

Pictures of Hollis Woods Study Guide

Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff

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Plot Summary

Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff is an emotional story about a little girl searching for a family. Hollis Woods is abandoned as a baby and spends her life being sent to various foster homes. Her story alternates between the time she spends with Josie Cahill and the summer she spent with the Regan family, who wanted to adopt her. Pictures of Hollis Woods is a heartwarming novel about a troubled girl finding a family who will love her.

In First Picture, Hollis draws a picture of a family for her homework assignment, which is to depict something beginning with the letter W, but her teacher marks it with an X because she does not understand that W is for wish or want. In chapter one, Hollis is sent to live with Josie Cahill, and when Josie takes Hollis to the canal in chapter two, Hollis decides to stay with Josie for a while. Second Picture shows Hollis meeting the Old Man and Steven, and in the Third Picture, they teach her how to fish. In chapter three, Hollis realizes that Josie forgets things sometimes, and Beatrice praises Hollis' artistic abilities in chapter four. In Fourth Picture, Steven takes Hollis halfway up Old Man's Mountain, and Hollis tells the Old Man about where she was found in the next picture. In chapter five, the social worker catches Hollis skipping school, and after Beatrice goes to New Mexico to paint in chapter six, the mustard woman plans to send Hollis to a new family in chapter seven, causing Hollis to convince Josie to run away to Branches in chapter eight. In the Sixth Picture, Steven teaches Hollis how to drive, and Hollis overhears the Old Man and Izzy planning to adopt her in the next picture.

In the Eighth Picture, the Regans tells Hollis of their plan to adopt her, which they celebrate with a cake in the Ninth Picture, and this is also when Hollis decides to climb the mountain and tell the world she has finally found a family. In chapters nine and ten, Hollis and Josie drive to Branches and break into the Regans' summer house. In chapter eleven, Hollis goes fishing, hiding when she notices a person across the river. She wonders what the Regans would think about her staying in their house in the next chapter. Hollis draws a picture of Josie and Beatrice as Josie's Christmas gift, but she realizes that Josie is sad and homesick. In the Tenth Picture, Hollis plans to climb the mountain and announce to the world that she belongs to a family, and in the next picture, she hurts her ankle when she climbs the mountain, but luckily, Steven drives the truck up the mountain to rescue her; however, the truck overturns and Steven is hospitalized. Hollis runs away in the Twelfth Picture because she fears she has ruined the whole family by trying to join them. In chapter thirteen, Hollis finds Steven's sweater on the shed doorknob, and after exchanging Christmas gifts with Josie in chapter fourteen, Hollis realizes that Josie wants to go home.

In the Thirteenth Picture, the Old Man tries to convince Hollis to come home, but she refuses because she knows he will continue blaming Steven for everything. Looking at the pictures she has drawn in chapter fifteen, Hollis realizes that Josie belongs with Beatrice and that the Old Man loves Steven whether she is with them or not. As Hollis walks to the nearest phone booth to call Beatrice in chapter sixteen, Steven pulls up beside her on a snowmobile, admitting that he has been providing her and Josie with



food because he knew she would come to the house in Branches as soon as he learned she was missing. Hollis admits she left the Regans because she blamed herself for the fights between the Old Man and Steven. Laughing at her, Steven asks Hollis to come home before giving her a ride to the phone. In chapter seventeen, Hollis calls Beatrice who agrees to come home and live with Josie, and when Steven calls Izzy, Hollis asks if she can come home. In the Fourteenth Picture, Hollis draws a family like in her W picture, but it is different because she is holding Christina, her six-week-old sister; Hollis finally has a family.



Section 1: First Picture and Chapter 1

Section 1: First Picture and Chapter 1 Summary

Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff is an emotional story about a little girl searching for a family. Hollis Woods is abandoned as a baby and spends her life being sent to various foster homes. Her story alternates between the time she spends with Josie Cahill and the summer she spent with the Regan family, who wanted to adopt her. Pictures of Hollis Woods is a heartwarming novel about a troubled girl finding a family who will love her.

First Picture, X, was cut out of a magazine when Hollis Woods was six years old because her teacher, Mrs. Evans, assigned homework to find a picture of words that begin with the letter "W", but Mrs. Evans marked the picture with an "X" because she saw a mother, father, brother and sister in front of a house but no words beginning with "W". Hollis wants to tell her it is for Wish or Want, but Mrs. Evans is already talking to the next child. When she thinks of her "W" picture, Hollis thinks about Mrs. Evans putting her in timeout because she did not deserve to be with the rest of the class that day, so while sitting and looking at a picture of a mountain, Hollis thought that someday she would build a house on a mountain like that and live there with a horse, a dog and a cat. Hollis walked out the door when she saw the principal coming down the hallway, and the lady she was staying with then, who she called the lemon lady, made her stay in the yard all weekend as punishment, not realizing that Hollis would be fine as long as she had paper and pencils. Hollis drew a picture of the lemon lady, tied it to a tree and used it for target practice. Mostly, her "W" picture reminds her of the Regans' house in Branches where there was a father, a mother, and a brother; on the morning she ran away from them, Hollis thought that they only needed a girl to match her picture. Running, Hollis stopped to look at the house, half hidden on the mountain by the Delaware, her river. She never thought she would see any of it again, so she drew an "X" over all of them and herself too.

In chapter one, Hollis is not bothered that she can tell the house is falling apart from the car window because all five houses where she has lived run together, unlike the house in Branches, Steven's house, which was different and she will never forget. After the mustard woman delivers her speech about how Hollis can start over here and be good since no one knows her, she informs Hollis that this woman is a retired art teacher and everyone at the agency says she is wonderful with children, but Hollis knows she means children like her. Emmy, the superstar of the agency, thinks this will be a good place for Hollis, and Mr. Regan wants her to have a chance to work on her drawings. The door opens, and a woman comes onto the front porch. Though she does not care what the woman looks like, Hollis cannot help but stare, as anyone would, upon seeing Josie Cahill who looks like a movie star and is holding a knife in her hand. Sitting straighter, Hollis is unsure whether to run or lock herself in the car as she imagines drawing Josie. Hollis grabs her backpack and hops out of the car, and they all stand there uncertainly until the social worker leaves. The woman invites Hollis to call her



Josie and introduces her to Henry, her irritable cat. Telling Hollis to drop her things, Josie leads her to the garden in the back of the house and shows Hollis the wood figures that Josie has carved, causing Hollis to realize Josie really is an artist. Josie says each figure takes weeks or even months, but she says she will do one of Hollis if she stays. Hollis is unsure what to say because she never stays in the same place for very long, even though they always find her eventually. Hollis tells Josie she is not sure, so Josie says that she and Henry will treat Hollis like the best company as long as she stays. Deciding to find a piece of wood anyway, Josie instructs Hollis to grab an axe and follow her into the woods. In her head, Hollis tells Steven that she may stay with Josie for a while.

Section 1: First Picture and Chapter 1 Analysis

First Picture, X, serves to introduce Hollis Woods, the narrator and protagonist of *Pictures of Hollis Woods*. Hollis describes how she failed a homework assignment in first grade because she drew a picture of a family when told to draw something beginning with a W. To Hollis, this picture adhered to the requirement because it depicted her want or wish, but the teacher did not see this abstract view of the assignment. This picture shows Hollis' great desire for a family of her own, and it makes recurring appearances throughout the novel as she tries not to think about her desire. Hollis also mentions living with the lemon lady and running away from that house. She alludes to the Regans' house, claiming she drew an X over the picture when she ran from them, indicating that she has given up on this desire when she gave up on becoming part of the Regans' family.

In chapter one, Hollis is seen as a lost child searching for a home. Her affiliation with Steven is seen in her comparison of the Regans' house to other houses where she has lived and in the fact that she often hears Steven talking to her in her head. In her head, Steven tells her not to think about it; she often pretends he is next to her and wonders whether he ever thinks of her. The mustard woman turns off the motor and announces that they have arrived. Hollis ignored her attempts at conversation during the drive, keeping her baseball hat low over her eyes since she once read that "if someone looks into your eyes... he'll see right into your soul. [She] didn't want anyone to see into [her] soul" (p. 5). The social worker drives Hollis to a new house belonging to Josie Cahill, a retired art teacher. She is sent here because Mr. Regan wants her to have the chance to draw. Hollis is indifferent to the owner of her new home until she notices the woman is holding a knife which intrigues the young girl. Josie shows Hollis her wooden figures, and Hollis is interested in Josie's art. Hollis is hesitant to agree to Josie's suggestion that she stay for a while, but in her head, she tells Steven that she may do just that.



Section 2: Second Picture and Chapter 2

Section 2: Second Picture and Chapter 2 Summary

Second Picture, Steven, is not one picture but ten because Hollis could never draw him right, though she can see him in her mind when she closes her eyes. On the first day, she took the bus to Branches to spend the summer with the Regan family because the stucco woman wanted "two months to do what I please and not have to worry about that kid getting into everything" (p. 131). As the bus lumbers up the main street of Hancock and stops in front of the diner, the driver tells Hollis they are there, so she gathers her belongings and exits the bus. A tall man leans against the diner wall while his son plays handball against the wall. Grinning, Steven introduces himself and asks how she got such a strange name, claiming he will call her Holly. Hollis tells him she is a year older than she is, pretending to be only one year younger than Steven, and Steven informs her that they are eating lunch at the diner while his mom, Izzy, makes carrot cake for dinner. He challenges her to checkers while they eat, obviously wanting to show her up, and Hollis lets him win a couple games. Steven tells Hollis that he calls his father "Pops", and when she says she will call him "Old Man", the Old Man tells her to try it, but she can tell he does not really mind. Though Hollis tries to draw a picture of Steven playing checkers with her that first day, she can never get it right, maybe because she saw for the first time what it might be like to have a brother.

In chapter two, after three weeks with Josie, Hollis' thumbs are blistered from clearing the grove of trees, but she does not mind. When Josie says they will build fires when it gets cold, they both wonder if Hollis will stay that long. Joining Josie one morning for breakfast, Hollis looks around the house and tells herself she will have a house like that one day. She has drawn the house, Josie with her scarf and Henry. Sounding pleased, Josie announces they are going to take a ride in the Silver Bullet, her car, today because she has something to show Hollis, and Hollis does not mind Josie forgetting she has school because it is Monday since she has only skipped two days so far, forging notes in Josie's handwriting. As Josie races down the street, she offers to teach Hollis to drive if she stays; it sounds like something Steven would say so Hollis tries to brush him from her mind. The Silver Bullet stops in front of the canal, and Hollis can see the Atlantic Ocean beyond the canal. Josie feels about the ocean how Hollis feels about the Delaware River, and Hollis thinks about fishing with the Old Man. As they walk along the jetty, Hollis has never smelled anything like that air, and she wonders if there is snow on the mountain yet as she looks at the water, telling herself not to think about the mountain in an attempt to suppress the ache in her chest whenever she thinks of Steven, the Old Man and Izzy. Hollis tells Josie that she will stay for a while so Josie can start on the tree figure of Hollis if she would like. Josie admits she has already began, and Hollis knows that Steven would ask her what she is doing.



Section 2: Second Picture and Chapter 2 Analysis

Second Picture depicts Steven, and Hollis describes when she first met him and the Old Man at a diner in Branches. The relationship between Hollis and Steven is familiar from the beginning with Hollis allowing him to win a few games of checkers. Hollis draws ten pictures of Steven because she can never get it quite right, and she suggests this is because she saw what it would be like to have a brother for the first time. This indicates that Hollis wanted to become part of the Regan family and foreshadows some event that caused her to run away from them.

In chapter two, Hollis describes living with Josie. She enjoys their time together. Josie takes Hollis to the jetty to see the ocean, and this reminds Hollis of her time at the Delaware River, causing her to think of the Old Man and again foreshadowing some event that caused her to run away from the Regans. Hollis tries not to think about the Regans, but they enter her thoughts constantly. She tells Josie she will stay for a while so Josie can begin carving a wood figure of Hollis, but Josie has already begun. Hollis knows that Steven would wonder what she is doing.



Section 3: Third Picture and Chapter 3

Section 3: Third Picture and Chapter 3 Summary

Third Picture, Fishing in the Delaware River, shows the river in front of the Regans' summer house with Old Man's Mountain on the opposite side. Steven warns Hollis that she will fall into the river as she leans over, using blue, green and gray colored pencils to convey the water's coloring. Steven asks if she knows how to fish, and as Hollis tries to figure out how to stay away from the water since she cannot even swim, the Old Man brings fishing rods out of the shed. The Old Man threads Hollis' rod on the bank, giving her the best lure for luck, and shows her how to cast the rod. Hollis puts her feet in the river, and as she looks at the mountain, Steven says he will show her the road going up the mountain tomorrow, but the Old Man warns them to be careful because the road is muddy. Hollis catches a huge fish, and though Steven bets she cannot hold onto it, he is right there with the net, hoping she will; when she slips on the rock, he grabs her elbow to keep her up. Steven pours water over her head, and Izzy comes down to the bank to see what is going on. Later, Hollis draws it all, and looking at the picture, she can remember how the fish tasted as they ate at the porch table. She wonders "why did I have to mess everything up" (p. 29).

In chapter three, Josie, Henry and Hollis eat a can of soup every night, and they eat big on days that Josie receives her check. When Hollis suggests spreading the money out, Josie hums an old song instead of answering, and Hollis knows what no one at the agency has guessed: Josie forgets things sometimes, and Hollis often has to help her finish a sentence or think of the proper word. One night, Josie says they are going to meet her cousin, Beatrice, at the movies. Josie puts a brown hat on Hollis' head and pulls her in front of the mirror, but Hollis does not like to look at herself and see her scar from the accident on Old Man's Mountain; she can pretend it never happened if she does not look at it. With the hat on, Hollis looks pretty though, and Josie gives her the hat, telling Hollis that her face is beautiful. Having no money for gas, they walk to the movie theatre in the rain, and Josie introduces Hollis to Beatrice Gilcrest, her cousin and best friend. Josie and Hollis make popcorn in exchange for their tickets and watch a movie about a boy, his dog and Christmas in a small town in New Jersey. On the way home, Josie tells Hollis they can decorate for Christmas as she twirls in the streets. In her head, Hollis tells Steven that Josie is more than enough and tries not to think about her "W" picture.

Section 3: Third Picture and Chapter 3 Analysis

Third Picture, Fishing in the Delaware River, shows Steven and the Old Man teaching Hollis how to fish. The Old Man's warnings about the mountain being dangerous foreshadow the accident that occurs there. The scene described in this picture shows Steven looking after Hollis, keeping her from falling into the river, and playing in the water with her. Hollis asks why she had to mess everything up, foreshadowing a



catastrophic event that leads to her running away from the Regans, and also indicating the fact that Hollis blames herself for this event.

In chapter three, Hollis describes how Josie tends to forget things. As they prepare to go to the movies, it is obvious that Hollis has low self-esteem by her reluctance to look at her reflection in the mirror. Her desire to forget the accident on Old Man's Mountain also foreshadows the discovery of what caused Hollis to run away from the Regans. After the movie, Josie suggests they can decorate for Christmas, and Hollis agrees, indicating her intention to stay with Josie. Hollis tells Steven that Josie is more than enough in her head and tries not to think about her W picture, indicating that Hollis is trying to wish for a new dream in which she and Josie will be enough of a family and she will not need a mother, father and brother to be happy.



Section 4: Fourth Picture and Chapter 4

Section 4: Fourth Picture and Chapter 4 Summary

Hollis draws Fourth Picture, The Old Man's Mountain, while sitting on the porch as Steven fiddles with the motor on the Old Man's truck and grumbles about not being allowed to drive on their property. At dinner one night, the Old Man gives Hollis a box of dozens of colored pencils, a pad of paper, erasers and a pencil sharpener. Telling him she loves French Blue, a soft color that is nearly purple, Hollis wants to hug him and tell him she has never received such a present, but though she ducks her head instead, he knows. Steven comes around the side of the truck and tells Hollis they do not have all day, so she puts the mountain picture in her box carefully, planning to give it to the Old Man as a present at the end of the summer even as she tells herself not to think about the summer ending. Steven and Hollis race to the mountain road, ending in a tie, and as they walk up the road, Steven shows her animal prints. Hollis asks if they are going to the top, but Steven says the Old Man would have a fit if they did that, so they stop halfway up at a wider spot where they can see the house. As they sit on a rock, Steven offers her half of his candy bar, and Hollis jokes that she deserves the whole thing. Steven says the Old Man would agree because he thinks she is a great kid, unlike anyone before. Looking at Steven, Hollis wonders if he minds that the Old Man thinks she is great, and she tells herself not to think about the "W" picture in her backpack.

In chapter four, as Hollis draws a picture of a boat and its captain that she saw in Josie's canal, Josie announces that Beatrice is visiting and bringing dinner. Finishing her drawing, Hollis props it on the counter to see what she thinks about it as Beatrice arrives with Chinese food. Beatrice notices Hollis' drawing, and she and Josie discuss Hollis' artistic talent. Before eating, Beatrice asks to see more of Hollis' pictures, and as she looks at them, she admits she "never saw anyone who was able to do this, and [she] was an art teacher for forty years" (p. 43). As they praise her abilities, Hollis' eyes fill with tears as she recalls the Old Man and Izzy doing the same. After dinner, Beatrice shows Hollis how to deepen the shadows on her drawing of the sea, telling her that she must keep looking at her drawings to see the truth. Beatrice tells Josie maybe she can take her trip to the Southwest now because Josie is in Hollis' hands. She wants to paint the desert and the adobe houses. Before leaving, Beatrice tells Hollis she is going to be something because of the language she speaks on paper and she is lucky to have that because it is more than most people have. Sitting there, Hollis can barely breathe.

Section 4: Fourth Picture and Chapter 4 Analysis

In Fourth Picture, Old Man's Mountain, the Old Man presents Hollis with a gift of art supplies, and she is completely overwhelmed by the gesture because she has never received such a nice present. The fact that she tells him she loves French Blue serves to show how well he knows her later in the novel. Steven shows his adherence to his father's rules by only taking Hollis halfway up the mountain. Steven shows his affection



for Hollis by offering half his candy bar and even giving her the bigger half. When he says the Old Man would agree with her joke that she deserves the whole thing, Hollis worries whether Steven minds that the Old Man thinks she is a great kid; this foreshadows her fear that her presence causes the arguments between Steven and the Old Man. Her attempts not to think about her picture indicate how much she wants to belong to the Regan family.

When Beatrice comes to dinner in chapter four, she is mesmerized by Hollis' drawings, and she praises the girl's talent. She also notes that the artist paints what they see, even when they do not realize what they are seeing at the time, foreshadowing the importance of the pictures Hollis draws. Beatrice's desire to go west to paint foreshadows her trip to New Mexico. Hollis' embarrassed and tearful reaction to Beatrice's compliments indicates how important her art is to her and how rarely it has been praised. It reminds her of Izzy and the Old Man's praise, which also shows how often she thinks about the Regans and how much she misses them.



Section 5: Fifth Picture and Chapter 5

Section 5: Fifth Picture and Chapter 5 Summary

In Fifth Picture, The Old Man, Hollis thinks she is alone as she sits on the bottom step in front of the house, trying to capture what the Old Man looks like so she can take it back with her and remember. The screen door opens, and the Old Man asks where she learned to do that as he looks over her shoulder. He tells her it is a gift to draw things the way they are and she shines through her drawings; no one has ever said anything like that to Hollis before. She looks at him and tells him Hollis Woods is a real place where they found her when she was only an hour old without a blanket, on a corner with a scrap of paper that said "Call her Hollis Woods" (p. 48). One day, Hollis ran away from a home to see that place in Queens, and the houses were pretty, though it was bleak winter; however, she could not find the woods. She tried to picture it in the spring when she was born with the birds chirping and the sun shining. As Steven comes into view on the rowboat, Hollis tells the Old Man that everyone says she is trouble but Steven is a great kid. The Old Man looks surprised, but before he can speak, Steven bangs the boat hard against the rocks along the bank, causing the Old Man to yell at him.

In chapter five Josie sings and works on the wooden figure of Hollis as they eat breakfast. Hollis thinks about the water, leaning against the counter as she waits while Josie cuts the wood. As Josie stands and announces they are ready to go, she notices that someone is coming. The mustard woman arrives to check on Hollis, and blaming herself for not going to school, Hollis suggests going down to the water instead of entertaining. She and Josie sneak out the back door, through the woods to the ocean in the cold air. They watch some smaller fishing boats on the horizon as they sit on the pier, and Hollis tries to decide what to do about the mustard woman. When she picks up a sea shell, Josie tells her it is good luck, so Hollis slips it in her jacket pocket because they need luck. Josie retrieves sea grass to use as hair on the wooden figure of Hollis, causing Hollis to think about the drawing box the Old Man gave her and wonder if it is still at the house in Branches. The mustard woman pulls up and asks why Hollis is not in school. She says she will drive Hollis to school, so they leave Josie, who waves as they drive away. When the mustard woman asks again why Hollis is not in school, Hollis lies and claims she told Josie it was a holiday. Holding onto her shell, Hollis realizes she will really have to go to school for the first time in her life if she wants to stay with Josie.

Section 5: Fifth Picture and Chapter 5 Analysis

As Hollis tries to draw the Old Man in Fifth Picture, he comes up behind her and, seeing the picture, praises her artistic abilities. Hollis has never had anyone tell her anything like he does, that she shines through her drawings, and she tells him about how she was born in a place called Holliswoods in Queens, NY. She was found on a street corner without a blanket, but a piece of paper was left with her which read "Call her Hollis Woods" (p. 48). One day, Hollis went to see the place in the winter, and she tried



to imagine what it looked like in the spring when she was born. Hollis tells the Old Man that she is trouble but Steven is a great kid; however, the Old Man does not respond because Steven appears and bangs the boat against the rocks on the bank, so the Old Man yells at Steven. This argument, like many others, indicates Hollis' suspicion that she is the reason that Steven and the Old Man fight so frequently.

In chapter five, Josie works on the wooden figure of Hollis, and as they prepare to leave, the mustard woman arrives to check on Hollis. Hollis convinces Josie to sneak away to the ocean since she knows they will both get in trouble for her skipping school. They sneak away and watch the boats, and Hollis finds a sea shell which she saves because Josie tells her it is good luck. Josie decides to use sea grass for the hair on the wooden figure of Hollis. When the mustard woman finds them at the jetty, she insists upon taking Hollis to school immediately. To prevent Josie from getting into trouble, Hollis claims that she told Josie it was a holiday. The mustard woman's discontent with this story foreshadows her decision to send Hollis to a different home. Hollis decides she will have to go to school if she wants to stay with Josie.



Section 6: Chapter 6, Sixth Picture and Chapter 7

Section 6: Chapter 6, Sixth Picture and Chapter 7 Summary

In chapter six, Hollis makes special deluxe, a dish Izzy taught her to prepare, one morning in early December in preparation for a special evening since Beatrice leaves for New Mexico in the morning. Worrying what the mustard woman will do, Hollis focuses on school all week, thinking it is strange how much she wants to stay with Josie. When Beatrice arrives, she tells Hollis to take care of Josie, and though Hollis considers telling her about the mustard lady, she tells Beatrice to go since she has wanted to do so her whole life. Hollis wishes she could leave too; she would take the bus to Branches on the first day she saw the Old Man and Steven at the diner, and she would do everything differently. Hollis promises Beatrice that she will take care of Josie, and when Beatrice writes down her phone number, Hollis memorizes it during dinner.

Sixth Picture, Driving the Truck, depicts Hollis with her hands at the truck's wheel and her head back, laughing. Before the Old Man and Izzy go to a movie in town, the Old Man tells Steve to straighten up his mess in the shed, pointing out how neat Holly's things are. After the Old Man and Izzy leave, Steven spends a few minutes cleaning the shed, and then he returns with the keys to the truck, announcing his plan to teach Hollis to drive. In the field, he shows her the gears and pedals before they switch seats and Hollis drives around the field as Steven shouts directions.

In chapter seven, Hollis works on her homework early Tuesday morning while eating breakfast and listening to the radio. When she hears that it snowed six inches upstate, she wonders what the Regans are doing in their winter house in Hancock. Deciding to take just one day off, Hollis grabs her jacket and jogs to the canal, though she knows it is a mistake. She earns four dollars scrubbing fish for one of the fisherman and cannot wait to get back to Josie so they can go shopping, but she forgets about homework, school and the mustard woman. Entering the house, Hollis finds the mustard woman sitting in the living room with Josie, so she sits with them, staring out the window as her heart pounds while they talk about movies, the decor in the living room and coffee. Hollis can tell the mustard woman wants to talk about something else, and she can also see that Josie does not know who the woman is. The mustard woman announces that it is time to find a different place for Hollis. She has found a family but wants Hollis to meet them first in a few days. She offers to drive Hollis to school, but Hollis insists on walking.



Section 6: Chapter 6, Sixth Picture and Chapter 7 Analysis

In chapter six, Hollis prepares a dish that Izzy taught her to make in preparation to celebrate Beatrice leaving, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing that Beatrice would finally follow her dream to go west and paint. Hollis attends school all week, showing how much she wants to stay with Josie, and she promises Beatrice that she will take care of Josie. Hollis' desire to go back to the first day she met Steven and the Old Man so she could do everything differently shows how much she loves and misses them, as well as the fact that she blames herself for what caused her to run away. Sixth Picture shows Steven and the Old Man fighting yet again before Steven teaches Hollis how to drive.

In chapter seven, Hollis demonstrates her love for the Regans by continuing to think about them. Unfortunately, she decides to skip school that day and go to the canal. Earning four dollars, Hollis excitedly thinks about what food she and Josie will buy as she rushes back to Josie's house, but her happiness is extinguished when she finds the mustard lady talking to Josie in the living room. The mustard woman informs Hollis that she has found a family for Hollis and wants her to meet them soon. Hollis refuses her offer of a ride to school, demonstrating her unhappiness and disapproval of the mustard woman's plan.



Section 7: Seventh Picture and Chapter 8

Section 7: Seventh Picture and Chapter 8 Summary

Seventh Picture, Izzy, shows Izzy flipping pancakes, and not meaning to be sneaky, Hollis goes around the side of the house to give it to Izzy. One afternoon, Izzy and Hollis walked up the hill to the cemetery where Izzy's parents are buried, and Izzy mentioned how she wanted more children but it never happened after her parents died. Hearing the Old Man yelling at Steven, Hollis asks if it is always like this, and Izzy admits it is worse this summer, but "they have to find their own way" (p. 69). Leaning against the wall, Hollis hears Izzy and the Old Man discussing that they cannot let her go because she belongs with them. They will have to build a room onto their house in Hancock for her, but they are happy they will have a daughter. Hollis has never been so happy, and she decides that before the summer ends, she will climb the mountain and announce to the world that she has a family.

In chapter eight, the mustard woman calls Hollis daily for the next few days, pointing out that Josie has a tendency to forget things and saying that she will pick Hollis up on Saturday, the next day, to have lunch with Eleanor and, if things go well, Hollis will move in on Sunday. She will stay in the same school and can still visit Josie. Thinking that Josie cannot stay alone, Hollis tries to call Beatrice, remembering she will be traveling for the first few weeks when she gets no answer. Hollis is puzzled; she cannot leave Josie, but she cannot stay either. Deciding she must save Josie, Hollis recalls that the Regans are in Hancock, so the summer house in Branches is empty. Hollis asks Josie to go away with her in the Silver Bullet and have an adventure, and Josie agrees. Hollis begins planning their trip since they must leave before the mustard woman comes for her at lunchtime tomorrow.

Section 7: Seventh Picture and Chapter 8 Analysis

Seventh Picture shows Izzy making pancakes, but when Hollis searches for Izzy to give it to her, she overhears Izzy and the Old Man discuss adopting her. They are very happy that they will have a daughter, and Hollis is happy also. This indicates that something bad happened to make them all change their minds. When Hollis asks Izzy about Steven and the Old Man fighting, Izzy's response that it seems worse this summer foreshadows Hollis' belief that she causes the fighting. Hollis decides to climb the mountain and announce that she belongs to a family before the end of the summer, foreshadowing this disastrous event.

In chapter eight, the mustard woman pursues her plan to move Hollis into a different home. Hollis worries about Josie staying alone and tries to call Beatrice but, unable to reach her, remembers that Beatrice plans to spend the first few weeks traveling around.

Knowing she cannot neither leave Josie nor stay with her, Hollis decides to rescue Josie. Recalling that the Regans' summer house is empty since it is winter, Hollis convinces Josie to have an adventure and run away with her. When Josie agrees, Hollis begins planning their trip, since they must leave before the mustard woman comes for her in the morning.



Section 8: Eighth Picture and Chapter 9

Section 8: Eighth Picture and Chapter 9 Summary

In Eighth Picture, End of Summer, Hollis draws the frenzy of the last week of August. One night during dinner on the front porch, Izzy and the Old Man tell her their plans, and though she does not need a picture of that night, Hollis draws Izzy holding her hand, the Old Man hugging her and Steven trying not to let her see how close he is to tears. She also draws Izzy and herself kissing Steven's cheeks as they all laugh. The Regans tells Hollis she belongs with them, and Steven looks happier than he has all summer. Recalling Steven's many arguments with the Old Man, Hollis begs for it to be alright because she worries that their fights are related to her presence. She wonders "was trying to fit me into a family like jamming in a puzzle piece that didn't match? Would it ruin all the other pieces" (p. 79).

In chapter nine, Hollis begs Izzy and the Old Man not to mind her plan to go to the house in Branches as she packs for the trip with Josie. She worries because it is dark and snowing and she does not know how to get to the house in Branches, but she knows they will be free once they get off Long Island to Route 17 and exit at 90. Hollis packs their food and Christmas ornaments, rushing to get far away before the mustard woman realizes she is missing. Hollis tells Josie they must leave now or she will be forced to live somewhere else. Josie, Hollis and Henry climb into the Silver Bullet with Josie driving as Hollis looks at the map, seeing all the lines "leading [her] home to Branches" (p. 84). After they get gas, Hollis thinks of how the mustard woman will react when she realizes they ran away. With Steven telling her to calm down in her mind, Hollis pretends everything is alright and tries not to think about the last time she ran from the stucco woman two weeks after what happened in Branches. It took them days to catch her, but maybe she will be luckier this time.

Section 8: Eighth Picture and Chapter 9 Analysis

In Eighth Picture, the Regans tell Hollis that they want to adopt her, and she celebrates with the family as all four of them are very happy. They tell her she belongs with them, and Hollis notes that Steven looks happier than she has ever seen him. She worries about his fights with the Old Man and explicitly states her suspicion that their fights are a product of her presence. In an analogy, she worries that adding her to the family is like trying to jam in a puzzle piece that does not match, and she fears it will ruin the puzzle as a whole.

In chapter nine, Hollis thinks about how the Regans would react if they knew her plan to spend the winter in their summer house in Branches. In her head, she begs them not to mind. Hollis packs hurriedly so that she and Josie can get a head start on the mustard woman. After Hollis packs the car, they stop for gas and start down the highway. In her head, Hollis can hear Steven telling her to calm down. Recalling the last time she ran

away and was caught in several days, Hollis hopes that she and Josie will have better luck this time.



Section 9: Chapter 10 and Ninth Picture

Section 9: Chapter 10 and Ninth Picture Summary

In chapter ten, Hollis is almost shocked to see Old Man's Mountain rising above her when they finally reach the exit to Branches. As they reach the house, she tells Josie they will build a fire, knowing they have winter and maybe spring but will need to find somewhere else by summer. Remembering her last morning in Branches when she walked to the bus station, Hollis recalls her worst moment was realizing she would never see her drawing box again. Telling Josie they are home, Hollis wonders what the Old Man would think of her if he found out and begs him not to mind in her head. After leading Josie up the back steps, Hollis smashes the small kitchen window, allowing them to enter the house. Turning on the lights and heat and building a fire, Hollis tells Josie that this is their place now, but in her head, she asks the Old Man if it is still hers, at least for the winter. She settles Josie on the couch for a nap and covers the broken window with a towel, knowing she will need to fix it while they are there. Going to her room, Hollis finds it hard to swallow when she finds the drawing box on the dresser. She retrieves everything from the car and puts the Silver Bullet in the shed, telling Steven in her head that she can drive it because he taught her how. Seeing the truck on one side of the shed, Hollis covers her ears to avoid hearing the sound of it hitting the trees that summer evening. Now that she is done, all she wants to do is sleep.

Ninth Picture, Izzy's Cake, depicts Hollis sitting on the porch with the Old Man and Steven as Izzy backs out of the door with a cake that reads "Welcome to the family, Holly" (p. 97). Patting her shoulder, the Old Man tells Hollis she will be with them forever, and when Hollis gives Steven pictures of animal tracks, he says he will keep them forever, calling her Sister Loon, which makes the Old Man yell at him. The day before, Hollis asked Steven if it is her fault he fights so much with the Old Man, and he told her not to be silly. Steven tells Hollis that might walk up the mountain after supper, and when the Old Man objects, Hollis feels guilty since she is the one who wants to go all the way up the mountain to announce "the end of the old Hollis. Hey, world, here comes the new one. And [she] wanted to go alone" (p. 100).

Section 9: Chapter 10 and Ninth Picture Analysis

In chapter ten, Hollis is surprised and happy to reach the Regans' house in Branches. She knows they will need to move on before summer when the Regans return to their summer house. Hollis recalls the horrible feeling of realizing she would never see her drawing box again because she left it here when she ran on her last morning in Branches. She wonders again what the Old Man would think about her staying in his house, and in her mind, she begs him not to care. Hollis breaks a window to gain entrance to the house, and after building a fire and turning on the heat, she tells Josie that this is their place now. Internally, she wonders if the Old Man would still say it was hers, at least for the winter. She covers the window with a towel, knowing she will have



to replace it before they leave. Hollis is touched that her drawing box is still in her bedroom, and after unpacking the car, she pulls Josie's car into the shed. Her reaction to seeing the demolished truck foreshadows the discovery of why Hollis left the Regans.

In Ninth Picture, Hollis draws the cake that Izzy made to welcome her to the Regan family. Steven and the Old Man were also happy as they told Hollis that she belongs with them and will be with them forever. When Hollis asked Steven if it was her fault that he fought so much with the Old Man, he laughed at her, but this foreshadows Hollis' belief that her presence is the reason for the fights between Steven and the Old Man. Hollis feels guilty when the Old Man yells at Steven for mentioning going up the mountain because she is the one who wants to climb to the top to tell the world that she has finally found a family. This foreshadows Hollis' disastrous trip up the mountain.



Section 10: Chapter 11 and Tenth Picture

Section 10: Chapter 11 and Tenth Picture Summary

In chapter eleven, Hollis roams through the house the next day, noting that the picture of her still hangs on the guestroom wall as though she still belongs with them. As she looks in Steven's room, Josie announces that she found boots and is going to wear them, but Hollis objects that it is too cold out. She follows Josie outside as Josie becomes bewildered and asks why they are not at home and asks where Beatrice is. Hollis leads Josie inside, wraps her in Izzy's robe, and sits with her in front of the fireplace until they sleep again. In the morning, she hears the faint buzzing sounds in the woods, as though someone is sawing, but the noises fade. Hollis makes breakfast, thinking she will have to pay Izzy back for this too, and after breakfast, Josie mentions wanting to go to where she belongs as she works on the wood figure of Hollis. Hollis knows Josie misses Beatrice. Since Josie needs sandpaper to smooth the figure, Hollis walks to the shed to get sandpaper and pick holly so they can decorate for Christmas. Hollis is happier than she has "been anywhere, except... I didn't belong in that house in Branches, not anymore" (p. 106). As she wonders about the Old Man's winter house and wishes she could stay in Branches forever, Hollis thinks about when the Old Man told her about fishing during the winter. She dresses warm, retrieves his fishing equipment and goes to the bank to fish. After she casts her line, she notices movement on the other side of the river, and realizing it is a person, Hollis drops the fishing pole and hides in the holly bushes. Making sure there is no movement on the other side of the river, she runs to the house, reassuring herself that she was not seen and they are safe.

In Tenth Picture, Hollis Woods, Hollis is so jubilant and ecstatic she feels like she is floating. She draws it all using the pencils with her eyes closed. Floating makes her think she can do anything so all she thinks about that last week is going to the top of the Old Man's mountain to tell the world that she has a family and now she belongs.

Section 10: Chapter 11 and Tenth Picture Analysis

In chapter eleven, Hollis is surprised that the picture of her still hangs on the guestroom wall with the pictures of the Regans, as though she still belongs with them. This foreshadows the realization that the Regans miss Hollis as much as she misses them. Hollis takes care of Josie, but it is apparent that Josie's senility is worsening. The buzzing sounds that Hollis hears foreshadow the discovery of what the noise actually is, though she thinks it is a saw at this point. Hollis knows that Josie misses her home and Beatrice, but Hollis is happier than she has ever been, other than when she was with the Regans; however, she refuses to allow herself to dwell on that thought though she wishes she could stay at the house in Branches forever. While Hollis is fishing, she notices movement on the other side of the river, and frightened at the thought of being found, she hides and rushes back into the house, leaving Steven's green sweater and



the fishing pole by the side of the river. Hollis draws Tenth Picture of herself, and her happiness is emphasized through the use of using all of her colored pencils. Feeling like she is floating, Hollis believes she can do anything, so she plans to climb to the top of Old Man's Mountain and announce to the world that she finally has a family to which she belongs. This foreshadows her disastrous trip at the same time that it indicates Hollis' utter bliss at joining the Regan family.



Section 11: Chapter 12 and Eleventh Picture

Section 11: Chapter 12 and Eleventh Picture Summary

In chapter twelve, Hollis thinks about Izzy, the Old Man and Steven one morning, wondering if they still think about her like she thinks of them, though she tries not to think of that terrible afternoon anymore. She has hung pictures on the walls during the past few days, and she wonders what the Regans would think if she left them there when she leaves in the spring. Hollis will call Beatrice in the spring, not knowing or caring what will happen to her when she does, but she will not leave the pictures on the Regans' walls. Realizing it is Christmas Eve, Hollis decides to draw a picture of Beatrice and Josie as Josie's Christmas gift. Josie and Hollis decide to decorate for Christmas while listening to Christmas carols on the radio. Hollis begins drawing her picture, leaning over the paper so Josie cannot see it, but she also notices Josie working on the wood figure and looking sad as she listens to the music.

Hollis does not actually draw Eleventh Picture, On the Mountain, because she tries not to think about that last day. On that Saturday, Izzy and the Old Man went on an antique hunt in Masonville, and when Hollis declines going fishing with Steven, he leaves with his fishing equipment, teasing her about spending the day drawing. Once he is gone, Hollis takes a few art supplies and begins the difficult task of climbing the mountain. She stops halfway up, making a quick sketch of the house and Steven, a tiny figure on the river. Hollis is out of breath by the time she reaches the top of the mountain, but she dances onto a wide piece of rock, saying everything she wanted to about how she has changed; when she takes a step too close to the rock's edge, she rolls down into a huge boulder a few feet down. Hollis is not hurt badly but cannot walk all the way down alone. Much later, she begins calling for Steven because she does not want Izzy and the Old Man to know she has done such a stupid thing. Though she knows he cannot hear her, Steven comes of course, driving the pickup truck up the mountain just before sunset. Steven had felt bad about Hollis spending the day alone and had returned and figured out where she was. As they sit there, Hollis shows him her W picture, explaining the assignment, and Steven immediately knows "it's a wishing picture, for a family" (p. 123). Steven wishes Hollis had joined their family when she was six years old. Hollis tells him all the bad things people say about her, like how she runs away sometimes, and Steven tells her she has finally run in the right direction this time. They need to leave so the Old Man does not find out about their journey up the mountain, but though Steven is a careful driver, the mountain is steep; the truck gains speed and begins to tip just before they reach the end of the road. Hollis can see they are going to go over, and Steven yells for her to jump.



Section 11: Chapter 12 and Eleventh Picture Analysis

In chapter twelve, Hollis battles against thoughts of the Regans and that terrible afternoon, showing that she misses the Regans terribly as well as foreshadowing the revelation of what exactly happened to make Hollis leave the Regans. Her decision to call Beatrice in the spring, combined with her indifference regarding what happens to herself, shows that Hollis truly cares about Josie and wants what is best for Josie, even if it is to Hollis' own detriment. Since it is Christmas Eve, Hollis shows her loving, caring nature by deciding to draw a picture for Josie's Christmas gift. She chooses Josie and Beatrice as her subject because she knows how much Josie misses her cousin, and her discontent at noticing Josie's melancholy foreshadows Hollis' decision to call Beatrice.

In Eleventh Picture, On the Mountain, Hollis describes climbing to the top of the mountain, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing that was seen by her desires to climb the mountain. Hollis obtains her desires to shout to the world that she has finally found a family; however, she falls down the rock and injures herself. Though she calls for Steven, Hollis does not expect him to actually come because she knows he cannot hear her. Steven, showing himself to be a good brother, guesses where Hollis has gone and drives up the mountain to retrieve her, not wanting her to get in trouble if his parents find out. When Hollis shows Steven her W picture, he understands it immediately, revealing how close they have become during the summer. Steven wishes Hollis had joined their family years ago. After Hollis tells him all the bad things people say about her, Steven still loves her, showing that he accepts her completely and has faith in her goodness, despite what other people say about her. Steven is careful driving down the mountain, but because the mountain is very steep and the truck gains speed, he loses control and they begin to tip. Steven's last words before the crash are meant to protect Hollis as he tells her to jump.



Section 12: Chapter 13 and Twelfth Picture

Section 12: Chapter 13 and Twelfth Picture Summary

In chapter thirteen, Hollis dresses warm and goes outside to collect holly branches for decorations after finishing Josie's picture. Going to the shed to retrieve the saw, she is surprised to find Steven's sweater hanging on the doorknob. Once she finishes collecting holly branches, she returns to the house, thinking about what she wants for Christmas as the song plays on the radio. Josie has found pancake mix and applesauce in the cabinet, and they will have apple pancakes and milk for Christmas Eve dinner. As Josie talks about Beatrice while cooking, Hollis can tell she is homesick. After dinner, they are too tired to decorate so they agree to do it in the morning before exchanging gifts. In the morning, Hollis wonders what the Old Man would think about her spending Christmas in his house before decorating with Josie. While they decorate, Hollis internally begs Josie to be happy. After watching deer scatter across the lawn without seeing anything that could have bothered them, Hollis remembers that she left Steven's sweater in the snow the day she backed away from the fisherman on the river bank. She starts to ask if Josie found it but knows Josie will not remember, and maybe she "didn't want to know the answer anyway, thinking of the fisherman finding us and what might happen then" (p. 132).

In Twelfth Picture, A Mountain of Trouble, Hollis cannot get warm that night as she keeps replaying the truck crash and how everything went still every time she closes her eyes. Steven's head lies against the wheel, and Hollis begs him not to be dead. She runs down the mountain to get help just as Izzy and the Old Man return to the house. It takes forever for the ambulance to arrive and bring Steven down the mountain as Izzy hopes he is alright and the Old Man clenches his jaw. In the emergency room, the doctor stitches Hollis' forehead and puts an ACE bandage on her ankle, but Hollis worries about Steven. Later that night, Izzy takes Hollis home and tells her everything will seem better in the morning. Knowing Steven drove to the top of the mountain because of her and his arguing with the Old Man has worsened because of her, Hollis thinks she has "messed up the whole family" (p. 136). Packing her belongings, Hollis leaves a note that it was her fault and asks them not to come after her because she does not want a family after all. Hollis returns to the stucco woman. Emmy tells her that Steven is alright, but Hollis insists she does not want to see any of the Regans again. Emmy cannot learn more from Hollis so she lets her stay with the stucco woman, but after staying most of September, Hollis runs from there too.

Section 12: Chapter 13 and Twelfth Picture Analysis

In chapter thirteen, the sweater hanging on the doorknob of the shed foreshadows the discovery that someone knows Hollis and Josie are staying at the Regans' house in



Branches, as does the food that Josie finds suddenly in the cabinets when Hollis has gone through the cabinets every day. Hollis sees again that Josie is homesick, and her worry over Josie's unhappiness foreshadows Hollis calling Beatrice. Again, Hollis thinks about what the Old Man would think about her being in his house during the winter. After watching the deer scatter without seeing anything to bother them, Hollis realizes that she left Steven's green sweater on the river bank the day she saw the person across the river. She wants to ask Josie if she found it, but Hollis is scared to know the answer even if Josie miraculously remembers.

In Twelfth Picture, a Mountain of Trouble, Hollis could not sleep the night after the truck crash because she kept replaying the accident in her head. Steven is sent to the hospital, and the Old Man blames Steven for the accident, though Hollis knows it was her fault because she went up the mountain alone. Worrying that she has messed up the entire family, Hollis packs and runs away. She learns that Steven has healed, but Hollis refuses to see any of the Regans again. By running away from them to avoid ruining their family, Hollis makes the ultimate sacrifice of her own happiness, demonstrating exactly how much she loves the Regans. Earlier foreshadowing is fulfilled in this section by explicitly explaining why Hollis ran away from the Regans.



Section 13: Chapter 14 and Thirteenth Picture

Section 13: Chapter 14 and Thirteenth Picture Summary

In chapter fourteen, the decorations are more beautiful than anything Hollis has seen, and when Josie says Beatrice would love them, Hollis assures her that Beatrice will be home someday. After Hollis gives Josie the picture of Josie, Beatrice and Henry, Josie gives Hollis a tin of Izzy's hard candies, and Hollis offers it to Josie first, thinking she will have to pay Izzy back for the candy too. Josie also gives Hollis the tree figure she carved of Hollis, and crying, Hollis says it looks like her except it does not look like a mountain of trouble. Josie wishes Hollis could see herself the way Josie sees her. Hollis knows Josie wants to go home. After Josie falls asleep, Hollis goes to Steven's room and looks at the picture he took of her in the rowboat. When her sea shell falls from her pocket, she holds it to her face. Hollis goes outside, needing to be so cold that she cannot think of anything except the ice and snow.

In Thirteenth Picture, the Conference Room, the girl at the table in the agency conference room is not Hollis because she is laughing. Hollis was not laughing when Emmy insisted on letting Mr. Regan talk to her. As he stood in front of her, Hollis told him she was sorry, but he interjected that it was Steven's fault, claiming he just wants her to come home when Hollis objects. Hollis imagines what it would be like to return home and hug Izzy and Steven. She tells the Old Man it was not Steven's fault because she went up the mountain first. When the Old Man says it does not make any difference, Hollis knows he is still blaming Steven and will always blame Steven if she goes home with him. Shaking her head, Hollis says she will stay here and does not look at him as he tries to talk her out of it.

Section 13: Chapter 14 and Thirteenth Picture Analysis

In chapter fourteen, Josie obviously still misses Beatrice, and Hollis worries more and more about Josie's happiness, foreshadowing her decision to call Beatrice. When Josie gives Hollis the tin of candy, it reminds Hollis of the candies Izzy gave her, and it foreshadows the discovery that someone is providing them with supplies. Hollis cries when Josie gives her the wooden figure of Hollis, saying it looks like her but not like a mountain of trouble. Josie contradicts Hollis' low self image by claiming she wishes Hollis could see herself the way Josie sees her. Hollis knows Josie wants to go home, and knowing that she is going to lose this family she has built with Josie, Hollis goes to Steven's room to see the picture he took of her during the summer. Hollis goes outside to mourn the loss of both families.



In Thirteenth Picture, the Conference Room, Mr. Regan begs Hollis to return to his family, but she refuses. Hollis tries to convince Mr. Regan that the truck accident was not Steven's fault, but he simply claims that it does not matter. Mr. Regan seems to want to ignore the incident, perhaps afraid that Hollis fears being punished for going up the mountain, but Hollis only worries that the Old Man will always blame Steven if she returns to the Regans' home. Though Hollis imagines the happy reunion with Steven and Izzy, she refuses to return with the Old Man because she does not want to cause conflict between him and Steven. Again, Hollis sacrifices her happiness for those she loves.



Section 14: Chapter 15 and Chapter 16

Section 14: Chapter 15 and Chapter 16 Summary

In chapter fifteen, Hollis recalls Beatrice saying that art is a language one has to learn to speak as she stands outside in the freezing cold. Hearing a saw in the distance, she realizes it is a snowmobile on the other side of the mountain. Back inside, she looks at her pictures from the summer and her pictures of Josie. She knows Josie belongs at home, by the ocean, with Beatrice, and Hollis knows what she has to do; she must call Beatrice and beg her to come home and stay with Josie. Looking at her pictures of the summer, she sees what she forgot. All of her pictures show how much the Old Man loves Steven, and Hollis wonders how she had drawn it but not seen it. Realizing the Old Man was going to love Steven whether she was there or not, Hollis wonders if she gave up the whole family for nothing. Thinking about Josie's comments about Santa Clause, Josie remembers Steven joking that Santa would come on a snowmobile in modern time, instead of a sleigh. She runs to Josie, waking her up to ask about Santa Clause.

In chapter sixteen, Hollis cannot rouse Josie, so she goes to bed, but she can almost hear him telling her "Merry Christmas" in her head. In the morning, Hollis asks Josie what Santa looked like, and Josie says he looked cold. Announcing her intention to call Beatrice, Hollis avoids the road on her walk because she still does not want to get caught. About twenty minutes into her walk, she hears a snowmobile, and she rushes toward the road just in time for him to see her and stop. Hollis starts crying as Steven asks where she is going, and then she tells him happy birthday. When Hollis asks how he knew she was here, Steven explains the agency wrote to the Regans about Hollis' disappearance, and he knew she loves this house. The Old Man did not believe Steven, but Steven came every day except during the big storm. He has hoped she would come home all these months and asks why she has not. Furthermore, Steven explains that the Old Man has been going back and forth to Long Island, searching for Hollis, since he learned she was missing. Steven has been bringing food to the house, but he wants to know why Hollis will not come home. Hollis explains that she thought she was the reason he and the Old Man argued so much, and he assures her that it has nothing to do with anyone. Smiling, Steven reminds Hollis that she does not know about families yet. He laughs when she admits she left because she thought she had messed up their family. Watching the snow, Hollis thinks "Old Man, I love you" (p. 158). Steven put the fishing pole in the shed and hung the sweater on the knob for Hollis. He tells her he is going to spend next summer fixing the truck and asks if she will help, if she will come home. Hollis does not say anything because she does not have to. She climbs onto the back of the snowmobile and tells Steven to take her to the phone booth at the grocery store, and they fly up the highway to call Beatrice.



Section 14: Chapter 15 and Chapter 16 Analysis

In chapter fifteen, Hollis realizes that the sawing noise she has been hearing in the distance is actually a snowmobile. Later in the chapter, she recalls Steven joking that Santa would come on a snowmobile instead of a sleigh in modern times, so she runs to Josie to ask about what Santa Clause looked like when he delivered the tin of candies. This foreshadows Hollis' discovery that Steven acted as Santa Clause. Also in this chapter, Hollis remembers what Beatrice said about the artist capturing what they see even if they do not realize what they are seeing at the time. As she looks at the pictures she drew of the summer, she realizes that the Old Man loves Steven and always will, regardless of how much they fight. She wonders if she gave up the whole family for no reason, foreshadowing her admission that she wants to return to the Regans. Realizing how sad Josie has become when comparing older pictures from Long Island to recent pictures in Branches, Hollis knows she must call Beatrice and beg her to come home so Josie can return to her house and be happy.

In chapter sixteen, Hollis can almost hear him telling her Merry Christmas in her head, and this indicates her suspicion that Steven is Santa Clause since she usually hears Steven in her head. Showing how unselfish she is, Hollis decides to walk to the grocery store to use the payphone and call Beatrice. When she hears a snowmobile during the walk, she runs to the road in time to see Steven. Steven stops and explains that he knew she would come to the house in Branches, though his parents did not believe him. The adoption agency is looking for Hollis frantically, and the Old Man travels to Long Island constantly because he is worried about Hollis. Steven explains that he has been bringing supplies to Josie and Hollis so they would not starve. When Hollis confesses she left because she felt she was ruining the whole family by causing the arguments between Steven and the Old Man, Steven laughs at her and tells her she knows nothing about families yet. Steven is also the one who returned the sweater and fishing pole to the shed the day that Hollis dropped them at the river bank when she saw a person across the river. Telling her he will spend next summer fixing the old truck, Steven asks Hollis to come home. They are so close that Hollis does not have to respond, but she tells him to take her to the phone so she can call Beatrice.



Section 15: Chapter 17 and Fourteenth Picture

Section 15: Chapter 17 and Fourteenth Picture Summary

In chapter seventeen, Steven talks the entire time that Hollis phones Beatrice. Beatrice answers the phone with worry because she has been worried about Josie since she could not reach them for days. Hollis assures Beatrice that Josie is safely with her as Steven's voice in her head tells her she may have never come home if she had not made this mess. Hollis tells Beatrice that Josie wants to come home, but the agency will not let her live alone and they want to send Hollis somewhere else. Beatrice says she will come home and move in with Josie right away, and Hollis assures her that Josie will be glad to see her. Steven tells Hollis that they started working on her bedroom, and he wanted to paint it green for holly; however, the Old Man insisted on painting it French Blue because that is Hollis' favorite color. Thinking the Old Man knows a lot, Hollis smiles. Steven bets Hollis does not even know their phone number, and he dials his house and hands the phone to Hollis as Izzy answers. Hollis asks Izzy if she can come home.

Fourteenth Picture, Christina, hangs over Hollis' bed in her room in the Regans' winter house in Hancock where she can see it first thing in the morning through the mirror on the opposite wall. Hollis tried to match it to her W picture, but she could not do it exactly. There is a flag in the background because they always open the summer house in Branches on Memorial Day. The Regans are on the porch, but there are five of them, instead of four. The Old Man looks grim in the picture because he just realized Steven left the bedroom window open all winter so the snow ruined the wall and floor. Though Steven tries to look serious, the laughter in his eyes is visible as he teases the Old Man that Holly's favorite color is green. Izzy sits in the center, and later that day, she asked Hollis if she was happy, telling her "Be happy, Hollis, because I am. I've never been happier" (p. 164). Hollis is the fourth person in the picture, smiling a bit because she is thinking of Josie since she would not have any of this if she had not run to Branches with her last winter. They visit Josie, Beatrice and Henry in Long Island every month, and though Josie does not exactly remember her anymore, Hollis knows that Josie loves her. Hollis has a new last name, Regan, but she has not forgotten Hollis Woods who was a mountain of trouble; she always signs her pictures with all three names because they all belong to her. The reason the fourteenth picture does not match her W picture is because Hollis is holding Christina, her six-week-old sister, in her arms. Christina looks quiet in the picture, but she is not always like that, and all of the Regans run to her whenever she cries. Izzy always tells Hollis that she brought them luck. "So there are five of us now: a mother, a father, a brother, and two sisters. A family" (p. 166).



Section 15: Chapter 17 and Fourteenth Picture Analysis

In chapter seventeen, Steven talks excitedly about how he knew that Hollis would be at the house in Branches while Hollis calls Beatrice. Beatrice is very worried when she realizes that Hollis is on the phone because she has been trying in vain to reach Josie for days and is very concerned about her cousin. Hollis feels guilty as she realizes she has worried Beatrice and the Regans while making Josie unhappy; however, she can hear Steven in her head, even though he is standing next to her, reminding her that she might have never come home if she had not made such a giant mess. After Hollis explains that the agency is taking her away from Josie and she does not think they will let Josie stay alone because she forgets things so often, Beatrice agrees to come home immediately and move in with her cousin. Meanwhile, Steven tells Hollis that they have started on her room, indicating that the Regans hoped Hollis would eventually come back to them. Furthermore, the Old Man insisted on painting her bedroom in French Blue, causing Hollis to smile at the thought of how well the Old Man knows her. When Steven dials the phone number to his house, Hollis asks Izzy if she can come home.

In Fourteenth Picture, Christina, Hollis provides an update on her situation with the Regans by drawing an alternate picture to her W picture; however, this picture is not a wish or a want because it is reality. The Regans adopt Hollis. She describes how the Old Man still gets angry at Steven, and though Steven teases that it is Hollis' fault, she knows it is not because of her. Izzy is happy and wants Hollis to be happy too, and Hollis is happy. She still thinks of Josie because none of this would have been possible without Josie. The Regans visit Josie every month, and Hollis believes Josie saved her life. Hollis has taken the Regans' last name, but she still signs her pictures as Hollis Woods Regan because all three names belong to her. The difference between this picture and Hollis' W picture is found in the presence of the six-week-old baby in Hollis' arms, her sister, Christina. Hollis has finally found a family, and Christina's presence serves as a metaphor to show that what Hollis got from the Regans was even better than anything she had ever hoped for.



Characters

Hollis Woods

Hollis Woods is the protagonist and narrator of *Pictures of Hollis Woods*. She is a foster child searching for a family. Hollis is left on a corner in Queens, New York, when she is an hour old. A mountain of trouble, she often runs from the houses where she is sent. In *First Picture*, Hollis draws a picture of a family for her homework assignment, which is to depict something beginning with the letter W, but her teacher marks it with an X because she does not understand that W is for wish or want. In chapter one, Hollis is sent to live with Josie Cahill, and when Josie takes Hollis to the canal in chapter two, Hollis decides to stay with Josie for a while. *Second Picture* shows Hollis meeting the Old Man and Steven, and in the *Third Picture*, they teach her how to fish. In chapter three, Hollis realizes that Josie forgets things sometimes, and Beatrice praises Hollis' artistic abilities in chapter four. In *Fourth Picture*, Steven takes Hollis halfway up Old Man's Mountain, and Hollis tells the Old Man about where she was found in the next picture. In chapter five, the social worker catches Hollis skipping school, and after Beatrice goes to New Mexico to paint in chapter six, the mustard woman plans to send Hollis to a new family in chapter seven, causing Hollis to convince Josie to run away to Branches in chapter eight. In the *Sixth Picture*, Steven teaches Hollis how to drive, and Hollis overhears the Old Man and Izzy planning to adopt her in the next picture.

In the *Eighth Picture*, the Regans tell Hollis of their plan to adopt her, which they celebrate with a cake in the *Ninth Picture*, and this is also when Hollis decides to climb the mountain and tell the world she has finally found a family. In chapters nine and ten, Hollis and Josie drive to Branches and break into the Regans' summer house. In chapter eleven, Hollis goes fishing, hiding when she notices a person across the river. She wonders what the Regans would think about her staying in their house in the next chapter. Hollis draws a picture of Josie and Beatrice as Josie's Christmas gift, but she realizes that Josie is sad and homesick. In the *Tenth Picture*, Hollis plans to climb the mountain and announce to the world that she belongs to a family, and in the next picture, she hurts her ankle when she climbs the mountain, but luckily, Steven drives the truck up the mountain to rescue her; however, the truck overturns and Steven is hospitalized. Hollis runs away in the *Twelfth Picture* because she fears she has ruined the whole family by trying to join them. In chapter thirteen, Hollis finds Steven's sweater on the shed doorknob, and after exchanging Christmas gifts with Josie in chapter fourteen, Hollis realizes that Josie wants to go home.

In the *Thirteenth Picture*, the Old Man tries to convince Hollis to come home, but she refuses because she knows he will continue blaming Steven for everything. Looking at the pictures she has drawn in chapter fifteen, Hollis realizes that Josie belongs with Beatrice and that the Old Man loves Steven whether she is with them or not. As Hollis walks to the nearest phone booth to call Beatrice in chapter sixteen, Steven pulls up beside her on a snowmobile, admitting that he has been providing her and Josie with food because he knew she would come to the house in Branches as soon as he learned



she was missing. Hollis admits she left the Regans because she blamed herself for the fights between the Old Man and Steven. Laughing at her, Steven asks Hollis to come home before giving her a ride to the phone. In chapter seventeen, Hollis calls Beatrice who agrees to come home and live with Josie, and when Steven calls Izzy, Hollis asks if she can come home. In the Fourteenth Picture, Hollis draws a family like in her W picture, but it is different because she is holding Christina, her six-week-old sister; Hollis finally has a family.

Steven Regan

Steven Regan is the brother of the Regan family, the family who wants to adopt Hollis Wood. Steven meets Hollis at the diner with the Old Man, and when they play checkers, she lets him win. Steven teaches Hollis how to fish and drive, and he also takes her halfway up Old Man's Mountain, sharing his candy bar with her and giving her the bigger half. He is very happy when his parents plan to adopt her. When Hollis drives up the mountain to announce to the world that she has finally found a family, Steven drives the truck up the mountain to rescue her, worried she is hurt. On the mountain, Hollis tells Steven about her W picture, and he immediately understands that the W stood for wish or want. Hollis is happy that Steven accepts her even after she tells him all the bad stuff that people say about her. Unfortunately, Steven loses control of the truck on the way down the mountain, resulting in an accident that causes Steven to be hospitalized. Because the Old Man blames Steven for the accident, Hollis runs away because she worries she will ruin the family.

As soon as Steven learns that Hollis is missing, he knows that she will go to the house in Branches, but his father does not believe him. Steven visits the house on his snowmobile, providing Josie and Hollis with food and treats to make sure they do not starve. He visits every day except during the big snowstorm. Steven even returns his sweater and the fishing equipment to the shed when Hollis drops them after seeing a person on the other side of the river and hiding to avoid being caught. As Hollis walks to the nearest phone booth to call Beatrice so that Josie can go home where she belongs and is happy, Steven pulls up beside her on a snowmobile, admitting that he has been providing her and Josie with food because he knew she would come to the house in Branches as soon as he learned she was missing. Hollis admits she left the Regans because she blamed herself for the fights between the Old Man and Steven. Laughing at her, Steven asks Hollis to come home before giving her a ride to the phone. After Beatrice agrees to come home and live with Josie, Steven calls Izzy, and Hollis asks if she can come home. Steven wants Hollis to learn more about families, and he is very happy when she agrees to come home.

Josie Cahill

Josie Cahill is a beautiful, older woman that Hollis is sent to live with in the beginning of the novel. She used to be an art teacher, and though she is movie-star beautiful, Hollis is intrigued the first time she meets Josie because Josie carries a knife in her hand. She



runs away with Hollis to the Regans' summer house in Branches when the mustard woman finds a new home for Hollis, but Josie misses Beatrice and her home, so Hollis calls Beatrice to come home and live with Josie.

Old Man Regan

Old Man Regan is the father of the Regan family, the family who wants to adopt Hollis Wood. He is an architect. Hollis loves the Old Man, but since he and Steven fight a lot, she wonders if it is her fault. When the Old Man blames Steven for the truck accident on the mountain, Hollis runs away because she does not want to ruin the entire family. The Old Man visits her at the agency and tries to convince her to come home, but Hollis refuses. After Hollis runs away with Josie, the Old Man searches for her, traveling between Hancock and Long Island frequently.

Izzy Regan

Izzy Regan is the mother of the Regan family, the family who wants to adopt Hollis Wood. She wants to adopt Hollis because she has always wanted a daughter, and she is very happy when Hollis calls to ask to come home.

Beatrice Gilcrest

Beatrice Gilcrest is Josie's cousin and best friend. She goes to New Mexico to draw, but she is worried when she cannot reach Josie and Hollis on the phone. When Hollis phones from Branches to inform Beatrice that the agency is making Hollis leave, Beatrice agrees to come home and move in with Josie.

Mustard Woman

The mustard woman is a social worker who takes Hollis to Josie's house. When she tells Hollis that she is going to live with a different family, Hollis and Josie run away to Branches. The mustard woman is happy when Hollis is adopted by the Regans.

Henry

Henry is Josie's old, irritable cat who Hollis learns to get along with.

Stucco Lady

The stucco lady is one of the people that Hollis lives with and runs away from.



Lemon Lady

The lemon lady is one of the people that Hollis lived with, at the age of six, and ran away from.

Emmy

Emmy is the agency hotshot who tries to get Hollis to reconcile with the Regans. She is happy when the Regans adopt Hollis.

Mrs. Evans

Mrs. Evans is Hollis' first grade teacher who marks an X on Hollis' W picture because no word starts with a W. She does not understand that the W is for wish or want.

Christina

Hollis draws Christina in Fourteenth Picture. Christina is the Regans' six-week-old daughter and Hollis' baby sister.



Objects/Places

Silver Bullet

The Silver Bullet is Josie's car which is frequently out of gas. Hollis fills it when they run to Branches.

Holliswoods

Holliswoods is the name of a neighborhood in Queens, New York, where Hollis was found when she was only an hour old. She did not have a blanket, but she had a note that said "call her Hollis Woods".

Branches

Branches is where the Regans have a summer home, and this is where Hollis spends the summer with the Regans.

Hancock

The Regans have a winter home in Hancock which is not far from Branches. Hollis' bedroom in this house is painted French Blue because it is her favorite color.

Delaware River

The Delaware River lies in front of the Regans' house in Branches, and the Old Man teaches Hollis to fish on the Delaware. Hollis loves the river and draws several pictures of it.

Old Man's Mountain

Old Man's Mountain sits across the river from the Regans' house in Branches. Because it contains a muddy road, the Old Man does not want Steven and Hollis going to the top. Steven takes Hollis halfway up the mountain, but when she learns the Regans want to adopt her, Hollis climbs to the top of the mountain to announce to the world that she has finally found a family. She falls and sprains her ankle. When Steven drives the truck to the top of the mountain to rescue Hollis, he gets into an accident on the way back down. Hollis runs away from the Regans because the Old Man blames Steven for the accident when she feels it is her fault since she went up the mountain first.



Drawing Box

The Old Man gives Hollis a drawing box, filled with many colored pencils, paper, erasers and a pencil sharpener. When she runs away, Hollis leaves it in her bedroom in Branches, but it is still there when she hides in Branches with Josie.

Josie's House

Josie's house on Long Island is where Hollis is sent to live with Josie Cahill at the beginning of the book. Hollis decides to stay with Josie, but when she learns she is going to be sent to a different family, Hollis runs to Branches with Josie.

Wood Figure of Hollis Woods

Josie carves a wood figure of Hollis when Hollis decides to stay with her for a while. She uses sea grass for the figure's hair. Josie gives it to Hollis for Christmas, and Hollis says it looks just like her, except it does not look like a mountain of trouble. The wood figure hangs above Hollis' bed in the Regans' winter house in Hancock, wearing the beaded pearls Izzy gave Hollis.

French Blue

French Blue is the name of Hollis' favorite colored pencil. It is a soft color, nearly purple, and the Old Man uses this color as paint for Hollis' bedroom in Hancock because he knows it is her favorite, though Steven wants to paint her bedroom green for holly.



Themes

Self-Perception

Self-Perception plays a large role in *Pictures of Hollis Woods* because Hollis' drama would not have occurred had she possessed higher self-esteem. This begins to be evident in the first chapter when Hollis explains that she does not look at the mustard woman because she does not want anyone to see into her soul, indicating that she does not approve of what they would see. After reminiscing about how the Old Man and Steven taught her how to fish in *Third Picture*, Hollis asks "why did I have to mess everything up" (p. 29), which shows that she blames herself for what went wrong with the Regan family. In chapter three, Hollis admits that she does not like to look at her reflection in the mirror because if she does not see her scar from the accident on Old Man's Mountain, she can pretend it never happened. Her desire not to think about her *W* picture reveals that Hollis is trying not to hope for her wishes, suggesting that she does not think she deserves to be happy. When joking with Steven about how the Old Man thinks she is a great kid, Hollis hopes that Steven does not mind. Hollis is overwhelmed by the compliments paid to her regarding her artistic abilities by the Old Man, Izzy and Beatrice, revealing her apprehension in accepting anything good about herself. Furthermore, she tries to convince the Old Man that she is nothing but trouble while Steven is a great kid. After giving Hollis the wooden figure for Christmas, Josie expresses the wish that Hollis could see herself the way Josie sees her.

The most obvious evidence of how Hollis feels about herself is seen in her reaction to the accident on Old Man's Mountain. During her summer with the Regans, Hollis is bothered by the continuous arguing between the Old Man and Steven, and she suspects that her presence causes their conflicts. Throughout the novel, Hollis tries not to think about the Regans because she ran away from them, but the reason she ran away demonstrates her love and selfless nature, though she believes that she is nothing but trouble. Hollis leaves the Regans because she believes she is causing the discontent between the Old Man and Steven because she does not belong in their family. She compares it to trying to fit a puzzle piece into the wrong puzzle, worrying that she will ruin all the other pieces. Even though Hollis has never been happier than when the Regans intend to adopt her, she still gives them up because she believes it is in their best interest. It is only after Hollis realizes that the Old Man will always love Steven, whether she is there or not, that Hollis is willing to consider returning to the family that loves her. Steven laughs at Hollis when he learns why she left, and he mocks her after his parents adopt her; however, none of that matters because Hollis has finally found a loving family and learned that she is a valuable member of the Regans.

Family

Family is perhaps the most important theme in this novel. In the *First Picture*, Hollis draws a family at the age of six when her teacher assigns her the homework of bringing



in a picture that depicts something that begins with a W. Hollis sees the picture of the family as fulfilling this assignment because W stands for wish or want, and a family is her greatest desire. Hollis begins a different kind of family in chapter one when she goes to live with Josie, and she tries not to think about her W picture which shows the type of family she wants: a mother, father, brother and sister. Her true desire for a family was reflected by the Regans who she lived with the summer before, but she gave them up because she thought she was ruining their family. Throughout the text, Hollis is seen developing a family with Josie, and they run away together when the social worker threatens to put Hollis in a different home. Hollis runs to the only other place where she has ever had a family, the Regans' summer home in Branches.

The pictures in this novel mainly depict the time Hollis spent with the Regans, showing how she came to consider them as her family. From the beginning, she gets along well with Steven, but she is never happy with the pictures she draws of him, perhaps because she saw what it might be like to have a brother for the first time. Steven and the Old Man teach her how to fish, and Steven teaches her to drive. The Old Man and Izzy are happy that they will finally have a daughter when they decide to adopt Hollis, and Hollis decides to climb the mountain and announce to the world that she finally belongs to a family. Unfortunately, she is injured during this adventure, but Steven, showing himself to be a protective older brother, drives the truck up the mountain to rescue Hollis. When Hollis reveals to Steven that she is a bad child, Steven accepts her as she is, though he obviously does not agree with her self-perception. Because the Old Man seems to blame Steven for the accident on the mountain, Hollis runs away from the Regan family, fearing she will ruin them by joining them. The Regans are unable to convince her to come home until Hollis, looking at pictures she drew over the summer, realizes that the Old Man loves Steven, despite their frequent arguments. Steven takes care of Hollis and Josie while they are hiding at the house in Branches, and when Hollis learns this, Steven reminds her that she does not know about families yet. Hollis phones Izzy and asks to come home. The final picture depicts a family, similar to the one in the W picture but different because it includes another sister, Christina. Hollis takes the Regans' last name, and she is finally happy because she belongs to a loving family.

Art

A major theme in *Pictures of Hollis Woods* is art since Hollis is an artist. She draws what she sees, and half of the novel is devoted to describing the pictures she draws. The first picture depicts a family which represents Hollis' greatest wish. The second picture shows Steven playing checkers with Hollis the first day they meet. Third Picture reveals Steven and the Old Man teaching Hollis to fish while Sixth Picture demonstrates how Steven taught Hollis how to drive. In Fourth Picture, Steven takes Hollis halfway up Old Man's Mountain, and in Fifth Picture, the Old Man praises Hollis' ability to draw. Seventh Picture depicts Izzy flipping pancakes, Eighth Picture shows the frenzy of the last week in August as the Regans tell Hollis they plan to adopt her, and Ninth Picture portrays the Regans' celebration to welcome Hollis into their family. For the Tenth Picture, Hollis draws her happiness that is her response to the news that Izzy and the Old Man want to adopt her, but she does not draw Eleventh Picture because she does not want to



remember the day she climbed the mountain which ended in the truck accident in which Steven was greatly injured. Twelfth Picture shows Hollis running because she does not want to be the cause of discord between Steven and the Old Man, and in the Thirteenth Picture, Hollis refuses to return to the Regans when the Old Man visits her at the agency to beg her to come home. The Fourteenth Picture is similar to the W picture described in First Picture, but it varies because it includes an additional family member, Christina, Hollis' six-week-old sister.

It is significant when Hollis goes to live with Josie because Josie is a retired art teacher, as is her cousin, Beatrice. These two women encourage Hollis in her artistic endeavors, praising her talent. Josie carves a wooden figure of Hollis which she presents to the girl for Christmas. Beatrice shows Hollis several techniques to improve her drawing, telling her that she draws the things that she truly sees. The Old Man also praises Hollis' pictures, and he gives her a box filled with art supplies which Hollis treasures greatly. For Christmas, Hollis draws a picture of Josie and Beatrice which she gives to Josie as a present. Hollis realizes that the Old Man will love Steven whether she is with them or not when she looks at pictures of the summer; she cannot believe she did not see it at the time, though she drew it. This reiterates Beatrice's earlier message that the artist draws what they see, whether or not they realize what they are seeing at the time.



Style

Point of View

The point of view in *Pictures of Hollis Woods* is first person. This point of view is limited and reliable which can be seen by the fact that the narrator, Hollis Woods, can only report on her own thoughts and feelings, not the thoughts and feelings of other characters. In fact, if Hollis were privy to other characters' thoughts, the novel would not contain a dilemma. Hollis tells her story, alternating between the time she spends with Josie and the time she spent with the Regans the previous summer. Occasionally, she mentions her life before the Regans in various foster homes from which she ran. This point of view is important to the novel as it allows the focus of the narrative to remain on Hollis' life and adoption.

This novel is written using approximately three-quarters exposition with the remaining quarter being written through dialogue. This distribution is effective as it allows the reader to focus their attention on Hollis' feelings about the time she spent with Josie and the Regans. The viewpoint of this novel is seen through the eyes of Hollis Woods throughout the entire book with no detours or deviations.

Setting

Pictures of Hollis Woods is set in the real world in modern times. The novel is set in various cities and towns throughout the state of New York as Hollis, an abandoned child, is sent to various foster homes. The characters in the novel are all either foster parents or social workers. Josie serves as a foster mother, and the Regans are a foster family who decide to adopt Hollis Woods.

Holliswoods is the name of a neighborhood in Queens, New York where Hollis was found when she was only an hour old. She did not have a blanket, but she had a note that said "call her Hollis Woods". Branches is where the Regans have a summer home, and this is where Hollis spends the summer with the Regans. The Regans have a winter home in Hancock, which is not far from Branches. Hollis' bedroom in this house is painted French Blue because it is her favorite color. The Delaware River lies in front of the Regans' house in Branches, and the Old Man teaches Hollis to fish on the Delaware. Hollis loves the river and draws several pictures of it. Old Man's Mountain sits across the river from the Regans' house in Branches. Because it contains a muddy road, the Old Man does not want Steven and Hollis going to the top. Steven takes Hollis halfway up the mountain, but when she learns the Regans want to adopt her, Hollis climbs to the top of the mountain to announce to the world that she has finally found a family. She falls and sprains her ankle. When Steven drives the truck to the top of the mountain to rescue Hollis, he gets into an accident on the way back down. Hollis runs away from the Regans because the Old Man blames Steven for the accident when she feels it is her fault since she went up the mountain first. Josie's house on Long Island is



where Hollis is sent to live with Josie Cahill at the beginning of the book. Hollis decides to stay with Josie, but when she learns she is going to be sent to a different family, Hollis runs to Branches with Josie.

Language and Meaning

In *Pictures of Hollis Woods*, the language used tends to be casual and informal. The sentence construction is fairly simple as well. This simplistic style of writing is very beneficial since the book is written on a fourth grade reading level. This style is utilized since the intended audience is young children. The language used in the novel aids comprehension since it is written according to the education that a fourth grade child should have received thus far in their academic endeavors.

The language utilized aids understanding of the novel, since it was written for children, by using a vocabulary that would be deemed appropriate for most children around the age of nine or ten. The language characterizes the age of the main character, which is around the age of the intended reader as well, and also reveals Hollis Woods' desire to belong to a family, specifically the Regans. This novel is written using approximately three-quarters exposition with the remaining quarter being written through dialogue. This distribution is effective as it allows the reader to focus their attention on Hollis' feelings about the time she spent with Josie and the Regans. The language is useful in aiding the style of the novel as it is appropriate for its intended audience. Overall, the language used in this novel is very easy to understand, especially for a more mature reader.

Structure

Pictures of Hollis Woods is divided into seventeen chapters and fourteen pictures, totaling thirty-one sections of the novel. It comprises one hundred, sixty-six pages, averaging approximately five pages per section. Each of the fourteen pictures are titled according to the picture which Hollis describes in that particular section, and chapters two through seventeen are entitled "The Time with Josie" since they describe the time Hollis spends with Josie. Chapter one is untitled. The chapters are very short but detailed. Varying amounts of time pass in the chapters. Each of the chapters range from hours to days, but sometimes, a time period is skipped in between the chapters. Each of the pictures focuses on a particular scene from Hollis' summer spent with the Regans in Branches.

Pictures of Hollis Woods by Patricia Reilly Giff is an emotional story about a little girl searching for a family. Hollis Woods is abandoned as a baby and spends her life being sent to various foster homes. Her story alternates between the time she spends with Josie Cahill and the summer she spent with the Regan family, who wanted to adopt her. *Pictures of Hollis Woods* is a heartwarming novel about a troubled girl finding a family who will love her. The novel's pace is fairly slow, and it is easy to understand since it was written on a fourth grade reading level. Flashbacks occur occasionally as Hollis



recalls her earlier childhood, and each picture serves as a flashback during which Hollis recounts the summer she spent with the Regans in Branches. This novel is very entertaining and heartwarming, and it is quite an enjoyable read.



Quotes

"I opened my mouth to say: How about W for wish, or W for want, or W for 'Wouldn't it be lovely,' like the song the music teacher had taught us?"

First Picture, X, p. 1

"Ah, and the house in Branches. Steven's house. But that house was different. I'd never forget that one."

Chap. 1, p. 4

"If someone looks into your eyes, I read in a book one time, he'll see right into your soul. I didn't want anyone to see into my soul."

Chap. 1, p. 5

"Two months to do what I please and not have to worry about that kid getting into everything... No wonder she hasn't been adopted. She's a mountain of trouble, that Hollis Woods."

Second Picture, Steven, p. 13

"There are saltwater people, and freshwater people. Then there are some who don't even know enough to fall in love with the water. But they're not us."

Chap. 2, p. 23

"Why did I have to mess everything up?"

Third Picture, Fishing in the Delaware River, p. 29

"Ah. You know it too. This is the way you're going to look very soon. This is the way you'll look for the rest of your life. You have a beautiful face."

Chap. 3, p. 32

"I had wanted to throw my arms around him, wanted to tell him I had never had a present like this before, no one had. I wanted to tell him but didn't tell him; I ducked my head, my bangs a fringe over my eyes. But he knew; I knew he knew."

Fourth Picture, The Old Man's Mountain, p. 38

"Imagine. I never saw anyone who was able to do this, and I was an art teacher for forty years."

Chap. 4, p. 43

"It's your world, it belongs to you. Drawing is what you see of the world, truly see... And sometimes what you see is so deep in your head you're not even sure of what you're seeing. But when it's down there on paper, and you look at it, really look, you'll see the way things are."

Chap. 4, p. 45

"You're going to be something, you and that language you speak on paper. I love what you have to say, Hollis Woods... You have that. It's more than most people ever have."



"Count yourself lucky."
Chap, 4, p. 46

"It's a gift to draw things the way they are... And something else. You shine through in your drawings."
Fifth Picture, Old Man's Mountain, p. 48

"I've found a family for her. A mother and a father with a three-year-old boy and a dog."
Chap, 7, p. 66

"B, belong. G, girl. S, sister. W for want, W for wish, W for Wouldn't it be lovely? My head was spinning."
Seventh Picture, Izzy, p. 70

"Josie, this is the place... We're home, Josie."
Chap. 10, p. 90

"You're good enough for both of us. That's what Pop would say."
Ninth Picture, Izzy's Cake, p. 98

"The sun on the ocean makes a path sometimes. You think you can walk on it, walk clear across the ocean to... To where I belong."
Chap. 11, p. 105

"And so that last week, all I thought about was going to the top of the Old Man's mountain and shouting down to the whole world. I even knew what I was going to say: Here I am, Hollis Woods, who didn't deserve to be in a family... tough Hollis Woods, running-away Hollis Woods. Look at me. I climbed the mountain. Now I belong."
Tenth Picture, Hollis Woods, p. 111

"I said all the things I wanted to. 'I'm new,' I said. 'I'm different.' And in my head I told myself I'd never be mean again, I'd be friendly, I'd go to school and walk up to people. 'A new leaf,' I said."
Eleventh Picture, On the Mountain, p. 121

"It's too bad you didn't come when you were six. I knew you had to stay with us when you let me win that checkers game." Steven, Eleventh Picture, On the Mountain, page 124

"I'll pay you back, Izzy, every cent, if it takes me the rest of my life."
Chap. 13, p. 128

"I thought about the stucco woman. She wouldn't have been surprised at the trouble I had caused. She would have seen it coming. Would Steven have driven the truck to the top of the mountain if I hadn't been there? And the arguing between Steven and the Old Man- what had Izzy said? 'Worse this summer.' I'd messed up the whole family."
Twelfth Picture, A Mountain of Trouble, p. 136



"Maybe you're tough when you need to be tough. But trouble? What would I ever have done without you? I wish you could see yourself the way I see you."

Chap. 14, p. 141

"Hollis, it doesn't matter. We just want you home."

Thirteenth Picture, The Conference Room, p. 145

"How had I drawn all that and not seen it? Of course the Old Man loved Steven. He was going to love him whether I was there or not. Had I given them up for nothing, the whole family?"

Chap. 15, p. 150

"I told Pop. 'Hollis loves that house,' I said. But did he listen? Of course not... 'If she loved that house so much she'd be with us right now,' Pop said. But I knew. I've been here every day except during the big storm. We've been hoping you'd come home all these months. Why not, Holly?"

Chap. 16, p. 156

"Ha, Hollis Woods, there's hope for you, I told you that. I'm going to spend next summer fixing up the old truck. What do you say? Want to help? Want to come home?"

Chap. 16, pp. 158-159

"Josie wants to come home. She remembers home, but she forgets so much else. The agency isn't going to let her stay there alone. And they want me to go somewhere else."

Chap. 17, p. 161

"It's me, Izzy. Do you think I could come home?"

Chap. 17, p. 162

"They're too small for you now, Hollis. They're from my sixth birthday. But I always wanted my oldest daughter to have them."

Fourteenth Picture, Christina, p. 163

"I have a new last name now. It's Regan. I love the sound of it. I haven't forgotten Hollis Woods, who wanted and wished, fresh as paint, a mountain of trouble, so I sign my drawings using the new names. They all belong to me."

Fourteenth Picture, Christina, p. 165

"So there are five of us now: a mother, a father, a brother, and two sisters. A family."

Fourteenth Picture, Christina, p. 166



Topics for Discussion

Who is Hollis Woods, and why doesn't she have a home?

What is the significance of the chapters describing pictures one through fourteen?

Why does Hollis usually run?

How does Hollis feel about her time with the Regans, and why does she leave them and refuse to return?

Why does Hollis decide to stay with Josie, and why does she decide to run?

Describe how Hollis spends her time with Josie at the Regans' summer home.

Who is "Santa Claus", and how does Hollis figure it out?

Why does Hollis decide to call Beatrice in chapter sixteen?

Why does Hollis think she is bad?

Why are there five people in the Fourteenth Picture, and how does Hollis feel about it?