

Shark Girl Study Guide

Shark Girl by Kelly Bingham

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Contents

Shark Girl Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Section 1: Part One, pages 1-17.....	5
Section 2: Part One, pages 18-33.....	7
Section 3: Part One, pages 34-49.....	9
Section 4: Part One, pages 50-68.....	11
Section 5: Part One, pages 69-84.....	14
Section 6: Part Two, pages 85-110.....	16
Section 7: Part Two, pages 111-131.....	18
Section 8: Part Two, pages 132-155.....	21
Section 9: Part Two, pages 156-179.....	24
Section 10: Part Two, pages 180-194.....	27
Section 11: Part Three, pages 195-211.....	29
Section 12: Part 3, pages 212-229.....	31
Section 13: Part Three, pages 230-247.....	33
Section 14: Part Three, pages 248-261.....	35
Section 15: Part Three, pages 262-276.....	37
Characters.....	39
Objects/Places.....	43
Themes.....	45
Style.....	48
Quotes.....	50
Topics for Discussion.....	53



Plot Summary

"Shark Girl" by Kelly Bingham is a novel written in verse about a girl who loses her arm during a shark attack. After Jane wakes from a coma after having her right arm amputated, she must relearn everything she once knew as she continually questions why this happened to her. "Shark Girl" is a powerful and touching narrative that shares Jane's inner and outer struggles as she adjusts to her new life with only one arm.

After being attacked by a shark while swimming at the beach, Jane's right arm is amputated and she spends ten days in a coma. Jane hates all the attention she receives since a video of the attack was played repeatedly on the news, and she wishes everyone would just leave her alone. Jane receives multiple letters from other amputees, but she has no intention of being an inspirational story and sometimes she wishes she had died. Jane's family and friends visit her in the hospital, and everyone tells her she is doing well, but she feels useless and wishes they would admit she is a mess. Jane is distraught at the idea that she may never draw again, so she secretly begins practicing with her left hand. She becomes friends with Justin, a younger kid whose leg was amputated, at physical therapy, and they spend a lot of time together. Jane also talks to Mel, a therapist appointed by the hospital who tells her to let herself be sad. Jane begins to wonder if she could have a career in the medical field because she wants to make a difference like so many doctors did for her. When it is time to Jane to go home, she is afraid because she belongs here, but she will not fit in on the outside.

Once Jane returns home, she feels awkward because of all the things she cannot do, and she hates how people stare at her every time she leaves the house. She continues drawing with her left hand, yet she cannot get the eyes of her animals right. Jane is fitted for a prosthetic arm and begins learning to use it. She is furious at Michael's insensitivity when he forces her to mow the lawn, but she is also grateful to be treated normally for a change. Jane is nervous to return to school, and she hates how her classmates stare at her. After Grandma expresses concern that Jane no longer cooks or draws, Jane forces herself to do some chores, realizing she cannot always rely on Mom to do everything for her. She begins talking to the school guidance counselor about medical school and finds something to look forward to. She always experiences happiness when Mom opens her Christmas gift. Still, Jane continues drawing because something will not be right in her until she can do this.

When Mom gets stuck in traffic, Jane has some difficulty making herself dinner, but she is proud of herself and knows it will be easier next time. She allows Mom to photograph her and her friends at her sixteenth birthday party, and she begins volunteering at the hospital on Saturdays, determined to make a difference. Jane dances around her room in excitement when she finally draws a fox with real eyes. Max, a boy she has a crush on, gives her a ride home from school, but when Angie tells Jane that Max is out of her league and continually criticizes her, Jane decides she is done with Angie. Jane is surprised to realize that her amputated arm is becoming part of her. Rachel tries to convince Jane to make up with Angie, and Jane finally apologizes after she realizes that



Angie was only trying to protect her from being hurt. Jane gifts Justin with a drawing of his dog on his birthday but knows she will not see him again for a long time because they are both moving on with their own lives. Arguing with herself about the attack being her fault, Jane decides that she is done doing this to herself. Looking through old photo albums of her dad before he died from cancer, Jane realizes the trick to life is celebrating the freedom of not knowing what will happen next. She says goodbye to her arm and starts to look forward to her future, beginning a new photo album of her new life with only one arm.



Section 1: Part One, pages 1-17

Section 1: Part One, pages 1-17 Summary

"Shark Girl" by Kelly Bingham is a novel written in verse about a girl who loses her arm during a shark attack. After Jane wakes from a coma after having her right arm amputated, she must relearn everything she once knew as she continually questions why this happened to her. "Shark Girl" is a powerful and touching narrative that shares Jane's inner and outer struggles as she adjusts to her new life with only one arm.

"I Remember" begins Part One with Jane recalling wearing her pink bikini as she, Michael and Mom packed the car and headed to the beach. "Los Angeles Times, June 22" describes Jane being attacked by a shark at Point Dume State Beach. She was rescued by Michael and taken to the hospital where her right arm was amputated and she slipped into a coma. In "Home Movies", Jane wakes after spending ten days in a coma and learns that there is a video of the attack that a guy sent to the news. Mom holds Jane's hand in "Holding" as Jane wonders why this happened to her and what she will do now that her life has been so drastically altered and she can no longer draw. When Aunt Karen and Uncle Ben call to check on Jane in "Phone Call, July 3", Uncle Ben assures Jane that she is strong enough to get through this. In "Michael", Jane recalls that Michael was busy watching a girl he has a crush on as she headed to the water, and though she told Mom she did not need Michael to accompany her, she hoped he would since it is always more fun with him along. In "Nerves", Mom asks the doctor when the pain will stop, and he says it is not an exact science; it could last a few weeks or for the rest of a person's life. Jane is annoyed that they refer to her only as "a person", and Mom is irritated that no one tells them anything. In "I Wonder", Jane asks why that man did not put the camera down to help her, and why he gave that video to the news.

Section 1: Part One, pages 1-17 Analysis

In "Ghost", the poem preceding the actual narrative, sometimes she still feels her right hand and reaches for things before she remembers it is no longer there. The right hand she remembers does not know enough to know peace. This foreshadows the topic of this novel. In "I Remember", Jane remembers the first and last time she wore her pink bikini. Being more obnoxious than usual with the freedom of his driver's license, Michael teased that she did not fill it out. It was a bright day as they packed the car and headed to the beach, and Jane slipped her notebook inside her beach bag. "Los Angeles Times, June 22" notes that a fifteen-year-old girl was attacked by a shark yesterday at Point Dume State Beach. Witnesses heard her scream and saw blood, and her arm was barely attached to her body as her brother pulled her from the water and tied off her arm to slow the blood loss. She was transported to UCLA hospital in critical condition. Her right arm was amputated, and she is in a coma, but she is lucky to be alive. Dr. Kim emphasizes the importance of the next forty-eight hours in determining whether she



sustained brain damage. These first few poems serve to provide details about the shark attack and what Jane undergoes as a result. In "Home Movies", Jane does not think it can get worse after they amputate her arm, but then she spends ten days in a coma. When she wakes, Michael tells her there is a video from a guy who was videotaping on the beach. Mom has not seen it and hopes she won't. Lindsey, Jane's nurse, tells her not to watch the video because she should "just try and put that day behind you" (page 7), showing that she is truly concerned for Jane. Tears fall, and Jane's rage boils so wild that it nearly swallows her fear. In "Holding", Jane holds onto Mom's hand with her left one as she thinks about her art and her life, wondering why this happened to her and what she is supposed to do now. Mom postpones Jane's friends from visiting for a few days. She leaves for coffee while the nurses rewrap Jane's bandages, but Jane feels Mom's hand slip back over hers as she dozes off, showing the comfort Mom offers and Jane accepts from Mom.

In "Phone Call, July 3", Aunt Karen calls to say she is glad Jane woke from her coma, and she will be visiting next week. When Jane assures her the pain is not too bad today, Aunt Karen tells her she does not need to be so brave. Uncle Ben takes the phone to tell Jane he is glad she is okay because he was so worried she would die; he knows it looks rough now, but Jane is strong. Aunt Karen advises Jane to take her time with everything but brushes off questions about the video. In "Michael", Jane remembers spreading out the towels and teasing Michael who was watching a girl from his class while pretending to read a magazine. As she went toward the water, Mom wanted Michael to go with her because the water was a little choppy, but Jane insisted she did not need him. She hoped he would come anyway because it was always more fun with him along, but "he was too busy not watching the girl" (page 14). This shows that she partially blames him, even though he is also the one who saved Jane's life. In "Nerves", the doctor warns Mom and Jane that a person could experience pain for a few weeks or the rest of their life after an amputation, preparing Jane for the possibility of continuous pain. Michael says everyone in the hospital is too busy to take care of people, and Mom yells at him to be more helpful. The words hang in the air long after Michael leaves. Jane wonders why the man continued taping instead of helping her in "I Wonder", and she also does not understand why he gave the video to the news. These first poems show Jane's depression following her amputation and her realization that life is going to change.



Section 2: Part One, pages 18-33

Section 2: Part One, pages 18-33 Summary

"Santa Clarita Press, July 7" announces that Jane Arrowood is in stable condition. Jane is a resident of Santa Clarita and will be a junior at Mountain Ridge High School in the fall. The doctors say she is lucky that she did not suffer brain damage, and she will be going home soon. Jane is a well-known artist at Mountain Ridge and has won several art competitions. In "Pity Bears", Jane receives many cards, flowers and stuffed animals from strangers who want to help her, but she hates their pity so she has Michael distribute them to other patients. "A Letter from Mary, Age 7" states Mary heard about Jane losing her arm. Mary also lost her arm, to cancer, and she has a new one named Patty that helps her do lots of things. She and her parents had a pretend funeral for her lost arm so she could say goodbye, and she suggests that Jane should do the same. "Corny" shows Jane missing her dad who died of cancer when she was young. Even though she is normally accustomed to life without a father, she really wants a hug from him after this predicament. Jane begins seeing a therapist, Mel, in "Permission", and Mel tries to comfort Jane by reminding her that she has the rest of her life to rebuild herself and her life. He also tells her that she should allow herself to feel as bad as she wants about the loss of her arm for now as it will help her move on sooner. When Grandma and Grandpa visit in "Lies", Mom tells them about Jane's progress and assures them things will be better once Jane goes home, and though Jane keeps quiet, she does not agree that things will be better. Jane's best friend, Rachel, visits in "Six Days After" to fill Jane in on recent gossip and assure Jane that she will be able to draw again. When she admits that she does not know what to say, Jane tells her she wishes people would just say what they really think because she is tired of being told it is okay, and Rachel agrees it is not okay; she would be going crazy if it were her. The simple words hurt because they are what Jane would say if Rachel were in this bed, and again she asks why this happened to her. In "Friday Afternoon", Jane questions Michael about the attack and learns he used the string from his bathing suit to tie her arm, he was scared she was dead, and he was not afraid of the shark because of his overwhelming fear for his sister. Jane thanks Michael for saving her life. In "Pain", there is a permanent tingling like a wet finger in an electric socket, and the throbbing from Jane's right arm, as if it is still there, always continues.

Section 2: Part One, pages 18-33 Analysis

"Santa Clarita Press, July 7" describes Jane's life preceding the shark attack, focusing on the fact that she has won several local art competitions which is important as her art is a significant part of Jane's life and her fear that she will never be an artist contributes greatly to her depression. In "Pity Bears", Lindsey brings a stack of envelopes and a tiny stuffed bear. The pain meds do not keep Jane high enough to shut out the pity bears and flowers from strangers which she has Michael distribute to other rooms. She does not want any of this, but Mom tells her to appreciate that people want to help. Michael is



the only one that understands how much Jane hates it that people watch the video and pity poor Shark Girl. "A Letter from Mary, Age 7" is the first of several letters in this collection from other amputees who write to Jane to share their story and encourage her that things will get better. Mary suggests that Jane should have a funeral to say goodbye to her arm, foreshadowing Jane's decision to take this advice. In "Corny", though it is cliché, Jane misses her dad at times like these, even though she does not really remember him since he died of cancer when she was only three years old. All she has left is pictures, and usually she is okay with the fact that she has not had a dad in twelve years, but today, she would really like a hug from him.

In "Permission", Jane was not sure about having a male therapist, but the hospital assigned Mel. Jane did not speak much during her first session, but now the sessions fly by. Mel tells her she could have died, but now she has time to find out why she is here; she has her entire life to discover and rebuild. Jane knows he is thinking of the terminally ill kids, the ones who deserve the attention she is receiving. Mel tells her that though society feels she should cheer up right away, that is not always healthy. He does not judge her because he knows losing her arm is heartbreaking, so he tells her not to fight the depression because she will be able to move on sooner if she allows herself to feel as bad as she wants. Jane's tears are ugly and awful, and she wonders when they will stop. In "Lies", Grandma and Grandpa arrive, and Mom tells them Jane is getting fitted for a prosthesis next month. Grandma worries about the hospital staff being callous, but Jane assures her that the nurses are nice. Mom fills them in on Jane's progress, convinced that soon Jane will go home and things will be better, so Jane keeps quiet but thinks "really. Better?" (page 28). This indicates Jane's depression and foreshadows her negativity. In "Six Days After", Rachel visits Jane six days after she wakes from the coma. She brings a red rose, and her astonishment at the myriad of flowers already delivered that day breaks the ice. Rachel fills Jane in on recent gossip, but she cannot believe this happened to her best friend. She assures Jane that she will draw again because people learn how to use their other hand just as well. Rachel admits that she would be going crazy if she were in Jane's situation, showing that she is a true friend since she is able to be honest with Jane. In "Friday Afternoon", Jane asks where Michael got the string to tie her arm, and he tells her he used the string from his bathing suit. When she asks if he saw the shark, he says he saw a shape and lots of blood, and he was scared she was dead. He was not afraid of the shark, though, because he knew he had to get to Jane quickly. This lack of concern for himself shows his devotion to Jane. Michael is sure the guy with the videotape was a coincidence, but the guy could have helped and Michael hopes he is proud of himself. Jane thanks Michael for saving her life, showing her acknowledgement of his effort as well as her own happiness to be alive, to some extent. "Pain" describes Jane's continuous pain in her right arm as if it is still there.



Section 3: Part One, pages 34-49

Section 3: Part One, pages 34-49 Summary

When Jane "Dreams" about dogs and alligators biting her arm off, Dr. Kim explains that amputees' brain often use dreams to explain the pain. Though the doctor, therapist and physical therapist work together in "Team Play" to put Jane back together, she feels she is the one who cannot do anything, so they should give their best to someone who deserves it more than she does. Jane thinks that things would be easier "If Only" this had never happened. In "It's Not Art", Mom offers Jane the opportunity to draw using her laptop and new software, but left alone to try it, Jane is unhappy with the lifeless giraffe that emerges on the screen. Instead, she draws on a gum wrapper, and though the giraffe is crooked and uncertain, it is better than the computer version. She does not tell Mom about her drawing when Mom returns, but she plans to continue trying. In "Hot", Jane passes a fat woman carrying sodas and hotdogs, and embarrassed for her when she drops a cup, Jane continues on into the water. "The Gang", Angie, Trina and Elizabeth, visit Jane to see how she is. Angie suggests throwing a party for Jane, but Jane declines the offer; she wonders why they cannot see the truth; forget boys and dating: it is all over before it has even begun. After an awkward moment, Trina changes the subject to her latest crush, and they try to pretend they are still the same group and nothing has changed. Jane receives "A Letter from Lynn in Louisiana" who assures Jane that her whole church is praying for her and that though God works in mysterious ways, they are sure he will deliver Jane from the pain. In "Smaller Picture", some days the pain is unbearable. When Jane tells Mel that her whole life is going to hurt and sometimes she wishes she had died, he tells her to think about the smaller picture; sometimes, she needs to focus on getting through one day or even minute instead of worrying about the rest of her life. He tells her to hold on through the bad days and tell herself "I made it through that minute, I can make it through another" (page 48). Jane does what he says and gets through one more day.

Section 3: Part One, pages 34-49 Analysis

In "Dreams", Jane dreams that a dog bites her right hand and snaps the bones, and then, she dreams an alligator bites her arm off as she trails her hand in the water from a raft. Dr. Kim tells her that such dreams are common for amputees, and it is her brain's way of coming up with an explanation for the pain. Jane mocks her brain's creativity: "why invent a dog or an alligator when you've been with a shark?" (page 35). In "Team Play", the doctor, therapist and physical therapist tell Jane they are all one big team working to put Jane back together, but Jane is the one who cannot do anything. Everyone is too patient when they should dump her; they give their best, but she thinks they should give it to someone better. In "If Only", Jane thinks that if only this had not happened, if the beach had been closed, if the amputation had been below the elbow, "things would be easier" (page 38). In "It's Not Art", Mom brings her laptop to the hospital with software that Jane can use to draw, but Jane objects "art is meant to travel



from your heart to your head and out through your fingers onto paper, or clay, or a chapel ceiling. Not into a mouse into wires into a box" (page 39). Still, she allows Mom to set it up, and she tries the software while Mom goes to the cafeteria. After ten minutes, a lifeless giraffe emerges. Jane grabs Mom's expensive pen and a gum wrapper, the only paper she can find, and she draws a crooked circle and eyes that look back at her, though they are rounder than she planned. It is not the giraffe she pictured, but it is a giraffe. When Mom returns, Jane hides the gum wrapper under her pillow. Mom is happy with the giraffe on the screen and tells Jane to give it a chance, but Jane wants her to leave so she can get the pen in her hand again. She will try a horse this time, but she cannot draw with anyone watching her. Mom is so disappointed that Jane nearly shows her the drawing, but she cannot bear the thought of Mom telling her relatives that it is therapeutic but her dreams of becoming a professional artist are over. Jane will not say a word, but she will ask for another piece of gum before Mom leaves. This indicates that Jane intends to continue trying to draw.

In "Hot", the sand burned Jane's feet as she walked to the water, passing a fat woman carrying three sodas and three hotdogs with two children clinging to her shorts. Jane felt embarrassed for her but was not sure why when she dropped a cup. Jane stepped into the water and spread her arms wide. In "The Gang", Angie, Trina and Elizabeth finally visit, professing they were afraid Jane would die. They praise her strength and tease her about the multitude of flowers, agreeing that it is weird that the people who saw the video sent them. Angie suggests throwing a party when Jane gets out of the hospital, but Jane asks if they really think she wants a party. Jane feels her separation from her group of friends acutely because of the loss of her arm, and she does not understand why they do not seem to feel it as strongly as she does. In "A Letter from Lynn in Louisiana", Lynn saw the video on the news and thinks it is horrible that this happened to someone so young. She believes the video is an invasion of Jane's privacy. Her whole church is praying for Jane, and they are sure that God will deliver her from the pain. God works in mysterious ways, but he always loves those who believe. When Jane's pain becomes unbearable in "Smaller Picture", Mel tells Jane that sometimes she needs to focus on getting through shorter periods of time rather than worrying about the rest of her life. This shows his concern for Jane and the important lesson which Jane applies when the pain seems overwhelming; she focuses on just getting through that minute or hour or day of pain.



Section 4: Part One, pages 50-68

Section 4: Part One, pages 50-68 Summary

Jane frequently dreams of her two-armed "Self" drawing, and she sketches when Mom goes to lunch, but she always hides it, planning to show her work only once she is pleased with it again. Jane wishes someone would just admit she is a mess instead of praising her bravery in "Invisible". When Jane meets "Justin" in physical therapy, she decides that she likes the younger kid since he does not bombard her with questions about the shark attack. Mom wants Jane to "Try to Acknowledge" each time she moves better because she is progressing, and Lindsey praises Mom also for doing so well. In "Private Affair", Mom begins therapy with Mel to talk about what happened, and Jane laments that her accident has affected Mom's life as well as her own. In "Pinned Up", Justin draws a picture of his dog, Spot, for Jane, but when he asks Jane to draw something for him, she says she cannot because she lost her good hand. Justin suggests she could draw with her left hand; both of his legs were good, but since he only has one now, that is his good leg, so doesn't it work the same with her arm? No one understands, and Jane wishes they would leave her alone. In "A Message", Jane understands that she and her mother need each other when Mel gives her a certain look after therapy, and she shocks Mom and herself when she holds Mom's hand in the elevator on the way back to her room. When Justin falls in "Why?", Jane wishes she could fix things for Justin, herself and everyone else; she wishes she knew why some people live, some die and some get stuck in the middle. In "Visitors", Grandma and Grandpa leave the same day Aunt Karen and Uncle Ben arrive, but Jane wishes they would all leave. Jane receives "A Letter from Kristen, Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin" from a woman whose leg was amputated ten years earlier, and she writes about meeting her husband in a support group for amputees and how happy she is now. When Aunt Karen stays with Jane on "Wednesday", she offers to bring some of Jane's art books to the hospital, but Jane does not want to read. Uncle Ben sits with Jane on "Thursday", and expresses his gratitude that she survived. He also reminds Jane that she is stubborn like Mom, and Mom's stubborn streak helped her survive after her husband's death, so maybe Jane being stubborn will be good for her too.

Section 4: Part One, pages 50-68 Analysis

In "Self", Jane dreams of her old self with two arms and hands sometimes, always drawing. She used to sketch animals with watching eyes. When Mom goes to lunch, Jane scratches away on a notepad, but she trashes everything before Mom returns. She will continue like this and will surprise everyone when she shows them her work only when she is good once again. In "Invisible", everyone keeps saying Jane is so brave, but they would still talk to the cartoon they have drawn over her body if she slipped away. She wants someone to just admit she is a mess. In "Justin", Jane meets a younger kid, Justin, in physical therapy. He lost his leg below the knee in a car accident. He asks about Jane's arm and is shocked that a shark ate it. Jane feels bad for him but



does not need some kid bugging her, so she moves away, but he follows to tell her about a new Superman movie. He does not ask any more questions about her arm or the shark. Jane likes Justin. This foreshadows the development of their friendship. In "Try to Acknowledge", Mom asks if Jane is moving any better today, but when Jane says not really, Mom tells her she seems to be moving better and needs to acknowledge her progress. Lindsey agrees that Jane is doing great and says Mom is too. Pretending not to blink back tears, Mom concurs that they are all doing great. In "Private Affair", Mom tells Jane she is going to have a few sessions with Mel because he thinks she and Michael should talk about what happened, but Mom is going alone since Michael refuses. Jane is upset that Mom needs therapy because this has disrupted her life too because Jane has caused this. She wishes she could be there to know what Mom is feeling. Justin wants Jane to draw something for him in "Pinned Up", and showing his general positivity, he suggests that her left hand is now her good hand since that is what she has remaining, but Jane just wishes everyone would leave her alone because they do not understand. In "A Message", Mom always waits for Jane outside Mel's office, searching for red eyes in the elevator with her hand on her daughter's shoulder. One day, Mel gives Jane a look that tells her she and her mother need each other, so when Mom rests her hand on Jane's shoulder, Jane surprises both of them by reaching up to grab her hand. In "Why?", Justin cried for the first time when he fell in the gym today when his new leg shifted sideways. Jane hates life and wonders why God would make her and Justin suffer. She wants to fix things for herself, Justin and everyone else, plus she wants to know why these things happen to people. In "Visitors", Grandma and Grandpa are leaving today, but Aunt Karen and Uncle Ben arrive. They all go into the hallway to whisper about Jane. She guesses they are here to assure themselves that she is still alive, but she wants them to leave so she can "experience stillness" (page 61).

In "A Letter from Kristen, Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin", Kristen writes after reading about Jane in the newspaper. She has been in Jane's position and is writing because she knows encouragement is helpful. Kristen lost her left leg ten years ago after an accident at work, and at first, she shut herself off from the world, but then she joined a support group for amputees and returned to work eighteen months later. She got engaged to her boyfriend, William, a man from her support group who had lost both legs. They have been married for seven years now, and Kristen has never been happier. She invites Jane to contact her because she would love for them to be friends. In "Wednesday", Mom goes home and leaves Aunt Karen with Jane. Aunt Karen notes that she saw cookbooks in Jane's room and assures her she will learn to cook with one hand. She offers to bring some of Jane's art books to the hospital, but Jane refuses. She also refuses the Harry Potter books that Aunt Karen brought since Mom told her that Jane likes to read them when she is down. Jane's contrary attitude indicates her severe depression and hopelessness. In "Thursday", Uncle Ben sits with Jane in the morning and tells her about his friend who was struck by lightning which disfigured the left side of his face but still never lost faith in God. Uncle Ben has been asking God why this happened to Jane, but they need to remember how close she came to dying. It is hard for Jane to feel grateful right now, and she starts to cry. Uncle Ben did not mean to make her cry, and he recalls how she was stubborn like her mom as a kid and would not cry. Mom's stubbornness helped her deal with Dad's death, and Uncle Ben claims

Jane's stubbornness will be good too. He insists she will draw again when she is ready because her gift is too special to give up, foreshadowing Jane being able to draw again as well as reemphasizing the importance of Jane's artwork. Jane says nothing will ever be the same, and Uncle Ben agrees as he starts crying too.



Section 5: Part One, pages 69-84

Section 5: Part One, pages 69-84 Summary

In "Two Books", Mel gives Jane a fancy journal to use, telling her it is a prescription, but since she objects to wasting such an expensive book, he also gives her a cheap purple notebook, telling her to use whichever suits her mood. Justin encourages Jane to love her family in "Thoughts on a Tuesday Morning", reminding her that she cannot be so bitter towards everyone. In "Go Fish", Jane used to want to escape California and visit Europe, but as she plays Go Fish with Mom and Justin with the simple pleasure of the game distracting Justin from his pain, Jane is content to let him win, and she feels her world is big enough when he smiles. In "Warm Hands", Carole, the night nurse, has warm hands but does not smile and rarely speaks. Lindsey, the day nurse, shows Jane pictures of her son and brings homemade cookies. Her hands are cold but steady. Jane feels she could help like Lindsey now that she knows "the difference between two warm hands and someone who cares is all the difference in the world" (page 73). In "Looking at Mel", Mel makes Jane feel better, and thinking she could do that for someone, Jane considers a career in nursing, therapy or rehab as she sketches. In "Shuffled", Justin visits Jane's room to say goodbye, but she cannot imagine staying at the hospital without him. He leaves her with his deck of cards which she holds as she watches him being loaded into a van and taken away from her window. In "July 25", Jane has lots to say in her last session with Mel, but she cannot say it. As she hugs him, she realizes Mel is a frail old man and only seems strong. In "Probably", Jane argues with herself that Mel is glad to see her go because she is so weak, too weak to handle this. Jane says goodbye to the hospital staff in "Good-Byes Are Fattening", and when Michael makes her laugh, "it feels rusty, but it feels good" (page 81). When it comes time for Jane to go home in "Leaving", she is afraid to leave because she fits in here, but she will not fit in in the outside world.

Section 5: Part One, pages 69-84 Analysis

Mel gives Jane two journals to choose from in "Two Books", prescribing her to write so that she can process her feelings. It seems likely that this novel is supposed to be related to these journals. In "Thoughts on a Tuesday Morning", Jane does not want the night nurse to wrap her residual arm or for the pain to wake her at night, but she wants to clap her hands and tie her shoes. Justin asks if she hates everyone, and after Jane answers affirmatively, he says she does not have to love everyone but she has to love her family, including himself as her family. Jane thinks she loves Justin. This furthers Jane's friendship with Justin and foreshadows her lessening bitterness toward life in general. "Go Fish" shows that Jane is happy when she is with Justin, and his happiness makes her feel like she does not need to escape California as she has always planned. "Warm Hands" serves to contrast Carole, the night nurse, and Lindsey, the day nurse. Though Carole's hands are warm, she is not personable and friendly like Lindsey is, and Jane realizes that it truly does matter to have someone care about her, foreshadowing



Jane's healing process. Jane begins to consider a medical career in "Looking at Mel", foreshadowing the continuation of this idea throughout the remainder of the novel. Jane is distraught when she says goodbye to Justin in "Shuffled", but this foreshadows their continued relationship.

The fact that "July 25" is Jane's last session with Mel foreshadows that she will be going home soon. This poem also indicates that Jane is beginning to realize that there is a difference between physical and emotional strength, as she realizes that Mel is not physically strong, but his emotional strength makes him seem like he is. In one of many arguments with herself in "Probably", Jane's inner voice calls her weak, and Jane tries to argue but eventually gives in. Jane's outer voice grows stronger and takes precedence as the novel progresses, showing her acceptance of her situation and her progress mentally and emotionally. In "Good-Byes Are Fattening", as the hospital staff gathers to celebrate Jane going home with cake, Marty, one of the paramedics who brought her in, steps forward and greets her. Jane is not ready to think about what he saw, but she begins to wonder if she can be a paramedic with one arm. After Marty leaves, Michael dabs icing on Jane's nose and calls her cupcake. Though it is not funny, they both laugh, and "it feels rusty, but it feels good" (page 81). This indicates Jane is beginning to live again, slowly. In "Leaving", Jane is going home, but she stares at her hospital bed and the halls she knows and the window where she and Justin sat at night after their families left to make up stories about people in the parking lot. The problem is that outside has too many people, and the people inside the hospital are familiar. It is their job to take care of people like Jane so she fits in here; out there, she will not. This shows and foreshadows Jane's fear of not being accepted because of her amputation. It also foreshadows the difficulties she faces trying to reassimilate into normal society as Part One ends.



Section 6: Part Two, pages 85-110

Section 6: Part Two, pages 85-110 Summary

Part Two begins with "Cold" in which Jane recalls standing in the water and moving farther from shore. "Calm, 84 Percent" discusses statistics of shark attacks before Jane notes that "sometimes you're just in the wrong place at the wrong time" (page 88). Jane returns home in "Real World", but though everything is the same, she is different, and she feels that difference acutely. In "The Kitchen", Jane recalls rushing to get to the beach and wonders if things would have turned out differently if she had just slowed down. In "Oil in the Machinery", Jane continually bumps into Mom and spills things. She has come home one arm smaller and lighter, "so why do I take up more space than before" (page 92)? Jane searches "The Web" for sites about amputees, and she decides she will never become the optimistic, inspiration-spreading type. Jane "Can't" go to the grocery store with Mom because she does not want to go in public like this. In "Pharmacy", Michael brings Jane joke magazines because he believes laughter is the best medicine, and as she reads them, her laughter causes a warmth to flicker in her heart. Jane argues with her inner voice that maybe this is her fault since she was too selfish to help the lady with the hot dogs in "Wonder", and in "Monday Morning", she refuses Angie's invitation to go to the mall. As "Mom" ties Jane's shoes, Jane tucks a tag into Mom's shirt, and Mom's smile catches her off guard since she does not smile much anymore. When Jane smiles back, Mom looks surprised, and Jane wonders if she is thinking the same thing about her. In "Moat, Overlooking", Jane does not seem to recognize the subject matter as she looks through her art portfolio, and she wonders if she will ever be able to create the same type of art from the dark recesses of her mind. Jane fills her journal in "Author", deciding against writing her story since her life is private. In "Waiting", Mom fixes Jane's lunch. Cooking used to be Jane's job, but she has not fixed a single meal since she came home. Michael gets angry at Jane on "August 15" because he refuses to do everything for her, and Jane is furious that he is so insensitive. Jane is "Tired All the Time" because she continues having nightmares about fish sliding through water. Jane is finally able to safely sleep in the daylight "In the Morning" after Michael stormily completes his chores and leaves the house.

Section 6: Part Two, pages 85-110 Analysis

As Part Two begins, "Cold" shows Jane's recollection of the cold water as she stood in it up to her chest. She looks back to shore as Mom waves, but Jane turns and moves farther from shore without waving. In "Calm, 84 Percent", Jane knows shark attacks are rare and that 84% occur in calm water. Shiny jewelry, erratic movement and blood are usually contributing factors, but "then again, sometimes you're just in the wrong place at the wrong time" (page 88). This shows Jane's acceptance of the fact that her shark attack was purely bad luck. In "Real World", Jane missed home, but it is unfamiliar. Her room is exactly how she left it, but she is obviously different, and her stomach knots at the sight of her sweaters in the closet with sleeves dangling down. In "The Kitchen",



Jane is happy to see her bedroom and bathroom, but the kitchen stops her as she sees herself in her pink bikini, rushing to get to the beach. She was always hurrying. Maybe, if she had slowed down, ten more minutes may have been enough. Jane does not understand why she is clumsier when she takes up less room in "Oil in the Machinery" which shows Jane's frustrations that she cannot seem to simply move without being awkward. In "The Web", Jane searches websites about amputees, and the perky quotes and claims that many become better people than they were before causes her to think she was fine with who she was and she will never become the heroic icon spreading hope. In "Can't", Mom asks Jane to accompany her to the grocery store, hopeful as she tries not to push, but Jane refuses because she cannot bear the thought of going out like this. Jane explains in "Pharmacy" that she has always believed food is the best medicine, but she can hardly eat. Michael brings her magazines with jokes, insisting laughter is the best medicine, and as she stays up late reading them, Jane chuckles several times, warmth flickering somewhere in her heart. In "Wonder", Jane argues with herself that this whole thing is her own selfish fault because she did not help the lady with the hot dogs since taking the time to help might have delayed her just enough. She will never know, but she will always wonder if it would have been different. In "Monday Morning", Angie calls and invites Jane to the mall, pointing out that everyone will see Jane's arm at school when Jane admits she is worried about people's reactions. Still, Jane refuses, so Angie suggests they should all get together soon. Jane surprises herself when she and "Mom" smile at one another because neither of them smile much anymore; this foreshadows the fact that they are both doing better with their situation.

In "Moat, Overlooking", Jane looks through her portfolio and notes she was good, but the subject matter is from someone else's world. She fears she is doomed to become an imitation of van Gogh, tortured but surviving and creating art from the dark memories of Shark Girl trying to accommodate with her left hand. "I have no legs to cross the bridge toward Sunflower, Blooming, and return home" (page 105). In "Author", as Jane tries to fill Mel's journal, she considers telling Shark Girl's story, but remembering she does not like to write and that her life is private, she returns to her entry about dressing herself today. "Waiting" shows Jane acknowledging that she has not cooked since she came home. In "August 15", Michael gives Jane the silent treatment over pizza, and when she offers to help him clean up, he tells her that he is sick of doing everything around here. He will not wait on her just because Mom does. As she helps him clean, Jane hates Michael for being so insensitive for the first time since June. This shows Michael's refusal to treat Jane differently, and though she does not like his attitude at this point, she eventually finds it to be a positive thing. In "Tired All the Time", Jane wakes in a cold sweat from nightmares about fish sliding through the water. The movie loops in her mind through the night and fades away. "In the Morning", Jane watches TV on the couch as Mom vacuums, and when Mom grabs Michael from going outside to dust and empty the dishwasher, he stomps through his chores before leaving with a dark cloud over his head. Calling him grumpy, Mom returns to mopping, and it is finally quiet enough for Jane to sleep, safe in the daylight.



Section 7: Part Two, pages 111-131

Section 7: Part Two, pages 111-131 Summary

In "Adrift", Jane refuses to go to a support group for amputees, and thinking about the positive websites she has found, she decides everyone who claims to be okay is pretending since able-bodied people also pretend all the time. She wonders where she belongs in humanity. When Jane goes to the grocery store with Mom in "Take a Picture", she is very uncomfortable with everyone staring at her, and in "Forever", she feels nauseous to know that she is the one that everyone stares at now like she used to stare at people missing a limb. In "Fat", Jane does not want to discuss whether she will draw again with Angie and Trina, so she is much more comfortable when they discuss Angie's belief that she is overweight. Jane sticks her stump in a jar of "Rice and Beans" on the doctor's orders as preparation for her prosthesis. Jane receives "A Letter from Paul Shaylor, Age 16" asking to interview her for a nonfiction report he needs to write for English class, and Paul includes a multitude of private questions about the attack and what Jane is doing with her life since losing an arm. In "The Hook", Jane is fitted for her prosthesis, and she orders a functional arm and a cosmetic arm, even though she dislikes the idea of wearing either of them. Jane sometimes finds it easier to let Mom do everything for her in "Constant". In "Schooling", Jane tries to get used to Chuck, her fake arm, but when he fails, she needs to be separate from him. Regardless, she always tries again. Jane has a "Thought" about people making prostheses look so real when amputees are supposed to be unashamed of their new bodies; it is obvious that they are supposed to blend in. Jane argues with herself in "Different" about how Michael might have been attacked instead of her if he had gone to the water with her, and though she feels horrible for thinking something like that, her inner voice insists it should have been different. Though Jane wants to look at the photos of Dad's last year, she refuses to open the "Albums" because she does not want to see herself with two arms. In "His Voice", Justin calls to say he misses Jane and tells her about everything going on, but he does not mention his leg because he has other things on his mind, "like life and living it" (page 129). They agree to hang out sometime. In "It Stinks", Jane feels guilty about not doing any chores, so she tries to do laundry and take out the trash while Mom is at work. Unfortunately, the trash spills out in the garage, but Michael takes care of it for Jane. She does not know if it is worse that she cannot do something as simple as taking out the trash or seeing her brother feel sorry for her.

Section 7: Part Two, pages 111-131 Analysis

In "Adrift", Mom suggests Jane should go to a support group, but she says maybe, knowing better than to give an outright no. She walks Mabel, wearing a sweater to hide her missing limb, despite the heat, and thinks of the websites she's found and how they claim to do fine. She believes they are pretending because even able-bodied people pretend all the time. In "Take a Picture", Mom stops at the store on the way home from Jane's physical therapy, but Jane insists on staying in the car. Unfortunately, it is too hot



so she goes inside to find Mom, and as everyone stares, she wants to scream that her new arm will be ready soon and no one will be able to stare then. Instead, she clings to the cart and lets Mom guide them both through checkout. In "Forever", missing an arm is something everyone notices. Jane remembers how, before, she would see someone missing a limb and look away fast before returning her gaze to wonder about them. Now, she is one of the people that others wonder about, and it gives her a crawling sensation in her stomach to think about it. When Angie and Trina visit in "Fat", Angie complains about how fat she is, but when Trina asks if Jane has tried drawing again, Jane lies and says no, giving vague answers to their questions about whether she will draw ever again. She is more comfortable when they resume talking about Angie's fat because "it's better than the bare boned truth" (page 118). Sixteen-year-old Paul Shaylor writes Jane because he wants to interview her for an English assignment.

In "The Hook", Jane is grateful that Dr. Kim was honest about her prosthesis and the fact that it will not do some things that her hand could do. Sam, the prosthesis maker, shows her how to use the metal hook attachment on the functional arm, and he also shows her a cosmetic arm that looks like it is covered with skin, telling her it gives some people confidence. Instead of telling him that his shop feels like mannequin purgatory, Jane asks Sam why a person decides to make artificial limbs for a living, and he tells her he gets to meet fascinating people like her. When he starts telling her how she can be an artist again, Jane shuts him up because she is tired of the inspirational stories. She orders a functional arm and a cosmetic arm, but she thinks she cannot wear either; it is bad enough to lose an arm, but she does not want to look like Captain Hook. Jane allows Sam to tell her that people will not even notice the prosthesis eventually because he is trying to help, but she thinks that he does not really know since he has never been in her shoes. In "Constant", Mom hangs over Jane, reminding her of thinking she already knows about her prosthesis. Sometimes her help is more exhausting than it would be for Jane to do it herself, but sometimes it seems easier to just shut up and let Mom do it all for her anyway. This shows the contrast between Mom and Michael; Mom tries to be there for Jane, even to Jane's detriment, while Michael is willing to be insensitive if it forces Jane to live again. In "Schooling", Jane recalls taking horseback riding lessons when she was nine and being told the horse responds to confidence. She wonders if Chuck, her fake arm, is like a horse, so she tries throwing her heart to an object in hopes that Chuck will follow; however, like in riding, the ideal does not always follow. When the book falls to the floor, Jane needs to calm down separate from Chuck, but as in riding, eventually, she saddles up and tries again. In "Thought", Jane wonders if amputees are supposed to accept and be unashamed of their new bodies, why do they put so much effort into making prostheses look real? They should come clean instead of giving amputees pamphlets about self-image. In "Different", Jane argues with herself that Michael would have come in the water with her if he had not been busy flirting with those girls, and then it could have been him instead of her. She feels horrible for thinking it and tells herself that it is just the way it is, but her inner voice insists that it could have been different, that it should have been different. In "Albums", Jane runs her hand along the photo albums, stopping at the one of Dad's last year. Though she knows the pictures by heart, she is in the mood to see his face today, but she does not want to see photographs of herself with two arms. Justin calls in "His Voice" to fill Jane in on his life, but he does not mention his leg because he is busy living



his life, showing that Justin is not dwelling on what could have been like Jane is. Jane's friendship with Justin is therapeutic since he deals with his amputation much easier than she does. Their agreement to hang out sometime foreshadows their times together. In "It Stinks", Jane feels guilty as she watches Mom do all the cleaning and shopping. She tries folding laundry one day while Mom is at work, but it is useless. Still, Chuck helps her get the shirts on their hangers. When she tries to take out the trash, it spills all around her before she reaches the garage, and when Michael finds Jane crying in the garage, he tells her that he will take care of it. Jane hates that Michael feels sorry for her, but Michael's willingness to help Jane when she fails shows that he is not insensitive; he just wants Jane to do for herself instead of moping about everything she cannot do. His way of dealing with her handicap is actually encouraging and shows his faith in his little sister's ability to recover mentally from her traumatic incident.



Section 8: Part Two, pages 132-155

Section 8: Part Two, pages 132-155 Summary

In "Perhaps Decaf", Rachel helps Jane practice going to a coffee shop by handling her money and practicing what to say if anyone questions her about her arm. Rachel announces Jane is ready, but at the coffee shop, Jane feels she cannot do this. She hates Rachel for a moment when Rachel insists she can go inside for ten minutes, yet she knows Rachel is right as she enters the coffee shop. As Jane is "Sipping" her coffee, no one stares at her. In "Failing Expectations", Jane has heard of a girl who also lost her arm in a shark attack but resumed her life mere months later. Jane has no desire to be so inspirational because she feels she has cause to complain. Jane is "Back At It Again" with her drawing, refusing to give up despite the fact that her sketches never turn out how she wants. In "Dear Jane", Jane feels like she will scream if she receives one more letter about an inspirational amputee. On "August 30", Michael insists on Jane mowing the lawn, and though it is difficult, she is capable of doing it so he suggests she make it her duty when he leaves for college. Jane likes that Michael treats her normally. In "Snip, Snip", Jane decides to cut her hair short so she can manage it better. Michael leaves for college, and though Jane wants to comfort Mom, Mom's shoulders warn her away, and she feels they might as well be on "Opposite Sides of the World". In "September: 8:33 p.m., Sunday", Jane and Rachel discuss what they will wear to school, but Jane insists it does not matter because everyone will be staring at her arm. Jane cannot sleep the night before returning to school in "Lighted Numbers", but in "Drowning", she follows her classmates into the school. In "Currents", eyes stare, glance away, and look back as people pretend not to see. Jane feels "I am Moses, parting the Red Sea. I am a leper, come to town. I have the plague" (page 155).

Section 8: Part Two, pages 132-155 Analysis

As Rachel and Jane prepare for their expedition in "Perhaps Decaf", Jane tries to forget how she felt at the grocery store and starts with a clean slate. She practices getting money out of her purse and putting the change back in her pocket. Rachel hands her a pretend cup of coffee and asks about her arm in imitation of an idiot. Jane states she had an accident before turning into a stone wall, but when Rachel begins to ask more personal questions, Jane wants her to stop, finally yelling it is none of her business and she would prefer if Rachel did not ask such personal questions. Rachel smiles and announces that Jane is ready. Chuck, Rachel and Jane set out for the coffee shop, but entering the shop, Jane becomes nervous and tells Rachel that she cannot do this. Rachel insists she can handle it for ten minutes, causing Jane to hate her for a second before realizing she is right. As she waits in line, Jane's throat is so dry she is sure that one sip will choke her. In "Sipping", Jane and Rachel sit at a small table nervously, but the people in the coffee shop spare Jane no more than a glance. "All of them have no idea how whole they are, how beautiful and dangerous and fragile they are, and that for this moment, they are all safe, on dry land" (page 138). In "Failing Expectations",



another girl lost her arm in a shark attack in Hawaii while surfing, but she returned to surfing a few months later. Jane wants to be like that and she doesn't. Everyone wants her to be brave and inspiring so they cannot complain about their lives if she does not complain about hers since they are lucky compared to poor Shark Girl. Forget that. She will complain about the pain and the inability to do anything normally. Some days, she hates everyone, even babies, so "how's that for inspirational" (page 140)? In "Back At It Again", Jane must love to punish herself because she cannot leave the pen alone even though it does not travel where she plans, leaving shaky, crooked shapes. Maybe she will never get them how she wants but she continues, just in case.

In "Dear Jane", someone writes Jane because someone they know had something amputated for some reason, but you would never know because they are so funny, happy, etc. Jane feels like she will scream if she has to listen to one more story. In "August 30", Michael tells Jane to join him in the yard where he waits with the lawn mower and clippers. She is not wearing Chuck because he is clumsy and it is too hot, but when she complains about the heat, Michael tells her to stop whining because today, she is going to learn to mow the lawn. As he tells her to start the mower and begin, Jane hates him, the grass, the sun and the mower. She yells that she cannot do this, but he is too busy with the clippers to pay attention. Later, once Jane finishes, Michael points out that she can do this and suggests Jane make this her job after he leaves for college next week. While showering, Jane knows he is right. As bad as it was to mow the lawn, it would be worse to watch Mom do it. Plus, "maybe it's kind of nice for Michael to treat me like old plain Jane" (page 145). In "Snip, Snip", Jane spends days skirting the issue that she cannot fix her hair, becoming impatient when Mom tries to help. Finally, she has had enough of looking like she just rolled out of bed, so she and Rachel buy some hair magazines, and though Angie forbids Jane to cut her hair when she runs into them, Jane shows the picture she chose to Lana, the hairdresser at the salon, who cuts her hair and tells Jane how easy it will be to style. As Jane's pale, serious face emerges, she wonders what Angie will say when she learns Jane defied her. In "Opposite Sides of the World", Michael tells Jane to be good and assures her school will be fine as he hugs her goodbye. Mom tells him to call when he arrives, and he insists he is only going to UCLA and will be home often. Jane wants to hug Mom as Michael drives away, but Mom's shoulders warn her off, and though they are standing side-by-side, they might as well be on opposite sides of the world. In "Buttons", Jane sneaks into Michael's room with a jar of buttons from Mom's craft cabinet and spreads them out on the carpet, rearranging them to make shapes, amused how they create pictures that are almost like sketching. In "September: 8:33 p.m., Sunday", Jane calls Rachel because she is nervous and asks her to ride to school with her in the morning, but Rachel has a dentist appointment she cannot miss. They discuss their clothing options, but Jane insists it does not matter what she wears because everyone will be looking at her fake arm. Rachel assures her that tomorrow will be the hardest, and it will be all downhill from there. She suggests Jane should call Angie or Tina to ride with her, and since Jane will not promise, Rachel insists she does not have to do this alone but she knows Jane can do this. In "Lighted Numbers", Jane watches as the clock changes from midnight to 1 to 2 to 3 in the morning. She would rather return to the beach and dip her toes in the water than go to school in a few hours. In "Drowning", Jane feels like she cannot even stand up, but they arrive, and she steps into the current of two-armed

classmates entering the school. Now, they notice her and look; the day begins. Jane feels like a pariah in "Currents" as her classmates pretend not to see her.



Section 9: Part Two, pages 156-179

Section 9: Part Two, pages 156-179 Summary

Jane overhears her classmates' "Whispers" about her shark attack and amputation. Her classmates stare at her arm as Angie and Trina comment on Jane's new haircut in "I Could Run Away, But Then What?", and she moves her shoulder out of sight in "Shark Girl" as two girls stare and whisper. Jane feels that being in "Art Class" is "like showing a dead person her lost life, and all she missed. It's cruel" (page 159). In "The Hallway Encounter That Leaves Me Weak in the Knees", Jane is astounded when Max Shannon catches a book she drops and apologizes for bothering her. Though she knows he would not talk to her if she was not Shark Girl, she is still happy and flattered. In "Love", Jane is eager to remove Chuck when she returns home. She keeps seeing the faces from the school hallway, but in the kitchen, she finds sunflowers and a note from Mom saying she is proud of Jane. Also, Michael emails his sister that she is tougher than the fullbacks at UCLA and she can do it; Jane realizes she can finally breathe again. Jane receives "A Letter from Riley, Plainfield, Vermont" who tells her that real friends will stick by her regardless, and though it is not always easy to do normal things, "I think if you are willing to work hard enough, you can find a way to do anything" (page 166). Jane wakes crying from a nightmare about the shark attack "Again". In "Bumped Off", Jane looks at the art contest announcement on the bulletin board and wonders who will win now that she is unable to create art. Jane plays with Justin and his LEGOs in "LEGO Man", and after he tells her the kids at school treat him the same as usual, Jane wants to tell him how everyone at her school stares. She admits she does not like her new arm which she is not wearing because she is comfortable with Justin. When Jane tells Justin that drawing is not going well, he encourages her to keep trying. Jane is offended when "Mr. DeLandro" jokes about dissecting goldfish because he could not find a shark. Grandma chides Jane for not helping Mom cook on "Thanksgiving" because she is worried that Jane is depressed because she is not pushing herself hard enough and getting back into her routine. Jane insists she is fine and no one needs to worry about her.

Section 9: Part Two, pages 156-179 Analysis

In "Whispers", Jane overhears her classmates whispering about Jane Arrowood, the girl who was bitten by a shark and had to have her arm amputated. Everyone sent a card or flowers, or at least they wanted to, but no one knows what to say to her. In "I Could Run Away, But Then What?", Angie and Trina join Jane at her locker, and though Angie is shocked that Jane cut her hair, neither comment on Jane's long sleeves. Their classmates stare as they pass, but they do not look at Jane's hair or her sweater. In "Shark Girl", two girls lean together and whisper as they stare at Jane, and they would notice she is staring back if they looked up, but since they do not, Jane turns her chair to place her shoulder out of their sight. In "Art Class", the art room looks familiar, but Jane feels she should not be here; "it's like showing a dead person her lost life, and all



she missed. It's cruel" (page 159). Jane crumbles pastels across black paper, and at the end of class, Mr. Musher asks Jane how she is really doing. She wants to tell him, yet it seems too melodramatic to say "I'm like the pots lined up by the kiln. Half-finished" (page 160). During "The Hallway Encounter That Leaves Me Weak in the Knees", Max Shannon rescues "Frankenstein" as it falls from Jane's grasp, and he blushes as he recognizes her and asks how it is going. Jane refuses his offer to help with her backpack as she flushes at the sight of his perfect lips and magnetic eyes. Max tells Jane that his cousin switched to homeschooling after she lost her leg because she was too embarrassed to leave the house. He is sure she is probably sick of all the questions and wonders if anyone asks Jane about anything else. As Rachel and Angie appear, Max apologizes for bothering Jane and disappears into the crowd. Jane knows Max would not talk to her if it was just her so she should not feel happy or flattered or jelly-legged. Angie does not smile like Rachel does, insisting they are going to be late instead. In "Crap Overheard", Jane overhears people talking about how much mail she received, that they wanted to make a movie about the accident, that she was a good artist, and that the video was sick. Her peers want to talk to her but do not know what to say and assume she would probably prefer to be left alone. Discouraged, Jane feels better in "Love" after receiving encouraging notes from Mom and Michael. In "Letter from Riley, Plainfield, Vermont", thirteen-year-old Riley is a paraplegic who has been in a wheelchair since a skiing accident two years ago. He intends to walk again someday, though the doctors say he will not. Riley knows how it is to feel different, but he assures Jane it will get easier and that good friends will stick by her no matter what. He says it is not always easy to get back to doing normal things, "but I think if you are willing to work hard, you can find a way to do anything" (page 166).

In "Again", Jane wakes up crying again after a nightmare about the ocean, screaming and gray flesh with a single black eye. She barely makes it to the bathroom in time to vomit, and then she waits in bed, watching for the sky to lighten. In "Bumped Off", Angie joins Jane as she stares at the bulletin board announcing the art contest that Jane has won the past three years in a row. Angie wonders who will win this year, the question leaving Jane breathless. Angie assures Jane that she will get it back if she works hard and enters next year, but Jane believes this is her contest, her win, because art is her thing. Now, someone new will cast their shadow on the useless Shark Girl and will be surrounded by love and goodwill without knowing what it is like to take up unjustified space in the universe. In LEGO Man, Jane and Justin finally have their play date, and he shows her his LEGOs and the pictures in his idea booklet. He always tears his creations apart so he will have enough LEGOs to build something new. Jane thinks that if Justin were her brother, she would buy him all the LEGOs in the world so he would never have to destroy his creations. She asks him about school and learns that most of the kids treat him the same as usual. Jane tells him that no one makes fun of her, but she wants to tell him how they stare because he would understand, unlike her friends. Justin tells Jane that he likes his new leg because it helps him do stuff, but she confesses she does not like her new arm. She is not wearing Chuck now because she is comfortable with Justin. When Justin asks why Jane has not drawn him a picture yet, she tells him it is not going well, so he encourages her to keep trying. Suggesting they play computer games, Justin leads the way with Jane following as she wonders why it seems like he is the big kid and she is the small one. After "Mr. DeLandro" jokes that



they are dissecting goldfish next week since he could not get hold of any sharks, Jane stays after class to tell him the remark was not funny. Mr. DeLandro insists he thought it would be easier if he did not pussyfoot around her condition, but Jane tells him she does not need help and she does not need to be laughed at. The price of this confrontation is Jane spends the rest of the day and night trying to forget the coldness in Mr. DeLandro's eyes and the anger around his lips. In "Thanksgiving", Aunt Karen calls to say happy Thanksgiving and tell Jane they are going to say a special prayer of thanks that she is still alive. Uncle Ben asks about school before handing the phone to Grandma who asks if Jane helped Mom cook dinner, and when Jane says no, Grandma points out that Jane loves to cook and Mom should not have to do it alone. Grandma is not trying to nag, but Jane needs to get back into her routine. Mom makes excuses for Jane no longer drawing, cooking or going out with friends, but Grandma thinks Jane is not pushing herself enough and worries about her being depressed. Jane argues that she has a lot to be depressed about before Uncle Ben takes the phone again and says they are all worried about Jane and want her to be happy. Jane insists no one needs to worry about her because she is fine before handing the phone to Mom.



Section 10: Part Two, pages 180-194

Section 10: Part Two, pages 180-194 Summary

On "Friday After Thanksgiving", Jane forces herself to dust, vacuum and do the laundry, knowing she cannot always rely on Mom to do everything for her. In "Finding", Jane slowly regains ground as she dresses herself and makes her own cereal. Jane becomes excited in "Shopping" when she asks the school guidance counselor, Mrs. Guiano, about medical school. Jane feels awkward when "Max" helps her with her books. In "Tape", Jane has some difficulty wrapping Christmas gifts but refuses to cry. She is filled with joy to be alive in "Opening Presents" as she notes that Mom likes her gift. When Missy Howard, VP of ABC programming asks Jane to come to New York to appear on "Good Morning America", she adamantly refuses, and "After Slamming Down the Phone", she tells Mom what happened, insisting she never asked for this when Mom points out that people are interested in Jane's story out of concern for her. Mom is unhappy that Jane will not discuss trying to draw again, but she reminds her daughter that she is there for her. Though Jane is sure she will never become a professional artist in "Midnight at the Drafting Table", she continues trying because "something is not right in me and won't be until I can do this" (page 194).

Section 10: Part Two, pages 180-194 Analysis

In "Friday After Thanksgiving", Mom goes shopping and Michael sleeps while Jane dusts, vacuums and does the laundry. When Mom returns, she hugs Jane, grateful for the nice surprise. Jane is exhausted, but she knows this needs to become her weekly obligation for both Mom and herself. Saying "I can't" will not cut it once she lives alone. In "Finding", Jane manages to put her bra on by herself and learns to button and zip, though tying her shoes is still a problem. She has even made her own cereal 22 mornings in a row as she regains pieces of lost ground, inch by inch. In "Shopping", Jane goes to see Mrs. Guiano, the guidance counselor, to ask about the classes she should take to get into school for nursing, physical therapy or art therapy. Mrs. Guiano is thrilled at Jane's initiative and promises to have a stack of information ready after the holiday break. Hurrying off, Jane does not feel so empty, and the presence dripping into her being may be excitement. "Max" sees Jane hurrying along and offers to help with her books, but Jane responds with "uh" as he carries them to her locker, smiling as he hands them over. Jane spends the rest of the day trying to think of a better response than "uh". In "Tape", according to Jane's book on being handicapped, wrapping gifts is a challenge, not a pain in the butt or a reason to smash her room. She decides to ask Rachel to help her, and Mom can help her wrap Rachel's gift. Jane refuses to cry in frustration because it is Christmas. In "Opening Presents", Mom loves the pink robe Jane bought her, and she jokes Grandma will make them all fat as she reaches for another cinnamon roll. Watching Mom, Jane is filled with a sudden rush of joy because she is here and alive. She feels like tears of joy should fall, but instead, she smiles, leans back and enjoys the deep, warm happiness.



In "January 27", Missy Howard, Vice President of programming for ABC, calls Jane to ask her to appear on "Good Morning America", offering to pay for Jane and her family to fly to New York. ABC is interested in Jane's story because people care about what happened to her, and Missy tells Jane this is her chance to show people the human side of herself, but Jane insists she does not want to be on the show and tells Missy to never call her house again. In "After Slamming Down the Phone", Mom asks Jane what happened, and when Jane explains what Missy wants, Mom agrees that Jane should not go on the show but asks why she is crying. Jane is upset because Missy "made it sound like I owed it to everyone to say I'm okay" (page 190). Mom points out that there is some truth in what Missy said about people caring about Jane, but Jane argues she never asked for any of this and does not owe them anything; she just wants to be left alone. Mom is thoughtful as she points out that Jane always enjoyed the attention she received from her art contests. It is strange how people crave attention in some areas of their lives but hate it in others. When Jane objects that she never craves attention, Mom argues that all people crave attention as it is a shared human trait. Jane asks if Mom is seeing Mel again, and saying no, Mom asks when Jane will draw again since she is neglecting an important part of herself. Jane says there is no point since she will never be able to make a living out of it. She does not want to talk this. Mom is not surprised since Jane does not want to talk to her about anything. She knew to expect this once Jane became a teenager, but she reminds Jane that she is here if she needs her. Jane leaves after reminding Mom to tell Missy "no" if she calls back. In "Midnight at the Drafting Table", Jane decides she will never be able to enter another art competition or become a professional artist. She does not know why she refrained from telling Mom that she has been working on her art except it is private and she does not want anyone charting her progress or saying the wrong thing. With the door closed, Jane works at the drafting table because "something is not right in me and won't be until I can do this" (page 194).



Section 11: Part Three, pages 195-211

Section 11: Part Three, pages 195-211 Summary

As Part Three begins, Mom gets stuck in traffic on "Storm Watch Tuesday", and instead of fixing herself cereal, Jane decides to make herself scrambled eggs and toast. Though it is difficult and does not come out perfectly, she is proud of herself as she sits to eat, and she knows that next time will be easier. Mom is also proud of Jane when she returns in "Rain", and though she offers to do the dishes, Jane insists on doing them herself because she knows Mom cannot wash her dishes for the rest of her life. Jane believes her "Cup" would overflow with love if she could create an animal whose eyes stared back into her own. Jane fantasizes about how things could be with Max in "Our Story" before returning to reality. When Jane tells her friends about the call from Missy Howard from ABC in "Opinions, Over Tuna", Angie thinks it could have been good for Jane to go to New York and share her story, but Rachel looks at Jane, obviously meaning "don't listen to them, you did the right thing" (page 207) which is why Rachel is Jane's best friend. In "Just Say It", Jane feels like she is no longer good enough for Angie who seems to constantly criticize her. At the "Playground" with Justin, Jane is amazed by his enthusiasm to play baseball and soccer, despite his leg. When she asks what he wants for his birthday on May 28, he cannot think of anything which is why Jane loves him so much; regardless of everything that is wrong in his life, Justin cannot think of anything he wants.

Section 11: Part Three, pages 195-211 Analysis

Part Three begins with "Storm Watch Tuesday" in which Mom is stuck in traffic caused by a spring storm, so when Jane gets hungry as she waits, she decides she wants scrambled eggs and toast, her favorite meal, instead of cereal. She has no problem getting the pan out, but cracking eggs is a problem. She add milk, beats the eggs and cooks them. There is no problem making the toast, but she spills the orange juice, and when Jane tries to tip her eggs onto a plate, half of them fall on the floor. She stabs holes in the toast when she butters it. Her eggs are overcooked and her toast looks like a murder victim, but Jane is proud as she turns on the radio and lights a candle. Thinking that next time will be easier, Jane hums to the radio as she eats. In "Rain", when Mom arrives with McDonalds for dinner, she is thrilled that Jane tells her she cooked eggs for herself. Jane suddenly realizes she forgot to wash the dishes, and though it will be difficult with one hand and Mom offers to clean up, Jane insists on washing them herself because she cannot expect Mom to go to college with her and live with her for the rest of her life. In "Cup", Jane thinks she is making progress as her animals' bodies start to look right, though their faces are skewed and their eyes are lifeless. She feels love dangling over her cup as she draws, and she believes that maybe the cup would fill up if she could create a pair of eyes to look back into her own.



In "Our Story", Jane fantasizes about how she and Max could go on a date to an aquarium and he could tell her "I love you because of who you are inside" (page 204). She could discover she has always wanted to be a ballerina, and he will win a swimming scholarship to Harvard. After the happy ending, the credits roll, and Jane exits into the light of day. In "Opinions, Over Tuna", Jane tells her friends about the phone call she received from Missy at ABC a few weeks later. Angie thinks that Jane could have had a lot of fun in New York, but Rachel argues against Jane putting herself on display. Angie suggests she could have done someone some good by talking about her story, and Elizabeth agrees, but Jane insists she is not inspirational; the doctors made her survive, and now she just goes on. In "Just Say It", Angie suggests that Jane should wear mascara, a V-neck shirt, heels and silver. It seems like everything that has always been Jane is no longer good enough for Angie. In "Playground", Jane and Justin go to the playground near Justin's house, and as they swing, he tells her about how he is playing softball on a league. They give him extra time to run the bases, but he still gets out sometimes; however, he does not mind because he is getting good at hitting. Justin also wants to play soccer with his friends again, and his dad may take him to the World Cup for his birthday. Jane asks when Justin's birthday is, and after telling her May 28, Justin cannot think of anything he wants. Jane is amazed that her friend is missing half his leg, has a prosthesis that still trips him up and soccer is just out of his reach, but he cannot think of anything he wants for his birthday, and that is why she loves Justin so much.



Section 12: Part 3, pages 212-229

Section 12: Part 3, pages 212-229 Summary

As Mom and Jane stop for Starbucks after physical therapy in "March 16, Sixteen", Mom notes that it seems only yesterday that she walked Jane to kindergarten. At home, an impossible lump in the corner separates to reveal Rachel, Angie, Trina and Elizabeth as they jump from behind the couch to wish Jane a happy birthday. In "Don't Say Cheese", Jane objects when Mom tries to take pictures of the party, but when Mom begs because she was afraid Jane would not live to see this day and Mom would be visiting her grave, Jane gathers everyone for a picture, though she stays in the back. In "Gift", Angie gives Jane a makeup kit filled with shades of purple. She wants to transform Jane into someone new, like her, and Jane wonders "can't she see I'll never be like her, whole and pretty and normal" (page 214)? Jane argues with herself in "Different, Again", as her inner voice tells her she would be drawing, driving and dating if this had never happened. Her life would be normal, but it will never be the same now. In "Hospital Help", Lindsey is thrilled when Jane requests to volunteer at the hospital, and after filling out the forms and completing the training, Jane is ready to go on Saturdays from 9 a. m. to noon. In "Drop-off", Mom asks if Jane is sure about giving up her Saturdays, and Jane points out that she does not have much going on anyway, but she notes that she will be able to drive herself eventually if they start her driving lessons soon. Mom agrees hesitantly. Jane is overwhelmed with memories in "Burned into My Mind", but she continues trying to make a difference as she recalls how much the doctors and nurses helped her when she was here. In "Letter from Andy, Washington, D. C.", Andy explains he lost the use of his left arm due to a recent stroke and can no longer do many things he loved to do. Still, he believes there is a reason and he hopes that someday Jane will "feel that this accident has not ruined your life; only changed it from the original plan" (page 220). In "Tools", Michael helps Jane dig through the contents of a box she ordered online filled with tools to make cooking easier like a jar opener and a specially curved knife. Michael notes that Jane is all set and can resume cooking before Mom kills them all. Jane wonders who the people are who invent these items to make life easier and whether anyone ever thanks them. Jane and Mom argue about Jane learning to drive in "Wheels"; Mom wants Jane to learn to use her new arm better, but Jane wants to learn without it because she needs to know the feeling of approaching freedom. In "Hello", the fox's face emerges under Jane's hands, and as she realizes its eyes are alive, she wants to shout for joy and wake everyone, but she only wakes Mabel as she dances around the room. In "Synchronicity", Jane misses the bus because she is discussing nursing school with Mrs. Guiano, and as she walks home, she wonders if she can plan a party for the kids at the hospital. A red car passes and reverses, and as Jane worries about being assaulted, Max Shannon offers her a ride. In "The Ride", Max laughs when Jane tells him she thought he might assault her, and as he drives her home, he invites her to his swim meet because the team could use some fans. Jane tells him about her conversation with Mrs. Guiano about medical school and how she is also considering occupational therapy. She realizes how much



looks interesting now and wonders if it is true that time really makes a difference, but she does not know since time is still passing.

Section 12: Part 3, pages 212-229 Analysis

"March 16, Sixteen" is Jane's sixteenth birthday, and after going to Starbucks with mom, she returns home to a surprise party with Rachel, Angie, Trina and Elizabeth which demonstrates how much her friends care about her. The fact that Jane allows Mom to take a picture of her with her friends in "Don't Say Cheese" shows that she is beginning to accept her amputation, even though she insists on staying in the back of the group. In "Gift", Jane feels like Angie is trying to change her, and she does not understand why Angie does not realize she will never be whole again. Jane's argument against herself in "Different, Again" shows that she is getting stronger as her inner voice gets weaker. Jane decides to spend her Saturdays volunteering at the hospital in "Hospital Help" which indicates that she has stopped feeling so sorry for herself and is changing her goals to helping others. Mom is hesitant at the mention of teaching Jane to drive in "Drop-Off", foreshadowing their future arguments about this topic. In "Burned into My Mind", everything comes back once Jane is inside the hospital walls, and she wonders if she has made a terrible mistake. She takes refuge in a restroom until she is ready to try again, but seeing the faces when she delivers flowers helps, as does Lindsey and Mel's encouragement. What helps the most is remembering how people made a difference when she was here. Her hand is cold but useful as she delivers cards and fills water pitchers so she continues trying to make a difference.

Jane's "Letter from Andy, Washington, D. C." expresses the hope that she will someday feel this accident only changed her life instead of ruining it, and this foreshadows the idea that Jane will eventually be able to feel this way. The fact that Jane orders "Tools" to make cooking easier on herself shows that she is willing to work with her handicap instead of ignoring it as well as the fact that she is not willing to give up on doing something she loves. In "Wheels", Jane reminds Mom that she needs to learn to drive because she wants to start saving for a used car soon. Neither mention that they don't know what job Jane will acquire so she can save, but the issue is independence. Mom wants to wait since Jane is still getting used to her new hand, but Jane thinks she might as well learn to drive without it. Mom agrees to take Jane out this weekend, but she refuses to go tonight because she does not want to. Jane slams the door to her room; she wants to learn to drive now because her friends are already parallel parking and know they are only days from freedom, and she needs to know that too. This argument fulfills the earlier foreshadowing. Jane is ecstatic when she finally draws eyes that look back at her in "Hello", and in "Synchronicity" and "The Ride", Jane is surprised to find that many things now look interesting for her future after talking to Mrs. Guiano about medical school.



Section 13: Part Three, pages 230-247

Section 13: Part Three, pages 230-247 Summary

In "The Scoop", Rachel and Angie passed Jane in Max's car on their way to the mall, so Rachel calls Jane for the scoop. Angie also calls to warn Jane that Max is dating Megan Dalloway, and Jane wonders how Angie can tell her that and still consider herself a friend. In "Overheard", Jane overhears Emily Morrison telling another girl that Max only talks to Jane because he feels sorry for her, and though Jane knows that both girls are idiots, she feels stupid. Jane decides what she will give Justin for his birthday in "Lightbulb", and she hopes he will love it. In "That Ship Has Sailed", Jane wants Max how Megan has him, but Rachel tells her she is fantasizing since she does not know him. Trina suggests Max is not that great, but Elizabeth thinks he is and asks to share him with Jane. Jane wishes there was a grain of hope, but thinking of Max is like watching a boat sail away and leave her on an empty shore. Jane argues with herself in "Maybe" about whether Max would like her if she looked normal, instead of feeling sorry for her. Maybe she will never feel normal again. In "Leagues", Angie tells Jane that she thinks Matt has a crush on her and will ask her out, but Jane doubts it. Angie insists that Jane cannot hold out for Max because he is out of her league. She insists it has nothing to do with Jane's arm but lots of girls are interested in Max so Jane should be open to other possibilities. Jane is furious as she rushes into art class and considers constructing a noose to hang Angie. In "Cry Me a River", Rachel tries to ignore the tension between Jane and Angie as she asks about their weekend plans. Jane knows she should make a joke to lighten the mood, but she does not feel like being the glue because Angie should be more aware. Angie does not look at Jane as they board the bus. Jane receives a "Letter from Barry Epton, VP of Inspire Publishing" who believes sharing her experience with others will help the healing process and wants to interview her for his series, "American Inspirations". In "It Occurs to Me", Jane realizes that Mom could have boxed up her art supplies before she came home from the hospital, and she wants to thank her for leaving her room as it was but does not know how.

"Emily Morrison" bumps her lunch tray into Jane's and gives Jane a wilting look. Jane thinks about all the popular girls who want to flatten anyone who challenges their self-worth and recalls Uncle Ben telling her that those who are jealous will become her enemy. "But I'm Shark Girl. Why would anyone be jealous of me" (page 241)? In "So Angie Was Right", Max glances over but is too busy talking to Megan Dalloway to really see Jane. Jane knows that Cinderella cried while everyone was at the ball because she knew she was an idiot for thinking she could grab a prince, and Jane knows how that feels. When Angie tells Jane she should not wear red because it makes her look pale in "Blowup", Jane tells Angie to stop picking on her and runs to the bathroom in tears. Angie knows she is hurting Jane but does not care, so Jane is through with her. Jane receives a "Letter from Naomi, Northern California" about how Naomi cannot believe what happened to Jane and hopes she is better. In "Phone Call, May 1", Rachel asks Jane if she and Angie are going to be mad at each other forever. She says they are separating the group, but Rachel refuses to take sides. Jane says that she hates Angie



who might as well admit she thinks Jane is hideous and deformed, but Rachel insists that Angie is just trying to help and reminds Jane that Angie has always been like this. She begs Jane to talk to Angie and tells her that the surprise birthday party was Angie's idea because she thought Jane deserved to be treated special. Jane feels rotten, and when Rachel reminds her that there is a cure for it, Jane agrees to think about it.

Section 13: Part Three, pages 230-247 Analysis

"The Scoop" shows Jane's budding friendship with Max as well as her growing dissension with Angie who upsets her when she calls to tell Jane that Max has a girlfriend. Jane feels stupid in "Overheard" when Emily Morrison tells her friend that Max only talks to Jane because he feels sorry for her. In "Lightbulb", Jane decides what to give Justin for his birthday, foreshadowing the revelation of her chosen gift. Jane reveals that she does not really believe she has a future with Max in "That Ship Has Sailed", but in "Maybe", she argues with herself about whether Max would like her if she was not missing an arm. Angie offends Jane in "Leagues" when she suggests Jane should not set her sights on Max since he has plenty of options, and Jane refuses to make up with Angie in "Cry Me a River", foreshadowing their escalated fight but also their eventual reconciliation. Barry Epton writes Jane to express interest in interviewing her for an inspirational series of books, but Jane does not respond, showing her continued refusal to publicize her life and become inspirational. Jane does not understand why "Emily Morrison" is mean to her; she knows girls will become her enemy if they are jealous, but she cannot imagine why anyone would be jealous of Shark Girl. When Max does not pay attention to Jane because he is talking to his girlfriend, she realizes "So Angie Was Right". Jane blows up when Angie comments on the fact that she wears too much red, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing concerning the escalation of their fight. In "Phone Call, May 1", Rachel tries to convince Jane to make up with Angie, foreshadowing their reconciliation, especially when Rachel tells Jane that her surprise birthday party was Angie's idea.



Section 14: Part Three, pages 248-261

Section 14: Part Three, pages 248-261 Summary

In "Monday", Max offers Jane a ride as she waits for the bus with her friends, so Rachel tells Jane to call her later as Angie watches silently. Max and Jane talk on the drive, and Jane wishes all the traffic lights would stay red. When Jane asks Lindsey about having a party at the hospital in "Spring", Lindsey tells her their spring party is already planned for May 23 and invites Jane to come and bring a date. Jane knows people may talk or he may refuse, but she knows exactly who she wants to ask. In "Finished, I Think", Jane is excited to see what Justin will think of his present. She considers showing it to Mom or Michael, but it is only for Justin, so she wraps it in red paper and slides it into her closet. In "Suppose", Jane argues with herself about whether Justin will like his gift. Her inner voice insists she is not showing it to anyone for fear they will pity her and admit she may never draw well again. The voice tells her it could have been different if she had stayed home that day instead of going to the beach, but Jane says she cannot keep thinking like this; it should have been different, "but it's not" (page 251). Jane receives "An Email from Michael, May 9" about UCLA having an awesome school of occupational therapy. He promises to bring the literature home this summer and suggests that Jane should make lemon bars for Mom for Mother's Day, telling her to make extra to send him too if she wants. In "Lemon Bars", Jane manages to make the lemon bars without crying or cursing, even when she is tempted. The treats come out sweet and light, though Jane has flour in her hair and burned her thumb. The lemon bars were a pain to make, but Mom is worth it. Jane sets some aside for Michael too. Though going to the post office will be difficult, he did save her life.

In "Mother's Day", Mom is excited about the lemon bars even though she is sick with the flu. She notes Michael will be jealous, but when she learns Jane is mailing some to him and she offers to drive Jane to the post office, Jane refuses. Mom insists she likes to do things for Jane because she is still her little girl, not because of her arm. Jane agrees if Mom feels better, but Mom insists she cannot call out of work anyway. Jane points out that the world will not fall apart without her for one day and she will only infect her co-workers if she goes to work when she is sick. Mom notes that Jane would make a good doctor, admitting she saw the pamphlet from medical school and asking if she is volunteering at the hospital because she is considering a medical career. Jane explains that it helps her feel important and useful. Mentioning that she has not seen Jane draw for nearly a year, Mom asks if she will ever work on her art again, and Jane says she will but she is waiting for the right time. Mom is proud of Jane because she has been through a lot and is doing great, and Jane returns the compliment to Mom. In "Red Streaks", Jane studies it in the mirror, wondering if they are fading a little. She knows that they are not going anywhere so avoidance is useless. Comparing the differing thickness of her two upper arms, Jane realizes "somehow, this thing that was once alien is returning to being part of me" (page 258). Looking through the makeup kit from Angie in "Sparkle", Jane finds a delicate blush that she may have actually chosen for herself. "Pride" keeps Jane from apologizing to Angie, but it does not stop her from noticing how



Angie turns away and pretends not to care when Jane passes her seat on the bus. In "The Wall", Jane's group sits divided at lunch with Angie and Jane sitting at opposite ends of the table with Rachel, Trina and Elizabeth between them, unsure who to side with. "Nobody can actually eat. Our throats are full of words unsaid" (page 261).

Section 14: Part Three, pages 248-261 Analysis

Jane enjoys riding home with Max on "Monday", and she excited to learn the hospital is planning a "Spring" party for the kids. She knows who she will ask to be her date, foreshadowing that she will ask Max. In "Finished, I Think", Jane hides Justin's birthday present in her closet, refusing to show Mom or Michael, and this foreshadows that it is her artwork which she is so reluctant to share. Her inner voice continues to torment her in "Suppose" regarding whether Justin will like his gift and also about how differently things would be if she had not gone to the beach that day. She shows strength when she acknowledges it could have been different, but it was not. On May 9, Michael emails Jane about UCLA's occupational therapy program and making lemon bars for Mom; he shows his encouragement in both her possible career choice and her continuing to cook. Mom is excited that Jane makes her "Lemon Bars" for Mother's Day, and Jane's effort shows that she is beginning to care about people other than herself again. Mom also encourages Jane's interest in a medical career; however, Jane still refuses to share her art with Mom. Jane begins to accept her amputation as part of herself in "Red Streaks", and in "Sparkle", she finds blush in the kit from Angie that she actually likes, foreshadowing their reconciliation. The distance between Jane and Angie in "Pride" and "The Wall" obviously bothers both girls, and this further foreshadows their reconciliation.



Section 15: Part Three, pages 262-276

Section 15: Part Three, pages 262-276 Summary

In "The Talk", Jane corners Angie on the way to the bus stop because she needs to make this right. When Jane says she wants to be friends again, Angie notes that Jane is different lately; she knows Jane is different, but Jane just seems so mad all the time and she asks what she did. Jane tells Angie that she is kind of bossy about her hair and makeup, and Jane does not want to change anymore because she has already been forced to change enough. Needing to get to the truth to end this, Jane admits that what Angie said about Max really hurt her feelings because she needs Angie to be on her side. Angie claims she was only trying to help because she did not want to see Jane get hurt again. Jane considers whether she believes Angie, and she does; "in her own way, she wanted to make me over into someone like her, someone who gets guys and who doesn't get hurt by the serious stuff because the serious stuff doesn't get acknowledged" (page 264). Apologizing, Jane realizes that Angie is her friend and she can nicely stop her from protecting her. Jane decides that she is going to start living again, differently. As Angie looks at her, she seems to see what Jane saw, the two of them with everything changed. Jane asks to try again, and Angie agrees, so they walk home together, trying again.

In "May 23: Party on the Second Floor", Lindsey greets Jane and her date, Justin. The kids at the hospital gather in the cafeteria, but the volunteers will visit those who are too sick to join them later. Jane aches for them, but for now, she focuses on the eager eyes in front of her wanting fun and asks who wants their face painted. In "Old Faces and New", Jane is busy painting faces without Chuck's help as Justin helps with the games. When Mel says hello to Jane, she asks if he remembers her saying that sometimes she wishes she had died that day, and after he answers affirmatively, she assures him that she no longer feels that way. He asks what changed her mind, and Jane thinks about Justin, Mel, Mom, Michael, Rachel, Max, Uncle Ben, Aunt Karen and Angie, but there is something else so she says she does not know. Mel tells her that she will figure it out someday but to just enjoy the feeling for now, so Jane does what he says and enjoys. In "Justin's Gift", Jane takes Justin into the hallway and gives him the hidden tube for his birthday. He grins when he unrolls the paper and recognizes Spot, his dog. He praises Jane's drawing, and though she claims she is still wobbly, he insists it is perfect. Jane hugs him tight. She loves Justin as much as she loves Michael, but something is drawing to a close and she knows it will be a long time before she sees him again. They are both moving on with their own lives, and it is time to let go. In "Memorial", Jane and her family prepare for their annual Memorial Day cookout, and when mom notes that she has never seen a nicer looking bunch, Michael and Jane tease her that she says that every year, laughing as she snaps a picture. Jane argues with herself yet again in "Done", but she finally tells her inner voice to shut up because listening to this negativity does not help so she is done. In "Not Knowing", Jane looks at photo albums depicting Dad at the grill. He does not know he will soon be dead from cancer. As Mom stands in front of her new car, she had no idea she would soon be left to raise two children by



herself. "None of us knew. None of us know now. Life is what it is, at any second. A snapshot. Nothing more. Maybe the trick is learning to live the moment celebrating our freedom; the freedom of not knowing" (page 275). In "A Letter from Jane Arrowood, June 25", Jane finally responds to Mary, apologizing for how long it took and congratulating Mary on beating cancer. She tells Mary she has a new arm too, and she took Mary's advice and had a private funeral for her arm: she said goodbye while looking at old pictures of her lost arm. Today, Jane started a new photo album, and she has lots of pictures to put inside and lots of empty spaces for all that she will do this summer. She says Mary is a very special girl for writing and trying to help someone she does not know. Jane hopes Mary and Patty have a great soccer season and many days at the park together.

Section 15: Part Three, pages 262-276 Analysis

Foreshadowing is finally fulfilled in regards to Jane and Angie's reconciliation when Jane approaches Angie in "The Talk". Jane explains why she is upset with Angie, and she believes her friend when Angie insists she was only trying to protect her. They decide to resume their friendship, but more importantly, Jane decides to start living again, differently, as someone who does not need to be protected. At the hospital's spring party, Jane focuses on making sure the kids have a good time, but she thwarts the earlier foreshadowing by asking Justin to accompany her as her date. She also shows her improved mental state when she tells Mel that she no longer wishes she had died during the shark attack in "Old Faces and New". Foreshadowing concerning Justin's gift is fulfilled when Jane gives him a drawing of Spot, and this also indicates her willingness to share her art finally. Though Jane loves Justin like a brother, she knows that she will not see him for a long time after this because they are both moving on with their lives; they no longer need each other to be their crutches as they ease back into reality. Jane enjoys time with her family in "Memorial", and the fact that she jokes with Mom and Michael and allows Mom to photograph her shows that she is mentally healing for the shark attack. In "Done", Jane finally refuses to let her inner voice continue tormenting her when she tells it to shut up because the negativity is not helping her. In "Not Knowing", Jane finally looks at old photo albums of herself with two arms and realizes that she needs to just living life instead of constantly worrying about what will happen next. Otherwise, she will be too busy dreading the future to enjoy the present. The novel ends with Jane responding to Mary, the first stranger who wrote her. Jane contradicts her earlier intentions to not be inspirational by praising Mary for writing her and trying to help someone she does not know. Jane also shows that she is healing by describing her private funeral for her arm, indicating that she has accepted her new body as it is.



Characters

Jane Arrowood

Jane Arrowood is the protagonist and main character of "Shark Girl". She is a fifteen-year-old girl whose right arm is amputated after she is attacked by a shark. After being attacked by a shark while swimming at the beach, Jane's right arm is amputated and she spends ten days in a coma. Jane hates all the attention she receives since a video of the attack was played repeatedly on the news, and she wishes everyone would just leave her alone. Jane receives multiple letters from other amputees, but she has no intention of being an inspirational story and sometimes she wishes she had died. Jane's family and friends visit her in the hospital, and everyone tells her she is doing well, but she feels useless and wishes they would admit she is a mess. Jane is distraught at the idea that she may never draw again, so she secretly begins practicing with her left hand. She becomes friends with Justin, a younger kid whose leg was amputated, at physical therapy, and they spend a lot of time together. Jane also talks to Mel, a therapist appointed by the hospital who tells her to let herself be sad. Jane begins to wonder if she could have a career in the medical field because she wants to make a difference like so many doctors did for her. When it is time to Jane to go home, she is afraid because she belongs here, but she will not fit in on the outside.

Once Jane returns home, she feels awkward because of all the things she cannot do, and she hates how people stare at her every time she leaves the house. She continues drawing with her left hand, yet she cannot get the eyes of her animals right. Jane is fitted for a prosthetic arm and begins learning to use it. She is furious at Michael's insensitivity when he forces her to mow the lawn, but she is also grateful to be treated normally for a change. Jane is nervous to return to school, and she hates how her classmates stare at her. After Grandma expresses concern that Jane no longer cooks or draws, Jane forces herself to do some chores, realizing she cannot always rely on Mom to do everything for her. She begins talking to the school guidance counselor about medical school and finds something to look forward to. She always experiences happiness when Mom opens her Christmas gift. Still, Jane continues drawing because something will not be right in her until she can do this.

When Mom gets stuck in traffic, Jane has some difficulty making herself dinner, but she is proud of herself and knows it will be easier next time. She allows Mom to photograph her and her friends at her sixteenth birthday party, and she begins volunteering at the hospital on Saturdays, determined to make a difference. Jane dances around her room in excitement when she finally draws a fox with real eyes. Max, a boy she has a crush on, gives her a ride home from school, but when Angie tells Jane that Max is out of her league and continually criticizes her, Jane decides she is done with Angie. Jane is surprised to realize that her amputated arm is becoming part of her. Rachel tries to convince Jane to make up with Angie, and Jane finally apologizes after she realizes that Angie was only trying to protect her from being hurt. Jane gifts Justin with a drawing of his dog on his birthday but knows she will not see him again for a long time because



they are both moving on with their own lives. Arguing with herself about the attack being her fault, Jane decides that she is done doing this to herself. Looking through old photo albums of her dad before he died from cancer, Jane realizes the trick to life is celebrating the freedom of not knowing what will happen next. She says goodbye to her arm and starts to look forward to her future, beginning a new photo album of her new life with only one arm.

Michael Arrowood

Michael Arrowood is Jane's older brother. He rescues her from the water when she is attacked by a shark. While they prepared to leave for the beach, Michael teased Jane that she did not fill out her new pink bikini. When she wakes from her coma, Michael tells her there is a video from a guy who was videotaping on the beach. In "Michael", Jane remembers spreading out the towels and teasing Michael who was watching a girl from his class while pretending to read a magazine. As she went toward the water, Mom wanted Michael to go with her because the water was a little choppy, but Jane insisted she did not need him. She hoped he would come anyway because it was always more fun with him along, but "he was too busy not watching the girl" (page 14).

Michael says everyone in the hospital is too busy to take care of people, and Mom yells at him to be more helpful. The words hang in the air long after Michael leaves. Michael is the only one that understands how much Jane hates it that people watch the video and pity poor Shark Girl so he delivers the pity bears to other patients at the hospital for her. Jane asks where Michael got the string to tie her arm, and he tells her he used the string from his bathing suit. When she asks if he saw the shark, he says he saw a shape and lots of blood, and he was scared she was dead. He was not afraid of the shark, though, because he knew he had to get to Jane quickly. He is sure the guy with the videotape was a coincidence, but the guy could have helped and Michael hopes he is proud of himself. Jane thanks Michael for saving her life. Michael refuses to go to therapy with Mel. Michael brings Jane magazines containing jokes because he believes laughter is the best medicine.

On August 15, Michael gives Jane the silent treatment over pizza, and when she offers to help him clean up, he tells her that he is sick of doing everything around here. He will not wait on her just because Mom does. As she helps him clean, Jane hates Michael for being so insensitive for the first time since June. Michael cleans up the spilled trash when Jane fails at taking it to the garage on her first attempt at chores. On August 30, Michael forces Jane to mow the lawn and, pointing out that she can do this, suggests she make it her weekly chore. Jane thinks it is nice that he is treating her normally. Michael leaves in the fall to attend college at UCLA, but on Jane's first day back at school, he emails Jane that she is tougher than the fullbacks at UCLA and she can do it. Michael is exciting when Jane orders utensils online to make cooking easier. He also emails her on May 9 about UCLA having an awesome school of occupational therapy. He promises to bring the literature home this summer and suggests that Jane should make lemon bars for Mom for Mother's Day, telling her to make extra to send him too if she wants.



Katherine Arrowood

Katherine Arrowood is Jane's mother. She does her best to be there for Jane after the shark attack, but she often babies Jane too much and worries about Jane's mental state.

Rachel

Rachel is Jane's best friend. She visits Jane in the hospital, helps her prepare to be comfortable going out in public and encourages her to reconcile with Angie.

Justin

Justin is a younger kid who Jane meets and befriends in physical therapy. He lost his leg below the knee in a car accident, so he does not pressure Jane to talk about her shark attack. Justin is upbeat and positive despite his loss.

Lindsey

Lindsey is Jane's daytime nurse whose caring nature leads Jane to consider a medical career.

Max Shannon

Max Shannon is an older guy at school who Jane has a crush on. He talks to her and gives her a ride home, so she begins to fantasize about him. Jane is upset when she hears some girls saying Max only talks to her because he feels sorry for her, and she is more upset when Angie tells her that Max has a girlfriend and is out of Jane's league.

Angie

Angie is Jane's bossy friend who Jane feels is trying to make her into something else, as if Jane is not good enough. Angie offends Jane when she tells her that Max is out of her league, so they do not speak for a while. Eventually, they make up after Jane realizes that Angie was only trying to protect her from being hurt.

Trina

Trina is one of Jane's friends.



Elizabeth

Elizabeth is one of Jane's friends.

Mel

Mel is Jane's therapist who gives her permission to mourn the loss of her arm.

Dr. Kim

Dr. Kim is Jane's primary doctor.



Objects/Places

Point Dume State Beach

Point Dume State Beach is where Jane is swimming when she is attacked by a shark on June 21.

UCLA Hospital

After Jane is attacked by a shark, paramedics rush her to UCLA Hospital where her arm is amputated and she spends ten days in a coma. Jane stays at the hospital for about a month while going through physical and mental therapy.

UCLA

Michael attends college at UCLA in the fall, and he tells Jane that they have a great occupational therapy program.

Santa Clarita

Jane lives in Santa Clarita with Mom and Michael.

Mountain Ridge High School

Jane attends school at Mountain Ridge High School.

Home

When Jane returns home at the end of July, it feels strange though familiar.

Kitchen

Jane hesitates when she enters the kitchen at home because she remembers preparing to go to the beach on the day she was attacked.

Chuck

Chuck is the name of Jane's new arm, a functional prosthesis.

Art Room

Though Jane resumes taking art class when she returns to school, she feels the cruelty of being in the art room is like showing a dead person her lost life.

Pity Bears

Jane hates the teddy bears she receives from strangers while she is in the hospital, so she dubs them pity bears since they are sent by people who see the video of her attack and want to do something for poor Shark Girl. Jane has Michael distribute the pity bears to the younger kids in the hospital.



Themes

Depression

After losing her arm following a shark attack, Jane is understandably depressed. This depression is amplified by the fact that she is in constant pain, and can no longer draw or cook since she lost her dominant hand. Evidence of her depression floods the narrative. She hates receiving pity from strangers who have heard about her story, and she is disgusted when Mom says things will be better after Jane goes home. Jane yields to her sadness when Mel tells her that allowing herself to be as sad as she wants will help her heal quicker. Jane is tormented by nightmares of losing her arm, and she feels she is the weak link in "Team Play" since she cannot seem to do anything normal. She does not feel comfortable with her group of friends because she has so obviously changed, and moreover, she wishes everyone would leave her alone. Jane refuses to try to draw or to read. When it is time for her to leave the hospital, Jane is afraid to go home because she knows she will not fit in on the outside as she does in the hospital where people are paid to care for people like her.

At home, Jane feels helpless because she cannot do anything for herself. She refuses to cook or clean, even though she loves cooking. She hates how everyone stares at her arm when she goes out or to school. Jane also avoids looking at pictures of herself with two arms. Though she reads about inspirational amputees, she refuses to become one of them, insisting she has a reason to be sad. Jane is afraid to return to school, and she hates her classmates' whispers and stares when she does. She is even more distraught at the realization that she cannot compete in the annual art competition which she has won for the past three years. Grandma worries that Jane is depressed because she does not cook or draw. Jane fights with Angie because she feels her friend is trying to change her. In "Gift", Angie gives Jane a makeup kit filled with shades of purple. She wants to transform Jane into someone new, like her, and Jane wonders "can't she see I'll never be like her, whole and pretty and normal" (page 214)? Luckily, Jane's depression lessens over time, and despite these instances of her depression, there are simultaneously examples of the progress she makes.

Progress

Though Jane is depressed about losing her arm and this appears continually throughout the narrative, the poems are also interspersed with evidence of Jane's progress. For starters, Mom wants Jane to acknowledge that she is moving around better, but Jane refuses. Jane also secretly begins drawing again, sketching on gum wrappers and hiding them from anyone for fear of them offending her. She follows Mel's instructions to focus on the big or little pictures as appropriate for any given day, and she also writes in the journal as he prescribes; this willingness to listen to her therapist shows that Jane is trying to improve, and once someone tries, success is always inevitable if they are willing to put enough effort into their goal. When Jane sees the difference that someone



can make by caring in "Warm Hands", she begins to think about a medical career, and this consideration shows her ability to be flexible now that her life has changed. As the novel progresses, Jane also gains strength against the doubts of her inner voice until she eventually tells it to shut up because she refuses to continue hurting herself. Jane practices with her prosthesis after she receives it: even though it is difficult and she often hates it, she is still willing to learn how to use it so that it can improve her life.

Jane goes to the coffee shop with Rachel, facing her fears of being stared at in public. When Michael forces her to mow the lawn, she is glad that he is treating her normally, even though she sometimes hates his insensitivity. Jane cuts her hair so that it is easier for her to style, and she takes art classes, despite the fact that it makes her sad; her willingness to continue doing art shows her determination which again can only lead to progress if not success. Jane learns to dress herself and make cereal, and eventually, she begins cooking again, even ordering utensils to make the job easier. She starts doing more chores around the house and taking care of herself instead of relying on Mom because she does not intend to live with her mother forever, so she knows she needs to be able to fend for herself. Jane's willingness to allow Mom to take her picture at her sixteenth birthday party shows a growing acceptance of her amputation. In "Red Streaks", Jane studies her arm in the mirror, wondering if they are fading a little. She knows that they are not going anywhere so avoidance is useless. Comparing the differing thickness of her two upper arms, Jane realizes "somehow, this thing that was once alien is returning to being part of me" (page 258). She also volunteers at the hospital, pursuing her interest in a medical career. Jane finally draws a picture of Spot for Justin's birthday, showing great progression as she shares her art again. In "Not Knowing", Jane looks at photo albums depicting Dad at the grill. He does not know he will soon be dead from cancer. As Mom stands in front of her new car, she had no idea she would soon be left to raise two children by herself. "None of us knew. None of us know now. Life is what it is, at any second. A snapshot. Nothing more. Maybe the trick is learning to live the moment celebrating our freedom; the freedom of not knowing" (page 275). She writes Mary and tells her she had a private funeral for her arm.

Jane Fighting With Herself

An important theme that ties into both of the previous themes is Jane arguing with herself. This shows her depression, but it is also evidence of her progress as she begins to accept her accident more and more throughout the novel. In "If Only", Jane thinks that if only this had not happened, if the beach had been closed, if the amputation had been below the elbow, "things would be easier" (page 38). In "Probably", Jane argues with herself that Mel is glad to see her go because she is so weak, too weak to handle this. In "I Wonder", Jane asks why that man did not put the camera down to help her, and why he gave that video to the news. In "Different", Jane argues with herself that Michael would have come in the water with her if he had not been busy flirting with those girls, and then it could have been him instead of her. She feels horrible for thinking it and tells herself that it is just the way it is, but her inner voice insists that it could have been different, that it should have been different.



Jane argues with herself in "Maybe" about whether Max would like her if she looked normal, instead of feeling sorry for her. Maybe she will never feel normal again. In "Suppose", Jane argues with herself about whether Justin will like his gift. Her inner voice insists she is not showing it to anyone for fear they will pity her and admit she may never draw well again. The voice tells her it could have been different if she had stayed home that day instead of going to the beach, but Jane says she cannot keep thinking like this; it should have been different, "but it's not" (page 251). Jane argues with herself yet again in "Done", but she finally tells her inner voice to shut up because listening to this negativity does not help so she is done. In "Not Knowing", Jane looks at photo albums depicting Dad at the grill. He does not know he will soon be dead from cancer. As Mom stands in front of her new car, she had no idea she would soon be left to raise two children by herself. "None of us knew. None of us know now. Life is what it is, at any second. A snapshot. Nothing more. Maybe the trick is learning to live the moment celebrating our freedom; the freedom of not knowing" (page 275).

Style

Point of View

The point of view in "Shark Girl" is first person and limited. The point of view is also reliable. Jane Arrowood, the novel's protagonist, serves as the primary narrator, though several entries are letters written to Jane from various individuals concerned about her situation. The fact that the point of view is first person and limited is proven by the fact that Jane is only able to share her own thoughts and feelings in addition to what she witnesses or is told. This is important as it permits the reader to focus on Jane's inner journey as she readjusts to life with only one arm.

The novel is written predominantly using exposition, but there is a significant amount of dialogue scattered throughout the narrative as well. This distribution is important as it allows Jane to remain in a central role while still showing her interactions with others through the dialogue, all of which serves as evidence of her mental state as she accepts her physical changes. The novel is told solely through Jane's viewpoint with no variation to other characters views.

Setting

"Shark Girl" is set in the real world, in California. The characters are Jane, her family and her friends, but the book also contains letters from random well-wishers who hear about Jane and write to comfort her. Jane is an artist, but after her right arm is amputated, she is distraught that she can no longer draw. Still, she demonstrates resilience as she continually struggles to relearn how to draw with her left hand. Feeling she will never be a professional artist, Jane turns her career aspirations to the medical field, hoping she can help someone as the hospital staff helped her after she was attacked by a shark.

Point Dume State Beach is where Jane is swimming when she is attacked by a shark on June 21. After Jane is attacked by a shark, paramedics rush her to UCLA Hospital where her arm is amputated and she spends ten days in a coma. Jane stays at the hospital for about a month while going through physical and mental therapy. Michael attends college at UCLA in the fall, and he tells Jane that they have a great occupational therapy program. Jane lives in Santa Clarita with Mom and Michael, and she attends school at Mountain Ridge High School. When Jane returns home at the end of July, it feels strange though familiar. Jane hesitates when she enters the kitchen at home because she remembers preparing to go to the beach on the day she was attacked. Though Jane resumes taking art class when she returns to school, she feels the cruelty of being in the art room is like showing a dead person her lost life.



Language and Meaning

The language used in this novel tends to be casual and informal. The style of the language is appropriate because the novel is written in verse, but it is also appropriate for the book's target audience, young adults. The language used in this novel aids comprehension as it is effective in conveying Jane's thoughts and emotions. The use of the common American vernacular is also familiar to the target audience making comprehension easier in addition to inspiring empathy for Jane's plight. The language used characterizes Jane's anguish as well as the progress she makes as the early passages tend to come across as depressed and hopeless whereas Jane begins to look forward to the future by the end of the book.

The novel is written predominantly using exposition, but there is a significant amount of dialogue scattered throughout the narrative as well. This distribution is important as it allows Jane to remain in a central role while still showing her interactions with others through the dialogue, all of which serves as evidence of her mental state as she accepts her physical changes. The language chosen for "Shark Girl" aids the writing style as it enhances reader comprehension and the target audience's association with the protagonist. Overall, the language is easy to understand and sets Jane in the position of being the reader's peer.

Structure

"Shark Girl" consists of two hundred, seventy-six pages divided into three parts which are comprised of multiple poems. Part One contains forty-six poems, Part Two is comprised of sixty-six poems, and Part Three includes fifty-four poems. Each poem averages one to two pages in length, though some are shorter and some are considerably longer. Each poem is titled according to the contents of what it discusses. The poems are all fairly short, but some are vague while others are more detailed. Each poem encompasses a short amount of time, and the entire novel takes place in slightly less than one year.

"Shark Girl" by Kelly Bingham is a novel written in verse about a girl who loses her arm during a shark attack. After Jane wakes from a coma after having her right arm amputated, she must relearn everything she once knew as she continually questions why this happened to her. "Shark Girl" is a powerful and touching narrative that shares Jane's inner and outer struggles as she adjusts to her new life with only one arm. The pace of this novel is quite slow, but it is easy to read. It is mostly linear, but it contains some flashbacks to the time before Jane lost her arm. Overall, the novel is entertaining and touching as it offers an honest and realistic portrayal of Jane's inner turmoil after having her dominant arm amputated.



Quotes

"She is lucky to be alive. She is in a coma due to blood loss. The next forty-eight hours are critical. We have no way of knowing yet if she sustained brain damage from the massive blood loss." Dr. Andrew Kim, "Los Angeles Times, June 22", page 5

"I think, constantly, about my art- my life. Why did this happen? Why me? I was supposed to be an artist. Has there been a mistake? Can it be fixed? How can I live without drawing? What am I supposed to do now?" "Holding", page 8

"This is not an exact science. Phantom pain is part of the fallout of amputation. It may last a few weeks. It may last a person's lifetime." Dr. Kim, "Nerves", page 15

"Michael is the only one who understands, pretending to gag when Mom isn't looking. This is pity, pure and simple. People have watched that damned video and been shocked into wanting to do something- something for That Poor Girl. Shark Girl. Me." "Pity Bears", page 21

"Big picture, Jane. You could have died. Instead, you are here. You have time to find out why. You have your whole life to discover and rebuild." Mel, "Permission", page 24

"You're going to draw again. People have stuff happen and they learn to get along with their other hand just as well." Rachel, "Six Days After", page 29

"The goal is not to work hard. The goal is to work every day." "Team Play", page 37

"Both my legs were good. But now I only have one, so it's the good one. Isn't it that way with your arm?" Justin, "Pinned Up", page 58

"I wish I could fix things for him, for me. For everyone. I wish I knew why some people live and some people die and some people get stuck in the middle." "Why?", page 60

"The difference between two warm hands and someone who cares is all the difference in the world." "Warm Hands", page 73

"The eyes of the doctors are familiar. The kind of seeing I can almost live with. It's their job, taking care of people like me. I was welcome here. I fit in. Out there, I won't." "Leaving", page 84

"Always hurrying. That was me. If I'd only slowed down, ten minutes more might have been enough." "The Kitchen", page 91

"What, then, is now? If I can't return to Horse, Grazing, am I doomed to be a van Gogh imitation? Tortured, wrecked, surviving pain through the art of my darkest attic, creations spun from the haunted memories of the Shark Girl trying to accommodate with her left hand? Will the subject matter be endless grays and white-capped waves, gaunt faces, thin children, rain?" "Moat, Overlooking", pages 104-105



"And this talk is fine. It's better than the bare-boned truth." "Fat", page 118

"You are a very attractive girl, Jane. Inside and out. I can tell. I think you'll find the more comfortable you are with yourself, the more people won't notice your prosthesis. Or absence of one, if that's how you eventually choose to go." Sam, "The Hook", page 123

"He didn't mention his leg at all. Justin has other things on his mind. Like life and living it." "His Voice", page 129

"It's none of your damn business and I would prefer you don't ask me such personal questions!" Jane, "Perhaps Decaf", page 135

"Well, screw that. Complain? Yeah. The pain, for one thing. The tingling, the numbness, the stupid chafing. The hot prosthesis, the stares, the inability to do ANYTHING normally. Some days, I hate everyone I see. Even babies. How's that for inspirational?" "Failing Expectations", page 140

"I don't know. I was thinking about the top with... oh, who cares? Does it matter?... Yeah, well, no one is going to even see what I'm wearing. They'll be too busy checking out my nice fake arm. I could wear a bag over my head and no one would notice." Jane, "September: 8:33 p.m., Sunday", page 151

"I shouldn't be here. It's like showing a dead person her lost life, and all she missed. It's cruel." "Art Class", page 159

"No. It's my contest. It's my win. Art is my thing. Now, someone new will climb the peak, cast their shadow on That Girl Who Got Bit by a Shark, lying like so much flab; useless, foolish. Whoever she is, she will be surrounded, she will be in light, she will be carried on a wave of love and goodwill. She will not know what it's like to take up unjustified space in the universe." "Bumped Off", page 169

"A sudden rush fills me. I'm here. I'm alive, and I'm here. Seems like tears of joy should flow right about now. Instead, I just smile, lean back into the couch, and enjoy the happiness, deep and warm." "Opening Presents", page 187

"Something is not right in me and won't be until I can do this." "Midnight at the Drafting Table", page 194

"Will Mom go to college with me? Live in my apartment, wash the dishes for me?" "Rain", page 200

"When I sketch the lumpy, bumpy things that are animals, I can feel love- joy, hovering, dangling, over my cup. If only I could create a pair of eyes to look back into mine. Then maybe, the cup would fill up." "Cup", page 202

"They give me extra time to run the bases. But I still get out sometimes. But that's okay. I'm getting really good at hitting." Justin, "Playground", page 210



"Jane. Back in the hospital, I thought- I thought you wouldn't live to see this day. I thought I'd be visiting your grave..." Mom, "Don't Say Cheese", page 213

"Life is funny, and sometimes it's easy to question why terrible things happen to good people, especially young folks like yourself. I believe there is a reason, though we may not see it for a long time. My hope for you is that someday, you feel that this accident has not ruined your life; only changed it from the original plan." "Letter from Andy, Washington, D. C.", page 220

"So much that looks interesting? Wow. Just a few months ago, my radar was EMPTY. So it's true, then? Time makes a difference? Who knows. Time is still passing." "The Ride", page 229

"Come on. I know you're, like, in love with him. But he's with Megan. And he's kind of out of your league... My league, too. "I'm not saying it has anything to do with your arm, so don't go there. I just meant, he's, you know. Max. He's got girls his own age all over him, and he's got Megan. I'm just saying, you need to open yourself up to other possibilities." Angie, "Leagues", page 236

"When someone is jealous of you, they make themselves your enemy.' That's what Uncle Ben told me once. But I'm Shark Girl. Why would anyone be jealous of me?" "Emily Morrison", page 241

"I cannot keep thinking like this. I won't." "Suppose", page 251

"I'm proud of you. You've been through a lot, and you're doing great." Mom, "Mother's Day", page 257

"I don't want to change. I've changed enough." "The Talk", page 263

"I'm going to start living again, only differently." "The Talk", page 265

"I love Justin as much as I love Michael. But something is drawing to a close tonight, and I know it will be a long time before I see Justin again. We're moving on with our lives. He has his friends, his family, his life, and I have mine. It's time to let go." "Justin's Gift", page 270

"Life is what it is, at any second. A snapshot. Nothing more. Maybe the trick is learning to live the moment celebrating our freedom; the freedom of not knowing." "Not Knowing", page 275



Topics for Discussion

What tragedy occurs to Jane Arrowood, and how does it change her?

How does Jane feel about the flowers and stuffed bears she receives in the hospital, and why?

How does Michael treat Jane after her accident, and how does she feel about it?

Why is Jane nervous about going back to school?

Who is Angie, and why do she and Jane get in a fight?

What is the significance of the box of tools that Jane orders online?

Why does Jane volunteer at the hospital, and how does her Mom feel about it?

What does Jane give Justin for his birthday, and why is this so important?