

The It Girl Study Guide

The It Girl by Cecily Von Ziegesar

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Contents

[The It Girl Study Guide..... 1](#)

[Contents..... 2](#)

[Plot Summary..... 3](#)

[Chapters 1- 8..... 4](#)

[Chapters 9 - 16..... 7](#)

[Chapters 17 - 24..... 10](#)

[Chapters 25 - 32..... 12](#)

[Chapters 33 - 37..... 14](#)

[Characters..... 16](#)

[Objects/Places..... 19](#)

[Themes..... 21](#)

[Style..... 23](#)

[Quotes..... 24](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 25](#)



Plot Summary

"The It Girl" is a young adult novel by Cecily Von Ziegesar, and details Jenny Humphrey's first week at an elite New York boarding school, Waverly Academy.

Formerly a student of Constance Billard, Jenny Humphrey travels to upstate New York to attend the elite boarding school, the Waverly Academy. Jenny has left behind her life in New York after a publicity scandal involving her brother's old band, the Rave. The media speculates that Jenny has slept with every member of the band, including her own brother. Jenny decides that her studies at her new school will be in pursuit of a new life.

At Waverly, Jenny's physical good looks attract many of the boys, among them, Heath, Brandon, and Easy. Jenny rooms with two girls, Callie and Brett, both of whom blame the other for the expulsion of their previous roommate, Tinsley. Brett begins an affair with a new teacher, just as Callie and Easy hit the rocks, because Callie is controlling and Easy has a crush on Jenny. Jenny is selected for the varsity team for field hockey. She successfully turns around a practical joke on the team, giving her instant celebrity and popularity. Callie and Brett both later learn that neither of them had anything to do with Tinsley being expelled, and the book ends with the announcement that Tinsley will indeed be returning to school shortly.



Chapters 1- 8

Chapters 1- 8 Summary

In Chapter 1, Jenny Humphreys is on her way by train to attend Waverly Academy in Rhinecliff, New York. Waverly is an elite boarding school for the wealthy. An encounter with a boy in his twenties on the train reminds Jenny of her old school, Constance Billard, and the events which bring her to Waverly. After spending the night with her brother's old band, The Raves, at the Plaza Hotel in the city, the press went wild with the story that Jenny was sleeping with all of the members of the band, including her own brother -none of which is true. Jenny has also decided that, in her new school and in her new life, she will become a new person. The boy, Sam, asks about Jenny's life, and Sam explains he is attending Bard.

Sam tells Jenny about a girl named Tinsley Carmichael, who has supposedly left school to be in Wes Anderson's next movie. As Jenny's stop arrives and she leaves the train, she notices that a boy behind them has been paying attention to her.

In Chapter 2, Callie Vernon moves back into Waverly, into Dumbarton dorm 303, which she shared the previous year with Tinsley Carmichael and Brett Messersmidt. Callie, reflecting on the previous year, wonders why Tinsley has been expelled, but she and Brett haven't. Callie's boyfriend, Easy Walsh, comes by to visit her. Easy says that Callie has grown thin. Callie has lost weight over the summer while in Spain because she has been too nervous to eat. Callie asks Easy if he is going to the party that night in the Richards Lounge, but Easy isn't sure. Callie knows this isn't like him. Angelica Pardee, the all-girl dorm's supervisor, arrives to kick out Easy.

In Chapter 3, Jenny arrives at Waverly, and is given a ride across campus by a boy named Heath, and his father. At the check-in, Mrs. Tullington explains that Jenny has been erroneously listed as a male, and scheduled to stay in Richards Dorm, and that things must be sorted out. Jenny then goes to see if her main luggage, shipped ahead of her arrival, has been deposited at Richards. As Jenny walks across campus, she feels intimidated by the wealthy, rich kids, who look attractive without even trying to be. A bird of some sort swoops down in front of Jenny, causing her to scream and drop her suitcase, spilling out her extra-support bras, which she quickly repacks.

In Chapter 4, Brandon Buchanan and his roommate, Heath Ferro, meet up . Though Heath is Brandon's roommate, Heath manages to annoy Brandon a lot. Brandon and Heath wonder who their roommate will be. Many parents use their wealth to bribe the school to get preferred treatment in all areas. For example, though there is a no-smoking rule, the faculty looks the other way when it comes to Heath. Jenny arrives to collect her things, and Brandon and Heath introduce themselves. Jenny asks about the thing that flew at her, and Brandon reveals it to be a Great Horned Owl, the school's mascot. Heath keeps looking at Jenny's breasts. He asks where Jenny is from, and if



she has ever been to the Hen Party club. He then announces he will take a shower, takes off his shirt, and goes to the bathroom.

Brandon invites Jenny to the party in the lounge that evening. Jenny agrees to go, and is pleased to learn that Heath will also be attending.

In Chapter 5, Brett Messerschmidt arrives at Waverly. Brett cannot stand her parents, who are cold and distant. In order to compensate for her alienation, Brett makes up lies about her parents, from where they live, to throwing charity events, to summering in Newfoundland. Callie and Brett meet up in their dorm room. Brett reveals that something known as the "E" incident had gotten her, Tinsley, and Callie in trouble, but only Tinsley kicked out. Tinsley had also dated Easy Walsh, and that a fight had potentially occurred between the two. Brett's boyfriend, Jeremiah, wants to have sex, but Brett just isn't ready for it yet. It is revealed that Brett has also made up stories about losing her virginity.

Brett feels suffocated, so she calls her sister Brianna, who is a fashion editor for Elle magazine. She then calls Jeremiah up to have phone sex with him.

In Chapter 6, Yvonne Stidder, a new student mentor, arrives for Jenny, for she has found Jenny a room. Yvonne explains that members of the opposite sex are only allowed in dorm rooms during visitation hours. Yvonne points out Easy Walsh, and then Yvonne leads Jenny to room 303. Yvonne and Jenny walk in on Brett having phone sex, who jumps up from bed to meet Jenny. Yvonne leaves the room, and Callie comes back from showering. Jenny is a sophomore; Callie and Brett are juniors. Callie and Brett talk about Tinsley, and Jenny wonders who Tinsley really is. It is also apparent there is some friction between Callie and Brett.

In Chapter 7, Jenny meets up with Heath outside Richard's Lounge, and Heath puts his arm around her waist. The party is full of wealthy, well-dressed kids. Among them is Benny Cunningham, who with her best friend Sage Francis, sees Heath and Jenny across the room. Brett realizes there is something fresh about Jenny. Sage asks Brett if it is true that Brett and Callie are seeking to room transfer, and Brett explains she wasn't planning on it. A rumor is also floating around that Callie and Easy have broken up, which is news to Callie. Heath brings Jenny outside, telling her she has an initiation ritual to perform, and he brings her to the chapel. They make out, and when Heath begins feeling her up, Jenny moves back, saying it is too fast. Jenny is also aware now that rumors about her have been circulating. Heath, who is wasted, passes out a moment later.

Chapter 8 - On her way to meet with Mr. Dalton, the new Disciplinary Committee adviser, she bumps into a boy, who turns out to be Mr. Eric Dalton, who is twenty-three. She finds him to be extraordinarily attractive. Mr. Dalton asks her to help him put all of the discipline records on the computer, and Brett agrees to help out.



Chapters 1- 8 Analysis

A series of characters and subplots are presented throughout the first eight chapters, setting the stage for the course and duration of the book. With all teen girl novels, there is no shortage of gossip and drama. Jenny's good looks, as well as poor past decisions, have landed her in the tabloid pages of newspapers, and so she heads upstate to attend a new school. Jenny also determines that this will be a new start for her.

At the same time that Jenny's arrival is presented, so too is the mystery of the expulsion of Tinsley Carmichael, a source of conflict between both Callie and Brett. Both girls consider the other responsible for Tinsley's expulsion, and both are unsure about the presence of Jenny. At the same time, animosity can be seen between Callie and her boyfriend, Easy, who has a wandering eye. Things are further complicated for Brett and her boyfriend, Jeremy, by the arrival of new teacher and Disciplinary Committee adviser, Eric Dalton.

The first few chapters also set a recurring theme that will be consistent throughout the book: gossip. The most prominent two rumors spread by gossip are that Easy and Callie have broken up and that Jenny is as easy as she is attractive. Indeed, Jenny's entire life is up for discussion as she is new to the area and kids like to talk.



Chapters 9 - 16

Chapters 9 - 16 Summary

In Chapter 9, Callie is waiting at the stables for Easy. He shows up, and she is happy to see him. Easy explains he didn't attend the party because he was really tired. They make out, and Callie realizes the rumors about the breakup are false. They lay down, and Callie asks if Easy remembers her declaration of love when they were both in Spain. Easy doesn't say anything at first, but pulls away. Down the path emerges Ben, the old groundskeeper, who enjoys getting students in trouble. Easy promises to visit her after the dinner that night, and then the two part company.

In Chapter 10, Dean Marymount officially welcomes the student body to Waverly Academy. That morning, Jenny has tried out for field hockey, and is bored with the welcome ceremony. Eric Dalton, a graduate of Brown University, is introduced. It is clear all of the females find him attractive, Jenny notices. After the ceremony, Brandon says hello to Jenny, and introduces her to Benny Cunningham and a boy named Ryan Reynolds. Jenny explains the previous night, she had to help Heath back to the dorms because he was so drunk. Brandon and Ryan tell Jenny about Black Saturday, when the St. Lucius sports teams come to play Waverly.

At dinner, Jenny is happy to eat some of the salmon prepared, but Heath and Brandon explain that at Waverly, people just don't eat certain things. Yvonne then appears and brings Jenny out into the hall, to let her know she has heard some things about Jenny -from her being a stripper who would take off her clothes for a dollar, to sleeping with the members of the Rave. Yvonne sources Heath as the origin of the rumors. Yvonne then disappears, and Brandon comes to check on Jenny. Jenny flees the hall, horrified and saddened, realizing that her new start is nothing like what she'd hoped it would be.

In Chapter 11, Jenny hears Callie and Easy about to have sex, but then Easy sees Jenny. Easy puts on his boxers, and Jenny feels stupid for having a crush on her roommate's boyfriend. Easy talks to Jenny about constellations while Callie goes to the bathroom, and then asks about Jenny's past. Suddenly, Mr. Pardee, husband of Angelica, and a French teacher, opens the dorm room door all the way, and orders Easy out. Mr. Pardee then sees condoms on the floor, and explains he will have to report this. Callie returns, pretending to look shocked, and Mr. Pardee explains that Jenny will now have to meet with her adviser, Mr. Dalton. Callie explains that Jenny will be alright, because Brett is on the Disciplinary Committee. If Callie is revealed as the cause of Easy's presence, she will be expelled because she has been caught before. She tells Jenny that she will make this the best year ever for her, if Jenny helps her out.

In Chapter 12, Jenny wakes up on Thursday, the first day of classes. Jenny heads to Stansfield Hall, where she overhears Brett flirting with Mr. Dalton. Jenny knocks, and then enters the office. Mr. Dalton reviews the facts of Jenny's case with Jenny and Brett. Jenny refuses to make a statement about what happened, and let it go to trial on



Monday. Outside the office, Jenny comes across Easy, who is heading in to see Mr. Dalton. Outside, Jenny stares down an owl, who looks away, and Jenny is happy because of it. Jenny then heads to class.

In Chapter 13, Easy meets with Brett and Mr. Dalton. Mr. Dalton goes over Easy's long list of deviant behavior. Mr. Dalton explains that, like Easy, he was a Waverly legacy. But that meant setting a better example to other students. Easy grits his teeth. Mr. Dalton explains that another bad incident would mean expulsion. Easy then leaves the meeting, thinking about how if he is expelled, his father will never let him live in Paris for a year. Easy finds himself also thinking about Jenny.

In Chapter 14, Callie is called down to meet with Ms. Emory, her adviser, who questions Callie about Easy's presence. Callie lies, saying she was on her way back from the library, and that she and Easy aren't an item anymore. Ms. Emory cautions her to behave, and then dismisses her. Callie now knows that her time at Waverly depends on Jenny not talking, and keeping Ms. Emory convinced that she had broken up with Easy.

In Chapter 15, Easy and Callie meet at Pimpernel's, a boutique. Callie explains the situation to him. They go inside the store, and Callie commences shopping with Tracey, who works there. In order to keep up the charade at school, Callie asks Easy to flirt with Jenny. Easy is excited at the prospect, but pretends to reluctantly agree to help Callie.

Chapter 16 - Brett calls her sister Bree, to talk about Eric Dalton, but the call is dropped from bad cell service. Brett has the feeling Eric likes her, and she definitely likes him. They meet in his office for lunch, and Eric tells her she is modest. As they begin to work, Eric tells her that anything she reads or learns from the records, she must keep secrets. Brett tells him she is good at keeping secrets.

Chapters 9 - 16 Analysis

Friction can be seen immediately between Easy and Callie, and their struggle ultimately drags Jenny into things. She becomes an unwitting accomplice to a failed sexual tryst between Callie and Easy, and ends up being the prime suspect for it in the eyes of the administration. Callie suddenly realizes her career at Waverly depends upon Jenny's willingness to cooperate and cover for her.

Jenny's acceptance onto the varsity field hockey team, despite her age and her grade, are also symbolic for the emerging acceptance by both Brett and Callie, despite her age and her grade. The acceptance from Brett comes as sort of grudging respect for Jenny's genuineness, and the respect from Callie is emerging as a result of Jenny's potential utilitarian understanding of Callie's situation, and what she gains to benefit as a result because of it.

As if fate could not be avoided, Callie falls prey to her own devices. The reader is aware that Jenny and Easy have eyes for one another, and Callie's insistence that Easy flirt with Jenny in order to make things believable is a recipe for disaster. Brett heads on a

dangerous course with Eric Dalton. Dalton's position as a teacher, and Brett's position as a student, are necessarily difficult at best, and scandalous at worst.



Chapters 17 - 24

Chapters 17 - 24 Summary

In Chapter 17, Brandon is unhappy at the rumor that Easy and Jenny have had sex. Jenny confesses to him that she thinks there could be something between her and Heath, but Brandon tries to warn her off. Jenny heads off after that, and Brandon is angry that Easy steals all the cool girls. Brandon wants to prevent Waverly from ruining Jenny the way it has ruined Callie.

In Chapter 18, through biology class, Callie knows Brandon is staring at her. She and Brandon had dated before, but had broken up almost a year ago after Callie made out with Easy. After class, Brandon asks Callie how she feels now that someone has been stolen from her. Callie says it sucks.

In Chapter 19, Brett and Jeremiah meet up. Jeremiah says he wishes their schools were closer together. Jeremiah asks if Brett has met Eric Dalton, and explains his family is loaded. Jeremiah brings her to the gazebo on campus, where he has placed dozens of flowers for Brett, who is taken aback, but pretends to love it.

In Chapter 20, the skies open up in a downpour before dinner as Jenny begins homework. Callie thanks Jenny over and over again for her help. Callie also asks Jenny to flirt with Easy, but Benny interrupts them. Benny has heard that Jenny has made varsity for field hockey, and wants to know if Jenny is in on the new cheer that the girls will use against St. Lucius. Jenny also discovers that Brett is not single, but taken by Jeremiah. Jenny agrees to help Callie by flirting with Easy.

In Chapter 21, dinnertime arrives, and the students head out to eat. Brett takes a moment to leave a voicemail for her sister, telling her she will be having dinner with a Dalton. Brett heads to Mrs. Tullington to get a pass to be out late, with the lie that she is going to an auction of Russian antiques with her uncle. For dinner, Eric is taking Brett to Lindisfarne, the Dalton family estate. There, Eric gives her a tour, and pours her some wine, not caring she is underage. Brett also gives Eric the real story to her family's background, such as growing up in New Jersey, and her father being a plastic surgeon. Eric says it doesn't matter what her parents -or anyone's parents- do for a living. Brett goes outside to call Jeremiah, leaves a message, and breaks up with him. Eric points out his boat floating in the water, and says he'll sail it up to Waverly on Friday, and leave the light on like Daisy did for Gatsby.

In Chapter 22, Jenny, who has been accepted into Waverly based primarily on the strength of her art portfolio, is happy to take art class. Easy is also in the class, and Jenny is excited to see him. They flirt with each other as they work. Easy hands her a secret note to be read later, which says the owls at Waverly talk, and perhaps they would talk to them together sometime.



In Chapter 23, Jenny and Brett meet up in the locker room before the first field hockey practice. Jenny tells Brett she saw Brett get in in the middle of the night, and that she knows where Brett was. Jenny says Brett's secret is safe with her, and wants to know if Brett is okay. Brett tells Jenny that Dean Marymount is looking to expel Jenny, making an example out of her. Brett thinks Jenny might be Tinsley all over again. Callie, meanwhile, lets Jenny know about a secret pre-Black Saturday party. She also wants to let Jenny know the cheer coming up is a joke, but her power and prestige depend on keeping the secret.

In Chapter 24, Callie continues getting gifts for Jenny, in the hopes that Jenny will have her back at the disciplinary meeting. Callie brings Easy to the rare-book room of the library. Callie asks Easy how things are going with Jenny, and Easy says he doesn't feel right about dragging Jenny into things. Easy wonders if all Callie cares about is getting kicked out. Callie retorts that Brandon would have her back, and Easy wants to know if she wants to go out with Brandon again, and says all Callie does is manipulate him. They begin yelling, and Mr. Haim interrupts, telling them to keep their voices down. Easy flips him off and leaves without another word to Callie. Callie also leaves.

Chapters 17 - 24 Analysis

In the midst of the events swirling around Jenny -the supposed break-up with Easy, her past, and Heath's advances- is Brandon, who appears to be in the gravitational pull of things, without ever directly participating in things. Indeed, Brandon is Callie's ex-boyfriend, who broke up with her because she left him for Easy. If there is any sort of a moral, grounding force in the novel, it comes mainly between the characters of Jenny and Brandon -though, later, there will be some moral calculations committed by Easy.

As time passes, Easy and begin flirting, each liking the other without the other realizing it -and all without Callie realizing it. As the newest member of the varsity field hockey team, everyone wants Jenny to join in on the pre-game cheer they will all perform. Jenny is happy to join, but Callie knows it is a ruse.

At the same time, Dean Marymount is looking to make an example out of someone to enforce discipline at the school, and he focuses his sights on Jenny, because she is new and because her family members are not previous students and wealthy donors to the school. The politics of wealthy schools are also shown in full light through Marymount's determination.



Chapters 25 - 32

Chapters 25 - 32 Summary

In Chapter 25, the e-mailed invitation for the girls-only and secret pre-Black Saturday party goes out. It is a tradition for Dumbarton girls. The party is an Arabian Nights orgy-themed evening, but without males. Callie and Brett talk. Callie has been drinking steadily, and Brett confesses she and Jeremiah are no longer together. Brett leaves the room after a heated discussion about Tinsley. Callie answers Brett's phone, for Brett has left it behind. It is Bree, calling to see how everything is going, and to let Brett know she would be home for the weekend in Jersey. Bree also wants to warn Brett about Eric Dalton, who gets around. Because Callie is drunk, it is tough for her to focus. She soon joins a conga line.

In Chapter 26, Callie, who is dancing around campus, comes across Brandon. Callie, drunk, explains that she made up the whole Jenny-Easy thing. Callie also says that Brett and Mr. Dalton have slept together. Callie further reveals that she thinks she and Easy are finished. She makes an advance on Brandon, who resists it, and leaves.

In Chapter 27, Callie gets the new cheer to Jenny. Black Saturday arrives, and the St. Lucius teams show up. Brett is looking for her phone. Jenny tells Brett she is excited for the cheer, but Brett tells Jenny it is a setup. The cheer arrives, and Jenny's solo has to do with sticking out her breasts and yelling that the Lucius girls are flat. Jenny realizes what Brett meant by setup, but plays it cool, finishes the cheer, and gets a standing ovation. Brett is impressed. Jenny then fires off a demeaning cheer about Heath, and the crowd loves it. Brett runs out to cheer with Jenny. Suddenly, the whole team joins in.

In Chapter 28, the Waverly girls field hockey team beats Lucius, 6 to 3. Brett finds her phone on her bed, with a text from Eric, saying he is in port. Eric is impressed to hear that Brett plays field hockey, and that he can't imagine her in a uniform. Brett tells him to try. They kiss, and then Eric excuses himself to go to his office, leaving Brett confused.

In Chapter 29, the Black Saturday party commences at Heath's house, an hour away. Brandon is chatting with Benny. Jenny comes over to talk to them, and Brandon is uneasy with everything he has learned from Callie. Jenny is the life of the party. Callie talks with Brett, asking Brett what has her visibly depressed. Jeremiah is at the party, and is looking for Brett. Callie wants to know if Brett wants to hang out with someone older instead, and Brett knows instantly that Callie has been in contact with her phone. Callie then tells all the girls around her about Brett and Mr. Dalton after Brett leaves.

In Chapter 30, Easy and Alan St. Girard are smoking weed, talking about how lame the party is. Brett bursts in, takes a drag, and wants to know why guys are stupid, and when they have what they want, they don't want it. Brett then leaves. Easy wonders if he and Callie are really done, and then he catches sight of Callie and Heath making out.



In Chapter 31, Jenny and Brandon head off on their own for a little while. Brandon confesses to hating Easy for stealing Callie. Easy's arrival, however, makes Brandon want to leave, which he does. Easy then asks Jenny what she's doing away from the party. They discover they are flirting with each other because they want to, not because Callie told them to. Easy tells Jenny he thinks it is horrible what Callie has gotten her into. Easy confesses he wants real love -like sparkling diamonds- because nothing else feels right.

In Chapter 32, Blacker Sunday consists of a harder sports practice regimen. Callie and Brett are called to play centers. Brett fouls Callie, which leads to a screaming match between both girls. The argument quickly moves to Tinsley, and Brett accuses Callie of setting Tinsley up to take the fall. Callie reveals that Tinsley was already gone before she went to the disciplinary committee. Brett says the same. The girls realize that Tinsley took the fall on her own, and they both begin laughing.

Chapters 25 - 32 Analysis

Callie, fresh on the heels of a fight with Easy, and full of alcohol, spills her guts to Brandon about all of the plans she's concocted, not to mention revealing that Brett and Mr. Dalton are in a relationship of some sort. Callie also gets the rigged cheer to Jenny. Both Callie's drunken confessions and her decision to go along with the practical joke pave the way for the crescendo of events in the book.

In the first instance, Jenny handles the prank with finesse and sophistication, managing not only to illicit a roaring applause from the crowds, but also managing to get the entire varsity team to join in with her. The Black Saturday Party begins at Heath's home, and the party is replete with underage drinking and drug use. Jenny is very popular from the day's performance, and she and Easy talk to one another, realizing they genuinely do like each other. Callie's entire plan has essentially blown up in her face. The odds are not in her favor for the coming disciplinary hearing.

However, something else important comes to light. Neither Callie nor Brett had anything to do with Tinsley's expulsion. While the mystery of Tinsley's exact causes of her expulsion are still unknown, it appears that Callie and Brett could potentially repair their friendship, except that Callie's duplicitous scheming and rumor-spreading threatens to undermine the fragile peace between them.



Chapters 33 - 37

Chapters 33 - 37 Summary

In Chapter 33, Brett receives a message from Eric, telling her to meet him on his boat as soon as she can. Eric begins by talking about their age difference, then asks her to come into the cabin.

In Chapter 34, Easy and Callie meet up. Callie is sorry about making out with Heath, and blames it on a drinking game. Easy reiterates that he doesn't think Jenny should get in trouble, and Callie realize that Easy likes Jenny. Easy wants both Jenny and Callie to escape without punishment, but Callie knows the only way that could happen would be if Easy offers himself up.

In Chapter 35, Brett and Eric fool around naked, but don't go all the way. As Brett leaves the dock, she runs into Jeremiah. Jeremiah is angry, and wants to know why she broke up with him over a voicemail. Brett wants to know who told Jeremiah where she'd be, but Jeremiah is already leaving.

In Chapter 36, Jenny and Easy are in Dean Marymount's office for the hearing. Jenny still has no idea what she is going to say. Easy then speaks, and says everything is his fault. He claims to have been sleeping in his boxers, and then he had gone over looking for Callie. When Callie wasn't there, Easy claims to have sat down to talk to Jenny. Jenny nods to corroborate the story, because it is true, mostly.

Dean Marymount asks Easy if he is taking full responsibility for the evening's activities, and Easy affirms it. The committee unanimously finds Easy guilty, and Easy is not expelled -but all of his privileges are taken away for two weeks.

In Chapter 37, back in room 303, Brett breaks out some rum and announces that they must celebrate. Jenny feels happy and confident. Brett asks both Jennie and Callie if they have heard anything about her and Eric Dalton, and both girls deny this. Brett then confesses and reveals her relationship with Eric in detail. Brett wonders aloud how Jeremiah would know she'd be on Eric's boat. Callie lies that again, she had no idea.

Suddenly, there is a knock on the door. The girls hide the rum and then in walk Mr. and Mrs. Paradee, and Dean Marymount. They decide the room is big enough for another bed. Mr. Pardee says Tinsley will be returning to school.

Chapters 33 - 37 Analysis

The book heads toward the climax in the final few chapters, most notably, Brett's continued relationship with Eric, and the disciplinary committee meeting. Brett realizes that the appearance of Jeremiah dockside means someone else knows about her and Eric, which threatens both of their positions.



The committee members, in an illustration of the politics of wealthy schools, upon discovering that Easy claims total responsibility for what has happened, choose to revoke his privileges and send him on his way -whereas if Jenny had been found guilty, she would have been expelled. Easy exhibits, in this instance, the greatest moral courage of anyone: he takes responsibility for his actions, covering for both Jenny and Callie, because he doesn't want Callie expelled and Jenny to have to pay for his actions. His decision will undoubtedly have far-reaching consequences.

The book ends with a tentative peace between Jenny, Callie, and Brett -the latter two whom are still heavily suspicious about the other. The announcement that Tinsley will be returning to the school sets the stage for a supposed showdown between Jenny and Tinsley in the future books in the series.



Characters

Jenny Humphrey

Jenny Humphrey is the main character and principle protagonist of the novel "The It Girl" by Cecily Von Ziegesar. She is a sophomore who is attending Waverly Academy in Rhinecliff, New York, having formerly attended Constance Billard in the city. Jenny is short, thin, and well-proportioned, which catches the attention of many males at the new school. She is also immensely talented as an artist and a field hockey player.

She has decided to attend Waverly following a series of rumors about her sleeping with her brother, and all of the members of her brother's old band. Jenny hopes that her time at Waverly will enable her to begin a new life. Indeed, much of the novel concerns Jenny's considerations about her courses of action, based upon whether those decisions would be something "New Jenny" or "Old Jenny" would do.

At school, Jenny rooms with two girls named Callie and Brett, both of whom harbor the suspicion that the other had their old roommate, Tinsley, kicked out of school. Callie and Brett are, at first, indifferent to Jenny. Brett later comes to respect Jenny, while Callie realizes she needs Jenny to cover for her after her boyfriend Easy is caught in the girls' dorm after visitation hour.

As a new member of the varsity field hockey team, Jenny becomes the victim of a pre-game cheer prank. Yet, she plays it confidently and coolly, and turns the prank around on the team, managing to gain a thunderous applause from the audience, causing the other field hockey girls to join in with her. She becomes immensely popular after this.

Romantically, Jenny has feelings for Easy, the boyfriend of Callie, who breaks up with Callie because she is manipulative, and because Easy doesn't want Jenny to take the fall for them. It is later revealed that Easy does indeed like Jenny, and a future romance between the two is possible.

Callie Vernon

Callie Vernon is the beautiful roommate of Jenny Humphrey and Brett Messerschmidt. She is a junior at Waverly Academy and plays field hockey. Callie is dating Easy Walsh, and she is manipulative and controlling. She has the suspicion that her previous roommate, Tinsley, was expelled because she was sold out by Brett. But without evidence to go on, Callie does not say anything.

When Easy is caught in the girl's dorm after hours, Callie pretends to have broken up with Easy, encouraging him to flirt with Jenny, so that Callie will not be expelled from school for another rule violation. Easy goes along with it, but then develops real feelings for Jenny. Easy later breaks up with Callie, sending her into a drunken daze, during which time she spreads rumors about Brett and teacher Eric Dalton getting together.



At field hockey practice, Callie and Brett begin screaming at each other over the expulsion of Tinsley, and they discover that neither one of them had anything to do with the expulsion. When Easy takes the blame for getting caught, Callie is further spared her own expulsion, and Jenny is safe.

Brett Messerschmidt

Brett Messerschmidt is the roommate of Jenny and Callie at Waverly Academy, is beautiful, and is keen on difficult love. She is currently in a relationship with Jeremiah, star quarterback for Waverly's rival school, St. Lucius. Brett also begins an illicit affair with her adviser and teacher, Eric Dalton. Brett harbors suspicions that Callie has something to do with the expulsion of their friend and previous roommate, Tinsley.

Brett further realizes that Jenny is a cut above Tinsley, and is far more popular and courageous. Brett later discovers that Tinsley's expulsion had nothing to do with Callie, whom Brett had believed sold Tinsley out.

Brett breaks up with Jeremiah in order to pursue Eric, who nearly comes across Eric's identity when he shows up at the docks where Eric's boat is moored. Brett realizes someone else knows about her and Eric, and suspects Callie.

Tinsley Carmichael

Tinsley Carmichael is the oft-talked about, but never seen former roommate of Callie Vernon and Brett Messerschmidt. Jenny is often compared to Tinsley, who apparently had a pension for trouble, and was later expelled. It is probable that Tinsley's expulsion was her own doing.

Easy Walsh

Easy Walsh is the handsome, artistic boyfriend of Callie Vernon, whom cheated with Eric on Brandon. Easy is hated by Brandon for this.

Easy, having sneaked into the girl's dormitory to have sex with Callie, is caught in the room with Jenny when Callie goes to the bathroom. Easy feels morally culpable for Jenny's potential expulsion over the incident. He develops genuine feelings for Jenny, and breaks up with Callie for this, in addition to Callie's manipulative nature.

Easy, at the disciplinary meeting, risks his own expulsion by admitting to and taking full responsibility for his presence in the girls' dormitory after hours. He is essentially slapped on the wrist by losing all of his privileges and is let off.



Heath Ferro

Heath Ferro is the girl-hungry roommate of Brandon Buchanan. Heath is given the nickname "The Pony" because so many girls have had sex with him. Heath is instantly attracted to Jenny, and he makes moves on her, but is rejected. During the Black Saturday lacrosse game, he is the subject of one of Jenny's cheers, which announces to the world that Heath is not sexually gifted. Heath later throws a party at his house, during which time Easy and Jenny admit their feelings for one another.

Brandon Buchanan

Brandon Buchanan is the roommate of Heath Ferro, and is a quiet and contemplative guy who appears to be morally upstanding. He despises Heath's womanizing, and hates Easy Walsh for stealing his girlfriend Callie, almost one year before. Brandon also appears to be one of the few genuine friends that Jenny has.

Eric Dalton

Eric Dalton is the twenty-three year old teacher and Disciplinary Committee Adviser who begins an affair with one of his students, Brett. He is extremely wealthy, and owns a boat which he sails to Waverly. He has a reputation for womanizing, which Brett is unaware of.

Jeremiah

Jeremiah is the star quarterback of the St. Lucius football team, and is dating Brett when the book begins. Brett later breaks up with him to pursue Eric Dalton.

Dean Marymount

Dean Marymount is the headmaster of Waverly Academy. He is formal and stringent, and prides himself on students following the rules, though he makes exceptions for wealthy legacy students. Marymount intends to humiliate and expel Jenny to make an example of her, but is thwarted when Easy takes responsibility for his after-hours visit to the girls' dorm.



Objects/Places

New York City

New York City is the hometown of Jenny Humphrey, her home, and the location of the Constance Billard School for Girls. It is also where Jenny is rumored to have slept with her brother and all the members of his band.

Constance Billard School for Girls

The Constance Billard School for Girls is the former school of Jenny Humphrey. It is located in New York City.

Rhinecliff, New York

Rhinecliff, New York, is a town on the Hudson, and is the location of the Waverly Academy.

Waverly Academy

Waverly Academy is the elite boarding school in Rhinecliff, New York, where Jenny Humphrey goes to attend and stay. It is also the school that Callie, Brett, Easy, Heath, and Brandon attend.

Richards Dormitory

Richards Dormitory is on the Waverly Academy campus, is the location of Richards Lounge and is where the boys on campus live.

Dumbarton Dormitory

Dumbarton Dormitory consists of Waverly Academy housing for girls. It is where Room 303 is located, and where Callie, Brett, and Jenny dorm.

Dumbarton Room 303

Dumbarton Room 303 is located in Dumbarton Dormitory. It is where Jenny, Callie, and Brett live and sleep.



Brett's Cell Phone

Brett's cell phone, left behind during a party, receives a call from Brett's sister, Bree, which Callie answers. It is later found on Brett's bed.

Records

Records are what Eric Dalton asks Brett to help him convert to digital format.

Boat

A boat is what Eric Dalton sails up to Waverly Academy, and where he and Brett fool around.

Cigarettes

Cigarettes are heavily smoked by most of the people on Waverly's campus, including Callie.

Alcohol

Alcohol is in abundance at Waverly Academy, and is drunk by nearly everyone, including Jenny, Callie, and Brett.



Themes

Elitist Politics

One of the major themes in the novel "The It Girl" by Cecily Von Ziegesar is the theme of elitist politics. Elitist politics is the favoring of particular students over others, because of the wealth and reputations of their families and their contributions to the school. Elitist politics are exemplified through the persons of Easy Walsh and Jenny Humphrey.

Easy's family is inordinately wealthy, and makes generous contributions to the school. As such, he has been in trouble numerous times without being expelled, and teachers and staff turn the other way when Easy does things like smoke on campus and use his cell phone. Easy flaunts the rules and gets away with it time and time again.

Jenny, on the other hand, comes from a family that is not inordinately wealthy, and has made no contributions to the school. The presence of Easy in her room leads to Dean Marymount's decision to use her as a scapegoat, to make an example out of her, and to expel her, while ignoring that Easy was in the exact same situation.

When Easy confesses and takes full responsibility for the incident, Jenny is let go, and whereas Jenny was going to be expelled for the same incident, Easy receives a two-week suspension of privileges. In other words, it is a slap on the wrist.

Rumor and Gossip

The theme of rumor and gossip pervades every chapter in the book "The It Girl" by Cecily Von Zeigesar. Gossip and rumors appear in countless ways and countless forms, and it is an activity participated in by nearly every student. Gossip and rumors appear about three prominent characters in the book, affecting both in vastly different ways.

For Jenny, her reputation in New York, and the tabloid rumors about her sexual exploits swirl about her appearance at Waverly. Jenny is said to be a stripper, willing to take her clothes off for as little as a dollar, and to be sexually voracious. This catches the attention of many of the boys at the school, and resolves Jenny to cast off her old image, and reinvent a new, more confident image of herself.

For Callie, rumors about her involvement with the expulsion of Tinsley Carmichael plague her friendship with her roommate, Brett. Another rumor, that Easy has broken up with her without her knowing it, plague her relationship with Easy as well. In anger at Brett, Callie also spreads rumors about Brett.

For Brett, these rumors consist of her having a sexual affair with teacher Eric Dalton, which is not far from the truth. Brett realizes she is in danger of being found out, so she will have to take extra precautions. Brett also realizes, when Jeremiah shows up near



Eric's boat, nearly finding out who Eric is, that someone has sold her out, and is spreading rumors about her and Eric.

Each of these instances of rumor and gossip spur on the plot and progression of the novel. Some rumors, such as Callie having anything to do with Tinsley's expulsion, are proved false. Others serve as catalysts, such as for Jenny. Yet others serve to do more damage than anything else, such as with Callie and Easy, and potentially, Brett and Eric.

Self-Discovery

Self-Discovery is the dominant theme in the novel "The It Girl" by Cecily Von Zeigesar, and chiefly concerns the character development of Jenny Humphrey. Self-discovery involves learning more about oneself, what one is capable of, and just who one is. Jenny, in her abandonment of her old life in New York, intends to be an entirely new person at Waverly Academy. Jenny both succeeds and fails in these attempts.

Initially, Jenny pretends to be much more confident than she really is, using her prominent physical assets to her advantage. Yet, despite this, she slowly moves back away from using her body as the means of her confidence, ultimately relying on herself, her intuition, and her inner nature to shine through. This occurs with great success at the game, and it also occurs with great success when Jenny rejects Heath's sexual advances. Indeed, Jenny discovers she is able to become more confident and more brave without betraying her inner moral nature.

Jenny also has success in her efforts to reach out and strike up friendships with Callie and Brett, both of whom eye Jenny suspiciously at first. Through using her new-found confidence, and outdoing Callie's manipulations, Jenny earns the respect and friendship of both girls, or seemingly so.

Jenny, however, fails in the sense that she will become an entirely new person. Her use of the word "jeepers" and her inner moral convictions continue to guide her, and she has not relied on superficial things, like her body, to get what she wants or needs. Jenny can be seen as an improved person and not a wholly-changed person.



Style

Point of View

Cecily Von Zeigesar tells her novel "The It Girl" in the third-person and omniscient perspective. This is done because of the sheer number of diverse characters, rumors, and subplots that populate the book. The third-person omniscient narrative makes transitions between people, places, and plots, much easier and more accessible to the reader.

Setting

The main setting of Cecily Von Zeigesar's novel "The It Girl" is that of Hudson Valley town, Rhinecliff, New York. Rhinecliff is a beautiful place, mainly rural, with small touches of sophistication. For example, most of the shops in Rhinecliff are hippie-themed, which Callie finds to be annoying. The relative isolation of Rhinecliff is a perfect setting for the novel and for the students in the novel, who, without their parents around, are much more open to behaving the way they do from indulging in sex and drugs to drinking and spreading rumors. Indeed, the isolation of the country and the school can also be viewed as a metaphor for the isolated world the rich and the elite inhabit, where they receive light punishments for offenses, rather than being expelled.

Language and Meaning

Cecily Von Zeigesar tells her novel "The It Girl" in language that is simple and straightforward, without poetic flair or complicated vocabulary. This is done in order to make the plot of the novel, and its characters, more convincing. Few people in their mid to late teens have advanced vocabularies, or formal and polite language. This is true of the characters in the novel.

The narration itself also reads quickly, without tying the reader down in unnecessary details or complicated poetic verbiage. This allows the plot to move at a brisk pace, keeping the reader's attention as the novel navigates the world of teenage rumors.

Structure

Cecily Von Zeigesar's novel "The It Girl" is divided into thirty-seven chronological chapters, with each chapter further advancing the plot of the book. This uncomplicated structure of the book helps to advance the plot of the novel, keeping the pace brisk and engaging.



Quotes

"At Waverly, Jenny was going to be stunning, amazing New Jenny, the girl who belonged at the center of everything" (Chapter 1, p. 5).

"She was here. Waverly. The grass seemed greener, the trees taller, the sky cleaner and bluer than anywhere she'd ever been before" (Chapter 3, p. 21).

"Jenny felt her body stiffen, suddenly intimidated. Everyone looked so beautiful - scrubbed and clean and fashionable without even trying to be, which was so much cooler than spending hours primping, like she usually did -and they'd known one another forever" (Chapter 3, p. 25).

"Yvonne took a deep breath. "They're saying you used to be a stripper and took your clothes off for, like, a dollar. And you're like this New York City sex legend, And, er, you've already slept with someone here at Waverly" (Chapter 10, p. 86).

"Well, that's the thing," Jenny responded meekly. She'd stayed up all night weighing which was the better option: confirming the Waverly student body's suspicion that she was a giant slut or making enemies with her roommate" (Chapter 12, p. 105).

"Moral?" She slammed the door shut again. "Are we forgetting about how you stole me away from Brandon Buchanan last year? Right out from under his nose" (Chapter 15, p. 129).

"The new boy had kept in the background, in the corner behind the door, almost out of sight, chapter one began. Gloomy tears filled Jenny's eyes. She'd read the book last year at Constance Billard and knew it wasn't even about this boy -it was about Emma Bovary, who only wanted to go to parties and sleep with guys who weren't her husband- but still, she empathized with the new bumpkin boy who was being taunted by prep school kids" (Chapter 20, p. 156).

"Then she realized something. She knew she could either feel like total sh— and act like Old Jenny, who, mortified, would sit back down on the bench and never speak to anybody ever again. Or she could try and turn this situation into something interesting" (Chapter 27, p. 214).

"Oh, it's not Jeremiah she's having problems with," Callie whispered. "It's, you know -Mr. Dalton." Jenny's mouth dropped open. Oh. My. God. Some friend Callie was" (Chapter 29, p. 227).

"Talk about down to the wire. She still hadn't decided what she was going to say in DC yet, and now it was time" (Chapter 36, p. 256).

"You heard us," Marymount boomed. "The faculty has decided to reinstate Tinsley" (Chapter 37, p. 264).



Topics for Discussion

Elitist politics run rampant at Waverly Academy in Cecily von Ziegesar's novel, "The It Girl." What are elitist politics? Whom do they affect and how? Do you consider these politics to be fair? Why or why not? Provide evidence to support your claim.

The isolated setting of Rhinecliff, New York, and the Waverly Academy, prove to be a metaphor for the isolated world the rich, elite students exist in. What is this world like? Is it a world that Jenny Humphrey embraces, shuns, or attempts to use to her advantage? Provide evidence to support your claim.

Rumor and gossip are rife throughout the novel "The It Girl" by Cecily Von Ziegesar. What are the biggest rumors and who are the biggest gossipers? How does gossip and rumor impact the plot of the novel? Is it for the better, or for the worst? Why?

Jenny Humphrey, upon seeking to attend Waverly Academy, wants to become a new person. Does this attempt at self-discovery succeed, fail, or partially succeed or fail? Why? Is this a good thing, or a bad thing?

Throughout the novel, Jenny Humphrey is compared to Tinsley Carmichael, the often-talked about but never seen expelled roommate of Callie Vernon and Brett Messerschmidt. In what ways are Jenny and Tinsley? Why are these comparisons made? In what ways are Jenny and Tinsley different? What observations do Brett and Callie make about Jenny and Tinsley at the end of the novel? Why is this important?