

Hope Was Here Study Guide

Hope Was Here by Joan Bauer

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Contents

Hope Was Here Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1 and 2.....	4
Chapters 3 and 4.....	6
Chapters 5 and 6.....	9
Chapters 7 and 8.....	11
Chapters 9 and 10.....	13
Chapters 11 and 12.....	15
Chapters 13 and 14.....	17
Chapters 15 and 16.....	19
Chapters 17 and 18.....	21
Chapters 19 and 20.....	23
Chapter 21.....	25
Characters.....	26
Objects/Places.....	29
Themes.....	31
Style.....	33
Quotes.....	35
Topics for Discussion.....	37



Plot Summary

Hope Was Here by Joan Bauer is the story of Hope Yancy, a sixteen-year-old girl who is being raised by her aunt Addie. When she was born, she only weighed a little over two pounds, and the doctors didn't have much hope that she would survive. But she had an inner strength that stayed with her throughout her young life. Hope's mother, Deena, had named her Tulip, a name which Hope hated and later had legally changed to Hope—because hope is a good thing to have. Deena was not equipped to raise a child—she was too caught up in her own life and her string of lovers. Deena "gave" Hope to Addie to raise.

Addie had been married and had wanted children but suffered three miscarriages and her husband left her for another woman. Deena claimed that she didn't know who Hope's father was but Hope didn't believe her. Hope held on to the dream that her father was searching for her and that someday they would reunite. In fact, she kept a "Dads" scrapbook with pictures from magazines of men who looked like good "dad" candidates. She kept another scrapbook of the history of her life so that when her father found her she could catch him up on her life.

Addie was a great restaurant cook but didn't have good luck in choosing the best restaurants to work for. They'd often go out of business or close for some other reason. For that reason, Addie and Hope moved around a lot. In fact, they moved so much from city to city and state to state that Hope went to six different schools in five years. As the story begins, Addie and Hope are leaving New York City where Addie was the head cook and Hope was a waitress at a restaurant they both loved. The manager, however, stole all the restaurant's money and took off. The restaurant closed down and Addie accepted an opening as head cook in a diner in Mulhoney, Wisconsin. Hope was less than thrilled. She had to leave her friends and leave the Big Apple for a dinky town in Wisconsin. On top of that, the guy that owned the diner was dying of leukemia.

When they arrived, they met the diner staff and G. T. Stoop, the owner. G. T. was one of the happiest and kindest people that Hope had ever met. She expected to meet someone who was depressed and on his last leg, but she was pleasantly surprised. G. T. didn't like the corruption that was going on in his small town, and wanting to make every minute he had left count, announced that he was running for mayor, challenging the corrupt man who had held the position for eight years.

The supporters of Mayor Millstone tried every dirty trick in the book to sabotage G. T.'s campaign but they could not deter his spirit and that of his loyal supporters, including Hope and Addie. A romance developed between Addie and G. T., and after he was elected mayor, they married. Hope finally found her father when G. T. expressed his intention to adopt her. She would be his only child and, in her heart, her only father. She had been waiting for him all her life. Hope also found her real home, a boyfriend, and did well enough in her new high school to be accepted at a university.



Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

Chapter 1

Hope Yancy was a teenager who lived with her aunt Addie. Hope was only a little over two pounds when she was born and the doctors didn't give her much "hope" of surviving. She made it but her mother, Deena, wasn't in the mindset to raise a child and gave her daughter to her older sister. Addie had always wanted a child but had three miscarriages and then her two-timing husband left her for a dental hygienist. Hope had been named "Tulip" by her mother. She had only seen her mother three times that she can remember—on her fifth, eighth and thirteenth birthdays. She hated her name and asked her mother why she named her Tulip. Deena told her that she remembered an actress in a movie running through a field of tulips. The actress seemed so happy—that's what she wanted her daughter to be. But Tulip wasn't happy with her name and Addie helped her legally change it when she was twelve to the name of her choice. She chose "Hope" because it's something that's good to have.

Hope and Addie had worked in restaurants in many different locations. When Hope was younger, she was a bus girl. But when she had the opportunity to move up to being a waitress, she took it. Addie was a cook and a good one but all the restaurants they worked at would usually close up. They worked together in Florida, New York, Missouri and Wisconsin. They moved a lot but Addie was always a constant in her life. Hope was happy for that.

Chapter 2

Hope doesn't know who her father is. Her mother claims she doesn't know either. But Hope doesn't completely believe her. She fantasizes that her father is paying large fees to private detectives to track her down. In case he does, she is ready. She has been keeping a scrapbook of all the places she's been. It's her history and she wants to keep it with her so she doesn't forget anything or anyone. If her father ever shows up, she can show him what her life has been like.

Hope never likes to leave for a new place. When Addie was packing up to move to Atlanta, Hope ran away and hid in her friend's house. But as time passed, Hope panicked and ran back home. Addie told her she wouldn't have left her. Hope really wanted to believe that.

Now they were heading for a small town in Wisconsin. The man who owned the diner where they were going to work had leukemia. The prospect of working with a dying man was not particularly appealing to her. As they drove up to the small town of Mulhoney, Wisconsin, population 5,492, Hope was disappointed. How could they be happy there after living and working in New York City? They were city people! But they accepted the



positions and arrived at the diner which is called "Welcome Stairways." On the back of the menu they were sent, Hope read aloud that "welcome stairways" are double staircases that welcome visitors no matter which direction they come from.

Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

Chapter 1

Hope is a teenager who had a very rough beginning—from her premature birth to a mother who abandoned her. But on the good side, she had a loving aunt who cared for her and cared for her. Their life together is not the typical life of a teenager. She works with her aunt in restaurants as a waitress and has lived a rather unusual, vagabond life for a young person. Although Hope is grateful that her aunt took her in, she knows she is missing out on the normal life of a teenager. She has attended six schools in five different states. Moving so much, she is not able to maintain friendships that are especially important to young people. She isn't complaining so far, but this type of life can have negative effects on a young person.

Chapter 2

Although Addie loves her niece and is devoted to her, their life has been very hard on Hope. She fantasizes about a father she never knew but who would one day find her. She doesn't believe that her mother doesn't know who her father is. Obviously, Hope doesn't want to think her mother was that promiscuous and wants to hold onto the hope that she could one day be reunited with her father. When she was younger, she had tough times adjusting to moving about so much, but now at sixteen, she has learned to cope and except that element of her life. But it still hurts. She tries to stop her tears when she opens a going away gift from a boy who was a close friend.



Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

Chapter 3

Hope and Addie ordered dinner at the Welcome Stairways diner. The owner, G. T. Stoop, wasn't there, but they met Flo, an attractive African American woman, who was the floor manager. She was very friendly even when Addie grilled her about the freshness of the food. Addie smiled when Flo complimented her on her knowledge of food. Addie didn't tell Flo that she was going to be the new cook. They also met Yuri, a quiet Russian man who didn't speak much English. He acted as the host and busboy. When Addie ordered Russian dressing, he walked over, thinking she had called him.

A group of eight big men came in the diner and told Flo to put one of their posters that read, "Vote for Eli Millstone" in the window. But Flo told them they would have to get G. T.'s permission. He'd be in the next day. Hope didn't think it was funny when the men ridicule Yuri.

Up in their new apartment over the diner, they talked about how Gleason Beal had stolen all the money from the Blue Box restaurant where they had most recently worked. It caused the place to close down and forced them to take this job. They wondered if the police would ever catch up with him. Addie told Hope not to dwell on the past. But Beal had gotten close to Hope, telling her he'd always wanted a daughter like her. It hurt. Just like in all the other restaurants they worked at, Hope wrote in small lettering in a cabinet, "Hope was here."

Chapter 4

G. T. was nothing like Hope imagined. He was happy and talkative and positive—didn't seem like a man who was dying. He was sure that Addie would do a great job and improve business. He asked Hope how she was adjusting to the move. He told her he hated to change schools when he was young. G. T. told them not to mince their words around him—he planned to live longer than everyone. G. T. talked and laughed with Flo and all the other workers. He commented that since he lost his hair to chemotherapy, he didn't have to worry about getting hair in the food he was cooking. A tall young man entered the kitchen. G. T. introduced him as Braverman. He was the grill cook at the diner. Another waitress, Lou Ellen, wasn't very friendly. She grilled Hope about her experience as a waitress.

G. T. was cooking something, a surprise, that he'd serve everyone after the Memorial Day parade the next day. Hope was prepared not to be impressed—after all she'd seen all the big parades in New York. At the parade, she watched as the high school band marched by followed by several floats decorated in red, white and blue with some carrying war veterans. She noticed several banners that read, "Vote for Eli Millstone for



Mayor." Braverman commented that Millstone had been mayor for eight years and that he was too powerful for anyone to run against him.

After the parade, everyone gathered in a park off Grimes Square. A troupe of tap-dancing kids performed and Mayor Millstone served as the MC. Hope longed to be back in Times Square and watch the jazz fusion dancers perform. G. T. asked Millstone if he could borrow the mic and make a short announcement. G. T. started off by referring to his illness which, he said, had made him too weak to stand all day and cook. He told the crowd that he needed a desk job and therefore had decided to run for mayor. Everyone, especially the Mayor, was stunned. G. T. explained that with cancer staring him in the face, he decided to make every minute count. He wanted to bring fairness and unity to the town.

G. T. told the crowd that he intended to fix the roads that have been neglected and help the poor. He would force the Real Fresh Dairy to pay up their past due taxes. They hadn't paid taxes in five years and owed \$750,000 to the town. The mayor became flushed and angry and denied everything G. T. said. But G. T. had confirmed the dairy's non-paid taxes with the assessor's office that very day. The mayor grabbed the mic and bragged about how he had brought Real Fresh Dairy to the town. The dairy had created jobs and brought other business to the town. But G. T. pointed out that Real Fresh had run a lot of small dairy farms out of business.

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

Chapter 3

Addie is proud of her knowledge of food and is flattered by Flo's compliment. It's been her life and she appreciates being recognized for it. Hope is a sensitive and kind person. She feels bad for Yuri when the men make fun of him. She relates to him. Yuri came from Russia and probably feels like a real outsider. She knows how he feels. Gleason Beal was responsible for the restaurant where Addie and Hope last worked closing down. He stole the money from the restaurant and took off. Apparently, Hope was hurt by her relationship with him. He had developed a father-daughter connection with her and then left. It was another abandonment to suffer through and the incident pointed to her emotional needs and vulnerability.

Chapter 4

Hope is surprised by G. T.'s positive attitude. She had expected the man who was dying to be sad and morose. But G. T. is living life to the fullest and enjoying what time he has left, and by doing so he is an example to everyone. Hope still misses New York City and has a slight condescending attitude toward the small town she's landed in. Perhaps she'll learn that it's more important to have people like herself than to be amid a throng of strangers. But Hope is adjusting and she's been hurt so many times that she has reason to be a little apprehensive.



The mayor of the town seems to be a bully and a power monger. He apparently is associated with the large dairy farm in town that owes back taxes and forced small farmers to go out of business. Why is the mayor so protective of the dairy company? Could he be on their payroll? G. T.'s challenge to the mayor is a brave move for a man who is just a diner owner and a cook and a man with a terminal disease. Hope is encountering a number of complex issues in her new hometown.



Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6 Summary

Chapter 5

Back at the the Welcome Stairways, the diner was packed. Hope was given the counter to take care of and Addie was struggling to keep up with all the orders. Sheriff Greebs entered and announced that the diner had too many people and was over the safety limit. He ushered some of the diners outside. Lou Ellen was annoyed that Hope filled the coffee cups of the guests at one of her tables. Someone hollered across the room to G. T. and asked him if the campaign would be too hard on him. He responded that he was focused more on living than on dying. He said that he tried to talk to the mayor about the dairy farm's unpaid taxes but he refused to discuss it with him.

Flo introduced Hope to her friend Brenda Babcock, who was a deputy sheriff and one of the prettiest women that Hope at ever seen. G. T. asked the diners to sign his petition to run for mayor. He needed two hundred signatures. Many were reluctant and made up excuses why they couldn't sign it. A lot of townspeople worked for the dairy. Hope had a rough first day. She recalled things her mother had taught her about being a waitress. Addie always told her that her mother loved her but having the responsibility of a child was just difficult for her. Braverman told her she could help with G. T.'s campaign even though she was too young to vote.

Hope got frustrated when she was left to lock up and couldn't get the key to work. Suddenly, G. T. came by and told her he had trouble with the door too, and that it wasn't her fault. He locked the door and told her to get some rest. She smiled when he told her she was a good waitress.

Chapter 6

The next day, Adam Pulver organized a group of teenagers, including Hope and Braverman, to get signatures for G. T.'s petition. Each kid was equipped with pens, a clipboard and a signature page. They had to make sure that anyone who signed the petition was a registered voter. Hope and Braverman worked as a team. Braverman was quick to defend G. T. and explained why he as qualified for mayor. He'd remind reluctant voters how G. T. had the crumbling stairs at the high school fixed, served on the school board and brought poor people food. Hope encountered a rude man who refused to sign the petition. She thought to herself that her own father wouldn't act like that.

Many voters were afraid of losing jobs at the dairy. Braverman commented that there were rumors that the dairy owner funded the current mayor's campaign and Millstone, in turn, let them get away with anything they wanted to do. Mayor Millstone built a big, fancy new house last year. He claimed his wife inherited the money to pay for it, but a



lot of people thought he was lying. The Mayor and the dairy owner, Cranston Broom, were fishing buddies.

Braverman did a lot of tricks with his yo-yo, which impressed Hope. She was beginning to think he was really cute. The kids returned to the diner to check the signatures they had gotten against the list of registered voters. One of Millstone's supporters drove a hearse up and parked it in front of the diner. Braverman became angry and headed for the door but was stopped by G. T., who told him to sit down. They were bullies and wanted to rile them up.

Chapters 5 and 6 Analysis

Chapter 5

Lou Ellen might be resentful of Hope's presence in the diner. She's a young girl and Hope may represent a threat to her. A lot of the diners are reluctant to sign G. T.'s petition for mayor. Perhaps they are afraid of retribution from the current mayor and from the dairy owner. It seems as though many of the townspeople are bullied and feel threatened. Hope often thinks of her mother who was also a waitress. Addie tries to comfort Hope about her mother's abandonment of her, but there is obviously a lot of hurt in Hope's heart over her mother's actions. Even though it's been years, she still feels a lot of pain and conflict.

Chapter 6

It appears as though Hope and Braverman are building a friendship. She thinks to herself that Braverman is cute. More is revealed about the relationship between Mayor Millstone and the dairy owner, Cranston Broom. The new house the mayor built may have been funded by bribes from Broom. The supporters of Millstone behave in a thuggish manner. They play dirty which was especially apparent when one of his supporters parked a hearse in front of G. T.'s diner—reminding the voters in the area that the man opposing the mayor is dying.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

Chapter 7

Hope was unpacked and settled in her new room. It was nice but it didn't feel like home. She recalled how she felt in the different cities she lived in. She glanced at her boxing gloves—an unusual item for a girl. She had learned to box when she was just eleven. Addie had encouraged her. She knew instinctively that Hope needed a way to vent her anger. Although Hope never fought with anyone, she remembered really pounding away on the punching bag.

Hope looked at her "Dads" scrapbook. Over the years, she had clipped pictures in magazines of men who looked like fathers. They were usually smiling and holding a child's hand. She had a fantasy conversation with her "dad," telling him she was having a hard time adjusting to her life in Wisconsin. Hope was at work early. She overheard Lou Ellen complaining about her—that Hope had just waltzed in and got a job.

Adam Pulver was in the diner, telling G. T. about his uncle Sid who was a spin doctor—someone who could take bad news, spin it around and make it good news. He had helped an underdog candidate turn his fortunes around and win his election. Uncle Sid planned to stop by the diner and meet with G. T. The next day, G. T., Sid Vole, Pastor Hall and Slick Bixby, the town's barber, all met in the diner for breakfast. Sid told G. T. that no matter what question he is asked, he should respond with a statement about his vision for the town. Sid commented that G. T.'s cancer could "work" for him. He could get the sympathy vote and Millstone could demonize himself if he was too harsh with him. Slick commented that G. T. was not the type to play dirty.

The hearse pulled up in front of the diner again. G. T. walked out the door to the hearse and shook the driver's hand. Meeting the enemy. G. T. invited the man in and gave him a free breakfast. G. T. commented that everyone should live like there's a hearse parked in front of their door. When the diners observed G. T.'s kindness toward the thug, they lined up to sign his petition.

Chapter 8

The kids had gotten over two hundred signatures and were waiting for the official word from the election board. The town was abuzz with politics and there was suspicion that the tax assessor's office was up to something shady when the office suddenly closed.

G. T. gave Hope a tour of the backyard where he had planted a big tree twenty-five years ago when he married and a small dogwood tree when his wife died four years before. He pointed out trees he planted to honor other friends. He liked to plant trees because they'd be there long after he and his loved ones. It reminded Hope of her habit of carving her initials in the different diners she worked in. Just then Adam called out to



G. T. The Election Board had disqualified fifty-five signatures. G. T. was off the ballot! Sid wasn't worried. He'd challenge the Board in the morning.

That evening, Lou Ellen broke down. Her baby was not eating and not sitting up the way a fourteen-month-old should. Hope tried to comfort her, taking over her tables and letting her to go home. A large group of hungry hunters entered the diner. Hope warned Braverman about the onslaught. Hope recruited Yuri to help serve the guests. The crew got through the night without a hitch. Braverman complimented Hope on how well she handled the crowd. She returned the compliment.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

Chapter 7

Since Hope does not yet feel at home in her new home, she has thoughts of the father she never had. She envisions him as a caring, happy man who would always protect her and take time to talk with her about her fears and concerns. In stark contrast to the very down-to-earth, honest G. T., Sid Vole, a political spin doctor enters the story. He advises G. T. to avoid answering questions and to use his illness to gain sympathy that would translate into votes. But G. T. is an honest, straight-forward person, not interested in treating his opponent harshly or using his cancer to scare up votes. He proves Sid wrong. When he treats the mayor's lackey with friendship and respect, the diners all flock to support him.

Chapter 8

Hope and G. T. are growing closer. He seems to see something special in her. Perhaps G. T. is the father figure that she's been searching for. She may be afraid to get too close to him because he may not have long to live. And she would face yet another loss, or abandonment, in her young life. It looks as though the Election Board and the Tax Assessor's office might be in the pocket of the large dairy owner. It is obvious that the Board is trying to keep G. T. off the ballot. Hope has shown her maturity by reaching out to Lou Ellen who has never been very nice to her. Hope and Braverman are growing closer. Perhaps there is a budding romance.



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

Chapter 9

At the Election Board, G. T., Sid, Braverman, Adam and Hope were disappointed when the official told them that the addresses were wrong on the signatures of fifty-five voters. At first, she refused to give G. T. more time but Pastor Hall appealed to her faith—reminding her that He always gives a second chance. The official reluctantly gave G. T. a new deadline of five o'clock that evening to correct the errors. Everyone ran out to get to work. Sid yelled at everyone to get extra signatures.

Hope went alone to the parking lot of the Farmer's Market in search of signatures. Two young men, who appeared to be full of beer, began to tease and taunt her. She tried to evade them but one of them grabbed her. She yelled for help. Deputy Babcock was nearby and made the boys back off. The two men, the Carbinger brothers, made the mistake of treating Babcock with disrespect. She returned the favor by arresting them for assaulting Hope. Hope was a little shaken. An old woman, Mrs. Pettibone, gave her a daylily and told her to put it in water and watch it grow.

That evening, Adam ran into the diner and announced that G. T. was on the ballot. Mayor Millstone stopped by with a photographer who took a picture of him and G. T. shaking hands. Millstone made a comment about G. T.'s health. G. T. asked him if his relationship with the dairy owner had compromised the interests of the town. The mayor turned to the diners and assured them he was always on their side. One woman asked when he would release the names of his campaign contributors. He told her to contact his office. She responded that she had called his office but no one would return her call. He left without responding.

Chapter 10

Lou Ellen's baby, Anastasia, was lying in a playpen in a back office that Adam had set up as campaign headquarters. The baby wasn't playing with her toys or moving about very much. The doctor told Lou Ellen that Anastasia had developmental problems. Everyone offered to help Lou Ellen watch the baby during her shift. G. T. was giving speeches at various gatherings. Sid wanted to write speeches for him but G. T. preferred to just talk and trusted that the right words would come out which caused Sid's ulcer to flare up. Sid was worried about future elections but G. T. said he probably wouldn't be around for them. Sid told him to he had to at least give the air of permanence.

Hope was flooded with memories when she received a long letter from two of her New York friends. She responded to the letter updating them on her new life. But it was hard for her to write the letter because she'd probably never see again. Sid told the campaign



to get out and spread the word to vote for G. T. Addie assured Hope that she'd vote for G. T. but she was a little irritated at the way he was neglecting his health.

Jillian, another high school student, created a website for the campaign. Jillian embarrassed Hope a little when she mentioned that she and Braverman would be a perfect couple. Braverman's last girlfriend dumped him before she went off to college. Hope responded that she didn't date people she worked with—especially the cook. But Jillian had struck a chord—Hope was having romantic thoughts about him. Jillian told her that Braverman had been editor of the high school newspaper and was going to major in journalism. But his father left and his mother got sick. He had to put off college and help his mother and sisters. Jillian told Hope that Braverman had a crush on her.

Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

Chapter 9

The real spin doctor turns out to be Pastor Hall. He appeals to the faith of the Election Board official to allow more time for G. T. to get the required amount of registered voter signatures. Hope finds that she has many friends in the new town when Deputy Babcock rescues her from two potential assailants. Mayor Millstone is showing his true colors. He tries to show that he welcomes G. T.'s challenge for the mayoral position but he soon loses his composure and strikes a low blow when he brings up G. T.'s health problems.

Chapter 10

The spirit of small-town closeness is apparent when everyone offers to help Lou Ellen with her baby. Hope still clings to her friends in New York. Although she is happy to receive a letter from them, it hurts because she knows from past experience that she'll probably never see them again. The relationship between Braverman and Hope is beginning to develop thanks to the intercession of Jillian. Hope realizes she has a lot in common with Braverman whose father abandoned him and his family. Braverman is a selfless person who put off his own personal goals of becoming a journalist to stay and tend to his sick mother and help take care of his younger sisters.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

Chapter 11

Every high school kid that showed up at the diner was told to spread the word - vote for G. T. - to ten of their friends. There were calls for a thorough investigation into the Tax Assessor's actions. G. T. was pushing himself too hard. Hope saw him steady himself against the wall, color draining from his face. Addie's great cooking was bringing in more and more diners. Addie and G. T. didn't see eye to eye on her cooking. He thought it was perfect and the best the town had ever seen. She said it still needed improvement.

The town was under stress. Four burglaries had occurred in the past week—one at Adam's house. Babcock figured out that only supporters of G. T. were burglary victims. G. T. called for a thorough investigation and had a message for the mayor: Dirty tricks and lies never win in the long run. Using fear was no way to govern. His words were printed in the Mulhoney Messenger. The next day the Real Fresh Dairy and several other companies pulled their advertising from the Messenger.

Hope told Lou Ellen that Anastasia was lucky to have her for a mother and that she thought Lou Ellen was really brave. Lou Ellen didn't know where Anastasia's father was. Hope responded that she didn't know where hers was, either. At the dairy, Broom announced his support of Millstone for mayor across the loudspeaker. It was very busy that evening in the diner. Suddenly, a woman screams. There was a dead mouse in her salad. The woman left, vowing that her lawyer would be in touch with the diner. All the other diners were naturally disgusted. Deputy Babcock was there and told the couple she would take the mouse and keep it as evidence. The woman started to change her story. She'd forget about the whole thing. After she left, Babcock told the others to go ahead and eat. It seemed as though the woman was trying to close the restaurant down.

Chapter 12

Hope and G. T. headed off for a day of politicking. G. T. refused to look at the list of people who had contributed to him. He didn't want to feel like he owed anyone anything if he won the election. Their first stop was the Wisconsin Cheese Company. G. T. prayed before he went in. While G. T. shook hands, Hope handed out literature. G. T. acted like each person was the only person in the room. A woman started a chant, "Kick Millstone's butt." Most of the people joined in. On the car on the way to another event, Hope almost teared up when G. T. told her that her mother was missing out on a great daughter. G. T. got through the long day but he was pale and exhausted by day's end.



Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

Chapter 11

Everyone is worried about G. T.'s health and whether he's going to make it through, but G. T. seems to have a a lot of inner strength. Hope is showing herself to be a very kind and compassionate person. She tries to prop up Lou Ellen through the crisis with her daughter. Anastasia's father's whereabouts are unknown. Hope feels a connection to Lou Ellen and Anastasia because they had been abandoned by the baby's father just like she had been abandoned by her father. The mayor's side is playing dirty politics. A female diner tried to sabotage G. T.'s diner by planting a mouse in her salad. The dairy owner is putting pressure on his workers to vote for Millstone by announcing his support for him at work. The question lingers: How can G. T. and his small group of honest campaign workers combat a rich dairy farmer and the current mayor who participate in dirty politics?

Chapter 12

Even though he seems to be gaining popularity, Hope is having her doubts whether or not G. T. has the strength to keep going. Hope is touched by G. T. when he tells her that it is the mother who abandoned her who is missing out. G. T. has a growing affection for Hope. He is the father she never had.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

Chapter 13

Arriving late back at the diner, Hope learned that Braverman was beaten up. He would be okay but he had a gash over his eye and two broken ribs. It probably wasn't a coincidence that Deputy Babcock had the day off. The next day Hope ran into G. T. when she stopped by to see Braverman. G. T. was very upset over the incident. Inside, Braverman's little sisters teased her about being "Eddie's" girlfriend. Braverman emerged from a room. He had a large bandage over his eye. Three guys had beat him up. They were wearing ski masks. Two held him down while the other guy beat him. They told him to shut up about the campaign. He told Hope that if he could have gotten free he felt like he might have killed them. Hope agreed to take Braverman to the Methodist church picnic where Millstone was speaking on Saturday.

When word of the beating got around, more students volunteered for G. T.'s campaign. G. T. publicly called for Deputy Babcock to take over the investigation. He didn't trust Sheriff Greebs to handle it. Braverman wrote an editorial about the incident, calling out his assailants as cowards and supporters of the Mayor. When Braverman entered the tent where the mayor was speaking at the church, the kids started chanting "Tell the truth" so loud and incessantly that the mayor stormed out. Deputy Babcock found out that the "salad" mouse was a plant and that the woman had been paid to pull off the stunt. G. T. tried to help Addie in the kitchen but it didn't go well. Hope told G. T. that the only way to get along with Addie in the kitchen was to let her have full reign.

Hope brought G. T. some of Addie's chicken soup. His fever had risen and his doctor told him to rest and take it easy but he was anxious to get back on the campaign trail. Hope was worried. Losing G. T. would be the worst thing that could happen.

Chapter 14

G. T. was still weak but insisted on doing some interviews. He welcomed all the questions, even those about his illness. Hope was doing her best to try to get Anastasia to drink her bottle but was having very little luck. She kept trying and finally the baby started sucking on her bottle and actually holding it. A tearful Lou Ellen looked on with gratitude. Addie gave Hope some news that disturbed her. Deena, her mother, was driving up from St. Louis for a visit.

A reporter interviewed Hope about G. T. She told him that she supported G. T. because he was honest and wanted to make things better. The reporter asked her how she would feel if he dies. She'd be sad, of course, but he would leave an example for everyone that no matter who you are and what your circumstances are, you can make life better for others.



Hope told Braverman that her mother was visiting. He understood her mixed feelings. He felt the same way when his father visited him not long ago. Hope told Braverman that her given name was actually Tulip. Braverman couldn't stop laughing. Finally, she began laugh, too, suddenly finding it very funny. Braverman put his cap on and headed to the door. He bowed to her before he left and told her that Hope was the perfect name for her. Her heart did a flip-flop.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

Chapter 13

Hope's real feelings are revealed when Braverman is beaten up. She also learns that Braverman must have been talking about her at home since the little sisters tease her about being Eddie's girlfriend. Hope is still unsure about her feelings for Braverman and vice versa. Braverman wishes he would have been able to get some swings in when he got beat but two guys were holding him down. He is undeterred and wants to go a public meeting and confront the mayor. Perhaps it's not a coincidence that his name has the words "brave" and "man" in it. Hope is also growing close to G. T. She is a strong person and has gone through a lot of loss but losing G. T. who has been so kind to her would be very tough for her.

Chapter 14

Hope is trying to get Anastasia to eat more. She feels connected to the baby and feels that Anastasia has a good chance to pull through because she, unlike Hope, has a mother who really cares for her. Hope is faced with a visit from her mother which she is not looking forward to. She would rather see her father show up somehow. He is a mystery to her. She fantasizes that he would have been a good father and caring father. She knows her mother hasn't been a good mother. She fantasizes about having at least one good parent.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

Chapter 15

Denna came into the diner dressed in tight jeans, too much jewelry and make-up and with her long died black hair streaming down her back. She didn't recognize Hope, who finally went over and said hello. Denna grabbed her hand and couldn't believe that the girl before her was her daughter, Tulip. Hope reminded her that her name was now Hope. Back in the kitchen, Braverman and Addie could see that she was upset. Addie told her to take a break but she refused. Braverman gave her a red clown's nose to put on. It would take her mind off her mother. She put it on and everyone, including Hope, began laughing.

Hope went out into the diner with the clown nose on. Everyone laughed, even her mother. She was glad her mother was there to watch her. The diners all were enjoying her, she didn't spill anything and she delivered all the orders quickly and accurately. She was showing off for her mother. When her mother left the next day, she told Hope that she was a good waitress and gave her a few more tips to become even better. The main thing, her mother told her, always treat your customers like you care. Hope wished her mother would treat her like she did her customers. When her mother left, Hope felt relieved and sad at the same time.

Chapter 16

G. T. was eating some of Addie's meatloaf, telling her it was the best thing she made. Addie thought her apple pie was the best thing she made. They had a little back and forth about what dish was the best and suddenly G. T. asked her if she'd have dinner with him - at another restaurant. Hope was shocked. Stunned at first, Addie finally said she would. Lou Ellen and Flo weren't surprised. They had seen it coming. Right after that, Hope was in the pantry and Braverman followed her in. He asked her to go to dinner - on a date he said. Hope was speechless and didn't answer him. Addie didn't return until one o'clock. All she would tell Hope is that she had a decent time.

The next night there was a lot of tension between Braverman and Hope. Later, Hope apologized to him, explaining that she was afraid to date him because they work together. He understood and offered to make each of them a pork chop sandwich. Braverman set up a special table with a small vase of flowers for them in the back. After dinner, they shared a kiss but then looked around at the dirty dishes. He offered to wash and she offered to dry.

Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

Chapter 15



Hope literally became someone else when her mother visited. She put on the clown nose so she had something to hide behind. She wanted to impress her mother. She was glad that she didn't drop anything and had no problems with the diners while her mother was watching. Even though they have had hardly any relationship at all, Hope is still trying to understand her mother and reconcile in her mind why her mother didn't want her. Her conflicted feelings are demonstrated when she is both happy and sad that her mother is leaving. One thing is consistent about Deena, she never fails to disappoint her daughter.

Chapter 16

Hope and Braverman are allowing their feelings for each other to show. Hope claims that she's afraid of dating Braverman because they work together. But she's probably more afraid that she'll be hurt because she's been hurt so often. What if she fell in love with him and then found out that she and Addie were going to have to move to another town? Hope fears close relationships because she's afraid she'll be hurt and abandoned.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

Chapter 17

It was time for Hope to start school, something she wasn't looking forward to. The summer, the campaigning and working at the diner had been fun and exciting. She was doing fine at school but she would rather be working full time with Braverman instead of just after school and on the weekends.

There was a lot of good things happening in town. Anastasia was holding onto her bottle now. The doctor told G. T. he was in remission. When G. T. told Addie, she started crying. He stunned her by proposing to her. Deputy Babcock arrested the Carbinger brothers for the recent burglaries. They were the same men who tried to assault Hope. Babcock got the Carbingers released on a plea deal in exchange for what they knew. They told Babcock that they were paid by the Real Fresh Dairy to try to scare people out of voting for G. T. They claimed the sheriff was paid off himself. Even though Cranston Broom and the sheriff denied everything, no one believed them. The polling began to show G. T. pulling ahead of the mayor by seven points.

G. T. pressed Addie to get married right away. Hope was excited. He'd be sort of like her father. But what if he didn't want to think of her as his daughter? The mayor began a series of damaging radio ads, claiming that G. T.'s leukemia had spread to his brain. It was a lie, but it spread all over town. Hope and Braverman and the others tried their best to refute it. They visited voters and called them on the phone. Sid told him to strike back in the same way but G. T. said that wasn't his style. The polls indicated that the race was a tie right before the election.

Election day came. It was a long day. The polls stayed open until 9 pm. Word came after 11 o'clock. G. T. had lost by 114 votes.

Chapter 18

Everyone was sad about the election outcome. Adam was bitter, certain that Millstone had stolen the election. The results of an investigation into the election indicated that there was no election tampering. G. T. was not bitter. He thanked everyone for their help. He gave a special thanks to Hope for the inner strength she provided. G. T. was congratulated for his part in helping to turn out the largest number of voters in the history of mayoral elections in the town.

Hope was gratified to see that Mr. Woldenburg and his wife voted. She had encouraged him to vote, even though he said that they never do. She ran into him in the grocery store. They discussed the election. She told him she was proud of him and his wife for voting even if he didn't vote for G. T. He was stunned. He told her neither he or his wife



voted. But, she told him, his name was on the voting records as though he had. He told her it was a fraudulent record. She asked him to tell his story to the Election Board.

The Election Board launched an investigation. They discovered that one-hundred and twenty people listed as having voted swore they had not. Adam organized student protests and a vigil outside town hall. Finally facing the inevitable, Millstone resigned as mayor. On January 12th, G. T. was sworn in as Mulhoney's new mayor.

Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

Chapter 17

Just when everything is going well - Anastasia began drinking her milk, G. T. was officially in remission, the burglars were arrested and confirmed the corruption, Hope and Braverman were dating and G. T. and Addie were getting married - G. T. loses the election, disappointing all his friends and supporters. Perhaps things will turn around if Hope and Braverman and the others can prove there was corruption. The spirit of the people has been dampened but not defeated. There are some very strong, assertive people who will not rest until this wrong is righted. But even if G. T. did actually lose the election, the important things in life are working out. The baby's health is improved and romance is on the rise in Mulhoney.

Chapter 18

Hope learned that nice guys don't always finish first, initially anyway. She also learned that by believing in something and working hard for it, things can turn out right. She encouraged a man that never voted to vote. Had she not cared that Mr. Woldenburg never voted, she would have never remembered his name and therefore the corruption and voter fraud would have never surfaced. She saw what the power of belief in values and goodness can produce.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

Chapter 19

The first thing G. T. did as mayor was appoint Brenda Babcock as sheriff. Ex-sheriff Greebs was being charged with multiple counts of corruption. The second thing he did was fine Real Fresh Dairy for the back taxes he owed. The third thing he did was marry Addie. Typical of Addie, she was more concerned about the food for the reception than she was about her wedding dress. Hope finally dragged her to the dress shop and made her decide on a dress. The mayor and his First Lady took a quick honeymoon trip to Milwaukee, where Addie said the food was only "passable." Soon after they returned G. T. told Hope he'd like to adopt her.

Hope got out all her "Dads" scrapbooks and showed G. T. everything about her life: Photos, report cards, menus of places she and Addie had worked, the first dollar she earned. She wanted him to know everything and told him that she had been keeping the scrapbooks for her father. G. T. was very happy that she had done all this for him. Hope had been keeping the scrapbooks for G. T. all these years, she just didn't know it. G. T. grafted the branches of two small trees together and told her that it represented their new father-daughter relationship.

Hope was more than thrilled with her new father but in the back of her mind there was always worry about his illness. She knew it could return. Addie told Hope that they were going to have as many good times with G. T. as they could and that they needed to appreciate him while they had him. Hope took her advice and enjoyed the time with her new father.

G. T. re-opened the tax assessor's office. He appointed Adam Pulver head of Students for Community Involvement and held regular town meetings. Sheriff Babcock brought a new honesty and integrity to the office. The Real Fresh Dairy paid their back taxes which G. T. used to help the poor. He opened up a new day care center where Anastasia was flourishing. Hope and Braverman and some of their friends helped make the city better. They fixed fences, mowed grass and painted houses. Everyone had learned a lot from G. T.

Chapter 20

The summer after Hope graduated, G. T. began to slip. Hope had been accepted at Michigan State. Braverman received a scholarship from the town and would be going to the University of Wisconsin. The doctor did not think G. T. would pull out of his downward spiral. Addie and Hope would take turns sitting by his bedside. Hope would leave the room if she couldn't stop her tears. Hope read a letter to G. T. that she had written to Gleason Beal, the man who had run out on Addie and Hope, stole all the



money and made the restaurant close down. In the letter, which she never mailed, she told Beal how he had stolen not only their money but her trust in people. She had always hoped that when she found her father he would straighten Beal out. G. T. told her once she puts her anger behind her it will disappear. He was grateful for Beal's actions. He would have never met his new wife and daughter had he not closed the restaurant down. G. T. died the next day.

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

Chapter 19

Hope finally found her father. She had been looking for him and preparing for him her whole life. She didn't realize that she had met him when she and Addie pulled up to the small Milwaukee town that she considered a real drag after living in New York City. G. T. was the force for good not only in Addie's and Hope's life, but for the entire city. Although his time is limited, he is making every minute count. Rather than feel sad about G. T. not being around long, Addie tells Hope not to waste time worrying about the future. She has him now, so she should enjoy him and make the memories that will never die. G. T. taught Hope another lesson which was to remember those who had helped you in your goals. G. T. was as grateful to his supporters when he thought he lost as he was when he found out he had won the election.

Chapter 20

Even in his dying days, G. T. was still teaching and inspiring Hope. The anger she had would only hurt her. She should let go of it. And he taught her that things work out the way they are meant to. Had the man not stolen the money and caused the New York restaurant to close down, he would have never met Addie and would have never met the only child he could call his own. Although Hope will face heartbreak over losing her father, she has nothing but good memories of him. His gentle ways and values will remain an inspiration to Hope throughout her life.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

The flowers and notes poured in. Addie and Hope were overwhelmed with grief. Addie closed the diner for a few weeks. Even though the diner was closed, they put vases of flowers on every table, in honor of G. T. Pastor Hall spoke at G. T.'s service, thanking him for the honor of being his friend. Hope loved it when Mrs. Pettibone shook her hand at the service and told her that she had her father's eyes.

Hope and Braverman were getting ready to go off to school. They decided to leave on the same day so it wouldn't seem like they were leaving each other behind. Sheriff Babcock was made acting-mayor and Eli Millstone was just barely staying out of jail thanks to the work of his lawyers. A few days before she left, Hope took a small marker and wrote "Hope was here" on the inside of one of the cabinets. That evening, the diner was filled with people. The day's special was Addie's chicken pot pie. Flo and Hope were taking orders while Addie and Braverman were trying to keep up in the kitchen. Hope wished G. T. was still there—but in many ways he still was.

Chapter 21 Analysis

Life goes on for Hope. Her life of disappointments and abandonment had actually prepared her for the biggest loss she had ever known. She writes in a cabinet that "Hope was here". It was an appropriate note. Not only did it signify that Hope worked and lived there, it also conveyed the message that there was always hope that your dreams can be fulfilled even though the path to them might not be the way you would design it.



Characters

Hope Yancy

Hope Yancy is a sixteen-year-old girl who is being raised by her Aunt Addie. Addie took Hope in when her younger sister, Deena, had Hope. Hope was only two pounds when she was born and the doctors didn't give her very good odds of pulling through. But even at that young age and fragile beginning, Hope had an inner strength that proved more than once in her life that helped her survive. Hope's biological mother, Deena, was a self-centered woman who was more concerned with her string of lovers than she was with raising a baby. She "gave" Hope to her older sister, Addie, who always wanted a child but couldn't have any. Deena had named Hope "Tulip" when she was born. As soon as Hope turned twelve, Addie helped her legally change her name to Hope because "hope" was always a good thing to have.

Hope loved her aunt and was grateful for her but she didn't necessarily like the vagabond life they led. Working as a cook, Addie moved from state to state in order to find enough work to support herself and Hope. But it was difficult for Hope. She attended six different schools in five years. When they moved to a small town in Wisconsin, Hope was less than thrilled. They had lived in New York City for the past several years where she made friends and earned money in the same restaurant as Addie. But the restaurant closed down and Addie accepted the position as head cook at a diner in Wisconsin.

Hope had always fantasized about finding her father one day. When she met G. T. Stoop, the diner's owner, she didn't realize that she was meeting the man who would become her father. G. T., of course, wasn't her biological father but he was a man who proved to be the most caring and loving father she could have ever dreamed of.

G. T. Stoop

G. T. Stoop was a man in his late fifties who owned a diner in Mulhoney, WI, named "Welcome Stairways." He named his diner that unusual name after a legend about a double staircase that led to both the left and right. It was designed that way so that guests coming from either direction would feel welcomed. G. T. had been widowed for four years and had recently been diagnosed with terminal leukemia. Despite the tragedies in his life, he was a happy and positive person. He was upset about the corruption in his town and decided to run for mayor. G. T. decided to use every precious minute he had left as best he could.

He hired Addie as his head cook and her niece, Hope, as a waitress for his diner. G. T. was immediately drawn to them. They saw that he was a man with good values that he was faithful to no matter what happened. They supported him in his run for mayor and in his fight against corruption in town. After becoming mayor, G. T. proposed to Addie and



after they married, told Hope, who never knew her father, that he wanted to adopt her. G. T. was the father that Hope had been wanting to find all her life and he was a better father than she could have ever imagined.

Aunt Addie

Aunt Addie took in Hope when her mother didn't want to raise her. Aunt Addie was a hard worker and very proud of her cooking abilities.

Braverman

Eddie Braverman was the grill cook at the diner. He had put off going to college to help care for his sick mother and little sisters. He and Hope became romantically involved.

Lou Ellen

Lou Ellen was another waitress at the diner. She was at first resentful that Hope was hired but later appreciated her support when her baby daughter Anastasia became very ill.

Eli Millstone

Eli Millstone was Mayor of Mulhoney for eight years. G. T. ran against him for mayor when he realized that Millstone was corrupt and on the take.

Yuri

Yuri was the Russian immigrant who worked at the diner. He was the host and busboy.

Flo

Flo was the floor manager at the diner. She was a friendly woman who got along with G. T. and all the employees.

Brenda Babcock

Brenda Babcock was a deputy sheriff in Mulhoney. She was a courageous and honest deputy and eventually was named Sheriff when the former sheriff was charged with corruption.

Denna

Deena was Hope's biological mother. She wasn't inclined to care for a baby and gave her away to her older sister. Hope only saw Deena a handful of times in her life.



Objects/Places

Pensacola, Florida

Before moving to New York City, Hope and Addie worked in a restaurant in Pensacola, FL.

Atlanta, Georgia

When Addie took a job in another city and she and Hope had to move out of Atlanta, Hope went and hid at a friend's house. But she got scared and ran back—she didn't want Addie to leave her.

St. Louis, Missouri

Hope and Addie worked at a restaurant in St. Louis, Missouri. Deena, Hope's biological mother, lived in St. Louis.

New York, New York

The manager of the restaurant that Hope and Addie worked at in New York City ran off with all the money and forced the restaurant to close down.

Mulhoney, Wisconsin

After Hope and Addie lost their jobs in New York City, they accepted positions in a small town in Wisconsin called Mulhoney.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

When G. T. and Addie married, they went on a short honeymoon trip to Milwaukee.

Welcoming Stairways Diner

The name of the diner that G. T. Stoop owned in Mulhoney, WI, was the Welcoming Stairways. G. T. named it after a dual stairway that led both left and right. He wanted everyone to feel welcome.



The Real Fresh Dairy

The Real Fresh Dairy was the largest employer in Mulhoney, WI. The dairy owner bribed the mayor and the sheriff so that they could break laws and get out of paying taxes.

Dads Scrapbook

Hope always fantasized about her father. She kept a scrapbook of pictures from magazines that in her mind depicted the perfect, caring father that she craved.

Hope's Scrapbook

Hope kept a scrapbook of photos, letters, menus, souvenirs and other items that told the story of her life. She kept it so that when she found her father she could fill him in on her life.



Themes

Sticking to One's Values

G. T. Stoop demonstrated that by sticking to one's values and core beliefs, one can rise above those who are corrupt or have no moral compass. G. T. was a remarkable person. Dying of leukemia, G. T. decided he didn't like the corruption that was going on in town and that with the time he had left, he was going to do something about it. He announced his run for mayor against a corrupt man who had held the position for eight years.

No matter what dirty tricks G. T.'s opposition reverted to, G. T. refused to sink to the same level. Mayor Millstone spread viscous lies about G. T., and even though his political adviser told him to fight fire with fire, G.T. refused. If G. T. couldn't get elected honestly and in his own straight forward and above-board manner, that was fine with him. He wasn't in the race to become like the dishonorable man he was trying to defeat.

Mayor Millstone and his supporters even stooped to using G. T.'s illness in an effort to turn people away from supporting him. When it was announced that G. T. lost the election, he showed no signs of bitterness. Later, it was learned that he had actually won the election but that the opposing side had committed voter fraud. When G.T. became mayor, he genuinely thanked his supporters but had showed them just as much gratitude when he thought he had lost the election.

Abandonment

Abandonment was a huge issue for the protagonist of *Hope Was Here*. Hope Yancy was a caring and compassionate young teen, but she was wrought with many fears and self-doubt. Having been abandoned by a mother who just couldn't take care of her—Deena was more concerned with her lovers than with caring for a baby—and a father whose identity was unknown, Hope felt she wasn't worthy of love. Although her Aunt Addie took her in and loved her, she was still haunted by the rejection of her mother and the absence of a father. Even though on an intellectual level, she knew that she would never find her father, she fantasized that he was searching for her. Children who suffer from abandonment carry the emotional scars throughout their lives.

The transient life that Hope was forced to live with her aunt who had to move from state to state in order to find enough work to make a living, was a difficult one for a youngster. Already suffering from self-esteem problems from her parental abandonment, Hope found it difficult to allow people to get too close. On top of that, when she made friends in a town she would often have to leave them because of the demands of her aunt's job. By the time she was sixteen, Hope had said goodbye too many times.



Inner Strength

It was obvious from the time she was born that Hope Yancy was gifted, with a good measure of inner strength. She only weighed two pounds when she was born and the doctors didn't have too much hope for her survival. But even though she was tiny, she proved to be a real fighter. It was a good thing that Hope was strong because she was facing a youth that was not ordinary or easy. Her mother was more concerned with her string of lovers than she was with raising a child. She "gave" her daughter to her sister to raise. As Hope matured, she had to deal with feelings of abandonment and rejection. But Hope's strength, coupled with her aunt's love for her, saw her through some very trying times and emotional turmoil.

Hope was determined that she would find her father even though she knew, at least on an intellectual level, that her goal was impossible. Still, some spirit inside her yearned for a father who would care for her. She never gave up. She stubbornly clung to that dream, and it eventually paid off, although in a way and at a time she would have never imagined.

When she began working for G. T. Stoop at the diner in Mulhoney, Wisconsin, it wasn't long before G. T. noticed and admired that Hope was a very strong young person with great character. Over time, G. T. and Addie fell in love and married. Soon after, G. T. had a serious proposition for Hope. He wanted to adopt her. He had always wanted a daughter like her. Of course, she had always wanted a father but she had no idea that when she met her new boss that she was also meeting her father. As the story ends, it is Hope's inner strength that gets her through one of the most tragic experiences of her life.



Style

Point of View

Hope Was Here is written in the first person narrative. The narrator of the book is sixteen-year-old Hope Yancy. Hope was abandoned by both her parents and is being raised by her aunt, Addie. The reader is privy to all the confused feelings that Hope has about her rather vagabond existence and about not feeling wanted. Hope shares her conflicted feelings and pain about being abandoned by both her parents. Her mother wasn't equipped to care for a child and the identity of her father was unknown.

Hope is a spirited young girl and shows an inner strength throughout the story. She shares her intimate thoughts with the reader, revealing her reluctance to get too close to people because she's had to say good-bye way too many times in her young life. Hope is grateful for her aunt, the one constant person who never abandoned her and, she tells Hope, never would. Despite her aunt's love, Hope still fantasizes about finding her father. She keeps a scrapbook of dreams with images cut-out from magazines that depict, in her mind, the perfect father.

Despite the pain she has suffered, she demonstrates kindness and compassion to others who are scared and suffering. She understands them because even though she's lived a short time, she has experienced many of the same fears and uncertainty. Through her thoughts, Hope demonstrated that she was wise beyond her years.

Setting

The majority of Hope Was Here takes place in the small town of Mulhoney, Wisconsin, population 5,492. The story takes place over a time span of about two years. Hope and Aunt Addie work at the "Welcoming Stairways" diner, which is owned by G. T. Stoop.

The Real Fresh Dairy is the biggest employer in the town. A Memorial Day parade winds down the town's main street and a celebration is held afterward in a park off Grimes Park. Hope and her aunt had just recently moved there from New York City. Hope was less than thrilled with the tiny town compared to the excitement of the Big Apple. And "Grimes Square" reminded her of "Times Square" where she wished she was.

When G. T. is on the campaign trail, he stops by the Wisconsin Cheese Factory to speak to the employees there about his platform in his run for mayor. When Hope is helping G. T. campaign for mayor, she is almost accosted by thugs working for G. T.'s opponent when she is handing out literature in the parking lot of the Farmer's Market.

There is mention of the other states that Hope and Addie worked in. They include Florida, Georgia, and Missouri. Addie tells Hope one day that her mother is going to be driving up from St. Louis for a visit. When G. T. and Addie marry, they have a short honeymoon trip to Milwaukee.



Language and Meaning

The narrator of *Hope Was Here* is the sixteen-year-old protagonist. Hope Yancy is being raised by her aunt, Addie, after being abandoned by her mother as a baby. Hope tells the story of her and her aunt's transient life as restaurant workers. Addie is a top cook and is very proud of her abilities in the kitchen. Many of her best dishes are described in the book. She is most proud of her apple pie but there are references to many other dishes like her chicken pot pie, meatloaf and pork chop sandwiches.

Yuri works in the restaurant as a bus boy. He is a man who had moved to the United States from Russia. He seats the diner's guests, gives them water and clears off tables. The first evening that Addie and Hope are in the diner, they both order dinner. When the waitress asks Addie what kind of dressing she wants on her salad, Addie responds, "Russian." When Yuri hears "Russian," he comes over to the table to see what she wants.

There are touches of humor throughout the book which, while enjoyable, also add clarity to the story and often serve to crystallize a passage. Hope who struggles to understand why her parents didn't want her, often fantasizes about her father. She hopes that somehow he knows where she is and is looking for her. Since Hope is the narrator of the story, it is told in the words of an adolescent who has suffered emotional damage. The poignancy of her pain and vulnerability are told in an effective manner with words and phrases that are realistic for the character's age.

Structure

Hope Was Here is separated into twenty-one short to medium-sized chapters. The story is basically told in chronological order with a minimum use of flashbacks. The beginning chapters provide a background of the protagonist, Hope Yancy, and her caretaker, her aunt Addie. These initial chapters highlight the transient life that Hope and Addie live as restaurant workers and the struggles that Hope has faced as a teen who was forced to attend six schools in five years.

The heart of the story begins in the third chapter when Hope and Addie arrive in Mulhoney, Wisconsin, at the Welcoming Stairways Diner where they are scheduled to start work—Addie as the head cook and Hope as a waitress. The majority of the remaining chapters deal with the character arc of Hope Yancy. It focuses on Hope's relationship with the new people she meets in the small town and with G. T. Stoops' run for mayor. As the story comes to an end, Hope begins to build self-esteem, trust people and open up to them emotionally. The ending is bittersweet as the last chapters deal with G. T.'s death as well as the bright future that lies ahead for Hope. By the book's end, Hope has become a young woman who has left her anger behind and has learned to reach out to others.



Quotes

"Hon, leaving you with Addie was the best thing I could have done for you. You need constants in your life.' She had a different hair color each time she said it."

Chap. 1, p. 5

"My favorite book when I was little had pictures of baby animals, like foxes and lambs and ducklings, who were being raised by other animals, like dogs, geese, and wolves."

Chap. 1, p. 6

"Addie says it's easy to go to a new place and feel like you don't have a history, so you have to lug your history around with you or it's too easy to forget."

Chap. 2, p. 8

"Here I was—my body heading to one place, my heart stuck in another. My mind's got questions and no answers."

Chap. 2, p. 11

"No matter what happens in the world, from war breaking out to computers taking over our minds and bodies, there's always going to be a need for a good waitress who can keep the coffee coming and add up the check in her head."

Chap. 4, p. 29

"You tell me what this world's coming to when the voter's choice for mayor is between a dying man and a crook."

Chap. 6, p. 49

"Everyone needs a spin doctor."

Chap. 8, p. 62

"Tell him that lies and dirty tricks never win in the long run. Tell him that fear is no way to govern people."

Chap. 11, p. 100

"For a minute her whole face lit up. She was real pretty when the light went on inside."

Chap. 11, p. 102

"One person can make a difference, two can start a revolution."

Chap. 12, p. 110

"A good sailor knows how to steer into the wind, to use the power to his advantage. You don't become a real sailor until you sail in a storm. Then you test what you know, you see what you and the boat and the wind are made of."

Chap. 13, p. 125



"You don't understand the power of loss when it first hits you like a baseball coming fast from an out-of-control pitcher. You reel back stinging from the blow."
Chap. 18, p. 162



Topics for Discussion

Why was Hope's Aunt Addie raising her? What happened to her mother? Her father?

What type of work did Aunt Addie do? How was this environment good for Hope? How was it negative for her?

What did Hope learn from G. T.? What did she admire about him? What did she fear about getting close to him?

What condition did G. T. have? How did his illness effect him? What did it mean when G. T. went into remission?

Who put the mouse in the woman's salad? Who figured out what was really going on? What member of the sheriff's department was corrupt?

What corruption existed in Mulhoney? Who was responsible for the corruption?

How did supporters of Mayor Millstone try to sway voters? What role did the Real Fresh Dairy have in the election? Why did the owner of the dairy want Mayor Millstone to be re-elected?