

Looking For Me Study Guide

Looking For Me by Beth Hoffman

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Plot Summary

"Looking for Me" opens up with the protagonist, Teddi, visiting her mother in Kentucky. Teddi works in an antique shop in South Carolina. She's visiting her mother because she's hoping to repair their damaged relationship. Teddi's mother has never been up to visit her before, always coming up with some excuse. She constantly criticizes Teddi decisions to start her own antique shop.

Teddi eventually reveals through flashbacks why her mother is so bitter towards her. When she was younger, Teddi's mother kept pushing for her to become a secretary because she thought it was a safer and reliable job. Instead, Teddi ran away from home thanks to money and car provided by her father. Teddi was able to get a job selling antiques and eventually started her own business.

Teddi kept returning to see her family. One year, she witnessed someone abusing a dog. This greatly offended Teddi's brother, Josh. Josh grew up feeling a close connection to nature. He's always been very protective of the woods and hates anyone that threatens nature. After hearing about the abuse he tried to rescue the dog, but he was too late and it died on his way back.

Josh is disturbed by what happened and ends up running away from home, just like Teddi had years ago. Nobody ever hears from Josh, and the rest of the family assumes that he's dead. Teddi believes that he's alive, and she keeps leaving messages for him in the woods where they used to play and explore as a child. Teddi gets further evidence that Josh is alive when she hears about a vigilante that patrols the woods and goes after poachers and anyone else that threatens the environment.

Before Teddi is able to repair things with her mother, she passes away. Teddi is devastated and doesn't know what to do with the family farm. She ends up giving it away to a young family that wants to turn the farm into a clinic. While all this is happening, Teddi has to deal with her business, as well as the fact that she's getting older and feels like something is missing from her life.

Teddi ends up falling in love with Sam, the adopted son of a frequent shoplifter at Teddi's store. Teddi quickly falls for Sam, and the two enter into a relationship. Teddi's life is improving, but she's thrown through a loop when she hears about the vigilante acting in Kentucky again. The book ends with Teddi receiving a box full of items from Josh, artifacts from their childhood. She's finally able to say goodbye to her brother, realizing that he's doing what he wants in life by living in and defending the woods.



Chapters 1-4

Summary

Chapter 1

The main character, Teddi, is down from South Carolina to visit her mother in Kansas. Teddi is hopeful that she'll be able to repair the relationship she has with her mother. She mentions wanting to talk about her younger brother, Josh, implying that he has passed away at some point. Several years earlier, Teddi's father passed away, and now her mother lives alone. Teddi keeps trying to get her to come up and visit, but her mother always declines. She criticizes Teddi's lifestyle, believing that her job as an antique dealer isn't real work. The two are interrupted when her mother's best friend, Stella arrives. The three have dinner and Teddi goes off to walk in the woods, remembering when she used to do the same thing with her grandparents.

Chapter 2

(flashback)

Teddi thinks back to when she was ten years old. She had found an old chair thrown into a ditch. She thought it was beautiful and dragged it all the way back to her home, much to the chagrin of her mother. Teddi's grandmother and father were supportive of her and helped her fix up the chair. After that, whenever she and her father went out together, he would try and stop at yard sales so she could pick up new antiques. Teddi sold all the items she fixed up and managed to save up a few hundred dollars as a child. She decided when she was an adult she would become famous and start her own shop.

In the present, Teddi says that her dream became possible because of someone named Jackson Palmer.

Chapter 3

(flashback)

Teddi remembers back to when she was a teenager and had kept buying antiques to fix and resell. She made a table that was one of her finest pieces. She showed her mother, who didn't seem that impressed, instead chastising Teddi for not doing her chores. Teddi went out to sell the table. She ran into an older gentleman who was interested in purchasing it. He asked her about her techniques, not believing she had fixed it up herself. Once she explained herself, he bought the table for \$50, Teddi's biggest sale. He ended up giving her \$100 after talking with her and hearing her dreams about one day having her own shop, explaining that she should always aim higher since people liked to haggle and feel like they were getting a sale. He left her with his business card, identifying him as Jackson Palmer, the owner of an antique shop.



Chapter 4

(flashback continues)

This chapter continues Teddi's tale as a teenager. Teddi's mother was pushing for her to go to one of the local colleges so she could become a secretary. Teddi tried to put up with it, but she eventually snapped and ran away from home after fighting with her mother about what she wanted to do. Her father ended up finding her and took her back home. For her birthday, he gave Teddi her own car and secretly gave her \$2,000 and a map, telling her to find her own dreams. Josh, her brother, somehow knew that she was planning on leaving.

When Josh confronted her, Teddi promised that she would come back, and that she just needed to go out and see more of the world to figure out what she wanted to do. He told her about poachers and tourists that were destroying the area. Josh worked with one of the local rangers to help keep the forest clean, and he was constantly learning new things about the woods. At the end of the chapter, Teddi ended up leaving on her trip, saying one final farewell to her brother.

Analysis

Chapter 1

One of the things that is established right off the bat is the troubled relationship that Teddi has with her mother. This is one of the major conflicts throughout the first half of the book and drives the plot. Readers are given the impression that something happened in the past between these two, but it isn't explained what until much later in the story, and the next several chapters help to develop their complex relationship. Teddi's status as a store owner and antique dealer are set up in the initial chapter, as well as the southern setting.

The reader sees some of the pressure that Teddi's mother places on her with the college brochures that her mother continually leaves for her. These brochures represent a life that her mother wants for her, and not what Teddi wants for herself.

Chapter 2

Teddi restoring the chair is what sets her on the path of becoming an antique dealer. It also showcases one of her unique traits, which is to always see the beauty in anything, even discarded or abused objects. Teddi is fascinated with restoring the chair to beauty, and she wonders about its history. This is something that Teddi frequently does whenever she finds an antique. The character of Jackson Palmer is introduced, and his later importance in Teddi's life is foreshadowed at the end of the chapter.

The theme of Freedom is introduced in this chapter through Teddi's father and his insistence that she follow her dreams. Teddi's mother and father are polar opposites of one another, with Teddi's mother wanting Teddi to go into a profession typically female



in nature, such as a secretary, teacher, or clerk. Teddi resists this and her father nurtures her creativity and goal of having her own shop one day.

Chapter 3

Teddi goes into more detail about her love for antiquing and how she started to follow her dreams. This touches upon the theme of Happiness. Teddi knows exactly what she wants, and even at a young age she works towards that goal. Her hard work pays off when she's introduced to Jackson Palmer. She's able to impress Jackson with her skills and knowledge. She makes enough of an impression that Jackson remembers her years later when she's looking for a job, which sets her on the path of starting her own business.

The theme of Judgement is also introduced primarily by Teddi's mother's insistence that she accept or adopt a traditional female role. As a result of her resistance to this judgement by her mother, Teddi feels as if her mother is disappointed in her, or is embarrassed to be related to her.

The symbol of the \$100 dollars that Palmer gives to her shows that he believes in her ability to do good work and that he supports her dream of one day having her own store. This encourages Teddi to follow her dreams. It also shows that money and support from others can lead to Freedom to pursue her goals and interests.

Chapter 4

The conflict between Teddi and her mother is explained in more detail. Teddi's mother was trying to control her future, something that Teddi hated. Teddi's father was there to give her freedom. Teddi's father explains to her the importance of freedom, which is one of the major themes in the book. Teddi's relationship with her family is explained in more detail as well, with the reader having a better understanding of how close Teddi was to her father.

The symbolism of the money and the car that her father gives to her is featured in this chapter. The car and the money both represent and support the theme of Freedom, but they also point to the support and belief that Teddi's father had for her.

The relationship between Teddi and Josh is also explored. Josh knows that Teddi was thinking about leaving because of how close they were to one another. Josh's knowledge of nature is also highlighted in this chapter, and it's made clear that he's a prodigy when it comes to animals and woodland survival. His desire to keep the forest safe is also brought up, foreshadowing his eventual future.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Freedom.



Discussion Question 2

Compare and contrast Teddi's parents.

Discussion Question 3

What early experiences helped shape Teddi's decision to become an antiques dealer?

Vocabulary

scuffing, aroma, riotous, mortician, embalming, faux, patina, brocade, recounted, concocted, vehement, silhouette, collateral, inaugural, ambled, urn, sheen, upholstering, marbleizing



Chapters 5-8

Summary

Chapter 5

Back in the present, Teddi returns to her shop in Charleston. She doesn't regret leaving home when she was younger, but she wishes she had done it differently. She thinks her mother was never able to forgive her for how she left. She's greeted by her repair specialist, Albert, informing her that Tula Poteet is present again. Tula frequently comes by the shop and tries to shoplift. Her son is a hotshot lawyer who always pays for whatever Tula takes. Teddi tries to keep track of her, but Tula ends up stealing one of the smaller boxes. Teddi gets in touch with her son, who agrees to pay for it.

Chapter 6

(flashback)

Teddi thinks back to when she was a teenager. She had just driven into Charleston and found Jackson's shop. Jackson remembered her and took her out to lunch. He asked her what she planned to do. She explained that she wanted to start her own shop. Jackson pointed out how difficult that would be and how she would need to get a job first. The two haggled, but Teddi was able to win him over when she explained all the plans that she had for his shop.

Teddi worked at the shop along with Albert, who frequently disappeared. Jackson warned Albert that if he disappeared again he would get fired. Things were good for a few weeks, but Albert eventually missed another shift. Teddi covered for him and did the repairs herself. Albert's job was saved, but Teddi thought he didn't care. At the end of the day, he gave her Blackjack Gum, the same gum that she had talked about sharing with her father.

Chapter 7

(flashback)

Teddi had been working for four years at Jackson's shop when her brother went missing. She returned home, hoping that there would be more news, but he wasn't found. Albert was supportive and started to talk more about his past. Things got worse when Jackson suddenly passed away. His shop went to his nephew, Elgin. Teddi tried to get Albert to buy a new shop with her, but he declined. He was back with his wife, Reba, and he didn't want to risk their finances. A month later, Elgin sold the shop to investors.

Chapter 8

(flashback continued)



Teddi had to get a job working at a restaurant. She wanted to start her own shop, but she just didn't have the money. She ran into one of her old customers, Tedra Calhoun, at the pharmacy. They started talking and Tedra brought Teddi to meet with her husband, Preston. Preston helped her form a business plan and apply for a loan. Teddi thought things were over when she had to have someone cosign the papers. Preston ended up signing, and in the present Teddi remarks that his decision to help changed her life.

Analysis

Chapter 5

Teddi goes into a little more detail about her relationship with her mother. She thinks that part of her mother's resentment comes from the fact that she just left in the middle of the night without properly explaining where she was going. The reader later learns that this is even more personal to her since she ended up losing Josh in the same way.

Miss Poteet is introduced for the first time. At first she appears to just be another minor character, but she's important towards the end of the book. Through Miss Poteet, Teddi ends up meeting and subsequently falling in love with Sam.

Chapter 6

Teddi starts to explain to the reader how she was able to get her business started. This shows her determination, since she had to work hard to prove to Jackson that she was worth hiring. Albert's character is explored more, which also helps to highlight Teddi's caring nature. She wants to cover for Albert because she believes that he has a reason for leaving. It's never sufficiently explained, but it's hinted that Albert kept leaving because of the problems he was having with his wife, Reba. Teddi knows that he's a hard worker, so she doesn't want to see his job destroyed, especially because she recognizes how skilled and passionate he is.

Blackjack gum, as a symbol, shows up at the end of this chapter, when Albert offers it to her as a way of thanking her for covering for him. Blackjack gum was something that Teddie shared with her father, and to her it represents caring, and someone who listens and understands. When Albert offers this to her, she knows that he has been listening to her and he knows and acknowledges what she did for him.

Chapter 7

Josh going missing is officially confirmed. It was hinted at in some of the previous chapters that he was no longer a part of their lives, but it was never outright stated that he disappeared. Teddi doesn't focus too much on his disappearance in this chapter, but it ends up being a prominent plot point throughout the rest of the chapters.

The main focus of the chapter is Jackson passing away, demonstrating the theme of Loss. Teddi had earlier tried to convince him to leave the store to her, suggesting to the



reader that was how she acquired her business in the present. Things don't work out for Teddi, and the business instead goes to one of Jackson's nephews, who sells the shop off to investors.

Chapter 8

This chapter acts as another example of how determined Teddi is. She didn't give up when she lost her job at the store. She kept working at any job she could get, determined to save enough up so she will be able to get her own store. Her hard work is recognized by the Calhoun's, and Preston helps Teddi to achieve her dreams. This has a meaningful impact on Teddi's life. She's touched that Preston was willing to help out a total stranger, and she wants to return the favor at some point in her life.

The cosigned papers have special significance in this chapter as a symbol, as well. To Teddi they represent the hope that she has for her own future, and it shows that Preston believes in her ability to make her dream a reality.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Loss.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the symbolism of the Blackjack gum.

Discussion Question 3

How did Jackson's death affect Teddi?

Vocabulary

mended, cornice, gouges, tureen, sacrilege, meticulous, amicable, veneer, solvent, tarnish, curmudgeonly, emphasis, beneficiary, etiquette, cantankerous, exuded, asphyxiated, decanter, euphoria



Chapters 9-12

Summary

Chapter 9

Teddi goes to visit her grandmother, Belle, who lives in a retirement home. Belle had come to visit Teddi several years ago and fell in love with Charleston. Because of her old age she suffers from severe arthritis and has to live at a retirement home. Teddi is sad because the arthritis means her grandmother can't garden anymore, but Belle, as always, is in good spirits during the visit. Teddi returns to work after the visit and gets a call. After the call, she's very excited and calls her best friend Olivia, telling her that they have to meet so she can tell her about the phone call.

Chapter 10

Teddi meets with Olivia. The two had met several years ago and bonded over their mutual love for collecting. Olivia runs a very successful business collecting and selling rare books. Teddi identifies the caller from the last chapter as her mother. She has finally agreed to have Teddi pick her up for a visit. Olivia is excited to meet her and promises to make dinner for them. The two talk about their past relationships, and Teddi worries that she's too happy being alone.

Olivia is happy not being in a relationship because of her past failed marriage. Teddi goes down to pick up her mother, happy to see that she's already started to pack. Her mother is not there when she arrives and is told that she is out getting ready for the trip. Teddi starts reading through a magazine while she waits, and her happiness fades when she reads an article about parenting and naming children.

Chapter 11

(flashback)

Teddi thinks back to the summer of 1959, right before her brother was born. Her mother was very stressed and upset, talking about how miserable Teddi would be when she grew up. A few weeks later, Josh was born, and Teddi was the one that officially named him. As Josh got older, he became more fascinated and knowledgeable about nature. The chapter ends with Teddi saying she didn't realize how connected her brother was to nature until she returned home for his 17th birthday.

Chapter 12

(flashback continued)

This chapter takes place in the past. Teddi had returned home to see her family, and found that Josh was excited because he was nursing a rare albino hawk to health. Teddi



realized after he was able to nurse the hawk back to health just how connected to nature Josh was.

In the present, Teddi feels bad because she misses Josh. Her mother had told her before that she had to get over his death, but Teddi wasn't convinced he was dead. When she was younger, she would leave messages in waterproof containers for him in the woods. Whenever she'd check them, the letters would be gone, but she never received a response.

Analysis

Chapter 9

Teddi's close relationship with her grandmother is shown by the fact that Teddi has been supporting her for the last few years. Belle doesn't do much at this point in the book, but she becomes more relevant in later chapters.

Teddi gets a mysterious phone call, which the reader later learns was her mother. Teddi's mother has finally agreed to go to Charleston to see where Teddi works and lives, something that she has never done before no matter how many times Teddi asked.

Chapter 10

Olivia is introduced to the reader. She shows up several more times as a supporting character and later helps to demonstrate the theme of Judgement. Olivia is important to the reader because she often asks questions that they want to know the answers to. In this chapter, she's the one that asks about the mystery call, and the reader is able to discover that it was Teddi's mother calling.

Teddi mentions feeling happy even when she isn't in a relationship. She worries that this makes her abnormal, but it just shows that she's able to achieve happiness without relying on someone else, which is another theme of the book. When Teddi goes to see her mother she finds a magazine article that makes her sad. It's never clearly stated why she's sad. It could be because she feels like she's missing out on something by not being a mother herself. It might just be making her unhappy because it makes her think about the troubled relationship that she has with her mother. It also could just be making her think of Josh, which would also cause sadness.

Chapter 11

Teddi's mother has been shown as being cynical before, but this is the first example where she acts outright depressed and the scene hints at her suicidal nature. Readers are given the impression that it might just be because of the stress of being pregnant, but Teddi expounds on her depression in later chapters. Josh's connection with nature is brought up again, which foreshadows his eventual fate as a forest vigilante.



Chapter 12

Josh nurturing the hawk is just another example of how close he is with nature, and how knowledgeable he is about the forest and all the animals. This helps to explain how Josh becomes the man he is in the future. Teddi starts to explain to the reader about how much she misses her brother, something that she claims to struggle with every day. This touches upon the theme of Loss. Teddi is the only one that believes Josh is alive. Because of that, she can never let go of him, so she's constantly suffering and thinking about him. This denial is shown by the way that she continues to leave letters for Josh in the woods. The letters, literally, represent Teddi's link to her brother and her belief that he isn't dead.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Loss in these chapters.

Discussion Question 2

What is the symbolism of Teddi's hidden letters to Josh?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Teddi's mother. How is she similar to Teddi? How is she different? How would you describe their relationship?

Vocabulary

serene, alimony, ante, disintegration, imperceptible, dapper, unison, altitude



Chapters 13-16

Summary

Chapter 13

Teddi gets a call from Stella, her mother's best friend. They were coming back from the stylist, explains Stella, but Teddi's mother started complaining about not feeling well. Stella took her to the hospital and they are running tests, Stella tells her. Stella tries to insist that Teddi's mother is fine, but Teddi can tell that the older woman is worried.

Teddi rushes over to the hospital. The doctor tells her that her mother has had a mini stroke. Teddi's mother isn't that concerned. The doctor goes on to say that her blood pressure is incredibly high, and she's in danger of having another stroke. Teddi's mother admits that she hasn't seen a doctor in years, which worries both Stella and Teddi. They spend the rest of the night with her. Teddi gets ready to leave and wants to tell her mother that she loves her. She's afraid she won't return the sentiment, so she instead opts to blow her a kiss when she leaves, an affection that her mother returns.

Chapter 14

Teddi returns home and goes to sleep. When she wakes, she talks to Olivia and tells her about what happened. Olivia promises that Teddi can call and talk to her whenever she wants. Teddi tells her grandmother next, but she plays it off as not being a big deal, since she doesn't want her grandmother to worry. Teddi returns to the hospital, but when she gets there the doctors are rushing off towards a room. Teddi panics when she sees that they're going to her mother's room. When she gets there it's too late and her mother has died.

Chapter 15

Teddi is still reeling from the sudden death of her mother. She discovers that her mother wanted to be cremated. After the service, Teddi ends up taking the urn with her on the way back to Charleston, the last trip that her mother would ever take. Teddi goes to the nursing home so she can tell Belle about what happened. Belle is devastated, but she tells Teddi that she believes her mother was very proud of her as a daughter. Teddi is dubious of that statement.

Chapter 16

It has been several weeks since Teddi's mother passed away. She's still mourning her loss and things around the store are naturally grim because of it. Olivia shows up to bring Teddi and Albert to a yard sale with the hopes of finding something valuable that's worth fixing. Teddi is instantly taken with an old chest, even though it's in poor condition. She feels a connection and begs Albert to help her repair it. Albert is reluctant at first, but when she says it would just be for her, he agrees to help her restore it.



Analysis

Chapter 13

Teddi still clearly cares about her mother when she rushes off to the hospital. Teddi wants to talk to her mother about everything that's gone on between them all of these years, but she knows it isn't the right time. Teddi's mother acts like her medical condition isn't a big deal. The reader knows otherwise, but they're under the impression that this will just be a wakeup call that allows Teddi and her mother to start to repair their damaged relationship. This ends up proving false in the next chapter. Teddi and her mother do get to at least exchange a little gesture of love towards one another when Teddi blows her mother a kiss, something that she returns. This gesture represented the fact that even though things were estranged between them, they still cared for one another.

Chapter 14

Teddi losing her mother marks a big change in her life, and there are several chapters which focus on her dealing with the loss. The theme of Loss is poignant in this and the following chapters. Not only is she losing her mother, but she's going to have to deal with the family farm, which covers another one of the plots of the book. Teddi also starts to learn more about her mother after she passes, which helps to bring up several themes later on in the book.

Chapter 15

Some of Teddi's fears about her mother are dispelled when she goes to talk to Belle. Belle assures Teddi that her mother loves her, but Teddi has her doubts because of how fractured their relationship is. This later prompts Teddi to learn more about her mother through Belle. The theme of Loss is demonstrated in this section, too, as Belle learns that she's outlived her own daughter.

Taking the urn with her to Charleston is an example of dramatic irony in that this was the journey that Teddi had hoped to take with her mother when she was alive. Now, they make the trip together, but the discussion and reconciliation that Teddi had hoped would come from the visit, most likely won't happen.

Chapter 16

Teddi's unique way of looking at antiques is brought up again. She looks at the damaged chest and can see the beauty behind it. She begs Albert to help her restore it. Albert agrees because he can see how passionate Teddi is about the chest, plus he wants to be supportive after she just lost her mother. For Teddi, restoring the chest is exactly what she needs because of the pain she was feeling from her mother's death. She's still trying to grieve and process that her mother is gone, so it's natural that she's craving a new project.



Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Loss in these chapters.

Discussion Question 2

What are Belle's insights in regards to Teddi's mother?

Discussion Question 3

What is the symbolism of the blown kiss between Teddi and her mother?

Vocabulary

ailment, transient, incredulous, absurdity, creel, filigreed, quarrel, somber



Chapters 17-20

Summary

Chapter 17

Teddi is eager to get to work on her new chest, but she still has to deal with the farm in Kentucky. Olivia goes with her to help her pack everything up. Teddi is having a hard time because she doesn't want to sell the farm that has belonged to her family for so long. While cleaning the house, she finds a newspaper clipping from almost two years after Josh went missing. Teddi says she wishes Josh was there to take over the farm. Olivia asks why he left in the first place, and Teddi gets ready to tell his story.

Chapter 18

(flashback)

Jackson had given Teddi and Albert two weeks of paid vacation. She decided to go back to visit her family. While there, she was surprised to see how much Josh had grown. He told her that he had been watching a pair of ravens in secret, which was a big deal because they were supposed to be endangered. He didn't want her to tell anyone because he was afraid if people knew they'd all come down to see and scare them away.

Later, Teddi went out to get some items from the store for her mother. On the way back from the store, she saw someone beating a dog. She tried to stop him, but in a crazed rage he chased her and attacked her car. She got home and told her father, who in turn called the police. Josh and Teddi wanted to rescue the dog, but their dad wouldn't let them, saying it was up to the law to handle things now, which clearly angered Josh.

Chapter 19

(flashback continues)

This chapter takes place in the past. Josh left the house after Thanksgiving dinner. When he returned, he was covered in blood and clutching the abused dog from earlier. Teddi named the dog Buddy and they tried to treat it, but it was too late. They buried the dog and Josh was ready to go over and kill the abuser. He was stopped by his father. The two argued, but Josh begrudgingly returned to his room. The next morning, Teddi got a note from him saying not to go looking for him. She ran out into the woods calling out for him, but he was already long gone.

Chapter 20

(flashback continues)



Things were rough for Teddi's family for the next year. Teddi's mother blamed Teddi and Belle for inspiring rebellious behavior in Josh, but Teddi's father just blamed himself. It felt like nobody spoke to one another, but things gradually began to get better.

Back in the present, Teddi tells Olivia about the article she found. It is about a forest vigilante that went after a poacher for killing a fox. There were plenty of other stories about a vigilante going after poachers and hunters. Teddi believes that this is Josh. The next day, she takes Olivia up to the mountains, enjoying the trip because of how relaxing it is.

Analysis

Chapter 17

Olivia once again acts as a surrogate for the reader. Teddi has mentioned that Josh left, but she hasn't really gone into any detail as to why. Olivia seems to be as in the dark as the reader, so she's able to ask Teddi to finally expand on what happened, giving readers the chance to learn more about Teddi's complicated family history.

Teddi also goes into more detail about the farm, something that she hadn't focused on too much after losing her mother. Teddi knows that she's going to have to give up the farm, something which hurts her because of how long it was in her family. The theme of Letting Go is introduced in this chapter, through many of the past grievances that Teddi had with her mother, and in concern with what to do about the farm.

Chapter 18

Josh's connection to nature is brought up again. As an adult, Josh has become obsessed with nature. He's completely knowledgeable about everything to do with the environment and completely focused on animal welfare. He seems distant from any human, with the sole exception of Teddi. When Teddi witnesses the animal abuse it sets something off within Josh.

It's implied that Josh has been struggling with his spot in humanity ever since Teddi left. The animal abuse is just another reason for him to abandon his life on the farm and go into the woods where he feels more comfortable and where he feels that he can do more good in the world. In many respects, the theme of Freedom is demonstrated in this act by Josh. He, like Teddi, is choosing to follow the calling of his own heart, rather than stay on the farm and become someone he knows he isn't.

Chapter 19

Josh finally snaps when he learns about the fate of the dog. He intended to rescue it from the abuser, but it is too late, and despite his best efforts the dog dies in Josh's arms. Josh feels that if things had been different he would have been able to save the dog. He was restricted by the sheriff, who told Josh and his family that they shouldn't do anything. Josh even blames the sheriff for allowing it to happen in the first place. In his



mind, Josh has to become his own kind of law in order to protect nature. Josh shows his violent side when he talks about killing the abuser, which foreshadows his later actions.

Chapter 20

The end of Teddi's story touches upon the theme of Letting Go. Teddi's family initially struggled with losing Josh. Nobody was talking in the house, and everyone was torn up with guilt. Over time, they were able to accept that Josh was gone and they started to talk to one another again. Teddi never really got over losing Josh as she explains to Olivia. Teddi is only able to have closure at the very end of the book when she finds out what happened to Josh and can finally accept that he's no longer a part of her life.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Letting Go in these chapters.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the character of Josh.

Discussion Question 3

How does Olivia, as a character, function within the novel's structure?

Vocabulary

churned, deity, soot, disking, dilapidated, vibrant, draped, abide, atrocity, belligerent, magnitude



Chapter 21-25

Summary

Chapter 21

Teddi sends Olivia away while she finishes up in the house. She thinks about how unhappy her mother used to be in life, and how she hated to dwell on the past. Teddi decides she's not going to be like that. While she is going through her mother's things she finds a beautiful and elegant nightgown that she knows her mother never wore. She wonders why. She loads up her car with everything that she can possibly carry because she doesn't want to forget about her mother, just like she doesn't want to forget about her father or Josh. She reveals that the reason she was never able to buy a house like her mother wanted was because she was helping to front the bill for Belle's retirement home. She muses angrily that her mother might have figured that out if she had ever come down to see where she lived.

Chapter 22

Teddi returns to work and has to deal with a difficult customer who is trying to buy one of her chests for far less than it's worth. She doesn't let him intimidate her and manages to sell it for the full value. Moments later, an older gentleman comes by, looking to sell some of his items because he has to move. Normally Teddi doesn't deal with that kind of merchandise, but she can tell the old man is desperate. She ends up finding a telescope that she likes, as well as a teddy bear. She gives him several hundred dollars for both items, more than he initially asked for. She puts the telescope on sale at her shop and takes the bear home for herself.

Chapter 23

Several months have passed since Teddi lost her mother. Things are rough because business has slowed down. Teddi has to dip into her savings just to pay for rent and to keep her employees paid. Earlier in the year she had made two large purchases. Both of the antiques she bought were very valuable, but they haven't sold. Fortunately for Teddi, a rich older gentleman comes into the store and buys one of the antiques for \$40,000.

Things are better for a while, but Teddi knows she's just delaying the inevitable. She gets a phone call and afterwards leaves to go for a walk. Olivia runs into her, having gone looking after Inez, Teddi's employee, called. Teddi explains that she got a call from a farmer who wants to buy the farmland from her. Olivia thinks this is a good thing because it will help Teddi's money problems, but Teddi is having a hard time with it because she doesn't want to part with the land that had belonged to her family. After having lunch with Olivia, she goes to see her grandmother.

Chapter 24



Teddi goes to see Belle, her grandmother. Belle is upset about the way one of the new nurses is treating her, since she won't let her have treats. Teddi angrily demands that the nurse let her grandmother eat whatever she wants. Afterwards, she talks to her grandmother about selling the farm. Belle is okay with Teddi selling the farm. She talks to Teddi about her mother. Teddi is surprised to learn that her mother had dreams of being a nurse, but Belle wasn't able to afford to send her to school. Belle also tells Teddi that her father had a hard time coming back from the war, and suffered from PTSD, but Teddi's mother helped him get through it. She explains that the nightgown that Teddi found was what Teddi's mother bought to wear for Teddi's father after the war, but his PTSD was so bad she never was able to.

Chapter 25

Teddi goes to the farm to prepare it to sell it. Mr. Tucker arrives with his grandson, Gabe. He's helping her with all of the remaining assets on the farm. While she's going through the barn she finds a hidden arrow. Teddi momentarily panics, remembering the article about the forest vigilante, who was rumored to use a bow and arrow. She hides it from Mr. Tucker and retreats to Josh's room. She remembers some of the students that said he had a hard time at school because so many of the students thought he was strange. Teddi is interrupted by Mr. Tucker's grandson, Gabe. The two briefly talk about hawks, and Teddi finds out that Gabe is interested in nature. When they leave, Teddi feels like there's something special about Gabe.

Analysis

Chapter 21

Teddi touches on the theme of Letting Go, though she has a warped view of it. She thinks that her mother just gave up on Josh and didn't want to remember him. The truth is that her mother did remember everything about the past. She said she didn't like to dwell on it, but that's because of her depression, not because she wanted to forget about anything that happened.

The theme of Family is demonstrated in this chapter, too, as Teddi learns more about her mother and also realizes that her mother purposely disconnected from her for some reason. This desiring connection with relatives indicates the author's definition of what a Family should be.

Teddi lets some of her anger towards her mother show, something that hadn't really happened since her mother died. She's upset that her mother never knew anything about her life, like the fact that she was working so hard to provide for her grandmother.

Chapter 22

Teddi's strength and stubbornness are shown when she confronts the difficult customer. She isn't going to let herself be intimidated, and she's determined to get a fair price for the products that she worked so hard to restore. Teddi's love for antiques is also shown



when she works with the old man who is selling some of his items. She's drawn towards two items, one that ends up being valuable, and one that she just thought had meaning. Teddi is quite taken with the telescope.

Chapter 23

Teddi's money issues are briefly touched upon. This ends up being something of a red herring at first, since before the chapter is even finished she sells one of her largest pieces and doesn't have to worry about her rent or paying her employees. What Teddi is worried about is the fact that she isn't able to afford a house, something that she's wanted to do for some time. This is also a call back to the conversation that Teddi first had with her mother in the very beginning of the book. It could be that Teddi wants to get a house now because she knew that it was something her mother always wanted her to do.

The theme of Letting Go is demonstrated, again, in this chapter when Teddi talks about her struggles with selling the family land. Teddi doesn't want to let go of the land because it's the last thing that she has which belongs to her family. She doesn't want to feel like she's betraying them or their memories. Teddi goes to visit her grandmother hoping to get some advice on what she should do.

Chapter 24

Teddi's respect for her grandmother is shown with how protective she is regarding the nurse. Teddi refuses to let anyone disrespect her grandmother, even going so far as to threaten the nurse if she gives her grandmother any trouble in the future.

Teddi and Belle start talking about the past. Teddi learns for the first time that her father wasn't as perfect as she believed. She knew that he fought in the war, but she had no idea that he suffered from PTSD. She's also surprised to learn that her mother wanted to be a nurse. Teddi is finally starting to see why her mother acted the way she did, and what caused her so much depression.

Speaking with Belle covers the theme of Loss and how those losses shape and direct one's life. Belle explains what Teddi's mother had given up, which helped to explain her depression. It also helps Teddi justify selling the farm, putting her at ease since she knows that she can't properly take care of it.

Chapter 25

Teddi finds a homemade arrow. She panics because she's worried that if anyone else finds it they'll be able to put two and two together and figure out that Josh is the forest vigilante. Teddi doesn't want anyone to discover this, since what Josh is doing is illegal. She doesn't want anyone going after her brother.

The arrow, itself, is symbolic and representative of her brother, but it is also a specific vehicle for reaching a target. In this case, its symbolic target is Teddi.



Teddi very briefly runs into Gabe. She feels like there's something special about him. Readers might think that this is foreshadowing a potential relationship given what Teddi was talking about earlier. That ends up not being the case, as Gabe is already married. The connection has more to do with the fact that Gabe and Josh are very similar, as Teddi soon learns.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Loss in these chapters.

Discussion Question 2

Why is Teddi so ambivalent about selling the family farm?

Discussion Question 3

What does Teddi learn about her parents that she never knew?

Vocabulary

barometer, chortled, galvanized, reverently, placid, spiel, belittling, stifle, bewildered, renovation, introspective, articulate



Chapters 26-30

Summary

Chapter 26

Teddi finalizes the details and sells off the farm land. She runs into the Tuckers again who are fixing things up in the barn and removing all of the old equipment. Teddi talks to Gabe again. She finds out that he knows a great deal about the wilderness. She asks how long someone could potentially survive if they had the right skills in the woods. Gabe says it would be possible for them to survive their whole life in there, he just doesn't know why they'd want to. Teddi spends another hour talking to him about her brother. She asks for him to meet privately the next day. She gives him a notebook and her work and home phone number, telling him that he can call anytime he wants, but they need to keep their conversations between the two of them.

Chapter 27

Teddi returns to the shop to find good news. The last few days she had been gone, everything was selling. Inez did have some bad news; the telescope that Teddi had acquired was stolen. Teddi is having a hard time being upset since all the other sales more than make up for that. That night, she has dinner with Olivia. Olivia tells Teddi that she found a perfect house for her. Teddi is still hesitant about buying a house and points out that half the money she got from selling the farm should go to Josh. Olivia tries to insist that Josh is gone, but Teddi doesn't want to hear it. The next day, Teddi gets a call from Gabe. Gabe is talking about the deal that they made, and if Teddi is sure. Teddi says she is and she'll have the paperwork drawn up soon.

Chapter 28

Teddi goes dress shopping with Olivia and her mother, preparing for a date that Olivia has later in the evening. Later that night, Olivia shows up at Teddi's, saying her night was cancelled because her date was sick. She sees that Teddi is drawing up legal papers, and Teddi explains that she's giving the Kentucky house and barn away to Gabe. Olivia is surprised, but Teddi feels like it's the right thing to do. They end up going out and run into Olivia's date. Olivia is upset and humiliated that he lied. Teddi tries to comfort her, and Olivia admits she's afraid she'll never marry again. Teddi tells Olivia that she's too picky and judgmental. Olivia is initially upset, but Teddi points out the only reason they became friends is they got to talk after Olivia had written Teddi off as being simple. Olivia reluctantly agrees and the two return to Teddi's.

Chapter 29

Business has picked up at the shop and Teddi is extremely pleased. Teddi is invited by Gabe to go to a fundraiser at the farm, which she agrees to. At the shop, Teddi discovers that the shoplifter, Miss Poteet, has been caught at another store, and now



her son is having to have her locked away in the house. Teddi feels bad for her and brings over one of the boxes she liked. Teddi meets her son, Sam, who seems surprised and genuinely touched that she came to drop off the box.

Chapter 30

Teddi goes down to the farm. She's happy to see that it's being well taken care of by Gabe and his wife. Gabe shows her the renovations he's made, as well as the barn full of injured animals that he's been taking care of. Teddi is initially overwhelmed when Gabe shows her a hawk he's taking care of, since it reminds her of the one Josh took care of when he was much younger. Teddi goes into the woods and has a hard time since she misses Josh. She leaves a note for him in the woods where they used to hang out as children. She writes about selling the farm and everything that happened with their parents, and that she still misses him and wants to talk to him.

Analysis

Chapter 26

At first, Gabe seems like he's just a minor character, but by the end of the chapter it's clear that he'll play a bigger role. Teddi makes a secret deal with Gabe, something which seems to be very surprising given the way that he reacts. Readers will likely think that it has something to do with her missing brother, but they later learn that Teddi is planning on giving him the farm so he can turn it into a clinic.

Teddi getting rid of the farm also covers the theme of Letting Go. Teddi was trying to hold onto the memories of her family. She didn't want to disrespect them by getting rid of the farm, but after talking to Belle she realizes that it's okay to let go of the farm. It is shown that Letting Go can have a healing effect on those willing to engage in it. By letting the farm go, a great deal of benefit will come of it for both Teddi and Gabe.

The theme of Loss is demonstrated in this chapter, both in the loss of the farm and in Teddi's memory of losing her parents and Josh. However, she is beginning to heal when she allows the farm to go to Gabe, whom she know will keep it the way her family would have liked.

Chapter 27

Teddi's telescope goes missing, a plot point which doesn't get resolved for some time. Teddi eventually discovers that Miss Poteet was the one that stole it because she wanted to give it to Sam. Because Sam loved the gift, Teddi never tried to take it back. To her, it was also a sign that they had something in common, since they both recognized how beautiful the telescope was.

Olivia brings up the theme of Letting Go again. While Teddi has gotten some closure with her family, she's still clinging on to the belief that her brother is alive. While she has



found some potential evidence, there's nothing to suggest that Josh is still alive, since it's been some time since the forest vigilante was last active.

The mysterious deal with Gabe is brought up again. Readers are given a small clue that it has something to do with legal issues, since Teddi says she has to get papers drawn up.

Chapter 28

Once again, Olivia acts as a surrogate for the audience. Olivia spots the papers and asks Teddi what is happening. Teddi explains that she wants to give the land to Gabe so he can use it to start an animal clinic. Olivia is surprised that Teddi is giving away the land for free, especially given the past money problems that she has had. Teddi explains her reasoning, referencing the time that Teddi herself received help with starting her dream.

Olivia also brings up the theme of Judgement with her failed date. Teddi points out that Olivia is quick to make snap judgments about people. She initially didn't care much for Teddi, but the two of them got the chance to talk and ended up becoming best friends. Teddi brings up a plumber that Olivia refused to date because of his profession. This later comes up again towards the end of the book when Teddi arranges for that plumber to meet Olivia again, and the two enter into a relationship.

Chapter 29

Miss Poteet is finally arrested, and Sam has no choice but to keep her confined to the house so she doesn't get up to any more mischief. Teddi feels bad for her and brings her one last gift. This leads to Teddi meeting Sam. At first this seems like an unimportant encounter, but Teddi later runs into Sam and the two end up hitting it off, in no small part because of the kindness that she showed his mother.

Chapter 30

Because Teddi hasn't accepted Josh's death, she's very vulnerable when Gabe shows her the hawk. The hawk reminds her of the time she spent with a younger Josh, who at the time was talking care of his own hawk. Her sadness for Josh causes her to go into the woods, the last place she has where she can go to feel connected to her brother. Teddi clearly still wants Josh to be part of her life, which is why she's leaving notes for him in the woods.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Judgement in Chapter 28.



Discussion Question 2

Discuss and compare Gabe to Josh. How does Teddi feel about each of them and how do their relationships with her differ?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Teddi leave notes for Josh in the woods?

Vocabulary

tethered, consolation, woe, garish, avian, perspire, opulent, plethora, frayed



Chapters 31-35

Summary

Chapter 31

Teddi goes to spend the evening at Stella's. They start talking about Teddi's mother. Stella said that her mother had really been looking forward to the trip because she wanted to apologize to Teddi for all the tension between them. Stella explains that Teddi's mother always had a hard time in life. She used to be full of energy, but taking care of Teddi's father slowly got rid of that. She was jealous that Teddi's father only snapped out of his depression when Teddi was born, as if being a father was more important to him than being a good husband. Teddi is surprised, but happy to hear that her mother really did love her. She and Stella scatter Teddi's mother ashes in Stella's garden, since Teddi felt it was only right that her mother be back home with her best friend.

Chapter 32

Teddi and Stella go to the fundraiser. Gabe has turned the farm into a rehabilitation clinic for animals. He's hoping that with additional funds he'll be able to teach people about nature as well as take care of injured wildlife. They surprise Teddi by naming the clinic after her missing brother. Teddi is touched, but also hurt because it just reminds her how much she misses Josh. Teddi is allowed to christen the clinic by releasing one of the hawks that Gabe has helped rehabilitate.

Chapter 33

The next few months are very difficult for Teddi. She becomes very withdrawn and doesn't want to talk to any of her friends. She goes out late at night for walks, trying to deal with the fact that Josh is no longer a part of her life. On one of her walks, Teddi spots an old looking house that's for sale. She takes a tour, realizing that the house is beautiful, but needs a lot of work. Teddi buys it and spends the next six months fixing up the house and turning it into her perfect dream home. This does wonders for her mood and once she finishes she feels happy again. She goes out to dinner and runs into Sam Poteet, who asks her out. Teddi is surprised, but agrees to go on a date.

Chapter 34

Teddi goes on her date with Sam. She's uncomfortable at first, but within a few minutes the two get to talk about their mutual love for restoration and instantly start to hit it off. Sam reveals more about his family life. He was actually adopted into the Poteet family at a young age. He took their name because he thought it would make them feel more connected. Miss Poteet did a good job raising him, but in her old age she has started to suffer from many problems, such as Alzheimer's. Teddi is surprised to find her missing



telescope in Sam's house, which he says was a gift from his mother. She's happy to see that he adores it, and Teddi can almost forgive Miss Poteet for stealing it.

Chapter 35

Several weeks have passed, and Teddi has been dating Sam, but keeping the relationship hidden. Her mood has drastically improved. She finally comes clean to everyone after Sam sends her flowers at work. They can tell how happy Sam is making her and approve of the relationship. When Teddi gets home, she gets a surprise call from Gabe. Gabe tells her not to watch the news. He explains that there had been a poacher, Leland Boles, roaming the woods and killing animals. Teddi is horrified. Gabe continues and tells her that they found the poacher. He had been shot by someone who used a homemade bow and arrow.

Analysis

Chapter 31

Teddi begins to heal from her mother's death. Stella adds onto some of the things that Belle was saying earlier, in regards to Teddi's mother. Teddi's mother did love her and her attempt to make the trip to see Teddi was because she was hoping that she would be able to mend their damaged relationship. Stella gives Teddi some more details about her father as well, talking about the darkness that he was facing when he came back from the war, and how Teddi's mother had to help him get through his PTSD.

The theme of Happiness is demonstrated in this chapter. Teddi's mother relied too much on her own family to make her happy, and then, solely, on her husband. Unlike Teddi, Teddi's mother wasn't ready to follow her dreams on her own, so she became very bitter and cynical towards everyone, blaming them for her unhappiness. The author seems to be suggesting that happiness must be something that is generated from within, not gained outside of one's self.

The theme of Letting Go is also touched upon in this chapter when Teddi and Stella both spread Teddi's mother's ashes across Stella's garden. This act, done together, also recognizes Stella's friendship with Teddi's mother. This chapter also would seem to suggest why Teddi's mother is never given a name. It may be because Teddi's mother never defined herself as anything else.

Chapter 32

This is another chapter that focuses on Letting Go. Teddi equates releasing the hawk to getting rid of the hold that her family had on the land, and the sad memories. Teddi understands that it's time for her to move on, so a new family can take over and forge their own memories. Gabe shows how grateful he is for everything that Teddi has done by naming the clinic after Josh.

Chapter 33



Teddi is struggling so much because all of the recent events have, once again, reminded her of Josh. The theme of Letting Go is demonstrated in this chapter, as well. Teddi hasn't been able to have any closure in regards to Josh, and after the reminder of him at the farm, she's keenly aware that he isn't a part of her life anymore. Teddi becomes withdrawn and depressed. This depression also touches upon the theme of Happiness. Teddi believes that she can only be happy if she has Josh in her life. She doesn't try and do anything to address her depression, and she just wallows. She's eventually snapped out of her depression when she runs into Sam again, and when she begins to fix up the house.

Chapter 34

Teddi and Sam instantly hit things off. Teddi can tell that he cares about restoration, not only from his car, but also from the telescope that Miss Poteet stole. Sam gives Teddi more insight into his complicated family life. This helps to explain the strange behavior of Miss Poteet and Teddi is able to overlook some of her past thefts.

Chapter 35

The most important thing in this chapter is the revelation at the end when Teddi discovers that the forest vigilante has become active again. The reader is easily able to piece together that the vigilante must be Josh, especially after Teddi discovered the arrow in the barn in the previous chapter. This again causes Teddi to think about Josh, which causes her to become depressed once again.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Happiness in these chapters.

Discussion Question 2

What does the discovery of the homemade bow and arrow suggest to Teddi?

Discussion Question 3

What has been causing so much of Teddi's depression?

Vocabulary

famished, stipulation, bazaar, disconsolate, obliged, oasis, lulls, dissertation, nonchalant, amputate



Chapters 36-40

Summary

Chapter 36

(flashback)

Teddi thinks back to her childhood. There was a winter where her brother was sleeping in the barn, which upset their mother. Teddi went out to bring him cookies. She stayed with him and he told her about hawks. He revealed he was staying outside so he could feed an old injured bobcat. Teddi told Josh that he was a good person and there was a special spot in heaven for him. Josh responded by saying that all he cared about was that he was with the animals.

Chapter 37

Back in the present, Teddi is still reeling from what she heard from Gabe. She goes through the notes that Josh had left her, and looks at the arrow she took from the barn. She then goes to the library to get a book on arrowheads, trying to compare the arrow she found to the ones that Native American tribes used to use. She isn't able to tell if the arrows are the same, and doesn't know what to think about Leland's murder.

Chapter 38

Teddi returns to work and gets a surprise visit from Sam, who invites her to breakfast on Saturday. Teddi agrees and Sam picks her up early that morning. Sam takes her to a navy field where a charity group has been setting up a carnival. Sam is one of the donors, so they let him in early. He takes Teddi to the top of the Ferris wheel and the two have breakfast and watch the sunrise together.

Chapter 39

Teddi helps Olivia renovate her kitchen. Olivia wants to make it less personal and quirky to her because she doesn't want a potential boyfriend to think she's strange. Teddi brings up a plumber that Olivia had previously rejected because she was being too judgmental. Teddi breaks her faucet so that Olivia will have a reason to call him.

Back at home, Teddi is worried and upset because it's been a few days since she spoke with Sam. She takes her dog out for a walk, and when she gets back she runs into Sam. Sam tells her how Miss Poteet had an incident the other day. She started to smash up the house and accused Sam of being a thief. He was forced to move her into a medical care facility and is having a hard time handling the stress, which is why he hadn't called Teddi.

Chapter 40



Teddi tells her grandmother about Sam, and Belle's happy she has someone in her life. Teddi and Sam meet up and sleep together. Teddi gets a call from the sheriff in Kentucky. They have found an injured man with a head injury and no ID, but he did have Teddi's recent letter on him. Teddi is overwhelmed and calls Sam to tell him everything about the arrow and the forest vigilante. Teddi is worried that Sam will leave because of her baggage, but he assures her that he loves her. He goes on to say that he was in a relationship before Teddi, but he ended it the night he saw Teddi because he knew he had to be with her.

Analysis

Chapter 36

Teddi thinks back to a memory she's only thought about once or twice before. She remembers Josh admitting that he basically didn't care at all about humanity. He considered himself to be more related to nature than he was to any other person. The only human he really seemed to be close to is Teddi, but even that was a strained relationship since he was still willing to break off all communication with her and the family.

Chapter 37

Teddi is clearly suspicious about the vigilante. She tries to learn more about whether or not it could be Josh, but her evidence ends up being inconclusive. It seems like Teddi is in denial, likely because she doesn't want to get her hopes too high. Based on everything that she's said in previous chapters, it makes sense that she would still hope that the vigilante is Josh.

Chapter 38

Teddi and Sam continue to grow closer. Teddi still isn't completely comfortable with Sam, which is why she doesn't bring up anything more that is going on with Josh. Overall, the chapter seems to serve as a small break for the reader and a chance to show that Teddi and Sam's relationship is growing.

Chapter 39

The theme of Judging Others is very briefly touched upon when Teddi talks about the previous conversation that she had with Olivia. Teddi takes matters into her own hands, forcing a meeting between Olivia and an acquaintance, a plumber. This ends up working out as Olivia and the plumber later end up in a relationship.

Teddi starts to have trouble with Sam. It's only been a few days since they spoke, but it makes sense that Teddi would be particularly sensitive to that, given everything else that she is going through. Sam explains all the difficulty that he's been facing the last few days. This pushes them closer together and eventually makes it possible for Teddi to share the details regarding her own life.



Chapter 40

The injured man immediately forces readers to assume that he is Josh, back from the dead, or at least, exile. Teddi spends a great deal of time and effort, and some research, to try and convince herself that Josh isn't dead. While she's moving slowly toward acceptance of his disappearance, she is not quite there yet.

Teddi finally feels close enough to Sam to start sharing details about her life. She explains everything that's going on with Josh and her belief that he's still alive and hunting anyone who he considers is a threat to nature. Teddi is afraid that Sam will leave her, but Sam comforts her and confesses his love for her.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Judging Others in Chapter 39.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss Sam and Teddi's relationship.

Discussion Question 3

What evidence does Teddi have that makes her think that the man in the barn is Josh?

Vocabulary

serrations, decanter, bewildered, retrograde, periphery



Chapters 41-43

Summary

Chapter 41

Teddi learns that the young man that was brought in wasn't Josh, but he had taken the letter because he knew about Josh and thought it had great historical importance. Teddi's relationship continues to get better with Sam. She takes Sam to meet her grandmother on her birthday, and Belle's quite taken with him as well. At the end of the night, Teddi tells Sam that she loves him too, and their relationship continues to grow stronger for the next few months.

Chapter 42

This chapter is titled as taking place in 1993, the first time that the present has been clearly established. Teddi's business is continuing to thrive and everyone is in good spirits. Teddi gets a call from Gabe, who explains how someone sneaked in and put an injured bald eagle in one of the cages. They also left a strangely wrapped package that had Teddi's name carved into it. Teddi is floored, wondering if it could be from Josh. Gabe has the package sent over to Teddi. When Sam asks about Teddi's day, she doesn't mention the package.

Chapter 43

Teddi finally gets the package from Gabe. She goes home to open it and finds several artifacts from her youth with Josh. There was also a woman's braid, which Teddi takes to mean that Josh isn't alone. Teddi wonders how Josh could have gone from being a sweet boy to a nature warrior, but she's strangely happy for him. She takes the arrow that she had found in the barn and drops it into the water, hiding it forever, but happy knowing that Josh is still alive.

Analysis

Chapter 41

Teddi and Sam cement the seriousness of their relationship when Teddi brings him to meet her grandmother. Even with all the chaos that's going on in her life, Teddi confesses her feelings to Sam, saying that she loves him, too. This chapter is meant to illustrate and lay the foundation that suggests that Teddi is coming into a good point in her life and many of her questions and problems are going to reconcile themselves. The theme of Happiness is introduced at this point and the author seems to be suggesting that happiness is something that one continues to find on a daily basis if one is aware of it.



Chapter 42

The present day setting is finally established. Some of the flashback chapters have mentioned the year, but there's never been a real point of reference to refer to in the present day until this chapter. Teddi finds out that someone managed to sneak an animal into the clinic. Teddi knows that this has to be Josh, since he has the skills to get into the farm given that he used to live there. It also makes sense that he would be bringing in an injured animal to receive proper care.

Gabe mentions that there were two sets of footprints, and Teddi learns in the next chapter that Josh apparently has a partner.

Chapter 43

Teddi is finally able to find the closure that she needs. Part of her is still sad that Josh isn't part of her life, but she finally understands that Josh isn't going to be coming back. She's able to let go of him, thus demonstrating the final act of Letting Go. She is content that he's embracing his freedom and doing what he wants. This brings up both the theme of Freedom as well as the theme of Happiness. Josh knew that he would be miserable trying to conform to society's norms, so he left and chased after the life he wanted in the woods.

Discussion Question 1

How does Josh let Teddi know that he is alive and well?

Discussion Question 2

When Teddi throws the arrow into the lake, what does this suggest?

Discussion Question 3

Compare Teddi at the beginning of the novel and how she is at the conclusion.

Vocabulary

epiphany, loiter, monogamy, druthers, capricious, downy



Characters

Teddi

Teddi is the main character of the book. Teddi is characterized as being independent, private, and very stubborn. Once she sets her mind on something, she's determined to get it. She doesn't back down when she wants to become an antique seller, even when her mother tries to push her down a different course. She's convinced that Josh is alive and refuses to let anyone tell her otherwise. Whenever she finds an antique that she wants, she gets it. Teddi is shown to be a very shrewd businesswoman, constantly able to haggle towards great prices.

Teddi can also be very whimsical, making decisions based solely on gut feelings. This is why she acquires several antiques and ends up giving her land away to Gabe. Teddi's whimsical side causes her to become sentimental towards certain people. Teddi shows a great love for her family, even though she and her mother had a fractured relationship.

Teddi is very sentimental, which is part of why she was so attached to antiques in the first place. She's able to see the beauty in them and imagines the rich history that they have, and she wants to be able to restore them to their beautiful state. In many respects, this attempt to restore beauty to the discarded things she finds is a metaphor for her own life; restoring her own inner beauty and healing her feelings of rejection from her mother.

Mama (Teddi's mother)

Teddi's mother is very cynical throughout the majority of the book. She shows clear signs of depression, even remarking to Teddi that she's thinking about taking her life, or that she won't be so lucky as to die when doing something potentially dangerous. Teddi's mother is also shown to be very controlling, trying to make Teddi into something that she doesn't want to be. She's also terribly judgmental towards Teddi's life, criticizing her for not having a home and ridiculing her about her business.

Teddi learns after her mother passes away that in her younger years she was full of life. Her family promised she'd be able to become a nurse, but when it came time for her to go to college they revealed they didn't have the money. This made her depressed. She met Teddi's father, but when he came back from the war he was a different person. He was troubled and suffered from PTSD for 12 years. Teddi's mother took care of him, but it took a toll on her. He snapped out of it when Teddi was born, and Teddi's mother was jealous that he seemed to care more about being a father and not about being a good husband.



Papa (Teddi's)

Teddi's father isn't explored as much as a character as her mother is. He's shown to be very supportive throughout Teddi's life, and he's the one that gives the money and the means to travel and eventually start her own shop. Teddi later learns that her father wasn't always so cheerful, and he went through a very dark period after he came back from the war suffering from PTSD.

Josh

Josh is Teddi's younger brother. As a child, Josh was fascinated with nature. He knew everything about the plants and animals, and he showed a great dislike towards poachers and anyone else that threatened the environment. Josh had a hard time in school because nobody seemed to understand him, in no small part because of his obsession with nature. Josh got along very well with Teddi, and the two of them were shown to be incredibly close before Teddi left.

Josh left his family when he was a young man and started living in the woods. He thought that he was essentially an embodiment of nature. Josh started to go after poachers and anyone he thought threatened the environment, hunting them down with a homemade bow and arrow. Josh implies that he has a partner living with him in the woods when he sends Teddi a package containing a braid from a woman's hair.

Stella

Stella is Teddi's mother's best friend. Teddi is very close to her, as well, and she mentions that Stella was always there for them when she was younger. Stella helps Teddi to deal with the loss of her mother, and together they scatter her ashes in Stella's garden.

Grandma Belle

Grandma Belle is Teddi's grandmother. She's very supportive of Teddi and ends up moving to Charleston after visiting her. Belle used to be a skilled gardener, but her arthritis made it so she wasn't able to garden in her old age. After Teddi loses her mother, Belle helps to tell her about what her parents were like before she was born. Teddi's mother often says that Teddi is more like Belle.

Jackson Palmer

Jackson is an antique dealer that runs into Teddi when she's still a teenager. She sells him an antique and he gives her his business card. After she graduates, she seeks out Jackson and gets a job with him. The two grow very close, and Teddi sees beyond his



grumpy exterior. Jackson cares a lot about his employees, and after his death Teddi discovers that he cared a great deal about his family as well.

Albert

Albert is an older gentleman that worked for Jackson and later became partners with Teddi. Albert, like Jackson, has a grumpy exterior, but he warms up to Teddi after she helps cover for him. There was a time where Albert would mysteriously go missing during work, supposedly because of problems that he was having with his wife, Reba.

Jane Poteet

Miss Poteet is a shoplifter that frequents Teddi's shop. Teddi eventually learns that she's suffering from a number of mental conditions, including Alzheimer's. Miss Poteet's adopted son, Sam, eventually has her confined to the house and later sent to a care facility when she gets out of hand.

Tedra Calhoun and Preston Calhoun

Tedra Calhoun is an older woman that used to be a client of Jackson's. Teddi runs into her at the pharmacy and mentions her plans to start her own business. Tedra introduces Teddi to her husband, Preston. Preston is a successful businessman who decides to cosign a lease for Teddi, allowing her to start her business.

Inez

Inez works for Teddi and helps her handle her finances. Teddi insists that the two of them are friends, however their only interactions shown in the book are at work. Both Olivia and Teddi speak very highly of her abilities and personality.

Olivia

Olivia is Teddi's best friend in Charleston. Like Teddi, she runs her own business selling antique books. Olivia is shown to be very passionate, but also very judgmental. She looks down on many people just based off of first impressions.

Olivia later reveals to Teddi that she's very lonely after divorcing her husband several years prior. She worries that nobody is ever going to want to be with her again. Teddi helps her get over her judgmental side and she eventually settles down with a plumber that she had previously rejected just based on his profession.



Sam Poteet

Sam is Miss Poteet's adopted son. He's a very successful lawyer that ends up falling for Teddi near the end of the book. Sam shares many of her interests, including a fondness for restoration. He cares a great deal about his adopted family. He enjoys sponsoring events that help other children because he remembers how hard it was growing up without his biological parents.

Creighton Sheedy

Creighton is the animal abuser that Teddi ran into when she was visiting her family in Kentucky. His abuse towards his dog is part of what sets Josh onto becoming a vigilante.

Gabe Tucker

Gabe is a nature enthusiast that ends up getting Teddi's old farm when she finds out he wants to turn it into an animal clinic. Gabe ends up naming the clinic after Josh, and he keeps Teddi up to date on what's happening in Kentucky regarding the forest vigilante.



Symbols and Symbolism

Bird Feathers

Josh constantly leaves bird feathers around with strange messages attached to them, which is his way of communicating with and showing affection towards Teddi. Teddi holding onto them shows the connection that the two siblings have.

Jackson's \$100

When Jackson purchases one of Teddi's restored antiques he pays her \$100, double what she was asking for. This represents the faith he had in her and explains why he told her to seek him out if she was ever in Charleston.

College Brochures

To Teddi's mother, the college brochures represent hope for Teddi, but for Teddi they make her feel trapped because all she wants to do is restore antiques.

Blackjack Gum

Blackjack gum is something that Teddi always used to share with her father. To her, it represents the close bond that they have. Albert getting her gum is his way of thanking her for helping to cover for him at work and his way of showing that he did listen to her when she spoke.

Teddi's Car

Teddi's car is a gift from her father after she graduates. He wants her to use it to explore the world. To both him and Teddi, the car represents freedom, which her father knows she craves.

Cosigned papers

When Teddi is trying to start her own business she needs to get someone to cosign for her loan. To her, the papers represent the hope she has for her business and the faith that Preston has in her.



Letters to Josh

Teddi keeps writing letters to Josh that she leaves in various spots they used to explore in the woods. These letters represent the hope that she has for her brother being alive.

Bronze Star

Teddi's father received a bronze star for fighting in the war. He told Teddi that it's so important to him because it represents freedom.

Mama's nightgown

When Teddi is going through the house after her mother dies, she finds a very expensive and lavish nightgown. She never saw her mother wearing it. She eventually asks Belle about it. Belle explains that her mother saved for months to get that for when Teddi's father got back from the war. She wanted something nice to wear, but she never got the chance because his PTSD was so bad. She kept it locked away in the house, representing her growing depression and cynicism.

Noah's flight

When Teddi releases Noah, the hawk, from Gabe's clinic, she feels like she's letting go of the land that once belonged to her family and passing it onto a new generation.



Settings

Kentucky (1960-90's)

Teddi's family farm is located in Kentucky. Teddi grew up on the farm and frequently returns at later parts in her life. She eventually gives the farm to Gabe so he can turn it into an animal clinic. Teddi's brother, Josh, lives in and patrols the forested areas in Kentucky.

Charleston, South Carolina (1970-90's)

Charleston is where the majority of the book takes place. Teddi has her home and business in Charleston. Her best friend, Olivia, also lives in Charleston, as does Teddi's boyfriend, Sam.

Audrey Clayton Home (1990's)

The Audrey Clayton Home is a nursing home where Teddi's grandmother, Belle, stays. Teddi visits her a few times throughout the book and pays out of pocket for her grandmother to stay.

Teddi's Dream Home (1990's)

Teddi discovers an old house for sale when she's taking her dog for a house. She can sense the beauty in it, even though it's basically falling apart. The realtor is surprised when she buys it, even offering to show her a more traditional home after she makes the offer. It takes several months, but Teddi is able to use her restoration skills to turn the house into a beautiful place to live.

Audrey Clayton Home (1990's)

The Audrey Clayton Home is a nursing home where Teddi's grandmother, Belle, stays. Teddi visits her a few times throughout the book and pays out of pocket for her grandmother to stay.



Themes and Motifs

Freedom

This theme is something that Teddi's father directly tells Teddi about when she's growing up. The theme is largely shown through Teddi growing up and acquiring her own business. Teddi's mother tries to push her into a job field that she isn't interested in. Teddi is trapped and feels like she has no choice, until her father gives her a bunch of money and a car. Teddi is able to leave the farm and use her new-found freedom to pursue her dreams, and is eventually able to start her own business.

The theme is shown in the opposite way through Teddi's mother. Teddi's mother is shown as constantly being miserable and even borderline suicidal. Teddi never understood why her mother was so unhappy. She eventually talks to her grandmother about it and discovers more about what happened. When she was younger, Teddi's mother had dreams of going to college. Her family couldn't afford it though, but she at least settled down with Teddi's father.

They had a good relationship at first, but when he came back from the war things were different because of his PTSD. He constantly shouted and treated her poorly. She stayed with him for 12 years until he finally recovered soon after Teddi's birth. Teddi learns that her mother was so miserable because she felt like her freedom was stripped away and her life was wasted.

Lastly, the theme is shown through the character of Josh. Josh is clearly unhappy as an adult, struggling with the way people are mistreating the environment, as well as the fact that nobody seems to understand him. Josh gets his freedom, like Teddi, when he runs away from home. Josh enjoys his new-found freedom and uses it to live out his dreams of protecting nature.

Judging Others

This theme is first shown through Teddi's mother. Teddi's mother is always judging her daughter about the decisions that Teddi makes. The very first chapter opens with Teddi trying to reconnect with her mother, but all she does is talk about how Teddi doesn't have her own home. She also judges Teddi on her business choice, insinuating that she doesn't have a real job. She always doubts how much money Teddi is actually making whenever Teddi talks about some of her big sales. This hurts their relationship and makes Teddi doubt whether her mom actually loves her.

The theme is also shown through Teddi at the very beginning of the book. Teddi is initially very judgmental about the Poteet family. She dislikes Miss Poteet because she thinks she's a no good shoplifter. She also dislikes Sam because she assumes that he's snooty and spoiled just based on their phone conversations. Teddi learns the truth about



Miss Poteet, and she eventually ends up falling in love with Sam after getting to know him.

The theme is demonstrated with Olivia as well. Olivia is miserable because she's alone. Teddi points out the reason that she's alone is because she always judges people and writes them off if they don't make a perfect first impression. Teddi points out an example with a plumber who asked Olivia out.

The plumber ends up also being an author, something that would naturally appeal to a book collector like Olivia. Teddi arranges a meeting between the two of them, and Olivia ends up in a happy relationship after letting go of her initial judgments of him being "just a plumber."

Loss

This theme is first shown when Teddi is trying to deal with the loss of her mother. Teddi doesn't know what to do, and she starts to feel a profound sense of loss when she's trying to clean up the house in Kentucky. While she's cleaning her house, she finds reminders of Josh, which just causes her even more pain. Teddi is eventually able to get over losing her mother and accept what happened, but it is something that takes time for her to accept and adjust to.

The theme is shown with Teddi's relationship with Josh. Teddi talks about how every day she misses her brother and how much it hurts her. Teddi is always grieving for him because she never actually found out what happened to him. He just disappeared and while everyone believes he is gone, Teddi thinks he's still out there. She's constantly missing him, but at the end of the book she's finally given closure and gets the chance to accept that he's no longer part of her life.

The theme is also demonstrated with the way that the rest of the family deals with Josh's disappearance. Teddi's mother and father believed that Josh was dead. The family was hurt for a year, barely talking to one another after he left.

Eventually, her parents are able to accept that Josh is gone and move on with their lives. They start talking to one another again. Belle and Teddi's father are able to move on, but Teddi's mother continues to hold resentment over Josh's disappearance because she never learns how to let go.

Letting Go

This theme is first shown when Teddi is learning about everything that her mother went through. Belle tells Teddi that her mother's life was shaped by all sorts of tragedies. Teddi's mother had to let go of her dreams of being a nurse because her family wasn't able to afford college. She wanted to be the first one to go through college, but it was just impossible. Instead, she settled for a relationship with Teddi's father. This ended up taking a toll on her because of his PTSD. Teddi's mother could have left him, but instead



she decided to stay, letting go of her chance at a happy life. The rest of her life is shaped by her letting go of her dreams.

The theme is also shown when Teddi decides that she's going to sell the family farm, which is when the theme is outright spoken in a discussion with Belle. Teddi is struggling because the farm has been in her family for generations. She knows how hard both her parents worked to keep the farm running, but she just can't handle it on top of running her own shop.

Teddi decides that she has to let go of the farm. By doing so, she's giving Gabe and his wife a chance to live out their dream and start an animal clinic, which Teddi knows will have a greater effect on the area because the animals need their support.

The theme is mostly strongly shown through Josh at the end of the story. Josh lets go of not only his family, but living in a civilization. He gives up everything normal about his life so he can embrace nature and become a protector of nature.

Happiness

This theme is once again shown through Teddi's mother. Teddi's mother blames everyone else for her being unhappy. The truth is that Teddi's mother is the one that decided to give up on her dreams. Even after Teddi's father gets better, she's miserable because she expects Teddi's father will make her happy, even though that hadn't happened during their 12 years together. Teddi's mother makes no effort to do anything she wants, or even to try and express what it is that she wants out of life.

Teddi shows this theme in a more positive way. When she was growing up she was determined to become an antique dealer. Unlike her mother, Teddi actually followed her dream and did everything she possibly could to achieve it. She started restoring items at a young age and researching more about restoring antiques. When she got an opportunity, she went out on her own and convinced Jackson to hire her. When Jackson passed away and they lost the shop, she kept working so she could start her own store.

This theme is also shown through Olivia towards the end of the book. Olivia admits that she's still hurt about her divorce from years ago. She realizes that she's been wallowing in self-pity, which has made her bitter and judgmental. She's able to let go of what happened in the past and stop wallowing in her self-pity. Her cynicism goes away and she learns to be happy with herself, which makes it so she can finally move on. She does end up getting in another relationship because that's what she wanted, but her happiness wasn't dependent on that relationship. Instead, she was able to have a relationship because she was able to finally be happy with herself.

The same can be said of Teddi's relationship. She's happy when she's with Sam, but her happiness isn't entirely dependent on being with him. In fact, Teddi even points out earlier in the book how she finds it strange that she is always so happy, even when she was alone.



Styles

Point of View

"Looking for Me" is told from the first person perspective of the main character, Teddi. This allows readers to experience Teddi's thoughts and actions, and how she's truly feeling about the events of the book. This is important since so many of the events involve Teddi being alone. Using the first person perspective like this makes it almost seem like the events are being directly narrated to the reader through Teddi.

Language and Meaning

Some of the language that is used in the book reflects the fact that it takes place in the South. Teddi even mentions once or twice how her southern heritage is a point of pride, which is reflected in her speech. Teddi also uses many terms that relate specifically to antiquing and restoration. The first time these terms are brought up are usually in the past when Teddi was learning how to restore. This way, the reader is just as inexperienced as she is, and it makes it feel natural when she explains the terms.

Structure

"Looking for Me" is structured in a very unique way. Certain chapters or sections will jump to something that Teddi experienced in the past after taking place in the present and then switch back to the present. Teddi's story is almost split up into separate parts. In certain chapters she will be focusing on her relationship with Josh, talking about how much she misses him and how she's struggling to get by without him.

The next chapter Josh won't be mentioned at all and Teddi will be perfectly happy but dealing with something that's going on in the store. Some chapters will also jump ahead several months in the present. Even the flashbacks occur in a sporadic fashion, sometimes going to her teenage years while other times going to even younger points in her life. Usually the flashbacks serve to highlight something that is going on in the present, such as flashing back to Josh whenever Teddi gets a hint that he might be alive or someone brings him up in the present.

"Looking for Me likes" to portray Teddi's reaction to events before the reader is given an indication of what happened. For example, when Teddi is getting rid of the farm she talks about getting phone calls and drawing up documents, but it isn't revealed exactly what she's doing until Olivia asks about it in a later chapter.



Quotes

I wanted to point out the hawk and tell her I was thinking about Josh, and I wanted to look directly into her eyes and say, We need to talk about him, Mama. We need to remember him and say his name.”

-- Teddi (chapter 1)

Importance: This is the first time that Josh is mentioned. It's implied that he's either missing or dead, which is one of the central conflicts throughout the book. This passage also implies that things are strained between Teddi and her mother.

In my imagination I could see the steady hands of a man working a piece of wood, carving each flower patiently and smoothing his fingers over what he'd just done. It was while we oiled that old chair and buffed it to a satiny sheen that I began thinking about what it might be like to fix up old furniture and sell it in my very own shop.”

-- Teddi (chapter 2)

Importance: This passage highlights the unique way that Teddi looks at the world and also explains her desire to start her own antique shop, something which she accomplishes when she grows up.

She pointed towards the road and stabbed the air with her finger. 'See that? Take a real good look and listen to me. That's not the Yellow Brick Road. Without training, you could end up stuck in a life you never wanted and no way to see yourself clear to change it.

-- Teddi's Mother (chapter 4)

Importance: Teddi's mother is dealing with her depression and cynicism towards the world throughout the book. This passage explains her general view and also foreshadows some of the difficulties that she had to go through when she was younger.

You're wrong, Mama. The world's beautiful, but you're so busy being disappointed in everything that you don't see it!”

-- Teddi (chapter 4)

Importance: This shows that Teddi doesn't see the world the same way like her mother does. Unlike her mother, Teddi refuses to give up and wants to pursue her happiness.

Freedom is the most precious thing you'll ever have, Teddi.

-- Teddi's father (chapter 4)

Importance: Teddi's father is directly stating one of the themes of the book, a lesson that Teddi learns and takes to heart throughout her adult life.

And now here I was all these years later, driving down the same road and feeling that familiar twinge of regret. Not for leaving home to go after my dream but for the thoughtless way I'd done it. Though Daddy claimed that Mama eventually got over it, I



knew she'd never forgiven me. Most likely she never would."
-- Teddi (chapter 5)

Importance: This passage shows the damage between Teddi and her mother's relationship and helps the reader understand why Teddi thinks there's so much tension between the two of them.

My brother belonged to the forest, its creatures, and all its mysteries. And they belonged to him."
-- Tedi (chapter 12)

Importance: This brief sentence foreshadows Josh's eventual change into the forest vigilante. It also shows how deep Josh's bond is with the forest and how he feels a deep bond to it.

How long I stood and looked at my mother, I don't know. But it felt like an eternity. Reaching beneath the blanket, I took hold of her hand. A smudge of the blush I'd applied the previous evening remained on her left cheek. The sight of it nearly brought me to my knees. Turning toward the window, I looked into the morning sky, so blue and bright with the promise of a new day. I wanted to rip it down and throw it away. I wanted black clouds, thunder, and unforgiving winds. I wanted the world to hurt like I did.
-- Teddi (chapter 14)

Importance: This shows how much pain Teddi is in at the loss of her mother, an event which has a large impact on the rest of her life.

Yeah. I was standing in the opening of a stone arch with my arms above my head. While I looked out over the valley and stretched my back, this strange current started traveling up my legs and went straight up my spine. It was like my whole body was getting rewired. Anyway, it's hard to explain, but I've been awake ever since."
-- Josh (chapter 19)

Importance: This is another example of Josh's mentality, and explains where his mind was when he decided to run off into the woods to be part of nature.

She turned, her dress getting soaked as the wind ripped through her hair. The look on her face startled me, eyes empty of light, skin as white as paraffin. "Don't worry," she said, opening the umbrella. "I couldn't possibly be that lucky."
-- Teddi's Mother (chapter 21)

Importance: This passage shows exactly how depressed Teddi's mother was. She considers herself unlucky because she wouldn't be struck dead by a bolt of lightning. While Teddi's mother has been depressed before, this is one of the first time she's outright said how much she hated being alive.

She'd been doing a lot of thinking We all do when we get to be this age, believe me. Last summer when you and your little dog left to drive back to Charleston, your mother



called me in tears and asked if she could come over. We sat right here where you and I are now and had a long talk. She felt real bad about some things- said it was time to stop holding a grudge and start being a mother.”

-- Teddi's Grandmother (chapter 31)

Importance: Teddi finally learns that her mother did in fact love her and felt bad about how their relationship had fallen apart over the years.

She looked at me with a sad smile. “I don’t know. Only you can figure that out. But try to remember something, Teddi: Never tie your happiness to the tail of someone else’s kite.

-- Tedi's Grandmother (chapter 39)

Importance: Teddi's grandmother is discussing another one of the themes of the book, that you can't rely on someone else for your own happiness.