter 39. She realizes how much she enjoys the quiet time they spend together working. Victoria tells her dad that she may not want to go to college right away and she asks him if she can go to Poland with him to work on Dracula as an intern. She tells him that this is what she wants to do with her life and, after confirming that she's serious and letting her know that she won't get special treatment, he seems to start thinking of a way to make it work.

Chapter 40 focuses on the night of the statewide journalism awards. Victoria understands that neither of her parents can attend with her and, when discussing her decision to go to Poland with her dad, Victoria learns that her mom does recognize her talent. She also realizes how much she loves and likes her mom. When she heads into the ceremony, she is greeted by Max, who immediately compliments her on how good she looks. Victoria meets Max's parents, who say that she is a legend in their household, and she notices that Max and Nelly aren't interacting in the same way as before. During dinner conversation, Max and Victoria rekindle their bond of friendship and a brief, more intimate moment as well. Their legs are touching on the way home and, although they sit in silence, Victoria describes their connection as electric. Before she goes in her house, Max tells her that he and Nelly are no longer dating and he gives her a kiss goodnight on the cheek.

Chapters 38-40 Analysis

Chapters 38-40 reveal more about Victoria's transformation. In chapter 38, Victoria is able to experience joy in her relationship with her mother once again, as they come to accept and appreciate the other for who she is. Chapter 40 confirms this new relationship, as Victoria shares with the reader that she truly enjoys her mom's company and is no longer embarrassed by her. In chapter 39, Victoria realizes her true passion for creating creatures and she takes the next step by asking her father to join him as his intern in Poland. Chapter 40 focuses mainly on the development of Max and Victoria's relationship. During and after the ceremony, it is clear that they have an effortless and meaningful connection with each other and, at the end of chapter 40, Max shows his true interest in Victoria by telling her that he and Nelly are no longer dating and by

giving her a goodnight kiss on the cheek, confirming for Victoria that she is no longer invisible.



Chapters 41-42

Chapters 41-42 Summary

In Chapter 41, Victoria receives several pieces of good news. She receives three college acceptance letters in the mail, a 70% on her math exam and, most importantly to her, and email from her father's travel agent confirming her flight information for Poland. Victoria knows now that she will be a Vampire and Bat Wing apprentice for her father.

Chapter 42 begins with Victoria making her broccoli costume for the protest against genetically modified food. She easily deals with the stares she receives on the bus and, although she can't find Max immediately when she arrives to the protest, she isn't worried and focuses on how fun and real the protest is. Victoria finds Max when the protest is broken up by the police and, after taking some pictures for the school paper, they decide to leave the protest site and go to a movie. On the way, Max says that he got into his first-choice college, the Chicago Art Institute. Victoria tells him that she is going to Poland with her dad to work with him on his new movie, and then coming to visit Max in Chicago, Max takes her hand and tells her that's what he was hoping to hear. The chapter ends with Victoria focusing on her bright future and her newfound hope.

Chapters 41-42 Analysis

Chapters 41 and 42 provide an end to Victoria's story. In Chapter 41, Victoria learns that she is going to be an intern for her dad in Poland, making her happier and more excited than the three college acceptance letters and 70% on her math test she received. Chapter 42 brings the story to a close. Because she has rebuilt her relationships with her mom and her friends, will be pursuing her passion in Poland with her dad, is now living in the "real world" and has shared her true feelings with Max, which he reciprocated, Victoria is able to realize the true happiness and peace with her life and with herself that she's been searching for. The story ends with Victoria recognizing and appreciating where she is in her life currently, but also displaying her hope for a bright future.



Characters

Victoria

From the beginning of the story, the reader immediately knows that Victoria is intelligent, unique, independent and witty. She has tailored her physical appearance, as well as her mental perspective, to mimic that of her favorite movie character, "Egg," from Terminal Earth. She gives off an air of confidence and strength however, as the story progresses, it becomes clearer that Victoria struggles with many different insecurities about herself, her looks and her abilities. Also, as identified early in the book, Victoria experiences a "burning black feeling" inside, possibly caused by feeling misunderstood and invisible to others, and this feeling seems to influence not only how she feels about herself but how she thinks about and interacts with others.

Through Victoria's relationship with her parents, Max and her friends, the reader is able to witness the transformation that takes place in Victoria. While at the beginning of the book she appeared to define herself based on the character of "Egg," as the book continues, Victoria begins to define herself by her own thoughts and interests. She is able to reach a new level of self-acceptance when she begins to tell people to call her Victoria. Victoria is also able to realize the effects that her anger, isolation and tendency to shut people out emotionally have had on her life and, by adopting a new perspective and approach with others, she is able to find the balance between being herself, becoming visible and maintaining meaningful relationships with others.

Max Carter

The son of a well-known documentary filmmaker, Max is the 19 year old new kid at Victoria's school. Max is intelligent, cultured, deep, creative, unique and talented and his arrival causes Victoria to feel insecure about her status as the most intelligent student at her school. Max takes an immediate interest in Victoria, as he shares many of her interests, including drawing, science fiction, the need to spend time alone and numerous social causes. Max makes several attempts to start a friendship with Victoria however, when she shuts him down numerous times, he respects her wishes to be left alone.

In the meantime, Max enters into a relationship with one of the school's pretty, smart and popular girls, Nelly, who he seems to find attractive and nice but with whom he has little in common. Max seems to get in a conflict with himself as the story progresses, as he stays in a relationship with Nelly but appears to have continued feelings for Victoria, finding it increasingly difficult to deny their connection. Max's inner conflict leads to Victoria feeling led on by him at one point in the story, which nearly ended any chance of them having a relationship at all. However, it is ultimately Max's easy-going personality, as well as his deep understanding and complete acceptance of who Victoria is that allows her to open up and engage in a relationship with him and others.



Ursula Denton

Ursula is Victoria's mom and she is also divorced from Victoria's dad. In the beginning of the book, she is a currently out-of-work actress who was semi-famous in the science fiction and fantasy world for the character she played on the TV show *The Nemesis*. She is often found hanging around the house, drinking wine and smoking cigarettes. Although she clearly means well, Ursula's attempts to be involved in Victoria's life are seen as an annoyance by Victoria and many arguments are caused by it. The reader also gets the impression that Ursula has not always set the best boundaries and rules in the household and is not as involved in Victoria's life when she has a job. Ursula appears focused on getting her career restarted and, as the book progresses, she receives a role in the Greek Mythology trilogy and her career takes a turn for the better. When Ursula reaches a new level of self-acceptance, she appears to have a better ability to relate to Victoria. This ability, in combination with Victoria's new attitude, allows Ursula to rekindle a positive relationship with Victoria.

Sam Jurgen

Sam is Victoria's father and is also divorced from Victoria's mother. He is an Academy Award-winning mask-maker/monster and alien specialist/special-effects makeup genius who lives and works in Hollywood, CA. He has a shop where he and Victoria spend their Tuesdays visiting and working side by side. Based on Victoria's description, he is somewhat childlike, has a very high level of focus and can't be interrupted while working. She also describes him as a good father and, throughout most of the book, she maintains a higher level of respect for him than for her mother. The text suggests that Sam leaves the city or country often for work. Victoria has a lot in common with her father and ultimately decides to forego college in order to work as his intern.

Nelly Melendez

One of Victoria's classmates. She is described as pretty, nice, athletic and smart. She is the editor of the school newspaper as well and describes herself as an aspiring actress. Nelly dates Max for a large portion of the book, although she struggles to appreciate and/or take interest in his true passions.

Martin

One of Victoria's classmates and friends. He is described as smart and sensitive. He works at Golden Apple Comics and is a member of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club at school.



Rue

One of Victoria's classmates and friends. She wears a scarf and fedora every day because of her love for the TV show Doctor Who. She is also smart and is a member of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club. Rue makes an honest effort to be friends with Victoria and, after not talking for several weeks following a fight, Rue and Victoria become friends and Rue tutors Victoria in math.

Hasan

One of Victoria's classmates and friends, also a member of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club.

Ms. Dicostanzo

A teacher at Victoria's school and sponsor of the school newspaper.

Ms. Weber

Victoria's math teacher.

Mr. Gerber

Victoria's favorite teacher in her favorite class, AP Global History.

Ms. Perez

Victoria's AP English teacher.

Dr. Gellar

Dean of students at Victoria's school.

Mr. Padilla

A teacher at Victoria's school and sponsor of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club.

Saba Greer

Actress who plays the character "Egg" in Victoria's favorite movie, Terminal Earth. She is also dating Lark Austin.



Lark Austin

Movie producer who will be producing the upcoming Greek Mythology trilogy, in which Victoria's mom has a large role. She is also dating Saba Greer.

Zach Cross

Actor who plays the character "Uno" in Victoria's favorite movie, Terminal Earth. He ends up helping Victoria with her homework and providing her with the insider information that gets her back into the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club.

Wanda

Victoria's supervisor at her internship at the American Cinematheque offices.

Eduardo

Employee at the American Cinematheque offices.

Jacques

Makeup artist on the set of Victoria's mom's TV movie, Trouble at Santa Land. He allows Victoria to help him apply makeup to other actors on set.



Objects/Places

Los Angeles

This is the main setting of the book.

Melrose Prep

This is Victoria's school.

Sam Jurgen's Creature Shop

This is Victoria's dad's workshop.

Mr. Padilla's Physics Room

This is where the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club have meetings.

American Cinematheque Offices

This is where Victoria interns.

King Kong Café

This is where Victoria spends a lot of time.

Museum of Television and Radio

This is the place where The Nemesis 20th anniversary marathon was held.

The Melrose Lion

This is the school newspaper.

Golden Apple Comics

This is the comic book store where Martin works and that Victoria frequents.



Trouble at Santa Land Set

This is the set of the TV movie that Victoria's mom is starring in. Victoria has a small role as an elf on the movie as well.

The Nemesis

This is the TV show that Victoria's mom starred in.

Star King

This is the movie that led to Sam Jurgen winning his first Academy Award.

Buns not Guns Show

This is the event that Nelly, Max, and Victoria attended and wrote a newspaper article about. Their article on this event won a first place statewide student journalism award.

A Dream for the Moon Screening

This is the event where Victoria met Saba Greer for the first time.

Terminal Earth

This is Victoria's favorite movie.

Cyberspace

This is where Victoria spends a lot of her free time.

Themes

The Importance of Defining and Accepting Yourself

From the beginning of the book, the reader gets the sense that Victoria is confident, unique, strong, and independent. However, while her willingness to modify her physical appearance to match that of her favorite sci-fi character may seem to indicate that she feels completely comfortable with herself, it becomes clear as the book progresses that Victoria is hiding behind this appearance. Victoria also takes on the perspective, thoughts and name of her favorite character as well, indicating further that she feels uncomfortable with herself and isn't quite sure of who she is.

When Victoria meets the actress that portrays her favorite character and sees that she is nothing like the character, and when others begin to point out that she is putting all of her passions into a movie and that they don't know who Victoria is, Victoria begins to realize that her thoughts and interests vary from that of the character she has been portraying.

As Victoria begins to explore her passions, including making creatures, drawing and several social and political causes, she begins to realize who she truly is and finds that she likes herself. With this realization, she more openly pursues these passions, asks people to begin calling her by her real name and finds a balance in her physical appearance that is still unique but that is her own. It is only when Victoria finds the courage to define and accept herself that the pieces of her life fall into place and she is able to experience the contentment for which she's been looking.

Making Yourself Visible

Victoria makes it clear throughout the book that she feels invisible, not just to boys, but to society in general. She appears to be angry and resentful about this as well, feeling as though no one tries or has the ability to understand her or accept her for who she is. Victoria seems to have the attitude that, since no one understands or accepts her, she will not try to interact with others. She even seems to be happy with this arrangement for the first part of the book and appears to go to great lengths to shut others out of her life and make herself unapproachable.

The reader also gets the sense that Victoria is, in a way, proud to be on a different level than those around her. However, when she begins to like Max, becomes jealous that she does not have the romantic connection with him that Nelly does and begins to experience true loneliness, Victoria realizes that her intentions and decisions made her unapproachable and boy proof and have worked against her. Victoria comes to accept the fact that Max, her friends and her family do have the capacity to understand her, if only she gives them the chance to get to know her. By making the decision to engage in



true relationships with those around her, Victoria realizes that she is not alone, not invisible and not boy proof.

Anger

Victoria's anger shapes the way she interacts with others throughout the book. She is angry with her mom, with people at school, with society and with herself. Victoria mentions relatively early in the book that she has a "burning black feeling" inside and, although all of the factors contributing to this feeling are not identified, it is clear that one of the main sources of this feeling for Victoria is feeling misunderstood and unaccepted by those around her. Throughout the book, Victoria uses anger and sarcasm to keep others from getting too close to her and, specifically with her mom and her friends, she feels badly about this because she knows that they do not deserve it. Her inability to control her anger causes Victoria to be angry with herself and this cycle continues throughout most of her story.

It is not until Victoria realizes that it is her anger and emotional unavailability that are keeping others from getting to know her that she decides to have a friendly, more positive attitude. When she does, she is surprised to learn that her friends and family have a genuine interest in getting to know and understand her and that they are more than willing to accept her for exactly who she is. Victoria sees that her anger, which was based in fear, is no longer needed and she chooses instead to take the risk of letting others know her for who she is, a risk that pays off in the end.



Style

Point of View

"Boy Proof" is written from a first-person perspective. The story is recounted through Victoria's perspective, giving the reader access to her thoughts, reasoning, emotions and bodily sensations. Due to the writing style, the reader is easily able to see the type of person Victoria is, the way she thinks and feels about herself and the reasons as to why she has the perspective on life that she has. The first-person perspective of the book offers the reader insight into Victoria's uniqueness, independence, sense of humor and sarcasm, as well as her insecurities and anger. As events are experienced by Victoria and the reader simultaneously, Victoria's sharp wit, intelligence and ability to make keen observations offers the reader several interpretations about the behaviors of others and events.

Overall throughout the story, the reader is able to easily experience Victoria's anger with feeling misunderstood and invisible, her struggle to make her connection with Max jump from a friendship to a romantic relationship, her feelings of jealousy throughout the book, her struggle to come to terms with losing her spot as valedictorian and her pain when hearing the truth about herself from family and friends. Because of the vivid and personal writing style of the book, the reader may even find themselves cheering for Victoria when, at the end of the story, she is able to triumph at learning how to let her guard down, interact with others and maintain meaningful relationships.

Setting

"Boy Proof" takes place in Los Angeles, California. As a result of the setting, many of the events in the book are related to the entertainment industry, particularly the film industry. Victoria and her friends and family attend several movie premieres and parts of the book take place on the set of Victoria's mom's TV movie, Trouble at Santa Land. The occupations of many of the characters in the book are influenced by the setting as well: Victoria's dad makes creatures and is well-known in Hollywood for his special-effects work, Victoria's mom is an actress who is trying to reinvent herself, Max's dad is a documentary filmmaker and Nelly is an aspiring actress.

Another setting found often in the book is the school Victoria and her friends attend: Melrose Prep. The school sounds relatively large, as Victoria refers often to the student quad and the text suggests that there are many extra-curricular activities offered as well. Several other settings are frequently mentioned in the book as well, including the King Kong Café, a place that Victoria enjoys going because she can be alone and she won't see anyone she knows, her father's creature workshop, where they can work on their shared passion side by side, and the two-dollar movie theater, where she can enjoy her favorite movie, Terminal Earth, as well as other special screenings of movies in the science fiction and fantasy genre.



Language and Meaning

"Boy Proof" is a young adult novel aimed primarily at adolescent females. Although no explicit sexual scenes are described in the story, there are several points in the book that reference sexual activity. The reader will also encounter the use of adult language throughout the book, although not frequently. Overall, the sexual content and language found in the book appear appropriate for its target audience.

The story focuses mostly on Victoria's journey of self-discovery and the ways in which her relationships with her parents and friends impact that journey. The language and descriptions found throughout the book are vivid but clear. The sentences are of short or moderate length and tend to focus on the development of Victoria's relationships with family and friends. The story moves along quickly, somewhat due to numerous short chapters throughout the book, and there is no hidden meaning in the text, only occasional foreshadowing or suggestions aiming at the final outcome.

The story is balanced between sections of dialogue and sections that illuminate Victoria's thoughts, reasoning and/or emotional state. Although the reader may find that the plot is interrupted at times, they will be able to easily follow the story. The author's overall use of vocabulary and uncomplicated sentence structure makes the story easy to read and understand, although the reader will encounter difficult and/or unfamiliar vocabulary words at certain points throughout the book. The author also capitalizes on telling "Boy Proof" through the eyes of an adolescent girl by displaying a sense of humor and sarcasm in the dialogue with which many in the book's target audience would appreciate.

Structure

The novel, "Boy Proof," is two hundred and three pages long. Although they are not marked by the author as chapters, the reader could easily divide the book into forty-two chapters. Each chapter begins with a larger heading than is used elsewhere in the book and it offers the date and location of Victoria. Many of the chapters are short- only two or three paragraphs in length-so several chapters can be read in a single sitting. "Boy Proof" is a quick, enjoyable read built around a relatively straightforward plot.

Chapters 1-14 focus on introducing the main character, Victoria Jurgen, her parents and her friends. The author uses these chapters to introduce and somewhat develop the main plots of the story, including the anger Victoria feels by being misunderstood, the contentious relationship she has with her mother, the dynamics found in Victoria's relationships with her friends and her relationship with Max. Chapter 14 ends with Victoria questioning her decision to shut people out of her life.

Chapters 15-24 consist of numerous short chapters and bring a multitude of disappointments for Victoria, which develop the plots further in necessary ways. Victoria learns that she may not be valedictorian because of her declining math grade, she meets her idol and is disappointed in her personality and she finds herself being jealous



of Max and Nelly's relationship, as she doesn't know how to undo her efforts to make herself boy proof and turn her connection with Max into a sustainable friendship and possibly more.

Chapters 25-28 provide the climax to the novel, as all of Victoria's meaningful relationships dissipate. She loses any hope of a friendship with Max, her friendship with Rue is destroyed and she is suspended from the Science Fiction and Fantasy Club at school. Through these losses, Victoria realizes what true loneliness is and makes a commitment to having a friendly, more positive approach to life and with those around her.

Chapters 29-42 bring an end to Victoria's story. As all of the major and minor plots are resolved, Victoria realizes that her friends and family want to know and understand her but need her to give them the chance to know her for who she truly is. When Victoria lets her guard down and begins to engage in true relationships with her friends and family, she finds the understanding, acceptance and happiness for which she's been searching.



Quotes

"Ugh, you make yourself boy proof on purpose" (Chapter 1, p. 6).

"I would prefer it if you call me Egg" (Chapter 1, p. 9).

"Well, you're a catch. I wish I had known a girl who could design an alien exoskeleton" (Chapter 2, p. 25).

"No one ever sees me" (Chapter 5, p. 52).

"So let me get this straight. You're telling me that you prefer to eat lunch alone every day" (Chapter 6, p. 54).

"One thing that I really love about sci-fi and fantasy is how they talk about taboo issues and open up a conversation about them. That's how I started to become politically aware" (Chapter 10, p. 68).

"No, we aren't. I'm just like Dad" (Chapter 10, p. 70).

"Yeah, maybe I should. I love talking to him. He's so deep" (Chapter 11, p. 73).

"Well, that's the last time I show you anything of mine to get inspired by" (Chapter 15, p. 106).

"Who are you? You're not an Egg freak, too, are you" (Chapter 16, p. 112).

"Don't pull me out of the running yet, Dr. Gellar. I'm full of surprises" (Chapter 18, p. 119).

"You really like yourself, Egg. Deep down inside. That's what I like about you. You're really true to yourself. I try to be like that" (Chapter 24, p. 136).

"Egg, Nelly and I are, you know...hanging out" (Chapter 25, p. 141).

"No. You just make yourself so unapproachable. And Nelly doesn't" (Chapter 25, p. 141).

"You're angry all the time, Egg. You don't let anyone in. I don't know why. It's obvious that you have a spark, a passion, a heart. You have so much potential to be a fantastic person and you just choose to piss it away" (Chapter 25, p. 144).

"Well, you know what they say. When a door is closed, a window opens" (Chapter 28, p. 156).

"You know, my real name is Victoria" (Chapter 32, p. 170).

"Friends" (Chapter 37, p. 183).



"I learned from the best. I want to make it my career" (Chapter 39, p. 188).

"Oh yes, Victoria. I'm so proud of how talented you are. I'm really happy you've found something that you like to do. Even if I find it horrifying" (Chapter 40, p. 190).

"Wow. I almost didn't recognize you" (Chapter 40, p. 192).

"Nelly and I are over. I just wanted you to know" (Chapter 40, p. 196).

"Egg is gone. It's just me" (Chapter 42, p. 201).

"That's what I wanted to hear" (Chapter 42, p. 203).



Topics for Discussion

Discuss Victoria's transformation throughout the book.

Identify three possible source of Victoria's anger.

Discuss the reasons that Victoria may have been scared to be in a relationship with Max.

Name two specific ways in which Victoria made herself invisible or boy proof.

Discuss the importance of Saba Greer in the novel.

Why was it easier for Victoria to get along with her dad than with her mom?

Name three specific ways in which the movie, Terminal Earth, affected Victoria's life.