

Jellicoe Road Study Guide

Jellicoe Road by Melina Marchetta

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Plot Summary

"Jellicoe Road" is a young adult novel written by Melina Marchetta. It involves the coming-of-age story of seventeen year-old Taylor Markham during a year of attending the Jellicoe School.

When Taylor Markham is eleven, her mother abandons her at a 7-11 convenience store. A few moments later, Taylor is found by a woman named Hannah, who becomes a guardian to her, and sees to it that Taylor is enrolled at the elite, but state-run Jellicoe School, outside the town of Jellicoe, Australia. Taylor is haunted by her past, and tries to escape the school when she is fourteen with a boy named Jonah Griggs. Griggs is a member of the Sydney-based cadets who camp out at the school every year for a life-education camp. Taylor and Griggs are shortly caught by the Brigadier and returned to the school.

Three years pass. Taylor often visits Hannah, who is building a house on land by the river near the school. Hannah is also working on a manuscript about students who attend Jellicoe School in the 1980s. The rest of the land is divided up into territory between three warring factions: Students who board at the school, students who commute to the school from town, and the Cadets. Taylor is elected to lead the boarding school faction, and Griggs is elected to lead the Cadets. Over the next few weeks, Taylor and Griggs begin a romance as Hannah goes missing. Griggs agrees to go with Taylor to Sydney to find her mother.

In Sydney, Taylor discovers that her mother was checked out of the hospice she was registered out by Jude Scanlon, the Brigadier, a former romantic flame of Hannah's. Hannah, Jude, Taylor's mother and father, and a boy named Fitz are all the characters in Hannah's manuscript. Taylor's father was killed when he was seventeen, and Taylor's mother became a drug-addicted prostitute who gave her up to Hannah, Taylor's father's sister. Dying of cancer, Taylor's mother returns and is free of any addictions to live with Taylor and Hannah in Hannah's house.



Prologue - Chapter 7

Prologue - Chapter 7 Summary

An unidentified narrator's parents are killed on Jellicoe Road in a car crash, which the narrator and the narrator's brother, Webb, survive when they are found by a kid named Fitz on a stolen bike. Tate, the girl in the other car crawls through the wreckage to sit with the narrator and Webb.

Twenty-two years pass. Seventeen year-old Taylor Markham, boarding at the Jellicoe School, dreams of a boy in a tree, and wants to be up there with him, feeling like she belongs. They sing and listen to music on a discman from the 1980s, and Taylor tells the boy stories about her life and her school, including someone called the Hermit, who shot himself.

Taylor and her friend Raffaella care for younger girls. Taylor doesn't believe in anyone or anything, yet looks forward to her senior year. In a passing-on ceremony, the outgoing seniors initiate the new seniors to be in charge. There is a territory war going on between the kids at school between boarding students, the Townies -kids from the town in Jellicoe- and the Cadets -kids from Sydney who come to the school for six weeks. Taylor is selected to be the leaders of the seniors, despite the reservations from the leaders of each of the dormitories. This is because when she was fourteen, Taylor tried to run away with a Cadet to find her mother. Ben Cassidy seems to support Taylor's nomination, and Taylor learns the leader of the Townies will be Chaz Santangelo.

Taylor heads toward Hannah's house by the river. The house is unfinished, and lived in by a writer named Hannah, who is Taylor's mentor and guardian in many respects. Hannah is working on an unfinished manuscript about students at Jellicoe in the 1980s. Taylor reveals that Jellicoe School is state-run, and is a selective school. Richard's parents are embassy staff members, so he boards at the school. Raffaella's parents are teachers in town, but she boards anyway. Taylor also recounts how, when she was eleven, her mother abandoned her at the 7-11 store on Jellicoe Road. It was Hannah who found Taylor five minutes later. Hannah tells Taylor that she will be transferring students to Taylor's house, students who need some help and guidance.

Back at the school, Jessa McKenzie, another student who looks up to Taylor and follows her around. She brings word that she has been transferred to Lachlan House. Raffaella and Jessa are convinced they will get back the Prayer Tree in the Territory Wars, which recommence as the Cadets arrive.

An excerpt from Hannah's manuscript reveals life after the accident in the prologue. Narnie, Tate, Fitz, and Webb all band together and meet a boy named Jude Scanlon. The Cadet program begins, which is a six-week life-education experience.



The little Purple Book that Taylor receives as leader of the Underground Community details that the Territory Wars have been going on for sixteen years. The Cadets stay down by the river, and sightings of them around the edges of school territory are frequent. Taylor is determined to lost no territory, and to gain some back. Taylor goes to Hannah's house to help her with the construction. The river and land near Hannah's house is still school territory. On her way back, Taylor believes she is being watched or followed, panics, and rushes back to the House dorms.

That night, Taylor enters into negotiations with the Townies. Santangelo wants to work out a deal between all three sides -different territories different nights each week- so that each side can get to town or travel around without issue. But Taylor doesn't want the Cadets being able to get so close to the dorms with younger girls in them. Santangelo reveals that the leader of the Cadets is Jonah Griggs, the boy who Taylor ran away with years before.

Ben thinks Taylor should meet with Jonah because they have a history together, but Taylor hates Jonah because she believes he sold her out to the authorities when they ran away. Taylor says Ben should make contact with him instead, and Ben agrees to do so. Taylor reveals that she wants to run away because she is afraid of caring for a House of younger girls.

An excerpt from Hannah's manuscript reveals that someone has gone missing, and five days after the disappearance, Narnie scribbles "Matthew 10.26" into the Prayer Tree.

Taylor's dreams of the boy in the tree are interrupted by Rafaela, who wakes her up. Ben has been beaten up by the Cadets. Ben reveals Cadet territory has been booby-trapped, and the Cadets want to talk to Taylor herself. Taylor heads to Hannah's house after she has disappeared, missing Hannah terribly. Taylor goes to see the principal of the school, John Palmer, about Hannah. Hannah owns the land by the river, and has been a volunteer at the school for years. Palmer reveals she can come and go as she pleases, and she has gone to Sydney to take care of some important business, and will be back when she can. In the meantime, Ms. Morris will take over Hannah's duties. Taylor explains to the reader that there is a rumor that Hannah was a student at the school, and never left. Palmer promises Taylor that if he hears anything, he will tell her.

In Hannah's manuscript, Webb prepares to build a treehouse.

Taylor goes to Clarence House to find Ben, who says he told the adult coordinator of the House that he has taken up footballing to explain the injuries. Taylor tells Ben she trusts him, which is why she wanted him a second-in-command, and she needs his help. Ben reluctantly agrees to help her seek out the Cadets. Ben is apprehended by Cadets and Taylor meets with Jonah face-to-face. Taylor tells Jonah that the school has access to all waterways according to the standing treaty. The past four years have been dry, but the present year is wet, meaning the Cadets only have a tenth of the land they've used in the past. Taylor promises war.



Prologue - Chapter 7 Analysis

The beginning of the metaphorically-rich novel "Jellicoe Road" by Melina Marchetta is as confused as the character of Taylor Markham -and both target the reader's attention immediately. Indeed, the confused nature of the beginning of the book can be viewed as a metaphor to the emotional and spiritual confusion and distress of Taylor. Names, places, and events are thrown at the reader in quick succession, from a car accident to a territory war, and it is only in the succeeding chapters that Taylor takes great care to explain certain things. Certain things, like the mystery of the Hermit's suicide, appear in full context only later on in the novel. Just as Taylor will, through the course of the novel, sort her life out, so too will the mysteries of her life and the novel be sorted out as well.

The setting of the novel -Jellicoe School, on Jellicoe Road, and near the small, rural town of Jellicoe, Australia serves as a metaphor in its own right, as a world of childhood. In childhood, children and young adults dream and believe as they wish, and grow up in their own world, away from the chaos of real life. In this respect, Sydney represents real life: prostitution, pollution, drugs, and so on, while none of that is present at Jellicoe.

Furthermore, Taylor is positioned as leader of the boarding school kids' Underground Community in the territory wars. The position of responsibility and power is something that Taylor is at first hesitant about, but later comes to accept, as she must come to accept many aspects of her life being beyond control, e.g., the abandonment of her mother, and the absence of her father for reasons unknown.

However, Taylor is not bound to have to settle for the things she accepts. She still longs to find her mother, still longs to feel like she belongs somewhere, and is still searching for something better. Indeed, a pseudo-familial relationship exists between Taylor and Hannah, and it is one that Taylor seems to relish in, for she feels as though she is safe when she visits Hannah's house by the river.

Hannah's house by the river also serves to be metaphorically -and metaphysically- important. The unfinished house can be likened to Taylor's life: unfinished, incomplete. Taylor spends her holidays helping Hannah to build the house, and in doing so, feels as if she is doing something to complete the whole of things.



Chapter 8 - 16

Chapter 8 - 16 Summary

CNarnie meets up with Webb in an excerpt from Hannah's manuscript. They go to meet Jude and the other Cadets. While there is a war, their meeting is happy and kind, and not the violent stuff of years later. Jellicoe Town hosts a yearly gala for the Cadets and the School students, which all attend. The three territorial factions enter into negotiations after the gala ceremony. The Cadets can rent the river so long as no more than twelve Cadets are there at any one time. Santangelo's mother, the Mayor of the town, tells him to behave. But Jonah Griggs insults Santangelo's mother, which causes an all-out brawl between Cadets, boarding school kids, and the Townies. The police arrive swiftly to arrest everyone. Santangelo's father is a cop, and is also Raffaello's godfather.

While in jail, Taylor and Santangelo get to talking about the Hermit, and find out that he had a son. Jonah snaps and demands to know why Santangelo is telling Taylor about the Hermit's life. This makes Taylor sick to her stomach and dizzy, and she passes out. John Palmer comes to care for Taylor, and helps get her back to the school. Mr. Palmer tells Taylor that Hannah is caring for a friend in Sydney, a friend who is sick, whom Hannah refers to as "Mrs. Dubose." Taylor immediately recognizes the reference to the book "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Taylor has nightmares and rescues Hannah's cat from Jonah Griggs. The next day, Taylor, Raffaella, and Ben go over a map to make an account of all of the territory they hold. Taylor realizes how stupid past leaders have been for making major concessions. The three of them hike out to the Prayer Tree, a massive, sprawling, and beautiful tree. Messages, prayers, and other quotes -some amazing, some disgusting- are carved into the tree. Taylor notices "Matthew 10.26", just as in Hannah's manuscript. Taylor, Ben, and Raffaella climb the tree, and are amazed by the beautiful view around them, for they can see for miles. There is also a treehouse behind them in the branches. As they go to leave, Taylor sees Hannah's nearly-completed house, and realizes its near-completion terrifies her.

Taylor finds her bike outside the dorm house that night. It had previously been stolen from behind Hannah's house, and Taylor wonders if whoever returned the bike is watching her. Inside, Taylor looks up Matthew 10:26 in the Bible. It reads, "Whatever is now covered up will be uncovered and every secret will be made known." Taylor dreams of the boy in the tree again, likening things to Hannah's character, Webb. Taylor wakes up crying, and is comforted by both Jessa and Raffaella.

Taylor has more nightmares, of a tunnel, and thinks of her mother, and of Hannah. Often, Taylor feels as though she is being hunted. She discovers that Hannah has called, and a girl named Chloe has taken a message. But this enrages Taylor, because no one has told her. So she turns her anger on Chloe, but Raffaella confronts Taylor,



telling her that her problem is that she doesn't care about what anyone else feels. Taylor says she doesn't, and heads up to her room.

Taylor goes out by herself to the river, and sees Jonah Griggs across the way. Taylor spends her nights in the Prayer Tree, going over the carvings, finding Biblical references and the names Hannah used in her story. Taylor knows that one of the people is dead.

Taylor, Raffaella, and Ben meet the Townies and the Cadets in town. Jonah Griggs is present with this second-in-command, Anson Choi. Santangelo wants to offer free passage to the town on weekends in exchange for access elsewhere. Griggs wants waterway access. Arguing breaks out, and Griggs calls her an emotional mess seeking her mother, and Taylor asks Griggs how he killed his father, which causes Griggs to pin her against the wall, and the negotiations to break up. Everyone leaves, and Taylor cries on the way home.

In an excerpt from Hannah's manuscript, Narnie takes too many sleeping pills, Tate reads to her all night until they both fall asleep hours later. Tate reads "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Taylor tells Raffaella she wants to go searching for her mother, but Raffaella tells Taylor she belongs in Jellicoe, with Hannah. Taylor tells Raffaella she needs her help to run the House, and that she can't do it without her. After that, the girls make dinner, and it calms Taylor down.

The following week is full of events. Two girls go missing from a town named Rabine. Richard attempts to replace Taylor as head of the Underground Community. Girls from Darling House are taken hostage by the Cadets. Ben and Taylor head out to meet the Cadets, while Raffaella watches over the other girls and Lachlan House. Griggs tells Taylor that there must be a fight to dictate the return of the hostages. Taylor tells Jonah to release the hostages, which he does. But Jonah warns that every territory violation will be visited upon Taylor's head. Taylor, meanwhile, interviews the three kidnapped girls, who describe the setup of the Cadet camp to Taylor.

Webb goes missing in Hannah's manuscript. That night, Griggs sneaks up the tree to Taylor's room to discuss the use of the Club House. They also reach a number of other agreements, such as letting Anson DJ at the club, and Griggs never smashing Ben's fingers again.

While at the river, Taylor is visited by Griggs and Anson. Taylor realizes they are planning an invasion. She has manure planted all around Hannah's house, which causes the Cadets to think twice about coming across the river, foiling one invasion attempt. Another attempt that fails means that Taylor calls the shots for diplomatic immunity. Taylor and her friends goad the Cadets into chasing them onto school territory, and are saved by Santangelo and the Townies who are in the Prayer Tree. Griggs feigns painting the tree, but it turns out just to be water. It gets Taylor to come down from the tree, and they all agree to a truce.



An attempt to hotwire Santangelo's car by Taylor and Raffaela is interrupted by Santangelo and Griggs. They all decide to go driving, and comes across part of the road where poppies are growing, at the scene of a bad accident twenty-some years before. Taylor recognizes the poppies from Hannah's manuscript. Taylor explains that one day, the first year the Cadets came, they destroyed the poppies, but one came back the next day to help the school kids replant them. Santangelo then takes everyone to the place where a kid went missing and was found dead. Santangelo explains there were two photos -one of the dead boy, the other of a group of friends, and one of them was a Cadet. The cadet's name was Xavier Webster Schroeder. Taylor immediately draws connections to Hannah's manuscript in her mind. Hannah's last name is Schroeder. Taylor spends the night at Raffaela's house in town.

The next morning, Santangelo and Griggs arrive to see Taylor and Raffaela. Santangelo tells Taylor he is going to break into the police station to get her the photos he mentioned the night before. On Saturday night, Taylor Raffaela attend a birthday party at the hall in town with Santangelo, Anson, and Griggs. Jonah kisses Taylor.

Chapter 8 - 16 Analysis

As the novel progresses, and events begin to pick up steam -including the infamous territory wars- Taylor begins to grow as a person in terms of confidence and leadership. As the events of the novel begin to move faster and faster, Taylor can perhaps sense that everything -herself included- is changing. This can be seen in the ninth chapter, when Taylor is descending the prayer tree: "I go down last, taking a closer look at Hannah's unfinished house by the river. Except I realize that it's almost finished. It's only the stuff inside that needs to be done, and the idea of its near-completion frightens me beyond comprehension" (Chapter 9, p. 117).

Just as Hannah's house is being constructed -with each piece slowly coming together- Taylor's childhood is ending. This is the beginning of the end of childhood, the beginning of the end of Taylor's story in her character's current incarnation -but the future days and weeks will begin an entirely new chapter and story in her life. And that evolution of her character, and the evolution of everything she knows, scares her as she indicates.

Incidentally, Taylor longs to feel like she belongs. Every new event, every turn of the page, Taylor's walls begin to crumble as she becomes more and more trusting of people like Raffaela, who comes into being not just a friend to Taylor, but something like a sister. This in turn causes Taylor to admit she cannot handle the House without Raffaela, which illustrates that Taylor isn't as fiercely, proudly independent as she had previously believed. It is not a crime to need help, and Taylor has come to realize that.

Indeed, Taylor has a very electric, charismatic personality. Even her arch enemies, Jonah Griggs and Santangelo come around to her side. A large reason for this is because the friendship Taylor returns is genuine and sincere. Ben, for example, recognizes this, and it is displayed in his loyalty to Taylor. Taylor, who has seemingly not

had any sort of relationship of any kind, of any real significance beforehand, now seems to be in the midst of friendships, and romance.



Chapter 17 - 24

Chapter 17 - 24 Summary

Webb comes up with the idea to build a tunnel to get around after-hours, in Hannah's manuscript. The five kids decide to have a skirmish war, and write down all the rules in a purple leather book.

Meanwhile, Taylor and Raffaella spend the rest of their holiday days with Griggs and Santangelo. Jessa, Taylor explains to the reader, has a lot in common with her. Jessa's mom is also gone, but having died of cancer when Jessa was two. Taylor and Jessa talk about their fathers. Taylor never knew her father, and Jessa's father went insane after her mother died. Hannah is also Jessa's guardian and mentor. Jessa believes the Cadet Brigadier might be the kidnapper and murderer of the girls who went missing from Rabine because he drives back and forth to Sydney.

Meanwhile, Taylor listens to Santangelo wonder about why the Hermit was so obsessed with the river, and Santangelo believes something from the kid may have gotten stuck somewhere. Santangelo and Rafael go diving in the river to see what they can find, while Griggs and Taylor kiss on the bank of the river. They argue, because they are unsure about how the other feels Griggs says he never betrayed her all those years ago, and Taylor tells him they will never see each other again. Griggs explains that years ago, when she and Griggs first met at a train station, her appearance stopped him from committing suicide.

While awaiting a meeting with Santangelo at the town club house, Taylor tells Raffaella and Jessa about Hannah's manuscript. But she doesn't know the rest of the story, because the Brigadier caught her in Hannah's house, and took the manuscript. Taylor is worried the dead person in the photo that Santangelo is bringing over will be her father, but it is not. It is of a handsome young boy, and Taylor realizes that she does believe in God, but wishes she didn't because of something so horrible as the photo. Taylor believes her father is the person in the photo, because he father supposedly went missing at seventeen. Taylor also believes Hannah is her aunt. Jessa, who is friends with Santangelo's younger sister Tilly, is excited when Santangelo's father allows Tilly to spend the night at the dorms with them.

Meanwhile, Santangelo, Griggs, Rafaela, and Taylor break into the Brigadier's office. There, they find some of Hannah's things, including her passport and papers, as well as Xavier's. She suspects that the Brigadier is a serial killer, and that he did something to her father, and Hannah. The next morning Jessa reveals that two kids in Mittagong have gone missing.

Chapter 19 - Taylor goes to see Santangelo's father at the police station. He reveals that Hannah was called Narnie because when she and her brother were young, he couldn't say Hannah. Taylor wants to contact Fitz, but Santangelo's father reveals that Fitz is



dead. He tells Taylor that Hannah will come back, because Taylor and Jude are everything to Hannah. Santangelo's father reveals that Tate is also still alive.

In another excerpt from Hannah's manuscript, Fitz jumps into the river from the tree over and over again. Taylor reveals that the Hermit at the river addressed her by name, asked her to take care of his little girl, and then committed suicide.

A week before the Cadets leave, an agreement on the Club House is reached, and it opens. Taylor and Griggs get everyone to talk to each other, and the place begins humming with activity. The night becomes a success.

The Club House is profitable, and the profits are split between the factions, and then between the Houses. Lachlan gets a Karaoke machine, which becomes a hit. Every other night, Raffaella, Santangelo, Griggs, and Taylor sit up and talk in the Prayer Tree. Grigg's killing his father stemmed from his father's abusiveness. Santangelo brings more photos, of the five people in Hannah's story. Taylor sees Hannah among the people in the photo. Fitz -who is the Hermit- is also there. She also sees Tate -Taylor's mother.

Taylor decides she must go and find her mother, but Griggs goes along with her. Santangelo gives them gas money, and tells them to be back in three days, or he will tell his father where they are.

Taylor and Griggs head toward Sydney. There, they walk around, seeking to find something familiar to Taylor when she was little. They settle on a place called Time Zone, a video game arcade, that Taylor went to when she was little with a friend named Simon. She leaves a message asking that if Taylor comes in, to meet her across the street at McDonald's at 6:30.

Taylor comes across their friend Sam, who says she is supposed to be dead. This shocks Taylor. Sam says he'd seen her mother, but her mother hasn't been around for a while. He agrees to meet them at McDonald's later. Sam's mother is a prostitute, and he hates her. Sam agrees to talk to Eve about Taylor's mother, and they agree to meet up outside the Court House Hotel at 10:30. He later reveals Taylor's mother is at Saint Vincent's Hospice. That night, Taylor and Griggs make love.

The next day, Taylor and Griggs go to Saint Vincent's. It is revealed that Taylor's mother was signed out by Jude Scanlon, the Brigadier. Jude is not a murderer. Taylor talks to Santangelo's father, tells him not to be mad at Santangelo, and tells him to tell Jude to come to Saint Vincent's. Santangelo's father agrees to pass on the message. At six, Jude arrives to bring them back. Jude tells them that Taylor will see Tate soon, but not yet, because it is what Tate wants. It was Tate who made Hannah take Taylor. And long ago, Jude and Hannah were in a relationship. But Fitz's suicide drove them apart. Fitz's wife died of cancer, leading to his suicide, and giving up his baby girl -Jessa.

As they drive, firetrucks race past them. Jellicoe School is on fire.



Chapter 17 - 24 Analysis

The most unlikely friendship between Taylor, Raffaella, and Santangelo and Jonah blossoms -much the way that it did for Hannah, Tate, and the others twenty-two years before. Indeed, the friendship between Santangelo and Jonah is so strong that Santangelo allows Jonah to use his car to drive Taylor to Sydney to search for her mother- and agrees to cover for them for three days.

Taylor reflects on days past, including the suicide of the Hermit down by the river, an experience which also traumatized her. The Hermit not only committed suicide in front of her, but addressed her by name, and asked her to take care of his little girl. Taylor comes to understand that all of the people around her, and all of the people in Hannah's manuscript, are the same individuals, and all of them factor into her life in profound and significant ways.

With respect to the metaphorical duality of Sydney and Jellicoe, and the absence of childhood and innocence, the journey from childhood to adulthood can be seen in a physical sense as having been completed by the sexual union of Taylor and Jonah. Being present in Sydney also quashes the idyllic, indeed bucolic world that Taylor had mostly hitherto existed as a part of: she is now confronted with the horrendous reality that her mother is a drug-using prostitute who is dying. Despite the traumatic experiences of her childhood, Taylor had lived a relatively peaceful life at Jellicoe, devoid of the harsh and disgusting realities of life. But that is no longer the case. Her search for answers has revealed truth, and the brute and tragic nature of human existence.

Taylor also grows exponentially stronger in terms of her emotional and spiritual nature. She is able to understand that she was not abandoned; and she is able to understand that there were many people in her life who cared about her -and still do. More importantly, she recognizes she believes in God, and in herself.



Chapter 24 - Epilogue

Chapter 24 - Epilogue Summary

Lachlan House is burning. Two girls are missing -Jesse and Chloe. Jude leads the way into Murrumbidgee House, to head to the tunnels that he helped construct years before. Griggs goes into the tunnel first. He brings out Jessa, who is unconscious, and Chloe crawls out behind him.

Taylor and Jude wait in the hospital. Jessa survives, and Hannah reappears. Taylor remembers being on Jude's shoulders when she was little, and realizes that the love in her life was given to her by Hannah and Jude.

The fire is the result of an electrical fault. It is revealed that Fitz accidentally killed Hannah's brother; and that Jude and Hannah blame each other for being alive when no one else is, and it is getting in the way of love. Taylor says goodbye to Griggs, and Jude will be bringing her mother back the following day. Taylor embraces her mother, and brings her inside Hannah's house with Jude and Hannah. Tate is dying of cancer. Taylor introduces Jessa to Tate.

Many stories are heard over the next few weeks and Taylor writes them all down. The serial killer is caught, and Jessa is very happy about it. The killer is the postman in Yass -who gave Griggs and Taylor a ride when they were little, and were saved by Jude. When she dies, Tate's ashes are scattered by the Prayer Tree along with Fritz's. They go to the ocean after that.

Hannah's construction of a house, it is seen in the last excerpt of the manuscript, is a place where everyone can live together, and belong together, and see the world.

Chapter 24 - Epilogue Analysis

True to form, Melina Marchetta ends the novel with another metaphorical event: the destruction of Lachlan House. The force of destruction - fire - proves to be a catalyst for change as well as razing the area and cleansing it. This can be seen in juxtaposition with Taylor's old and new self, and the new life ahead of her. The old Taylor, of insecurity and powerlessness, is gone, replaced by a far more confident and competent young woman. All of the pain of the past, as well as the mysteries, are being replaced by answers, and love.

Taylor also finally finds a place to rest -with her mother, her aunt, and what could presumably one day be her uncle. She comes to realize she can trust people, and she really does come to accept that she can believe in others, especially so long as she believes in herself. The coming together of Taylor, Tate, Jessa, Hannah, and Jude in Hannah's house by the river is the fulfillment of a twenty-two year-old prophecy of everyone living somewhere together.



Characters

Taylor Markham

Taylor Markham is the pretty, seventeen year-old protagonist of Melina Marchetta's novel "Jellicoe Road". Abandoned as a child by her mother, and never knowing her father, Taylor is prone to depression and anxiety, as well as emotional distress. She is elected the leader of the Underground Community for the territory wars against the Cadets and the Townies, and is in a leadership position in her own dormitory house.

Taylor is looked up to by the younger Jessa McKenzie, and Taylor is best friends with Rafaela, who lives in town but stays at the school. Taylor is also good friends with Ben, her second-in-command of the Underground Community. Taylor often visits the house of a young woman named Hannah, who is building a house at the river by the school. Hannah is Taylor's mentor and guardian, having found her when she was abandoned, and ensuring that Taylor was enrolled at the Jellicoe School.

Over the next few weeks, Hannah disappears and Taylor begins a romance with Jonah Griggs, the head of the Cadets. Taylor has known Jonah for years, having tried to run away with him when she was fourteen to search for her mother. Three years later, Taylor and Jonah both travel to Sydney to find Taylor's mother once more. They discover that Taylor's mother is dying of cancer, and had been living as a prostitute strung out on drugs. Hannah is revealed to be Taylor's aunt, the sister of Taylor's father. Taylor then returns to the school to discover her dorm hall has burned down, and Jessa nearly killed in the fire. Jessa is the daughter of Fitz, whom everyone called the Hermit and lived by the river, a childhood friend of Hannah's and Taylor's parents.

Taylor then spends time with her mother and Hannah before her mother dies.

Ben

Ben is a friend to Taylor and Raffaella, and is second-in-command of the Underground Community. Ben is an accomplished violinist, and is fiercely loyal to Taylor.

Raffaella

Raffaella is the pretty best friend of Taylor Markham, and a friend to Ben. Raffaella acts as Taylor's second-in-command in the dorm House Lachlan, where she helps care for Taylor and the other girls. Raffaella accompanies Taylor on many of her adventures, and is childhood friends with Santangelo, the leader of the Townies.



Jessa McKenzie

Jessa McKenzie is a student at Jellicoe School who looks up with great admiration to Taylor, following her around and spending as much time with Taylor as possible. Jessa, who has grown up without knowing her parents, is revealed to be the daughter of Ftiz, the river Hermit, who was a childhood friend of Taylor's parents and Hannah.

Jonah Griggs

Jonah Griggs is the handsome, strong, and powerful leader of the Cadets. He is quick to action and to anger. When he was fourteen, he attempted to run away with Taylor to help her find her mother, but the two were apprehended by the Brigadier. Years later, Jonah and Taylor begin a romance during the time the Cadets spend at Jellicoe. Jonah again consents to traveling to Sydney to help Taylor learn the truth about her family and Hannah. When they return to the school, Lachlan Hall is on fire, and Jonah goes down into the tunnels beneath the buildings to save the life of Jessa. Jonah also reveals that years before, when he first met Taylor at the train station, she saved his life. Until he met her, he was going to commit suicide by jumping in front of the train.

Santangelo

Santangelo is the foul-mouthed, off-center leader of the Townies. His father is a police officer, and his mother is the mayor of Jellicoe. He loans his car to Jonah and Taylor to go and find Taylor's mother in Sydney.

Hannah Schroeder

Hannah Schroeder is the thirty-something mentor and guardian of both Taylor and Jessa. Hannah lives in a house that she is building herself near the river at the school. Hannah is writing a manuscript, which details the lives and adventures of five friends at the Jellicoe School in the 1980s. In reality, the characters in Hannah's story are herself, Taylor's parents, Jessa's father, and the Brigadier, Jude Scanlon. Hannah is kind and patient, and she doesn't hesitate to let Taylor know when she is wrong. Hannah disappears from school to go to Sydney to see after Taylor's mother without telling Taylor, which ultimately piques Taylor's interest to search for her mother. Hannah has Taylor and her mother live at her house for the duration of Taylor's mother's life.

Jude Scanlon

Jude Scanlon is the Brigadier of the Cadets, and has an office at the school. One of the childhood friends of Hannah, he also had a relationship with her which was destroyed by the unwillingness by either himself or Hannah to accept that they were the only two surviving members of their friends. Jude stops the fourteen year-old Taylor from going to



Sydney, and later reveals much about circumstances to her when she is seventeen. He becomes a guardian to Taylor and Jessa ultimately.

Santangelo's Father

Santangelo's father is a police officer in the town of Jellico. He is kind and to the point, and he keeps much of Taylor's past a secret as long as he can.

John Palmer

John Palmer is the principal of Jellicoe School. He is gentle but firm, and acts as a sort of guardian for Taylor from time to time, such as picking her up from the town jail following the town brawl at the gala.



Objects/Places

Australia

Australia is the country in which the setting of the novel "Jellicoe Road" by Melina Marchetta occurs. It is the location of Sydney, Jellicoe, Jellicoe Road, and Jellicoe School.

Jellicoe

Jellicoe is the quiet town in Australia, 600 kilometers (about 372 miles) from Sydney, where Jellicoe Road and Jellicoe School are located. Jellicoe town is the territory of the Townies, and is where Santangelo, his family, and Raffaela and her family live.

Jellicoe Road

Jellicoe Road is the road that goes to the Jellicoe School. It was the scene of a freak car accident in the 1980s, happened upon by Fitz, who saved the lives of Tate, Webb, and Hannah.

Jellicoe School

Jellicoe School is an elite, but state-run school that caters to students with less-than-stellar pasts. It is the territory of the students who board at the school, the Underground Community. Jellicoe School is attended by Taylor, Raffaela, Jessa, Ben, and the others. It is also the site of the six-week Cadet camp.

The Prayer Tree

The Prayer Tree is a large, gnarled, beautiful old tree upon which a treehouse has been built, and from which one can see Jellicoe Road, the town, and the surrounding countryside. The trunk and branches of the tree are inscribed with prayers, ideas, thoughts, memories, names, dates, and some vulgar sayings. It is where Taylor goes to spend time at night, and where she first discovers a conclusive link between Hannah's manuscript and reality.

Lachlan Hall

Lachlan Hall is one of the dormitory houses on the Jellicoe Campus. It is where Raffaela, Jessa, and Taylor live, and it burns to the ground due to an electrical fault at the end of the novel.



Hannah's House

Hannah's house is down by the river, and is unfinished. Hannah has, with the help of Taylor, been constructing it for years. The house is Taylor's refuge.

The Cadet Camp

The cadet camp is located by the river on the Jellicoe School grounds, and is where the Cadets, including Jonah, stay for their life-education camp.

Sydney

Sydney is a major city in Australia, and is the hometown of both Taylor and Jonah Griggs. It is where Taylor goes to seek her mother.

Purple Rule Book

The purple rule book is a collection of rules and information about the territory wars, and was originally begun by Hannah and her four friends in their childhood.

Stolen Bike

A stolen bike is what Fitz is riding when he comes across the accident on Jellicoe Road, and saves the lives of Tate, Webb, and Hannah.



Themes

Family

Family is one of the three major themes of Melina Marchetta's novel "Jellicoe Road." Family is a major driving force in the novel, and serves to be a catalyst for the actions of Taylor and the course of the plot. Family, in the novel, is absent in the traditional sense for Taylor, but is present in an unorthodox but secure fashion.

Taylor's real family is nonexistent. Taylor's father was killed when he was seventeen, and Taylor's mother -a drug-addled prostitute- abandoned Taylor when she was eleven. The disappearance of Taylor's mother leads Taylor to a failed attempt to find her when she is only fourteen. Taylor's sense of abandonment causes tremendous and severe emotional distress and instability. Indeed, Taylor looks at the families that do exist around her -such as Santangelo's- and wishes that she had something similar. Taylor longs to belong.

In an unorthodox and nontraditional sense, Taylor does indeed have a family. Her family consists of her aunt, Hannah who acts as her mother; Jude Scanlon who acts as her father; and Raffaella and Jessa, who are like sisters to her. Each of these characters in some way provides missing elements to family for Taylor. Taylor's only member of a father figure is of being on Jude's shoulders when she was little; and the guidance, dependability, stability, and mentoring from Hannah fill a void left by Hannah's mother. Indeed, Jessa takes on the role of an annoying younger sister, while Raffaella assumes the role of a sister to whom Taylor can confide.

At the end of the novel, Taylor is reunited with her real mother, Tate, and Taylor realizes that no matter what happens, she will always have Hannah and Jude to protect her.

Friendship

Friendship is one of the three major themes of Melina Marchetta's novel "Jellicoe Road." It appears in both present and past form, and friendship ensures the evolution of the plot.

In the past, the bond of friendship existed between five kids at Jellicoe School in the 1980s: Hannah, Jude, Tate, Xavier, and Fitz. Fitz's stealing of a bike enabled him to happen upon the Jellicoe Road accident, thereby saving the lives of Xavier, Hannah, and Tate. Later, they meet Jude, the five become fast friends. They look out for one another, and all plan to live in the same place together some day. When Xavier is accidentally killed, Tate raises Taylor in Sydney. Jude joins the military and has a romance with Hannah. Fitz later commits suicide following the death of his wife to cancer, and Jude and Hannah break up because they cannot deal with the fact that they are still alive. Tate later abandons Taylor, giving her to Hannah to raise.



The friendship between the five meant that even in the most tragic circumstances, each of them was there when needed. Hannah and Jude looked after both Taylor and Fitz's daughter, Jessa, following the disintegration of Tate, the death of Xavier, and the suicide of Fitz. Their friendship ensured the survival of both Taylor and Jessa.

Friendship in the novel's present also has significant bearings. Just as Hannah and her friends were from different backgrounds and were different people, so too are Taylor, Jonah, Raffaella, and Santangelo. Their friendship ensures that each looks out for and cares for the other, despite the rocky beginnings of the friendship due to the territory wars. Raffaella accompanies Taylor all over; Jonah and Taylor take their friendship to the romantic level; and Santangelo drives the four of them around in his car, ultimately loaning the car to Jonah and Taylor to bring to Sydney. Indeed, Taylor also extends friendship to Jessa as well in the end.

Coming of Age

Coming of age is the most significant of the three major themes of Melina Marchetta's novel "Jellicoe Road." Coming of age involves the emotional and spiritual growth of a character through different situations and circumstances, leading the character to better his or herself. The character of Taylor Markham experiences the theme of coming of age.

At the beginning of the novel, Taylor is emotionally distressed. She suffers from fears of abandonment, is emotionally unstable, is quick to anger and depression, and doesn't have much confidence in herself. Indeed, most of the other girls in Lachlan House avoid her following her outbursts. Taylor says she doesn't believe in anyone or anything, and she longs to belong and to be able to love.

By the end of the novel, Taylor has reconnected with her mother and Hannah's past. She has fallen in love with Jonah, and realized that her friendship with Raffaella, Santangelo, and Jessa, is stronger than anticipated. Taylor also discovers that she wasn't abandoned so much as given up in the hopes of the promise for a better life. Furthermore, she becomes a hero to the other girls in the house after returning three kidnapped girls during the territory wars. Beyond that, Taylor comes to discover that she does believe in God, and believes in herself just as importantly. She finishes the novel as competent, capable, and confident. She is also happy to enjoy her mother's company until Tate dies.



Style

Point of View

Melina Marchetta's novel "Jellicoe Road" is recounted in the first-person perspective from the point of view of main character and principle protagonist Taylor Markham. This is done because the events of the plot of the novel concern Taylor primarily, and she is the force by which the mystery around her own life is solved and explained. Additionally, Taylor's growth of character in terms of coming of age also makes her telling the story in first person that much more effective, so that the reader is able to understand the evolution of Taylor's character through her own eyes.

Setting

The setting of Melina Marchetta's novel is that of rural Australia, near the small town of Jellicoe, a few hundred miles away from the city of Sydney. The relative rural isolation of the town and the school provides the quintessential atmosphere for young adults and children, who often live in their own worlds. Jellicoe and the school, then, are a world away from the rest of the world, and the characters are able to develop, grow, learn, and understand apart from the chaotic environment of Sydney. Indeed, the rather idyllic setting of the town and school can serve metaphorically as childhood, when everything is beautiful, new, and wonderful, and before the realities of the real world -drugs, prostitution, real heartache- become overwhelming in adulthood.

Language and Meaning

Because Melina Marchetta's novel "Jellicoe Road" is told from the point of view of a seventeen year-old girl with emotional issues, the language of the novel is simple and straightforward, with emotionally-charged tangents and poetic flourishes. Using simple and straightforward language reinforces the believability of a seventeen year-old narrator; and the poetic prose where appropriate, in conjunction with the language of someone in emotional distress, makes the characterization of Taylor all the more realistic.

Structure

The novel "Jellicoe Road" by Melina Marchetta is structured in chronological, consecutive chapters, including an epilogue and a prologue. Some chapters consist wholly, or partly, of excerpts from Hannah's manuscript, which tells the story of Taylor's parents and Hannah in coordination with the events of Taylor's life. The simple structure of the book -the consecutive, chronological chapters concerned with Taylor's life- further help focus the attention of the reader on the plot, rather than dragging down the reader with a complicated chapter structure.

Quotes

"For the first time since they made me leader of the community, I realize why I told Hannah I was thinking of leaving. It's fear" (Chapter 4, p. 61).

"The pages aren't numbered, so I don't know whether I have the beginning or the end or whether it's in a sequence but these days I'm not really looking for continuity" (Chapter 6, p. 69).

"Do you remember nothing stopped us on the field in our day" (Chapter 9, p. 112).

"I go down last, taking a closer look at Hannah's unfinished house by the river. Except I realize that it's almost finished. It's only the stuff inside that needs to be done, and the idea of its near-completion frightens me beyond comprehension" (Chapter 9, p. 117).

"If you saw the photo, you'd understand. You'd want to say to the kid in it, 'Why weren't you strong enough to resist death? Didn't that look in your eye stop anything bad from happening to you'" (Chapter 16, p. 216).

"These people have history and I crave history. I crave knowing someone so well that they can tell me what I'm thinking" (Chapter 16, p. 229).

"This isn't romance. This isn't a declaration of love or affirmation of friendship. This is something more" (Chapter 17, p. 255).

"I remember love. It's what I have to keep on reminding myself. It's funny how you can forget everything except people loving you. Maybe that's why humans find it so hard getting over love affairs. It's not the pain they're getting over, it's the love" (Chapter 18, pp. 261-262).

"It's a game, these territory wars. They loved each other" (Chapter 20, p. 289).

"I remember love. These two people taught it to me and when I see Hannah lean over and kiss Jessa's sleeping head, I know that for the rest of my life, no matter what, Hannah and Jude are going to be there" (Chapter 25, p. 398).



Topics for Discussion

Discuss the theme of family in the novel "Jellicoe Road" by Melina Marchetta. In what ways does family appear in the novel? Is family a good thing or a bad thing for Taylor? Does family negatively or positively affect Taylor, or both? Provide evidence to support your claim.

Discuss the theme of friendship in the novel "Jellicoe Road" by Melina Marchetta as it pertains to Taylor's parents and her Aunt Hannah. What is the importance of the friendship between these people, and what is the impact of this friendship?

Discuss the theme of friendship in the novel "Jellicoe Road" by Melina Marchetta. Compare and contrast the present and past friendships, between Hannah and her friends, and Taylor and her friends. In what ways are both sets of friends similar? How do they differ? What are the outcomes of these friendships?

What is the significance of the quote, "I go down last, taking a closer look at Hannah's unfinished house by the river. Except I realize that it's almost finished. It's only the stuff inside that needs to be done, and the idea of its near-completion frightens me beyond comprehension" from Chapter 9, p. 117? What does the quote mean, and why does it fit Taylor as well as it does?

Discuss the theme of coming of age in the novel "Jellicoe Road" by Melina Marchetta. What is coming of age, and which character comes of age? Why does this occur, and how does this occur? How does the associated character turn out in the end? Is it for the better or the worse?