

Every Soul a Star Study Guide

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Plot Summary

Every Soul a Star is a young adult novel written from the perspective of three pre-teens about their interwoven experiences surrounding an unusual solar eclipse at Moon Shadow Campground. Ally and her family own and manage a campground, which hosts guests who come to see eclipses and other astronomical events every few months. A solar eclipse is expected that has required considerable planning. Ally is an unusual child who is homeschooled at the campground along with her brother Kenny by her parents. She is fascinated by astronomy and is content with her life in preparation for the eclipse, until she learns that her parents are planning to move into a large city, where her father can get a better job. Her world is now threatened.

In a similar way, Bree, the beauty-obsessed wannabe model, who is only a bit older than Ally is content with her life in the city. She is somewhat alienated from her physicist parents and her nerdy little sister, Melanie. Bree finds out from her parents early in the book that they're going to move to Moon Shadow in order to take the campground over from Ally's family and will use the campground to do their research. Bree is devastated and feels as if her dreams are shattered. The rest of her family is so excited to move that they go on ahead to Moon Shadow before the eclipse.

Jack, a pudgy, artistic boy who has trouble in school has failed science class and must go to summer school until his science teacher and eclipse tour guide, Mr. Silver, makes him a deal. Mr. Silver tells Jack to come with him to Moon Shadow for two weeks and study the eclipse. Then he will not have to go to summer school. Jack begrudgingly agrees.

This is how the three main characters, Ally, Bree, and Jack, cross paths at Moon Shadow prior to the eclipse. Their interactions cause changes in their personalities and understandings of their lives. When Bree and Ally meet, they help make each other more comfortable with their transitions and Jack learns to be more confident through a series of confidence-building events. But what really brings them together is when they all must cooperate to gather data attempting to demonstrate the existence of an exoplanet after Mr. Silver is pulled away due to his wife's health issues. After successfully demonstrating the existence of the planet, "Team Exo" (Jack, Ally, Kenny, Bree, Melanie, and Ally's friend Ryan) celebrate and watch the eclipse together. Afterwards, each of the three main characters reflects on how their experiences changed them for the better. Ally grew friendlier to the world, Bree grew friendlier to her inner geek, and Jack grew more confident and responsible due to their shared experiences.



Eclipse, Ally 1, Bree 1, Jack 1

Eclipse, Ally 1, Bree 1, Jack 1 Summary

Every Soul A Star begins with an Eclipse, the term which derived from the ancient Greek work ekleipsis, which in turn means an abandonment or omission. There are then depictions of the three main characters, Ally, Bree, and Jack, who have symbols of a half-moon, star, and planet above their heads respectively.

Chapter "Ally 1" begins in Ally's voice, explaining that fairies live in rocks and that few outside of Iceland knows this. She reads this in books as she is homeschooled. Her studies have made her able to find every constellation in the sky and she also knows that the brightest star in any constellation is named "Alpha." Ally is short for "Alpha." Ally reports that she has no friends because she lives hundreds of miles away from anyone. She lives in an area, not a town, as her family owns the Moon Shadow Campground, which she knows intimately. The closest store is an hour away. She has lived there since she was four, so she barely remembers civilization, which her ten year old brother Kenny describes as anywhere other than where they live.

Ally's family lives in the middle of nowhere. He parents hoped to build a new, quasi-utopian society that had not been seen in the U.S. in nearly a century. The campground lies in the middle of the path of an eclipse known as the Great Eclipse, only twenty-two days in the future where the sun will disappear.

Chapter "Bree 1" introduces Bree who feels totally different from her family. Her parents are physicists and certified geniuses, as is her eleven-year-old sister Melanie. She sees her intelligence level as average and unlike her family, she doesn't care about physics at all. She notes, however, that her family is plain-looking, whereas she is beautiful. She spends a lot of time on her appearance and can't wait for summer to go to the mall and get "made-up." Admittedly, she is only thirteen and a half but she gets to do make up as a part-time job as "Let's Make Up." Bree wonders if she wasn't switched at birth, as her parents think she is wasting her time. But she has goals, like being a model.

Chapter "Jack 1" introduces Jack who notes that he has never seen his father's head. All the photos her mother has of him have his head cut off. She removed his head from those photos out of anger because he had left the family before Jack was born. So Jack is left to wonder about him. He wonders whether his father was athletic, because he is not. He is easily winded and can't run well. His brother Mike, however, has two regular feet and is an excellent athlete. He can't compete with his older brother, as he is just a young, pudgy kid who draws in his art book. Since he failed science, he is stuck learning about the earth and instead dreams about other matters.



Eclipse, Ally 1, Bree 1, Jack 1 Analysis

Chapter "1" introduces the three main characters, Ally, Bree, and Jack, who seem to be wholly unaware of one another. Each of their three chapters introduces themselves and their basic outlook. They're all under fourteen and tell the reader about their families, from whom they are all somewhat alienated. Ally gets along with her parents, but is totally isolated from the rest of the world. Bree is less intelligent and much more beautiful than the rest of her family and they do not take her aspirations of being a model seriously. Jack is fat and pudgy and jealous of his athletic brother. Ally is the only of the three children who is interested in nature and the eclipse that is coming. Bree and Jack hardly care at all, as they do not even mention it. The reader learns from the dialogue that there are three children with their own outlooks on life who seem to be connected only by their stage in life and common astronomical events.



Ally 2, Bree 2, Jack 2

Ally 2, Bree 2, Jack 2 Summary

In "Ally 2," Ally and her family are preparing the campground for the eclipse and the eclipse comers. They have to smooth out and clean the ground and also keep up the "Labyrinth," a large maze Ally's family set up on the campground the summer before. The Labyrinth was meant to give campers something to do if they got tired of swimming, fishing and hiking around the campground. The point of the maze is to send people into a puzzle that would lead them to be more reflective about the point of their lives. There are five other unusual activities at the campground, such as panning for fake gold, painting on the walls of the Art House, Alien Central where campers can track alien radio transmissions via a small computer. It's very popular. There is also the Sun Garden to tell the time by their own shadows. They also have star parties, where people come out to star gaze. This is the sixth Unusual and all require upkeep.

Ally explains that her brother Kenny is a very good person who loves to draw and wants to make his name doing it. Ally wants to make her name discovering a comet, which will be called "Comet Summers" after her last name. Kenny overheard their parents talking about the meteorite Ally wears around her neck, which came from her grandfather, who helped inspire the idea of the campground. The meteorite had struck her grandfather as a kid and he showed it to anyone who would listen. It made him interested in space. Ally inherited his interest and his rock.

In "Bree 2," Bree and her sister Melanie go to the community center where Bree and her friend Claire are taking a "Breaking into Modeling" class. Her sister is reading books in the library about moving, as she believes her parents will get the big grant they have applied for which will lead them to move. Bree mentions that her sister has night terrors which lead her to sleep walk. In the modeling class, Bree learns about how important it is not only to take care of one's appearance but to sign with a reputable modeling agency. Bree's parents refuse to help her any time soon. In fact, their nerdiness keeps her from completely securing her position in the "A-Clique" rather than falling into the "B-Clique." When her parents pick her and Melanie up from the community center, they announce that the family is moving to a campground they will manage for three years while her parents complete their research.

Jack's third stepdad taught him to lucid dream, which is why he can fly. He wishes he could get art training, but his mother doesn't seem to care enough to register him. His brother Mike warns him that his teacher called and that his mother may be upset. It turns out his science teacher is on the phone, a man named Mr. Silver. Mr. Silver asks Jack "Rosten" to come to summer school for failing science in a special location. This is a two-week eclipse tour Mr. Silver is leading and he wants Jack to camp with him while he does some scientific experiments. If Jack participates and writes a paper, he will get out of summer school. Jack has to leave the next day and his mother quickly gets him ready. He has to pack up things from his treehouse and his real house.



Ally 2, Bree 2, Jack 2 Analysis

Chapter "2" which include Ally, Bree, and Jack's third essays both illuminates their characters and explains how they may come into contact with one another. In Ally's essay, she unintentionally alludes to the fact that her parents are worried she is a little too weird to have friends her own age, due to the fact that she wears her grandfather's meteorite. The family is getting ready to receive a number of visitors for the eclipse. It turns out that Bree and Jack will probably be among the visitors. While Bree is focused on having a modeling career, her parents are physicists who seem to have secured a grant to study dark matter. They will need to be at Ally's family's campground for a long time to do their research, so they are moving. Bree is furious. In Jack's story, he has failed science and must go to summer school. But his science teacher offers to let him off if he comes to the campground with him to do some experiments. Bree and Jack will be at Ally's campground before the eclipse. Their paths will cross soon.



Ally 3, Bree 3, Jack 3

Ally 3, Bree 3, Jack 3 Summary

"Ally 3" finds Ally finishing up cleaning the Unusuals and anticipating the arrival of camp guests. Most importantly, Ally is looking forward to her friend Ryan, a boy a year older than she is, paying her a visit. They aren't boyfriend and girlfriend, but Ryan is one of Ally's only friends. His grandparents usually bring him out each summer. Ally is also excited that her favorite constellations will make their appearance soon (Glenn, Eta and Peggy). She talks to them and treats them as her friends. In the essay, Ryan shows up before Ally can dress up. Mr. Flynn, Ryan's grandfather, and he check in. Ally and Ryan then decide to tour the Unusuals together, after Ryan showers. They take Kenny with them as Ryan and Ally pan for plastic gold pieces. Ally has to stock the tents as they tour. She overhears Ryan asking Kenny if any hot girls are coming by and he remarks that Ally is just a friend. Ally doesn't know what a hottie is and wonders why according to Ryan she isn't one.

In "Bree 3," Bree is completely speechless as her parents discuss their move. She will be homeschooled at the campsite and will see a solar eclipse (she's not sure what that is). All she knows is that she has to leave everything she has ever known. All her dreams are flying away from her, all the boys, cliques and modeling dreams. She leaves her parents' crappy van and goes to her friend Claire's house. Claire understands Bree's plight and her mother offers to let her stay there. When Bree's parents arrive, they tell Bree she just has to deal with it but that she will get a lot out of it. Bree bursts into tears and she and Claire share a sad goodbye. When Bree gets home, she locks herself in her room but her mother makes her pack her things and throw other things out. She now calls the campground Purgatory. Her life is on hold for three years. Melanie and her parents are excited, but Bree is miserable. The next day she watches with disgust as her parents sell all of their things. The next few days are a haze as they move save when Bree's mother will not let her follow up on a call from her modeling teacher, which totally demoralizes her. She knows that her life will suck.

In "Jack 3," Jack is nervous as his mother drives him to meet up with Mr. Silver who will take him to Ally's camp. Mr. Silver gives him some short articles explaining what a total solar eclipse is. Mr. Silver is excited for Jack, asking him if he is ready for the adventure of a lifetime. They then get on a bus to the campground. An elderly science teacher sits next to Jack, and explains the basics of the solar eclipse to him. Jack and the elderly woman begin to talk back and forth about the details. During a solar eclipse, the sun is in the same place but the moon is covering it. Mr. Silver then comes in over the intercom and tells people about the eclipse tour and tries to get the passengers excited. He then introduces Jack to all the older people on the bus. Eventually the old woman introduces herself as Stella and admires his artwork. When the bus stops for lunch, Jack meets a boy his age named Pete. He learns from Pete's parents that Mr. Silver is famous for leading eclipse chasers. Jack had never known. The tours fill up years in advance. Jack is surprised to feel himself being proud of him. He meets some scientists



on the bus who are trying to use the eclipse to coordinate an experiment that they have only a small window to complete. Finally, the bus stops for the night and Jack tries to fall asleep until a man, claiming to be Stella's son, reports to him that Stella is missing.

Ally 3, Bree 3, Jack 3 Analysis

Chapter "3" complicates the lives of Ally, Bree and Jack. Each of them is faced with some new, daunting prospect. Ally is reacquainted with a boy named Ryan who she, it seems without her realizing it, has a crush on him. Ally is relatively unfamiliar with "boy-girl" stuff and doesn't understand what Ryan meant when he told Kenny that Ally's "just Ally." She is excited to have a friend around but she is concerned that Kenny overheard her parents talking about whether she was ready for more extensive social interactions.

Bree is moving in the opposite direction. She is totally removed from her home environment when her parents decide to move her away from home. Everything she is interested in - popularity, modeling, boys - will likely be denied to her for three years and her entire family seems not to care, devaluing all those things Bree thinks matter most.

Jack's experience is somewhere in between. He leaves his mother and brother for two weeks but is quickly thrust into a new social situation with a bunch of older eclipse hunters. He discovers that his science teacher, Mr. Silver, is a world famous eclipse tour guide. He also meets an older woman named Stella who mysteriously disappears at the end of the chapter.

All of these events happen in the process of the three children being brought closer and closer together as Bree and Jack approach the campsite.



Ally 4

Ally 4 Summary

The chapter opens with Ally and her family preparing for the Eclipse travelers to arrive. Kenny, Ally and Ryan are left around the campground. Ally tries to convince Ryan how cool it will be to see some astronomical phenomena but Ryan seems, much to Ally's surprise, more interested in going to a talent show with his friends. Then Ryan and Ally go to the Alien Central Unusual to watch a computer search for communication from intelligent life. There Ryan explains that friends are not usually made through choice but by common experience. He says that he and Ally are friends for the same reason, though Ally hoped they would be friends because they actually liked each other. Ryan says that this comes after becoming friends.

Soon after, some RVs start to arrive and Ally and Ryan get busy helping them settle in. When Ally finds her way back to Alien Central, Ryan claims that the computer has detected a pattern that is perhaps indicative of alien life. They quickly inform Kenny and then the three of them contact some SETI researchers who, much to their disappointment, tell them that they can errant signals regularly and that the request will take a few weeks to analyze.

When Ally's parents return, she meets some of the campers. She sees a girl around her age, one of the most beautiful girls she has ever seen, and asks if she can help the girl out (the girl is Bree). Bree jokes that she could use some better parents. The Holdens have arrived, the rest of Bree's family exclaims, as if Ally's parents were supposed to know who they were. They are hoping to set up shop, having come a few days before most of the other campers. Ally's mother is clearly agitated at the Holdens' early arrival. She then tells Ally that they will be taking over Moon Shadow campground after the eclipse. Ally is stunned. But her mother says that her father is going back to work in Chicago. Her mother explains that she wants Ally and Kenny to learn to meet the rest of the world. Ally's too stunned to cry when her mother says that they were returning to a town near Chicago where Ally was born.

Bree is now desperate to get her clothes and Ally feels sorry for her. The two will have to share quarters for a while. Ally sees Ryan stop in his tracks when he sees Bree and realizes that she is what a "hottie" is. When the two girls reach Ally's bedroom, they begin to talk about who is less fortunate. Bree suggests they form a plan to where they can keep their respective lives. Ally expresses constant surprise at Bree's expectations for television, cell phone reception, etc. Bree is devastated and sobbing. Ally cries for herself as well.



Ally 4 Analysis

Ally 4 is Ally's fourth essay describing the events surrounding the coming eclipse. The main characters are converging on the Moon Shadow Campground, but Bree is very resistant. From Ally's perspective, everything is going fine until she is faced with the fact that her parents are moving her away. Bree's parents, the Holdens, will be taking over for several years. Ally is devastated, as the Campground is all she has ever truly known. But her mother reminds her that they had not intended to remain there forever and that it was time for Ally and Kenny to know civilization. Ally is not prepared for the change. She also continues to learn from Ryan what being a "real girl" means, as in being attractive, an idea she does not quite understand. She also meets Bree and describes her from Ally's perspective. Bree appears to her beautiful and entirely caught up in television, appearances, cell phones, and many things with which Ally is unfamiliar.

Bree 4

Bree 4 Summary

The Moon Shadow Campground is hell for Bree. She has started up at Ally's astronomical charts and cannot find anything of Ally's to wear, given that her clothes have not arrived. Bree feels sorry for Ally when she comes in, realizing that she is suffering too. Misery loves company. Bree thinks Ally is a nice kid, but backwoods. Ally invites her to a barbecue for the Eclipse Chasers and she must explain the idea to Bree. Bree doesn't care about the Eclipse and Ally is stunned, thinking the eclipse is incredibly cool. Bree wants to plan with Ally about how to keep their lives. She notes that Ally would get along well with her sister Melanie and decides to help Ally improve her appearance before she enters real school. Ally tries to get Bree appropriately dressed for being outside. While they go to fetch food, Bree explains that she wants to be a model. Ally can't understand why anyone would want to be a model but she responds to Bree's disclosure by telling her that she wants to discover a comet. Bree has no response.

When Ally goes to the food line, Bree notices Ryan, deciding that he's a "full-on 9.2." Ryan is checking her out, but Bree is too embarrassed by her appearance, so she flips through Ally's notebook, finding a number of astronomy drawings and information. She then uses some blank sheets to start to plan. They start to list the likes and dislikes of their family members, in the hopes that the dislikes will match up with their planned futures. Bree wants to try to make her parents feel guilty. Over the next few pages their discussion turns up a number of disadvantages of their present locations. Throughout Bree bursts a lot of Ally's "bubbles," her strange ideas about how the world works. She feels bad about it. Nonetheless, Bree admits that Ally has some good ideas.

They are interrupted when Ally points out a kid on the ground. The boy is about six and seems to be having a minor seizure. Bree starts to comfort the kid when a pudgy kid (probably Jack) runs toward the group and hands the boy's father a first-aid kit which has a cortisone stimulator, which helps the kid recover. Bree is embarrassed to have been helping the kid and runs away.

Bree 4 Analysis

Bree's story does not repeat her experience reports in the last chapter from her perspective. Instead, it simply takes off from where Ally's essay ended, save that this time we get to hear Bree's internal dialogue rather than Ally's. Bree generally has a favorable impression of Ally, despite realizing that she is, through no fault of her own, incredibly backwoods and not ready to enter civilization. Bree's primary focus is to develop an alliance with Ally so that Bree can go home and Ally can stay at Moon Shadow. That is her aim, in any case. Ally mostly cooperates and their banter in attempting to formulate a list of cons of their current arrangements reveals a lot about

both of them. Bree sees herself as in a position to help make Ally worldly, whereas Ally seems mostly to have trouble understanding Bree's personality and her interests. Incidentally, Jack makes an appearance later in the chapter.



Jack 4

Jack 4 Summary

Jack 4 opens with Stella missing. Jack is searching for her with her son, Greg Daniels. He is exhausted, as he has only slept three hours. Eventually he and Stella's grandson, a six year old named Pete, find Stella quietly doing Tai Chi. Jack expresses some frustration that she disappeared without telling anyone where she was going. Eventually Greg finds her and yells at her as Jack leaves. Eventually things calm down and Jack falls asleep on the bus and has a lucid dream. When he wakes up, everyone is preparing to leave Burger King. Mr. Silver got him some food. They have a quick discussion where Mr. Silver tells Jack to take good notes and realizes that Jack has already been picking up some details about the Eclipse and the related astronomical phenomena. Jack feels out of his element but he is advised to learn.

Soon after the bus takes off, Jack starts to sketch people on the bus. They soon arrive at Moon Shadow and Jack is taken to his cabin past the Unusuals. He meets Ryan, who he notes is far more handsome than he is. Ryan mentions that there is a hot girl (Bree) that he wants to impress. Ryan then asks Jack to help him workout, to prepare for meeting up with Bree. Jack expresses a lack of interest in girls as he has no hopes of finding one, but what girls really like is confidence, Ryan emphasizes. When the boys leave the cabin, Ryan points out Bree, but the only pretty girl Jack sees is Ally, who is the person he believes Ryan is referring to. Soon thereafter, Pete has an allergic reaction to some peanut butter. Jack leaps into action to find the Epipen in the first aid kit he was supposed to be carrying around but he cannot find it. When he does, he gives it to a man who uses it on Pete who then recovers. Jack is so embarrassed he runs off. He eventually runs into Stella who tells him that he was a hero, which Jack denies, blaming himself for not having the kit on him in the first place. He then vows not to screw up again while he is there, emboldened by the realization that he can become a new person because he is in a new environment.

Jack 4 Analysis

In Jack 4, Jack starts to come into his own. While he is somewhat disconnected from the people around him, he is able to locate Stella after she disappears. Along the way he takes care of Pete, a six year old boy, and ends up saving him from a severe allergic reaction to peanut butter. Mr. Silver encourages him to take notes on what he learns and realizes that Jack has been paying a little bit of attention. Towards the end of the chapter, Jack makes the explicit decision to be a better person than he has been in the past, in part due to guilt over not saving Pete sooner. He has also noticed Ally, deciding that she, rather than Bree, is beautiful. The chapter appears to be a turning point for Jack.



Ally 5, Bree 5, Jack 5

Ally 5, Bree 5, Jack 5 Summary

Ally and Kenny are sitting down with their parents after Bree and Jack have run off and Pete is safe. Ally's parents explain that they are going to be fine in a nice suburb. They will find a place to rent and then buy a house in a good school system. Some of it sounds appealing but Ally still wants to stay and keeps her plan with Bree secret.

The next morning, Ally finds sharing the campground with Melanie and Bree somewhat complicated. They're wearing her clothes but Bree continues to wear make-up and look beautiful. Bree encourages Ally to do the same in order to look nice for Ryan, who she says is cute enough to want to impress. Ally does not understand initially but does feel the pull of wanting to look nice for him. She realizes that her lack of attention to her appearance is the reason he doesn't see her as a girl and that embarrasses her. At the same time, Ally learns from Mr. Flynn that finding her comet will be very hard given the robot computers that scan the skies for them.

Afterwards, Bree and Ally start to secretly implement their plan but cutting Bree's parents power and making them aware of poisonous bugs, all meant to make salient the disadvantages of life at Moon Shadow. They are initially successful. Later they try to make clear through talking aloud to one another how expensive life in the suburbs is and how drugs are everywhere, scaring Ally's parents. Their second attempt also seems to plant doubt in Ally's parents' minds.

Eventually Jack and Ryan appear. Ryan dotes on Bree and pays less attention to Ally. Then he introduces Jack. Kenny appears and reports that they got an email from the SETI people. The email reports, sadly for Ally, that a number of people monitoring the "Libra" area have experienced some radio interference, which accounts for their readings. Disappointed, Ally shrugs it off and talks to Jack, who is interested in Ally's meteorite.

In Bree 5, Bree welcomes Ryan as a distraction from her plight. Kenny and Melanie meet and start talking about how much they like school. Ally is bust talking to Jack and Bree and Ryan sneak off to briefly tour the campground, with Bree pleased to listen to Ryan. Ally comes to get Bree and they rush to their parents, who have figured out their plans and that they raised some good points. Ally and Bree cry simultaneously and walk off angrily. Bree finds her things from one of the boxes that has arrived, changes clothes and takes her iPod with her to a solitary place on the campground where she reminisces about what she has lost. That is, until Stella interrupts her and congratulates her on having her own plans. Bree thinks she is weird.

Jack 5 picks up soon thereafter. He's spent most of his time reading and mentions that he thinks Ally is very interesting. As night falls, people gather around to star gaze and Ally speaks to them as a group. Jack admires her confidence and hopes that Mr. Silver



will let her join their experiment. Ally explains how to star gaze properly to the crowd and entertains them in ways that fascinate Jack. He even finds himself getting interested. Bree is paying attention too and Melanie is complete transfixed. Ally then helps the crowd find the Big Dipper and the North Star. The lecture then breaks up and people are congratulating Ally. Mr. Silver then approaches Jack to explain how they are going to perform their experiment. Jack is happy when Mr. Silver says that Ally can join them. After Mr. Silver shows Jack Saturn in their telescope, Mr. Silver receives a message that his wife had a birth scare, as she is pregnant with their first child. He has to leave and come back. Mr. Silver is going to have to hand over the experiment to Greg Daniels, but Ally and Jack can still help.

The next day Jack finds Ally in the Art House. He tells Ally about the experiment and she is very pleased. Then they set out to find Mr. Daniels. When they find him, he says that he's not going to help, just instruct them, and let them do the grunt work. Kenny and Melanie join Ally and Jack to go through Mr. Silver's equipment and instructions. When they see Bree and Ryan, Bree declines to be part of the project and Ryan, who was initially interested, similarly declines. Ally is clearly jealous.

Ally 5, Bree 5, Jack 5 Analysis

Chapter "5" has united the three main characters and begins to complicate both their relationships and the plot. Ally and Bree connect through their (ultimately failed) plan to convince their parents to let them stay where they are. Kenny and Melanie hit it off given their common nerdiness and Ryan and Bree form a bond almost immediately which seems to be largely premised on attractiveness. Ally is clearly jealous and somewhat blames herself for not taking better care of her appearance. In general, there is some pairing off as Ally and Jack quickly develop a friendship as Jack finds himself increasingly interested in astronomy and admires Ally for both her knowledge and her ability to easily and comfortably communicate it to others, including adults. Jack likes Ally who like Ryan who likes Bree, so things are a bit complicated. But each perspective has its own emphases while sharing a common emphasis on somewhat disliking their present circumstances and fearing change while also seeing the attractions of it.

The events of the book grow more complicated as a storm is coming soon to Moon Shadow which may disrupt Mr. Silver's experiment, which can only occur over a two day period. What's more Mr. Silver has to abruptly leave the campground when his wife has a pregnancy scare. So the experiment is left to Jack and to Ally, who Jack convinced Mr. Silver to include. Mr. Silver wanted Mr. Daniels to take over but he has no interested. So Jack and Ally and Melanie and Kenny will have to figure out how to perform the experiment themselves.



Ally 6, Bree 6, Jack 6

Ally 6, Bree 6, Jack 6 Summary

In Ally 6, Ally is instructing campers on how to make their eclipse viewers, so as to block out harmful sunlight. When she's finished, Ryan approaches her and asks if he can join the experiment. Ally is ok with it but notes to herself that despite Ryan making nice everything has changed between them since Bree. Bree will be busy with her boxes, which have arrived. So now the five of them are focused on the experiment and communicating with Mr. Silver's fellow researchers. They call themselves Team Exo, as they are trying to see an exoplanet. But as soon as they move the equipment outside, it starts to rain. So the five run to a nearby shed where they want to stay for the duration. They all seem excited as Ryan tells them a ghost story that is until the door opens randomly and they're all scared. Then Bree comes in.

In Bree 6, Bree reports that she had left her clothes boxes behind. They gave her some comfort but she did not feel like the same person who once wore them. She was entering into a new life. When she gets inside the shed with the five other kids, she feels a new sense of community with them, unlike her pretty girl slumber parties from days past. Everyone seemed somewhat different, especially Jack, who seemed less pasty and less shy. They have fun for a bit, until Ally starts crying very hard, as she does not want to leave and have to worry about her "complexion" all the time. Jack remarks that they should all help one another make their transitions and Ryan suggests that Ally and Bree should learn to accept their fate. Bree reacts by saying that Ryan has life easy but he points out that he hardly knows his parents and that his grandparents, who raised him, just got divorce. This makes Bree feel embarrassed.

As the conversation develops, Bree begins to advise Ally on how to adjust to the world, and that she must learn the social rules of her school to do well. Ally feels unprepared but Melanie responds that Bree is wrong and that Ally should be her own person. She should not feel fear but be open and authentic. Next Ryan asks Ally what is so great about living at Moon Shadow. She then comes alive, arguing that living there connects you to the universe and helps you to forget all that is wrong with the world. There is no judgment at Moon Shadow and Kenny adamantly agrees. Jack says that he feels isolated even in society and that Moon Shadow might be nice. Bree admits, only to herself, that she understands Jack's sentiments.

Eventually, it stops raining but the clouds do not entirely clear away. Instead, only the moon can be seen. But Ally takes them outside and lets them each look at the moon through a telescope. Jack is overwhelmed by its beauty. And Bree is the last to see the moon. She too is overwhelmed, finding it beautiful, mysterious and powerful. She feels, much to her chagrin, that her "inner geek" that she had smothered for years, had been awakened.



Ally 6, Bree 6, Jack 6 Analysis

Ally 6 is mostly focused on plot development, as the four kids (Ally, Jack, Melanie, and Kenny) are joined by Ryan as they try to figure out how to take the measurements that Mr. Silver needs for his research. There is some tension between Ally and Ryan, as Ally is no jealous of the attention Ryan is giving Bree and realizes that their relationship has lost its innocence in a certain way. But Ryan is as friendly as ever. The group goes outside to get set up but they are rained out and have to retreat to a shed where they begin to tell stories and have a lot of fun.

In Bree 6, Bree enters in to find a new community forming. Bree 6 is a tale of Bree's revelatory psychological development. She only left her cabin because her boxes of material possessions no longer satisfied her that she already felt like a different person. Entering the shed only furthered this process, as she began to see transformations in others, such as Jack's new confidence and Melanie's wisdom and even seeing the struggles that Ryan has had to deal with. After the storm lifts and Bree looks into the telescope and sees the moon she is so overwhelmed with its power that she feels that her "inner geek" has awoken and that this is a problem. Now her whole identity has been threatened and will inevitably have to change.



Jack 6

Jack 6 Summary

Soon thereafter, the kids fall asleep in the shed, after Jack has admitted failing summer school to Ally, who was very comforting. They wake up to the sunlight early in the morning. In the morning, Jack walks to his cabin to get ready for the day and then gets something to eat with Pete, Stella and some others. Ryan and Jack got jogging afterwards, though has a hard time of it. When Jack returns to his cabin, Ally shows up with sandwiches and to help prepare for taking data that night. Jack and Ally start to talk and Ally expresses some insecurity about being a girl that she hopes Bree will fix. Then Ally has to disappear to help two hundred people register for the eclipse, which is three days away.

When Jack gets to the campsite later, he sees Ally talking to Kenny and Melanie. Bree is there as well. Ryan made himself sick eating raw eggs for protein and Bree is taking care of him. Jack really enjoys being around Ally and tries not to blush around her. Then they start to prepare Mr. Silver's machinery, enjoying themselves the whole time. Bree starts to seem prettier to Jack, but he still thinks Ally is better looking and indirectly says as much, which embarrasses him. Jack focuses on enjoying the moment, dreading that it will be over in four days. They get an email from a man in Scotland saying that he collected enough data along with his fellow researchers in Florida that tonight it is up to them and a woman in Italy. The experiment is starting to make more sense to him. The stars come out and they locate the coordinates and start taking data. Jack takes temperature readings as each person does his or her part. They're tracking any evidence they can for a planet that is distorting star light. Melanie exclaims that what they are viewing actually happened when Napoleon was ruling France, which amazes them all. And then their measurements confirm the existence of a planet, or at least they have what probably is confirmation, once the data is checked out. Then they email the data. Jack notes that he is hanging around with five kids he did not know ten days ago. The night is beautiful and they start to talk about the eclipse. But Jack zones out. He doesn't want it to end.

Jack 6 Analysis

Two important events occur in Jack 6. First, the kids bond in an extraordinary way. They fell asleep in the shed but continue to have a great time together that they could not have imagined ten days before. Jack is increasingly smitten with Ally, who seems completely oblivious to the crush he is developing on her. But all of them are starting to see each other more deeply. This is clearest that night when they all work in conjunction to collect the data needed for Mr. Silver's project. Ally leads them all to gather the data required to confirm the existence of an exoplanet. They are lucky - the measurements come out just right. The entire group has an enormous sense of accomplishment and

they go and talk the night through. So this second event, completing the project, is a kind of pre-climactic moment prior to the eclipse.



Ally 7, Bree 7, Jack 7

Ally 7, Bree 7, Jack 7 Summary

The next day Ally is incredibly busy. Over one thousand people are at or around Moon Shadow Campground and registering and keeping track of them all is overwhelming. She's had hardly any social time at and has seen only bits of "Team Exo." She notes that Bree seems less angry but distinct and that Jack is really helping out and seems fine save when she brings up the eclipse. She is still shocked that Jack thinks she's prettier than Bree. Just then, Ally's mother pops through on the walkie-talkie to tell her something important has happened. Ryan and Kenny rush up to her to tell her that Mr. Silver confirmed with a telescope in Hawaii that they had used their data to confirm the existence of the planet. They're the youngest people to have ever found an exoplanet.

But there is no time to spare. Ally's parents congratulate them but they must tend to the campers, who they have been planning to host for years. The field for the eclipse is already filling up and Ally describes some of the most creative and eccentric ones. Only a few minutes before "first contact" remain (the state where the moon first begins to cover the sun). When Ally runs up to some of Team Exo and their family, they're all doing an anti-rain dance. Soon thereafter first contact is made and everyone shields their eyes. Ally and her family have to help people do it right. Mr. Silver then makes an appearance, finally getting to the campground. Second contact (when the moon covers the sun) is coming. For a moment it is dark and everyone can take off their glasses. The corona of the sun is visible. Ally then hears people whooping and someone slips his/her hand into hers.

In Bree 7, Bree rises early to finally wander the labyrinth by herself. She meets a Muslim woman from Egypt named Bellana, who will pray during the eclipse, in imitation of the Prophet Muhammad. After she leaves the labyrinth, Bree goes to the Art House to see the walls covered. As Bree walks around the campground, she sees people getting more and more excited. She is alone until Melanie finds her to tell her about Mr. Silver's confirmation. Bree is stunned and feels like she didn't do anything. But she ultimately thinks it's pretty cool. Then Melanie hands her a fax from Claire which is just a cutesy update on things out there. Bree appreciates the thoughtfulness of it. Claire has been invited to do a modeling class and says that Bree should come with her for a few weeks. Afterwards, Bree and Melanie banter a bit and Bree can't bear to tell her that she enjoyed seeing the moon. Jack comes by next and tells Bree that he is probably not going to watch the eclipse and won't tell her why. He just asks her not to tell Ally.

Forty-five minutes before the eclipse, Bree arrives at the field. She finds her place and talks to Ally. They find their families together. Ally is overjoyed and excited. Bree watches the eclipse and is totally overawed by it. She then reports her own view of it. Bree exclaims to herself that until that moment she had never seen "real" beauty and that if that event could be repeated every day for a year she would never move from where she stood.



In Jack 7, Jack packs his bags and hoped that Mr. Silver would be back. He wants to hide, to make sure no one can find him. He feels like it is the best time to leave. But when he leaves, he immediately runs into Bree who he tells that he is not going to the eclipse. Bree chastises him and he realizes she was right and that Mr. Silver would be disappointed with his behavior. So he goes to his area of the field where Pete is. As the eclipse happens, it sends streams of eclipsed light into the trees, which amazes Jack. But Jack now wants to watch the eclipse with Ally, running with Pete in his arms (Pete is out of breath). Mr. Silver then comes through on the walkie-talkie and congratulates him on the planet. After dropping Pete off, he takes someone else's viewers and sees the shadow bands. When he finds Ally and Bree, he sneaks up to them and boldly puts his hand in Ally's. She is crying with joy at the eclipse and is glad to see him. At that moment, he feels a profound sense of peace that no matter what happens to him, part of him will always be right there with Ally and see the eclipse.

Ally 7, Bree 7, Jack 7 Analysis

Chapter "7" is the climax of the book. The epilogue follows. All three main characters tell their stories about the eclipse, so their stories are not in succession as they have been in some of the previous chapters. Instead, they each give their side of the story. Ally is incredibly busy in her chapter, working in tandem with her family to execute a plan they've had for years to accommodate all the visitors to the camp. It is in this part of the chapter that the reader discovers that the kids, Team Exo, was successfully in providing the data needed for an observatory in Hawaii to confirm the existence of the Exoplanet. Now the mini-climax in the previous chapter is completed, helping to build the excitement of the day.

In Bree 7, Bree is quickly evolving as a person as she remains quiet as she explores the campground. Bree is finding out that there is another part of herself that she was partly unaware of before and this is causing her to need some solitude. In general, Bree realizes that in many ways she is more like her family than she thought. And when she finally sees the eclipse, she is taken away by its beauty to such an extent that she claims that she had never seen "real beauty" before that moment, signaling to the reader that her very conception of beauty, the value with which she is obsessed, is growing and deepening.

Jack continues his maturation process in Jack 7. He initially wants to run away from the eclipse, given how unhappy he will be after it is over. He feels embarrassed and ashamed. But after Bree chastises him for wanting to leave, he throws himself into being present. He helps Pete over to his parents and runs into Mr. Silver who is very proud of him. Further, he boldly runs up to Ally and puts his hand into hers, which makes Ally very happy. He feels as if he has experienced something so wonderful that a part of him will always be there. Jack has thus become bold.



Ally Epilogue, Bree Epilogue, Jack Epilogue

Ally Epilogue, Bree Epilogue, Jack Epilogue Summary

In Ally's final essay, she describes the awe and joy of the eclipse and holding Jack's hand. She feels comforted by her new community of friends and finally, for once, as the eclipse leaves, she feels okay about leaving Moon Shadow Campground. She has a new confidence in her ability to be social and to grow. Her essay ends as Team Exo goes to meet with Mr. Silver.

In Bree's final essay, she displays a letter to her friend Claire telling her that she is getting used to the idea of living at Moon Shadow and feels affected by what has happened there. She then reports that she has to find Jack and Ally. When she finds Jack, they talk about how glad they both were to see the eclipse and how Jack was so surprised that he almost didn't go. Bree congratulates him on his personal growth and Jack thanks her. Bree then sheepishly asks Jack if he can teach her "how to fly," a clear reference to his lucid dreaming ability.

For Jack, the bus leaves in two hours. He has to pack to leave on the bus and finds himself with two books about astronomy and Jack remarks about the fact that in billions of years his atoms will be around kind of comforts him. The screen door opens as the whole team comes in to say goodbye. Jack promises Bree that he will come back next summer even if he has to fail another class. Bree leaves. Ally tells Jack that Bree is teaching her "the ways of the world." Jack then gives her a picture that he sketched for her, a picture of her riding on a comet with an Alpha Girl superhero outfit. Jack expresses pride that Ally is confident in her newfound ability to adjust and he believes great things will come of her. They then say kind goodbyes.

Ally Epilogue, Bree Epilogue, Jack Epilogue Analysis

The epilogue functions on two levels. First, it explains how the three main characters split up. Basically, Jack leaves on the bus and Bree and Ally are still around one another but start to settle into their lives moving in different directions. Bree is teaching Ally how to adjust to the "real world" and Ally is teaching Bree how to get in touch with her inner geekiness. Jack has gained a new confidence from both Ally and Bree and he has impressed them both at his ability to change and grow more confidence. In general, the major function of the epilogue is to summarize both how the characters developed and how they helped each other do so.



Characters

Ally

Ally Holden is the first essayist and character presented in *Every Soul a Star*. Ally has been raised by her parents on Moon Shadow Campground for as long as she can remember. Her life has been quite isolated. While she meets campers from time to time she mostly only sees her parents and her brother Kenny. In homeschooling, Ally has learned an enormous amount about astronomy and has come to love the universe and astronomical phenomena along with nature on earth. Ally is content with her life and happy to grow up where she is until her parents present her with a life-challenging decision - they have decided to hand Moon Shadow over to another family and take them to a city or suburb. Ally is distraught.

The course of the book shows how Ally responds to the challenge. Initially she resists it, plotting with Bree to get her parents to stay around. But when the eclipse comes, she rises to her natural ability to lead and speak in front of crowds and organize. She also leads Team Exo to confirm the existence of the exoplanet. After her interactions with Ryan, Bree and Jack, she gradually comes to accept that she may be able to survive in the real world and maintain her own identity rather than having to alter it in the ways she expected. She is somewhat brought down to earth by her experiences but retains her dreams under more realistic expectations.

Bree

Bree is the second essayist and character presented in *Every Soul a Star*. Bree's parents are physicists and her sister, like them, is a science geek. Bree feels alienated from her family as she is very beautiful and wants to pursue a modeling career. She is a girl happy to move into high school, find with social climbing and in every way "plugged in" to the world. But like Ally, she too is presented with a deep challenge to her identity and way of life when her parents have the opportunity to move to Moon Shadow to do their research. Her parents and sister are unsympathetic to her desire to stay and so when she reaches Moon Shadow she quickly allies with Ally to try and get her parents to let her go back home. When she realizes this is useless, she is distraught and isolates herself.

But Bree changes over the course of the book as well. When her material possessions finally arrive at the campground, she finds them less interesting. This leads her to wander to the shed where Team Exo is staying out of the rain and ends up having a wonderful time with them. The next night she helps them collect data and when she looks through the telescope at the moon she is overwhelmed with its beauty and feels her "inner geek" coming to life. The end result of Bree's development is that she realizes that there is "true beauty" in the world in nature and that inside she may not be so



different from her family after all. She gradually adjusts to the idea of staying at Moon Shadow, though she still hopes to pursue a modeling career.

Jack

Jack is the third essayist and character presented in *Every Soul a Star*. Jack lives with his mother, brother, and various stepdads. He mostly keeps to himself and is insecure about his appearance and academic performance. When he fails science class, Mr. Silver offers him the opportunity to go to Moon Shadow to see the eclipse, help him with an experiment and get out of summer school. As Jack travels to the campground and meets everyone, he has a continuous stream of events fall upon him that leads him to act in caring, thoughtful, intelligent and even heroic ways. This leads to an increasing confidence that eventuates in his rushing back to the eclipse after running from it and putting his hand into Ally's.

Kenny

Kenny is Ally's little brother and as much of a geek as she is.

Melanie

This is Bree's little sister who is much more like her parents than she is.

Ryan

This is an old friend of Ally's who visits the campground every summer and who takes an interest in Bree that in turn makes Ally jealous.

Team Exo

This is the team composed of Ally, Jack, Ryan, Bree, Melanie and Jack that together confirm the existence of an exoplanet.

Mr. Silver

This is Jack's science teacher and famous eclipse chaser tour guide who invites Jack to Moon Shadow and ends up allowing him and the rest of Team Exo to use his equipment.



Ally's Parents

The owners of Moon Shadow, Ally's parents are kind and laidback. Ally gets along with them well until they decide to take Ally away from the campground.

Bree's Parents

They are physicists who seem unable to connect with their daughter and they take Bree to Moon Shadow against her will.

Stella

This is an elderly woman and free spirit who helps Jack mature.

Greg Daniels

This is Stella's stern and difficult son.

Pete

This is Stella's grandson and a six year-old boy that Jack often takes care of.

Eclipse Chasers

These are the many people who come to Moon Shadow to see the eclipse.



Objects/Places

Moon Shadow Campground

This is the campground where people come to see the eclipse and the general setting of the book.

The Unusuals

These are five different amusement-park-esque areas of the campground where campers can amuse themselves.

The Shed

Team Exo hides in a shed the first night they try to take measurements in order to avoid a storm. They have a wonderful time there.

The Bus

Jack spends a lot of time on the bus on the way to Moon Shadow.

A Solar Eclipse

The entire book is built around the solar eclipse that draws everyone to Moon Shadow.

Mr. Silver's Materials

Mr. Silver had intended to run his experiment at Moon Shadow but had to leave when his wife had a health care. He left them with Team Exo who used them to great effect.

An Exoplanet

This is an extra solar planet or a planet revolving around another star than our sun. Team Exo confirms the existence of one of them.

A Comet

This is a small icy body that hurls through space and sometimes crosses the earth's atmosphere. Ally wants to discover one in the future.



Ally's Meteorite

Ally's grandfather was struck by a meteorite, which led him to become interested in astronomy that in turn led to the creation of Moon Shadow. Ally wears the meteorite around her neck.

Bree's Boxes

Bree is caught up in material things, but when her boxes, containing her things, finally arrive at Moon Shadow, they all of a sudden seem less important to her.

Jack's Sketchpad

Jack is an amateur artist who enjoys sketching. Bree encourages him to get into art classes due to his talent and Jack draws a picture of Ally for her.

Eclipse Viewers

These are devices used to view a solar eclipse to shield one's eyes from the sun's rays.



Themes

The Transformative Power of the Beauty of Nature

Every Soul a Star is based on a deep continuity between individuals and nature and the transformative power of the one upon the other. Ally was raised on Moon Shadow Campground, experiencing beautiful astronomical events literally in her own backyard for as long as she could remember. She is fascinated by the heavens and even wears a piece of it around her neck. Consequently, her entire personality is deeply shaped by nature and she enjoys sharing these experiences with others.

Ally is also able to introduce Bree and Jack to nature and watch how it transforms their personalities. Bree is not at all interested in astronomy. Her parents are physicists and her sister Melanie is just like them. She attempts to differentiate herself by having a different life and different goals. Nonetheless, it becomes clear that her life and possessions have helped her to suppress her "inner geek," which is only revealed when she begins to interact with the other members of Team Exo and actually looks into a high powered telescope at the beauty of the moon.

Jack's story is a bit more complicated. While he too has little interest in astronomy, he too learns to enjoy it and find value in it. The events involved in bringing him to Moon Shadow and the actions he takes there, transform him, as Jack helps and aids others in ways he didn't expect before.

Unexpected Camaraderie

Ally, Bree, and Jack are all solitary characters. While Ally has her family, she is isolated from the rest of the world, despite the campers that she frequently meets. As a result she has little knowledge of how most kids her age live. Jack, in contrast, is surrounded by many children but knows few of them and generally keeps to himself. He remains shy up to the last week or so of the book. Bree's isolation is more complicated. In general, she feels alienated from her family because her interests and goals diverge so dramatically from theirs. While she has good friends, their connections are superficial, which becomes clear to Bree over time. She also realizes that she has been suppressing her inner geek, and that some part of her is isolated from even herself.

The camaraderie that the three main characters encounter is, as a result, quite a pleasant surprise, one that leads to personal growth. Ally learns the ways of the world from Bree and combines to admire Jack's courage and thoughtfulness. Bree rediscovers her inner geek from Ally and befriends and encourages Jack. And Jack loses his shyness and irresponsibility in part by being inspired by Ally and encouraged by Bree. Add to the mix Ryan, Kenny, and Melanie. Team Exo is thus formed. This is the group that gives the three main characters a special, added meaning to their lives.



Self-Actualization

More than anything, *Every Soul a Star* is a story about self-actualization and not merely transformation and personal growth. Self-actualization is a complex ideal, which involves developing a self-concept and learning to act on it in fulfilling ways. Each of the three main characters begins with a kind of personality template. Ally is the nerdy astronomy lover indifferent to the social world. Bree is the self-absorbed, materialistic beauty with no real interest in nature or science. And Jack is the pasty, artsy kid who is shy and can't pass his classes. But in the book all three eventually decide, through personality crises, to become something more.

Ally learns that she can come to accept living in society and that acclimating herself doesn't require her to give up being who she is. She can develop and still deepen her own self-development. Bree learns that beauty and material possessions aren't everything and that she can use her social skills to benefit others. Further, she learns not to feel deeply alienated from her family as she discovers new dimensions of her personality in her encounter with science.

Jack starts off the story irresponsible, timid, and unconfident. But in helping out people like Stella, Pete and Mr. Silver he gains a new confidence in himself. He is able to conceptualize himself as someone competent, knowledgeable and resourceful. This new self-conception is seemingly permanent as they develop their personalities separately.



Style

Point of View

Every Soul a Star is unusual because it features three distinct points of view. The book is divided into often serial and otherwise simultaneously occurring chapters by the book's three main characters: Ally, Bree and Jack. In the earlier chapters, Ally, Bree and Jack's stories occur simultaneously, whereas in later chapters they occur partly sequentially. The story occurs over the course of two weeks that lead up to an important solar eclipse, so each perspective is closely related in time.

The three points of view are all first personal and are all the points of view of pre-teens and early teenagers. They are all apparently American as well. Beyond that, the points of view diverge significantly in terms of background, personality and thought patterns. Ally is a homeschooled child, isolated from the world other than her family, and fascinated by science and nature. She is the most socially naïve but also arguably the most intelligent. She is courageous but can sometimes be oblivious. Bree, by contrast, is the most socially adept and in many ways the most thoughtful. She is, at least at first, aggressively anti-science as that is her family's primary interest. But she can also be vain and values material possessions and appearance. Her vices erode over time however. Jack, the third character, is the only boy and is the most shy and awkward. However, he is also the bravest and in some ways exhibits the most personal growth.

Setting

The general setting of the book is in the United States during the early 2000s. This is clear from the presence of computers and universal cell phone use among pre-teens and young teenagers. While Bree and Jack start out from their homes in more populated areas, the story begins and is primarily set in Moon Shadow Campground, where Ally and her parents live and where all the eclipse chasers, Jack and Bree, come to view the solar eclipse around which the book is based. Moon Shadow is not a typical campground. It contains a number of amusement park-like areas and activities like a labyrinth and a place where campers can pan for fake, plastic gold. It is also meant to be based around long cycles of activities. Many campgrounds have season's cycles of campers, but Moon Shadow is built around eclipses, which occur only every few years, so a lot of long-term planning is required. As a result, when the eclipse comes, the campground is packed and the main characters are surrounded by many people.

The book contains a number of sub-settings within Moon Shadow. One example is the shed where Team Exo spends the night after a serious thunderstorm. Other examples are the cabins where the different kids are sleeping. The most significant sub-setting is the field where the eclipse occurs and where the climax of the book happens.



Language and Meaning

Every Soul a Star is written for young adults, some of whom may not be even teenagers. Consequently, the language is relatively simple. The text of the book is large, and is often decorated as many children's books are. The language is also highly colloquial, containing a number of terms of art common among youth and that become subjects of discussion when more socially aware characters like Bree explain them to less socially aware characters like Ally. The meaning of the text remains relatively close to the surface. It contains few hidden elements, though it does leave the young reader with some inferences to draw about the emotions of the characters. Bree, Ally and Jack all describe experiences of personal growth but they are only self-aware of some of the elements that went into producing that growth.

Every Soul a Star is also meant to teach the reader a bit about astronomy. First, it is built around an astronomical event, a solar eclipse. But the book discusses a number of related phenomena, like lunar eclipses and meteor showers. For instance, Ally wears a meteorite around her neck, and so the book explains the concept of a meteorite. The book also describes the phases of an eclipse and the need for specially constructed viewers. Most significant for its scientific language is the tracking and discovery of an exoplanet, or a planet that orbits a star other than our own.

Structure

Every Soul a Star is composed of seven "chapters" and an epilogue. "Chapters" is in quotes because the book is really composed of seven sets of three essays and an epilogue that itself is composed of three essays. Each of the three main characters has essays that compose the chapter. Most of them are of even length within the chapter. The chapters occur sequentially, though the "sub-chapters" are not structurally arranged in so straightforward a manner. In general, the sub-chapters are related to one another in two ways: sequential and simultaneous. The sequential chapters are those where each character's essay picks up where the others' left off. The simultaneous chapters each cover the same events but from three different perspectives.

The general structure of the book works as follows: Ally, Bree, and Jack all introduce themselves and their general circumstances in the first chapter. Jack's failure of summer school and Bree's parents' scientific interests lead them to converge on Moon Shadow Campground, where Ally is staying. When they arrive, it is not long until Ally discovers that her parents want to take her away. These plots elements lead the characters to grow along with leading them up to the two main plot events of (i) their confirmation of the Exoplanet and (ii) their experience of the eclipse. After the two events, the three characters explain how their paths diverge.



Quotes

"Eclipse: from the ancient Greek word ekleipsis, meaning abandonment or omission." (p. 1).

"We all have things to offer the world. My beauty is what I have to give." (Chapter 1, p. 3).

"No other campground in America has six Unusuals. Most don't even have one. They require a bit of upkeep, but we don't mind." (Chapter 2, p. 4).

"If I wasn't already on the ground I swear I would seriously faint. I yell so loudly my voice echoes in my head. 'We're WHAT???' (Chapter 2, 9).

"Ally's just Ally. She's not really like the other girls I know." (Chapter 3, p. 13).

"Oh, who am I kidding? It's gonna suck." (Chapter 3, p. 14).

"Ready for the adventure of a lifetime?" (Chapter 3, p. 2).

"Great Galileo's Ghost!" (Chapter 4, p. 10).

"This is our home. This is all Kenny's ever known. You can't do this." (Chapter 4, p. 34).

"I was wrong. This place isn't Purgatory. It's the other place." (Chapter 4, p. 1).

"But right then...I make a decision. I'm not going to screw up again. Those days are gone. This is a new place, and I can be a new person. I have to be. People are relying on me." (p. 17).

"I flash back to the morning Ryan arrived. Clothes rumpled from sleeping in them, hair unbrushed, ring of purple popsicle around my mouth. I lay the brush on the floor. No wonder he doesn't think of me as a girl." (Chapter 5, p. 12).

"She nods and is about to say something when her voice catches in her throat and she turns away. I know she's thinking about leaving and how hard it will be. I know because I'm thinking the same thing." (Chapter 5, p. 32).

"It's almost like nothing's changed. Except, of course, everything has." (Chapter 6, p. 7).

"The trick is that as long as you know who you are, and what makes you happy, it doesn't matter how others see you." (Chapter 6, p. 11).

"My inner geek has been released. That's so not good." (Chapter 6, p. 19).

"Do you realize that what we just witnessed actually happened back when Napoleon was ruling France?" (Chapter 6, p. 28)



"Mr. Silver said we're the youngest people ever to have found an exoplanet!" (Chapter 7, p. 10)

"And as streams of light fan out behind the darkened sun like the wings of a butterfly, I realize that I never saw real beauty until now. And one thought fills my head: If this could be repeated every day for a year, I would never budge from where I stood." (Chapter 7, p. 25).

"After all, I've got a whole world to see." (Epilogue, p. 6).

"I want you to teach me how to fly." (Epilogue, p. 6).

Topics for Discussion

Ally, Bree, and Jack are pretty different kids. However, in many ways, they have certain similarities. Identify three and discuss.

What is a solar eclipse? Explain how it happens and how it is explained in the book.

What is an exoplanet and how does Team Exo locate it?

Explain Ally's main life challenge in the book. How does she respond to it?

Explain Bree's main life challenge in the book? How does she respond to it?

Explain Jack's main life challenge in the book? How does he respond to it?

In what ways do the three main characters help each other to grow? Identify and discuss three examples.