

Someone Like You Study Guide

Someone Like You by Sarah Dessen

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Someone Like You Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Overview.....	4
About the Author.....	5
Plot Summary.....	6
Part 1, Chapter 1.....	7
Part 1, Chapter 2.....	9
Part 1, Chapter 3.....	11
Part 1, Chapter 4.....	13
Part 2, Chapter 5.....	15
Part 2, Chapter 6.....	17
Part 2, Chapter 7.....	18
Part 2, Chapter 8.....	19
Part 2, Chapter 9.....	21
Part 2, Chapter 10.....	23
Part 2, Chapter 11.....	25
Part 2, Chapter 12.....	27
Part 2, Chapter 13.....	29
Part 2, Chapter 14.....	31
Part 2, Chapter 15.....	33
Part 2, Chapter 16.....	34
Part 2, Chapter 17.....	35
Part 3, Chapter 18.....	36
Part 3, Chapter 19.....	38
Characters.....	39



[Objects/Places.....](#) 43

[Setting.....](#) 45

[Social Sensitivity.....](#) 46

[Literary Qualities.....](#) 47

[Themes.....](#) 48

[Themes/Characters.....](#) 50

[Style.....](#) 55

[Quotes.....](#) 57

[Adaptations.....](#) 59

[Topics for Discussion.....](#) 60

[Essay Topics.....](#) 61

[Ideas for Reports and Papers.....](#) 62

[Further Study.....](#) 63

[Related Websites.....](#) 64

[Copyright Information.....](#) 65

Overview

Someone Like You, published in 1998, tells the story of Scarlett and Halley, best friends since elementary school. Quiet Halley usually follows outgoing Scarlett's lead, but that has not stopped them from sharing everything important. The summer before their junior year in high school, Scarlett's boyfriend dies in a car accident. Scarlett finds herself pregnant and needs Halley's support. Halley does her best, but she finds herself facing her own problems—trying to separate from her controlling, psychologist mother, her secretive relationship with the irresponsible Macon Faulkner, and the declining health of her Grandma Halley.

Dessen's novel was designated as an ALA best book for Young Adults, an ALA Quick Pick for Young Adults, and a School Library Journal Best Book of the Year.

About the Author

Author Sarah Dessen, a relative newcomer to the world of young adult fiction, published her first novel in 1996.

This novel, *That Summer*, received a Best Book for Young Adults designation by the American Library Association. Dessen, who was born in Illinois but spent much of her life in North Carolina, credits her mother, who always bought her books instead of clothes for birthdays and Christmas, for introducing her to Southern writers and good books with strong women writers.

During her freshman year at the University of North Carolina, while taking a creative writing class from Southern author Doris Betts, Dessen became serious about the idea of writing fiction professionally and decided, "That's just how I want my life to be."

As a child, Dessen was a voracious reader who read everything she could get her hands on. While Judy Blume's *Are You There, God, It's Me, Margaret* was one of her favorite books, the book that really made her want to be a writer was Fannie Flagg's *Coming Attractions*, which she read when she was 13. She has been writing for as long as she remembers and has parents who were always very supportive of her efforts. After graduation from UNC, she took some time off to try to get published.

Dessen believes that "all good fiction starts with some truth. The trick is to begin with what really happened, and then change it to what you wish had happened, or what you wished you said."



Plot Summary

Someone Like You depicts a year in the life of two sixteen-year-old best friends. Scarlett and Halley have been best friends since they were eleven, when Scarlett and her mother moved next door to Halley's family. Although Scarlett is much bolder and more self-confident than Halley, the two girls immediately become friends. The novel begins at the end of the summer before the girls' junior year of high school. Scarlett has fallen in love with a boy named Michael Sherwood over the summer, and the day after she sleeps with him for the first time, he is killed in a motorcycle accident. Halley, who has been going through a phase of separating herself from her mother after a trip to the Grand Canyon earlier in the summer, comes home from camp to be with Scarlett and attend the funeral. Halley has the new experience of supporting Scarlett and being the strong one, instead of the other way around.

As Halley begins to fall for Michael's best friend, bad-boy Macon Faulkner, Scarlett learns that she is pregnant with Michael's child. Scarlett struggles with deciding whether to keep the baby, especially as her mother wants her to get rid of it, but with Halley's support, Scarlett decides to have Michael's child. As Scarlett's pregnancy begins to show, the girls experience a changing world. Scarlett must cope with her mother's expectations and the disapproval of her fellow students and her employer at the supermarket. Halley is thrilled and frightened by her intense feelings for Macon, and she struggles to distance herself from her mother, who seems to want to invade every part of Halley's life and wants to forbid her from seeing Macon. Halley begins lying to her mother and sneaking out to see Macon, exhilarated by the way he makes her feel. Halley feels like she has transformed herself from the "Old Me" she was at the Grand Canyon with her family to a wild and reckless "New Me."

As Halley and Macon's relationship becomes more serious, Macon begins pressuring Halley to have sex. Halley resists, in part because she doesn't feel ready and in part because Macon hasn't told her he loves her, but her resolve begins to weaken when she fears she is losing him. Her mother has forbidden her to see Macon anymore, and Scarlett has discouraged her from rushing into sex. Halley, though, is determined to have sex with Macon on New Years Eve. That night she drinks too much. Everything feels wrong, and she throws up. As Macon drives her home, angry and drunk and driving recklessly, they have an accident, and Halley is injured. When Macon doesn't even come to see her in the hospital, Halley finally realizes she deserves better than him. Although it is painful, she tells him she can't see him anymore. Once she does this, she and her mother begin to draw close again, learning new ways to deal with and respect each other. A few months later, Scarlett goes into labor at prom. At the hospital, Halley is suddenly overwhelmed by fear and has to leave the room when Scarlett needs her most. Halley's mother comes to the hospital and helps Halley find the strength to go back in and be there for Scarlett. Scarlett has a baby girl, and she names her Grace Halley. As Halley looks at Grace, she knows that she will be able to teach her things about how to become herself one day.



Part 1, Chapter 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 Summary

When Halley's best friend Scarlett calls her in the middle of the night while Halley is at camp, Halley can tell immediately from her voice that something is wrong. Scarlett tells Halley that Scarlett's boyfriend, Michael Sherwood, died in a motorcycle accident that afternoon, and she asks Halley to come home. Halley knows it is hard for Scarlett, who has never been the needy one, to even ask for her help, and Halley tells her that she is on her way. Michael is the only boy that Scarlett has ever loved. He grew up in Lakeview, the same neighborhood as Halley and Scarlett.

Scarlett and Halley first meet when they are eleven, when Scarlett and her mother move next door to Halley's family. Although Halley is a quiet girl who has had a hard time making friends, she and Scarlett immediately become best friends. Halley is impressed by Scarlett's boldness and the way she seems older and more competent.

When Halley gets off the phone with Scarlett, it is 1:15 a.m., but she calls her mother, who is a therapist and an expert on adolescent behavior. Halley's mother doesn't want to let her come home from Sisterhood Camp, the self-esteem building camp that had been Halley's mother's idea, but Halley convinces her that Scarlett needs her. Halley can tell that her mother doesn't understand, and she knows she will have to pay later for winning this battle. Her mother was so intent on the self-esteem camp that she even called Halley's boss at Milton's Market, where she and Scarlett work as cashiers, to make sure she could get the two weeks off. Halley feels like she and her mother have come to a draw, because Halley didn't want to come to camp and her mother didn't want her to leave, but she knows her mother won't see it this way. Halley doesn't sleep well that night because she is thinking about Michael and the picture she took of him and Scarlett at the lake a few weeks before.

In the car the next morning, Halley thanks her mother for letting her come home. Until recently, Halley and her mother have been very close, confiding in each other and having lunch together every weekend. Halley's mom has even written articles about their successful relationship in journals and magazines. However, after a two-week family road trip to the Grand Canyon at the beginning of the summer, their relationship has changed drastically. When Halley returns from the Grand Canyon, she starts work at Milton Market with Scarlett, and the two girls become friends with wild Ginny Tabor, which directly leads to Halley breaking up with her boring boyfriend Noah Vaughn. The Vaughns are the Halley family's close friends, and Halley's mom is sad about the breakup. Halley, though, sees it as part of the "New Me" she is evolving into. She tries drinking and smoking, double pierces her ears and begins to drift away from her mother. Halley's mom frames a picture of the two of them looking happy together at the Grand Canyon and puts it on the mantle, and Halley sees it as a relic of the past, of a time when they were best friends.



Scarlett is sitting on her front porch when Halley gets home, and Halley walks over to her house and sits next to her on the steps. Halley can tell Scarlett has been crying, and she feels confused because Scarlett has always been the stronger, braver one, the one who takes care of other people, including Halley. For a moment Halley doesn't know what to do, but then she reaches over and pulls Scarlett to her and hugs her close. Halley feels like it is the end of a lot of things, and although she doesn't know what she will do next, she knows that Scarlett needs her and that she will be there.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

This chapter alternates between sections narrating the events of the moment and those giving background information on Halley and Scarlett, Halley and her mother and Scarlett and her boyfriend, Michael. In this way, the author begins to immediately fill in the characters' background so that the reader understands the significance of Scarlett asking for Halley's help and Halley's position of caregiver and comforter to Scarlett. This is a role reversal and foreshadows the way that both girls will need to grow in the course of the book. Halley must learn to be stronger and more supportive, and Scarlett must learn to lean on and depend upon other people more. The author also explores Halley's rapid evolution into "New Me" by detailing Halley's activities over the summer and her changing relationship with her mother. It is evident from this first chapter that Scarlett and Halley are going through a transitional period in their lives, and this transition is sustained through subsequent chapters. Part I of the novel, which consists of the first four chapters, is entitled The Grand Canyon, in reference to the person Halley is at the beginning of the summer, when she and her mother share a close relationship and take a family vacation to the Grand Canyon. These first chapters evidence the beginning stages of her movement away from that person.



Part 1, Chapter 2

Part 1, Chapter 2 Summary

Halley thinks that Scarlett's red-haired beauty is exotic, and it makes her more jealous than she would like to admit. Halley feels it is somehow fair, because she knows Scarlett envies her conventional family, long hair and tan. Halley feels their lives are perfectly parallel. They go through the same phases and like the same things at the same times. Scarlett is more confident than shy, quiet Halley, but Halley doesn't mind being known as "Scarlett's friend Halley." Halley feels like she is an outline in a coloring book, and though Scarlett has added some colors, she is still waiting to be completed.

Although Michael Sherwood is also from Lakeview, Halley and Scarlett didn't know him very well for most of high school. He was good looking and well-liked, but he hung out outside of the popular crowd, with his best friend Macon Faulkner. He was famous for his pranks and great stories, and Halley sees him as "the great equalizer of our high school" because liking Michael was something everyone had in common. The day of the funeral, Halley goes over to Scarlett's house and finds Scarlett's mother, Marion, at the kitchen table, worrying about Scarlett, which is a complete reversal from the norm. Scarlett usually takes care of and worries about Marion. Halley remembers one time that Scarlett came over to her house in the middle of the night because Marion passed out drunk on the sidewalk. Scarlett needed help carrying her into the house. Marion fascinates Halley. With her smoking, flirting, bleach blond hair and long red fingernails, she neither acts like or looks like a traditional mother. Now Marion tells Halley that Scarlett hadn't slept much all night.

Halley sits with Scarlett and Marion as they eat breakfast. Halley's mom made her breakfast, newly sympathetic because their neighbor, Mrs. Trilby, said that Michael was a "nice boy." Halley resents this attitude change. As Marion leaves for work, Scarlett tells Halley that Marion won't come to the funeral because funerals freak her out. Scarlett thinks Marion has a convenient excuse for everything. When Scarlett goes to find something to wear in Marion's closet, Halley sprawls on her bed. Halley feels a hiking boot pressing into her back, and when she pulls at it, she is shocked to realize it is connected to a person lying in the bed, Macon Faulkner. Halley knows Macon by reputation because he is something of a legend in the neighborhood, but she didn't even know that Scarlett knew him. Scarlett comes back into the room and introduces Macon and Halley, as if it is perfectly normal. After sheepishly admitting that he feels terrible from overindulgence the night before, Macon kisses Scarlett on the cheek, thanks her and leaves. Halley is scandalized, but Scarlett explains that Macon has lots of problems, and he is upset because Michael was his best friend. Halley, transfixed, watches him through the window as he leaves.

When Halley and Scarlett arrive at the church, Scarlett takes in Ginny Tabor and Elizabeth Gunderson, who are weeping hysterically. She tells Halley she wishes they hadn't come. Ginny comes up to the girls and tells them she is a wreck and can't eat



because she loved Michael so much. Scarlett is silent and pale throughout the short service, and afterwards she tells Halley that she feels sorry for Elizabeth, because even though she and Michael broke up a long time ago, he really loved her. Halley tells Scarlett that Michael loved her too, and Scarlett says that she knows. As they drive away from the funeral, it begins to rain hard, and Scarlett sees Macon walking in the rain without an umbrella. She calls out to him. When he doesn't hear, she makes Halley shout to him out the window, even though it makes Halley weak with nervousness and embarrassment. Macon declines the offer of the ride, and Halley can see his eyes are red from crying. He then disappears down in alley in the rain like magic.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

Halley's metaphor of the coloring book is an interesting one because it seems to take away any responsibility on Halley's part in becoming the person she will become. It is as if she is waiting for Scarlett and others to provide the interest and color in her life. This is consistent with Halley's sense in this chapter that she is "spineless" and "a wuss." These are characteristics that Halley fights throughout the novel, often with Scarlett's help. This chapter also introduces Macon Faulkner, who plays an important role in the novel and in Halley's development as a character. Her immediate fascination with him in the chapter foreshadows his power over her in chapters to come. Scarlett shows her inner strength in this chapter in the way that she handles her weeping classmates at the funeral.



Part 1, Chapter 3

Part 1, Chapter 3 Summary

When Halley thinks of Michael Sherwood, she thinks of produce, because she and Scarlett first meet him while they all work at Milton's Market. Scarlett and Halley are cashiers for the summer, and Michael works in fruits and vegetables. Michael always checks out at Scarlett's register, even when there is a line, and he begins dropping off exotic fruit, especially kiwis, for Scarlett at her register when she isn't looking. Scarlett starts to take her breaks with Michael instead of Halley, and Halley and Scarlett spend nights apart that summer for the first time since they met. However, Halley can't hold it against Scarlett because she seems so happy. Scarlett and Michael spend entire weekends together, but they remain off the gossip radar, exposing themselves only once by going to the lake with Halley. By August, Michael has told Scarlett that he loves her, but he is dead two weeks later.

On the first day of school, Halley and Scarlett sit in Scarlett's car, dreading going inside. Since the funeral, Scarlett has folded inside herself, and whenever Michael is mentioned a mix of hurt and sadness overtakes her face. Ginny Tabor runs by the car giggling and wagging her fingers at Halley and Scarlett, and they can't believe they spent so much time with her at the beginning of the summer. The girls finally muster the strength to go inside. When Halley's schedule is handed out in homeroom, she sees she is registered for all the wrong classes. Halley goes to the guidance office and waits to see a counselor to sort out her schedule. While she is waiting, Macon Faulkner comes and sits next to her. He teases her for getting into trouble on the first day of school. Halley finds herself filled with sudden Scarlett-like boldness and discovers she isn't nervous talking to Macon.

Macon tells Halley three rules for handling herself: admit nothing, divert attention by mentioning your therapist or use the Jedi Mind Trick to convince them to think your way. Macon then studies Halley's schedule, noting that they have the same P.E. period and teasing her about being registered for band. Halley tries to act indignant, but she finds Macon so cute that she can't. When Macon puts his arm around her shoulder and squeezes it, Halley is so happy she wants to die. When he leaves, she feels a weird, jumpy feeling in her stomach. After fixing her schedule, Halley goes to meet Scarlett at the soda machines. Scarlett tells Halley she has been feeling sick. Halley tells Scarlett about Macon talking to her in the guidance office. Scarlett suggests that Macon might like Halley, and she chides her friend for thinking it impossible. Macon swoops by, shouting to Halley that he will see her in P.E. With a sad look on her face, like she already knows something Halley doesn't, Scarlett tells her to be careful.

P.E. becomes the most important time in Halley's life because it gives her a chance to see and flirt with Macon. Macon always arrives late, wearing non-regulation tennis shoes without socks and carrying contraband Cokes and sweets. He fails all of the easy P.E. quizzes, but he has mastered the art of forging his mother's signature on notes



excusing his absences. Halley is impressed by the strange and exciting outside life he leads. He seems to have no curfew, and he is always mentioning parties, clubs and road trips that Halley has never experienced. Halley repeats all of these details and every word of their inane flirtations back to Scarlett, who shakes her head and smiles, sometimes with the same sad expression on her face. Halley thinks this may be because it reminds Scarlett of Michael Sherwood.

In the meantime, Halley's father's morning radio show has become popular, and Halley hears his voice coming out of cars and stores everywhere. Halley only minds when he talks about her on the radio, and she is particularly embarrassed one morning when he tells a story about Halley sliding into a mud puddle when she was five. Everyone at school teases her, and Macon calls her Muddy Britches. Halley thinks both her parents make a living humiliating her, and it is just one example of how they are driving her crazy that fall. Though her mother once would have been the first person Halley would have told about Macon Faulkner, now she doesn't discuss it because she knows her mother wouldn't understand. Halley feels like Macon is as far as she can get from her mother and the world of the Grand Canyon picture in which Halley used to live.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

In this chapter, as Halley forges a relationship with Macon Faulkner, she feels herself growing further and further away from her mother and the close relationship they shared. Macon is clearly dangerous in a way that Halley has never experienced before, and she embraces the thrill of that danger, even as it makes Scarlett somewhat wary. As Halley's infatuation grows, she also feels herself changing, growing bolder and less nervous. This is also part of Halley's transformation from her Old Self to her New Self and her movement between the world of Friday nights spent watching movies with her family and Noah Vaughn and Friday nights spent sneaking around with Macon Faulkner. Dessen does a good job of capturing teen angst in Halley's sense that her parents have both made careers out of humiliating her. This sense of embarrassment and victimization mark many of Halley's emotions throughout the novel. Scarlett's pregnancy is foreshadowed for the first time in this chapter, when she tells Halley that she feels bad and sick.



Part 1, Chapter 4

Part 1, Chapter 4 Summary

Macon finally asks out Halley on a Friday in October after a P.E. badminton quiz. He tells Halley that he is going to a party in the Arbors that night, and he tells her she should come. Halley wants the moment to last forever, and she realizes at that moment that she would do anything Macon asked, no matter how dangerous that might be. She lets him pull her to her feet and feels like her eyes are wide open. After school, Scarlett and Halley hang out at Marion's house and watch her get ready for her date with an accountant named Steve. Scarlett teases Marion because Steve is a member of a history club. He dresses up as a medieval character named Vlad the Warrior (who Scarlett calls Vlad the Impaler) on the weekend and jousts and attends festivals with other club members. Marion insists he is very nice, and she says that Scarlett would know it too if she ever gave any of Marion's boyfriends a fair chance. Scarlett says she has given lots of people a fair chance, but there is only so much faith you can have in people.

Steve arrives with flowers, not looking much like a warrior, but Scarlett won't look as they drive away. Halley goes back to her house, where her mother asks her questions about her day, which Halley answers evasively, thinking of Macon and the momentous day she's had. Halley's mother invites her to watch movies with the Vaughns that night, but Halley tells her that she and Scarlett are going out to get a pizza. Halley feels she has to keep Macon from her mother and keep her mother at arm's length. Otherwise, her mother has to have her hands in everything Halley does.

Halley and Scarlett arrive at the party fashionably late and discover it is at Ginny Tabor's house. The girls search the house for Macon, and Halley feels like a fool when they can't find him. They leave soon after they arrive, as Ginny dissolves into tears over a broken family heirloom and a giant wine stain on the carpet. Back at Scarlett's house, Scarlett tries to make Halley feel better, but Halley feels stupid for ever thinking Macon was actually asking her to meet him and for thinking that he could ever like someone like her. Scarlett chides Halley for saying *someone like you*, and she tells Halley she is beautiful, smart, loyal and funny. She says that Macon would be lucky if Halley chose *him*. Scarlett goes inside for a moment, and Halley notices someone sneaking up the street towards her house through the shadows. She watches the person stop under her window and toss a rock at the window while whispering her name. She moves behind a tree until she is standing two feet from Macon Faulkner, and when she steps behind him and taps him on the shoulder, he is so startled that he drops a rock he was about to launch at the window onto this head.

Macon asks Halley why she didn't come to the party, and she learns that he was in the attic, waiting for her to show up. Halley's dad comes to the window, and she tells him she is looking for Scarlett's lost bracelet, and she is glad it is dark because she isn't used to lying to her father. Halley is mortified when her dad reminds her she has a date



with the Beast, his lawn mower, in the morning. She can hear Macon snickering at her from the shadows. When Halley's father leaves the window, Macon steps out of the shadows and kisses Halley, and she feels different, like Macon has given "that black outline some inside color, at last." (p. 84) He leaves abruptly when a car comes screeching around the corner, honking and calling his name, but he tells Halley he will call her tomorrow.

In the morning, Halley goes out to mow the lawn, as her dad laughs at what an impossible task it is. Halley's father thinks he is the only one who can navigate the yard's ruts and hidden stumps. Just after Halley has fallen into a hole in the yard and kicked the mower in anger, she sees Macon pull up to the curb in a red pickup. Ignoring Halley's warnings that the yard is impossible, Macon pulls a giant lawnmower off the back of his truck and begins to mow the lawn with ease, gliding around all the hidden tree stumps. Halley's father is shocked and asks Halley who he is. Halley tells him Macon is her friend, but she can tell that her father hears something in her voice that makes him worry about things besides the lawn. Halley's dad chides her for letting someone else do her job, and then Halley introduces Macon to her father. Halley can tell her dad's interest in Macon's fancy lawn mower is outweighing his anger and worry, but Halley's mother interrupts by shrilly calling her dad away before they can talk longer. Halley thanks Macon for saving her, and he leaves, telling Halley he will see her later. When Halley walks back to the house, her mother reprimands her and asks who Macon is, but Halley answers vaguely and turns away up the stairs to keep her secrets to herself.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Analysis

Although Scarlett's mother's problems and irresponsibility are addressed in previous chapters, this chapter is the first time that the effect on Scarlett is apparent. In Scarlett's distrust of Marion's new boyfriend Steve and her sense that there is only so much faith you can have in people, Dessen suggests the way that Scarlett's innocence and ability to trust may have been damaged by her turbulent childhood. This makes Michael's death seem even more poignant.

The title phrase is also explained in this chapter, as Halley worries that Macon could never like someone like her, and Scarlett tries to convince her that any boy would be lucky to be chosen by someone like Halley. Right before she first kisses Macon, Halley thinks that Macon makes her feel different and that he might be finally filling in her black outline with some inside color. Halley also continues to draw away from her parents in this chapter, lying to both her mother and father and guarding carefully her new feelings and experiences with Macon. Halley's sense that her mother "had to have her hands in whatever I did, keeping me with her or herself, somehow, with me, even when I fought hard against it" illustrates the way that Halley sees her mother's efforts to remain close to Halley as an effort to encroach on Halley's personality. Clearly, Halley's mother is still a part of Halley in spite of her best efforts. Otherwise, Halley wouldn't feel her presence inside the way she does.



Part 2, Chapter 5

Part 2, Chapter 5 Summary

As Halley deals with a long line of customers at work, Scarlett tells her she needs her and asks Halley to meet her in the ladies room as soon as possible. When Halley gets to the restroom, Scarlett shows her a pregnancy test and tells Halley she is pregnant. This is the third pregnancy test Scarlett has taken, and all have had the same result. Scarlett tells Halley she only had sex one time, because Michael died the next day, and even though the condom came off, she hadn't thought she could get pregnant the first time she had sex. Halley hadn't even known Scarlett and Michael had had sex, and she isn't very clear on the logistics of sex. She can only say "Oh My God" over and over again. Scarlett tells Halley she can't have a baby, but she also doesn't want to have an abortion. Halley puts her arms around Scarlett and tells her it will be okay and that they can handle it. Scarlett tells Halley she misses Michael so much. Halley can see it will be her job to hold them together, but she feels scared.

That evening, Halley goes over to Scarlett's house to help her tell Marion about the pregnancy. When Scarlett finally gets up the nerve, Marion refuses to look at either of them and only asks how long Scarlett has been pregnant. Steve then rings the doorbell, and Marion leaves the room, saying she can't talk about it now. Scarlett goes upstairs, and Halley babbles to Steve about her name and her grandmother while Marion and Scarlett argue upstairs. The fight is muffled, but Halley thinks she can make out the word "hypocrite." Marion and Steve leave the house, and Halley goes up to Scarlett's room, where she finds her curled up on the bed. Scarlett tells Halley that Marion lectured her about not learning from the mistakes Marion made and told Scarlett that they would go to the clinic on Monday to make an appointment for an abortion. Marion was a senior in high school when Scarlett was born, and Scarlett says that keeping her was the only unselfish thing that Marion ever did. Scarlett says she always wondered why Marion did it. Marion also told Scarlett that she had an abortion when Scarlett was six or seven, and it hadn't been a big deal. Halley feels they have never had to deal with something like this before, something bigger than them, and she tries to comfort Scarlett.

Scarlett's abortion is scheduled for that Friday, and as the day draws close, Scarlett becomes more and more quiet. On Friday, Halley's mother drives her to school because Halley has told her that Scarlett is busy, and then Halley and her mother have an awkward conversation after they see Scarlett and Marion in the car in front of them. Halley feels like everything her mother says has a double meaning, like a secret language that requires decoding. Halley's mother tells her to come straight home from school that evening because they need to make plans for Halley's birthday tomorrow. On the way into school, Macon appears magically next to Halley. Macon and Halley's new relationship has been the big news at school for the last two weeks. When Macon asks after Scarlett, Halley feels much worse lying to him than she feels lying to her mother. Macon tells her to keep her birthday night free because he wants to take her



somewhere, and even though Halley knows she has family plans, she agrees. A group of longhaired guys call Macon towards the parking lot, and Halley reflects that no matter how well she comes to know Macon, there is always a part of him that he keeps hidden from her.

At the end of Halley's second period, she is summoned to the office. The receptionist tells her that her mother is on the phone, but instead it is Scarlett on the line. Scarlett asks Halley to pick her up from the clinic early because she has decided not to have the abortion. Halley finds Macon before he goes to P.E., and she asks him to skip classes and give her a ride somewhere. As they leave the parking lot, Halley is very impressed with Macon's collection of passes he uses to skip school. They pick up Scarlett from a bench in front of the clinic. When Macon leaves the car to get some gas, Scarlett tells Halley that in spite of all the arguments for getting an abortion, she just couldn't do it. Scarlett says she knows no one will understand, and Halley tells her that she understands. Halley, Scarlett and Macon spend the day together driving around and eating a pizza. When Halley arrives back at her house, she is met with an uneasy silence, and she can tell something is wrong. Her mother comes out of the kitchen and tells Halley that she saw her driving around that afternoon with Macon, and she can't believe Halley would lie to her. She tells Halley that she called Marion, and then she sends Halley to her room. Halley goes straight to the phone in her bedroom and calls Scarlett to warn her that Marion knows, and then she watches through the window as Marion bursts into Scarlett's house, finger already pointing.

Part 2, Chapter 5 Analysis

Part 2 of the novel is entitled "Someone Like You" and represents the middle of Halley's journey of self-discovery, between the young girl she is with her family at the Grand Canyon and the more mature, self-aware young woman she is after Scarlett has her baby.

For the first time in this chapter, Halley is defined by others and by herself, not as Scarlett's friend, Halley, but as Macon Faulkner's girlfriend, Halley. In skipping school and lying to her parents, Halley rebels against her old meek and obedient self, but she also shows a strength and courage in the way she supports Scarlett in her time of need that is inconsistent with the person Halley is at the beginning of the summer. Halley's sense that everything her mother says has a double meaning, like a secret language that Halley cannot decode, is consistent with Halley's need in this period to protect her private life and private thoughts from the prying of her mother. The reader can see that Halley's mother is merely concerned and trying to stay involved in Halley's life, but to Halley, it feels extremely invasive and sneaky. The author does a good job of showing both sides of this conflict.

Part 2, Chapter 6

Part 2, Chapter 6 Summary

Halley's punishment for skipping school is that she is grounded for a month and allowed to go only to school and work, with no phone privileges. However, Halley's mother tells her she can still attend her family birthday dinner with the Vaughns the next evening. Halley's mother tries to get Halley to tell her Macon's name so she can call his parents, but she is interrupted by a phone call from Marion. Halley's mother goes over to Marion's house and stays for an hour and a half. When she comes back to Halley's room, carrying a milkshake peace offering from Halley's father, Halley can tell the fire of anger has left her. Halley's mother asks Halley why she didn't tell her about Scarlett and the baby, and she tells Halley that she thinks Scarlett is making a mistake and is too young to take on responsibility for another person. Marion told Halley's mother that Macon is Halley's boyfriend, and Halley can tell her mother is sad that Halley didn't tell her about it. Halley avoids looking at her face and the hurt she knows she would see there.

Part 2, Chapter 6 Analysis

In this shorter chapter, Scarlett and Halley must both face the consequences of their actions - Halley for skipping school and lying to her parents and Scarlett for deciding to keep her baby. Halley sees Scarlett as saving her from trouble again, because Halley escapes the brunt of her mother's wrath merely by not being pregnant like Scarlett. It is evident in the chapter that Halley's mother desperately wants to be close to Halley but doesn't know how, and the anger and the prying are just her attempts to stay involved in Halley's life. It seems that Halley might suspect this too, but she does her best to avert her eyes and avoid facing this truth for fear it will disrupt her ability to transform her life.



Part 2, Chapter 7

Part 2, Chapter 7 Summary

Macon visits Halley at work on her birthday, and she tells him that she was busted the day before and is grounded for a month. He kisses her, tells her it's too bad for him and slips a candy bar in her apron pocket. Halley feels giddy, knowing that he likes her. That night at Halley's birthday dinner with her family and the Vaughns, Scarlett tells Halley that she feels like Halley's mother saved her baby the night before by negotiating a truce between Scarlett and Marion. Halley's mother pretends as if nothing happened the night before, and she proposes a toast to Halley and tells her they love her. When Halley is getting ready for bed at eleven that night, she sees a car blink its lights into her window twice, and she creeps outside in her pajamas and jacket. Macon takes Halley twenty minutes away to Topper Lake, and he even lets her drive half the way, though he squirms nervously the whole time she is behind the wheel.

Macon leads Halley out of the car in the darkness, and Halley feels cold and disoriented. When he says they are "here," she can't tell where *here* is. They sit in the darkness, and Halley can hear water below them. Macon tells her that he and Michael found the place a few years ago and came here together often. They talk briefly about Michael for the first time, and Halley wonders whether, if he hadn't died, Scarlett would be keeping the baby or whether she would have ever met Macon. Then Macon tells her to get ready and pulls her close. Suddenly, she is surrounded by light and noise and sees danger do not enter signs. She watches the dam groaning and opening. Halley first feels terrified and then exhilarated, and as Macon pulls her close and kisses her, she feels herself letting go of the girl from the early summer and the Grand Canyon.

Part 2, Chapter 7 Analysis

As Halley's relationship with Macon begins to intensify, Halley feels an even greater distance from the girl she was at the Grand Canyon with her family early in the summer. In fact, Halley feels that old self "leaving me" as she kisses Macon above the dam. The mixture of terror and exhilaration that Halley feels with Macon above Topper Dam foreshadows the way he will make her feel in chapters to come. It is ironic in this period that Scarlett can recognize that Halley's mother is a good mother in a way that Halley can't, perhaps because Scarlett has more distance from their troubled mother-daughter relationship. Scarlett feels like Halley's mother has saved her baby.



Part 2, Chapter 8

Part 2, Chapter 8 Summary

As Scarlett and Halley sit in Scarlett's car before school starts, they read from *So You're Pregnant - What Now?*, Scarlett's pregnancy bible. Scarlett is suffering from food cravings, food aversions, headaches, heartburn and moodiness, which includes sniping at Halley in a way she never has before. Halley finds Macon waiting for her outside her homeroom. Since the night on the dam, things have felt more serious between them, and Macon is the only other person who knows about Scarlett's pregnancy. Later that day, in the only class Scarlett and Halley have together, Elizabeth Gunderson approaches Halley and warns her to watch out for Macon Faulkner because he can treat girls really badly. Elizabeth says Macon used her friend Rachel and never talked to her again. Halley manages to slip around her and goes to find Scarlett. Halley starts to tell Scarlett what Elizabeth said, but before she can get too far, Scarlett runs out of the room with her hand over her mouth.

Halley follows her to the bathroom, and after checking under the other stalls for feet, she brings Scarlett some wet paper towels to clean up. Scarlett tells Halley she can't believe how hard it is to do this without Michael, when Marion doesn't even want her to have the baby. Halley tells Scarlett that will never be on her own because Halley will always be there for her, but Scarlett says it isn't the same. Scarlett is worried about childbirth classes, giving birth and supporting the baby. Suddenly, they hear the creak of a door opening, and Ginny Tabor steps out of one of the stalls, her mouth in the shape of an "O." Ginny backs quickly out the door, swearing she won't tell anybody, but by that afternoon everyone in school knows. Halley feels horrible for letting big-mouthed Ginny fake her out in the bathroom, but Scarlett is somewhat relieved to have the secret out and finally feels hungry. As she scarfs hotdogs, Macon makes the girls laugh by warning Scarlett that she needs to eat more vegetables and foods with vitamin C, like cantaloupe. As they walk back though school after lunch, everyone stares at Scarlett's stomach, and Halley can tell it really bothers her. Halley wonders what is more shocking to their fellow students - that a girl like Scarlett got pregnant or that the baby is Michael's.

Part 2, Chapter 8 Analysis

Scarlett's strength is tested again in the chapter as her pregnancy secret comes out in the school. Although she tells Halley and Macon that she doesn't mind if people are talking about her, Halley can tell that all the stares bother her. Halley feels that she has let Scarlett down by allowing Ginny Tabor to find out Scarlett's secret, but the reader will be able to see the subtle ways that Halley is becoming stronger and more supportive of Scarlett, growing as a friend as Scarlett's need for her increases. Macon's true character is also foreshadowed in the chapter, although the reader may have a hard

time knowing whether to trust the source, Elizabeth Gunderson. Unfortunately, Elizabeth's dire prediction will later prove true.



Part 2, Chapter 9

Part 2, Chapter 9 Summary

At the same all this excitement is happening in Halley's life, her grandmother starts to get sick. She forgets and loses things, and she becomes easily confused, often calling Halley's mother in the middle of the night anxious and upset. Halley has always been close to her grandmother, after whom she is named, and loves her eccentricities, which she has always found magical. Now Halley's mother often seems distracted and worried. Halley and Scarlett continue adjusting to the pregnancy and are relieved to find that the school moves onto another scandal after a couple of weeks. Marion and Steve are still dating, and Scarlett notices that Steve is slowly letting his alter-ego show, first by wearing a warrior medallion with his conservative suit. Scarlett still thinks he is a weirdo, but Halley thinks he isn't that bad. Halley notices that, though Scarlett isn't yet showing, she's started to look different in some indescribable way. She reminds Halley of a stop-action film of flowers blooming they saw in biology. At this time, Scarlett also befriends Cameron Newton, a small, skinny, very white boy who transferred to their school from France that September. Cameron is in Scarlett and Halley's commercial design class, and he is nice to Scarlett one day when Maryann Lister and her friends are audibly talking about Scarlett and what a slut they think she is. Halley thinks Cameron is weird, but in time she sees how funny he is and what a talented artist he is. Halley knows that Scarlett has taken Cameron in, the same way she once took Halley in.

Halley's mother still isn't happy about Halley seeing Macon, who calls the house late at night and hangs up if someone other than Halley answers. He also pulls up in front of Halley's house late at night, letting his car idle before pulling away with screeching tires. Halley doesn't know why Macon does this, when he knows she is already on thin ice with her parents, and the sound fills her with half exhilaration and half dread. One night, Macon takes Halley to his bedroom in the penthouse suite of a fancy apartment building where his mother lives. Halley is pleased when she finds that Macon has stolen Scarlett's copy of the picture of Halley at the Grand Canyon, cut out Halley's mother and put it up in his room. Halley can tell Macon spends little time in the room, and she thinks how strange Macon's nomadic life of crashing at other people's apartments seems compared to her orderly, homely existence.

Halley and Macon begin kissing on the bed, and when she next looks at his watch, she realizes she is late for her curfew. She rushes home, darting through Scarlett's kitchen where Scarlett sits reading her pregnancy bible. Halley's mother is waiting up for her, and when Halley says she has been watching a movie with Scarlett, Halley's mother knows she is lying because she could see Scarlett sitting alone all evening. Halley can hear Macon's car still rumbling outside and thinks that he doesn't know how much worse he is making it for her. Halley's mother demands to know where Halley was and asks Halley how she could be so dishonest. Halley tries to explain, but she is drowned out by the sound of Macon screeching away, beeping his horn. Halley's mother's voice



sounds shaky and almost scared when she says that he could kill someone driving that way. On her way to bed, Halley stops and looks in the mirror, committing to memory the reflection of a girl who belongs with Macon Faulkner and who breaks her mother's heart without looking back.

Part 2, Chapter 9 Analysis

Halley's observation that Scarlett's gradual metamorphosis is like a stop-action film of flowers blooming is interesting in the context of the book's interest in metamorphosis generally. Halley notes that to the naked eye, blooming and color occur suddenly, but they have actually always been building beneath the surface, in real time. The same could be said for Halley and her growth as a character, or even Steve, who begins in this chapter to slowly introduce aspects of his warrior alter ego into his life with Marion. Halley also seems to feel by the end of the chapter that her transformation from the girl she was at the Grand Canyon to the girl she is now, Macon Faulkner's girlfriend, is complete. As she looks at her reflection in the mirror the night she gets home late for her curfew, she thinks of herself as "the girl who had risen out of that night at Topper Lake, the girl who belonged with Macon Faulkner, the girl who broke her mother's heart, never looking back. The girl I was." (p. 161)

Although Halley continues to believe that Macon wouldn't purposefully get her into trouble by screeching his tires and beeping his horn late outside her house, the reader begins to suspect that he actually intends to do just that and that Macon delights in his sense that Halley's parents "hate" him. In Macon's reckless driving and reckless attitude towards Halley's well-being, the author foreshadows the way Macon will hurt Halley in future chapters.



Part 2, Chapter 10

Part 2, Chapter 10 Summary

Halley is excused from her grounding temporarily to accompany Scarlett to the doctor's office. Scarlett, whose pregnancy is finally beginning to show, is terrified of doctors. Scarlett tries to tell Dr. Roberts that nothing is wrong, but Halley forces her to be honest about the side effects she is experiencing. The doctor examines Scarlett and tells her she is doing fine. Scarlett asks her how much it will hurt, and the doctor says how much it hurts will depend on the course of childbirth Scarlett chooses. Scarlett tells Halley she is thinking about taking a birthing class. Scarlett is worried because Marion seems to believe that Scarlett will definitely give the baby up for adoption.

That afternoon, Halley's mom comes by Milton's Market while Halley is working and tells her she will pick her up after work so they can go to dinner together. She gives Halley no chance to argue, and Halley spends the afternoon wondering what trick she has up her sleeve. Over dinner, Halley's mother brings up Macon and says that she is worried about the way Halley has been since she started dating him. Halley can tell her mother has planned out her entire speech and probably even outlined it for her book. She tells Halley that Macon isn't good for her and tells her that she and Halley's father have decided Halley can't see him anymore. When Halley protests, her mother says that Halley is inexperienced and is also like her. She has a tendency not to see people the way they really are. Halley stands up and tells her mother in a final way that she is not like her. Halley's mother looks like she has been slapped. They don't say another word to each other, and on the drive home, Halley thinks of the Grand Canyon and how many things are vast and impossible to cross now.

When Halley and her mother get home, Halley sees Steve getting out of his car in front of Marion's house and notices that he is wearing big clunky warrior boots, the newest sign of Vlad's emergence. As they walk into the house, Halley's dad is on the phone, and he tells them that Halley's grandmother has fallen in her house and is badly hurt. As Halley's mother talks to the doctor on the phone, she looks right at Halley, as if Halley is the only thing holding her up. Halley's father books Halley's mother on a flight to Buffalo that night. Halley wants to say something to her mother to "fix" the distance between them, but her mother is in a rush and only ruffles Halley's hair on the way out the door, saying everything will be okay. Halley thinks that with one phone call, her mother has forgotten what had happened at dinner and has become a daughter again.

Part 2, Chapter 10 Analysis

In this chapter, Halley makes what feels to her like a final break with her mother. By telling her that Halley is nothing like her, Halley knows she has said something incredibly hurtful. Halley's words also play against the book's title, *Someone Like You*. Halley's statement is even more significant because it is later proven incorrect. Halley's



mother's observation at dinner that Halley is like her in that they both have a tendency not to see people the way they really are foreshadows the fact that Halley is not seeing the truth about Macon Faulkner. Halley's mother may not be completely correct in the way she is handling the situation between Halley and Macon, but she clearly has some insight into the situation that Halley lacks. Halley uses the Grand Canyon as a metaphor for the distance that has grown between her and her mother, a distance she believes is now cannot be crossed. However, only moments after thinking that, Halley finds herself drawn closer to her mother again when her mother learns the bad news about her own mother. Halley notes that with one phone call, her mother has become a daughter again, and in a way, Halley does too, as evidenced by her sudden desire to bridge the distance between her and her mother.



Part 2, Chapter 11

Part 2, Chapter 11 Summary

When Halley's mother leaves town, Halley experiences a new freedom because her father is kept busy with promotional events for his radio show and doesn't keep careful track of what Halley is doing. Halley spends all the time she can with Macon, driving around and skipping school. Scarlett is also really busy, with extra shifts at work, hanging out with Cameron and going to her Teen Mother Support Group. Halley's mother calls every night to say she misses Halley, to tell her Grandmother Halley will be okay and to tell Halley she is glad that Halley broke it off with Macon. Halley agrees with her and tells herself not to feel guilty because her mother is the one who started playing dirty. The night before Halley and her dad leave for Buffalo for Thanksgiving, Macon comes into the house with Halley when he drops her off after work. Halley thinks her father is out doing radio stuff, but she still feels nervous. When Macon starts kissing her in the dark kitchen, she makes him stop. Suddenly, Halley hears her father's voice, and her heart stops. She then realizes that Macon has turned the radio on, and her father's program is on.

Macon wants to see Halley's room, and even though she knows why, she takes him anyway. They make out on the bed for a while, and Macon tries to put his hand in Halley's pants. She keeps stopping him. On the radio, Halley's dad says he will be on air until 9 p.m., but Halley still tells Macon that it's not a good idea. Macon tells her that he has been patient and waited for three months, and he asks her to think about it. Halley has the sudden flash of thought that he has done this before. Halley does think about having sex with Macon, but every time she is very tempted she thinks of Scarlett. Macon doesn't want to hang out or watch TV and leaves promptly. Halley can feel something changing, and she knows she will lose Macon if she doesn't sleep with him soon. She thinks of all the changes that have happened in the last few months, the girl she had been and the girl she is now, and she thinks one more change wouldn't be such a big deal. She also thinks of the sketched black outline of the girl she is becoming, though, and Scarlett, and she knows she isn't ready to take on that new color yet.

Halley goes over to Scarlett's house to say goodbye, and she finds Scarlett scrubbing the fridge, trying to get rid of a bad smell that Halley can't smell. Halley looks in the pregnancy bible and finds a paragraph that says sense of smell may become stronger during pregnancy. Scarlett ignores her. Halley is proud of Scarlett for the way she is handling the pregnancy. She is eating better, exercising and reading everything she can about child rearing, except the pamphlets about adoption that Marion leaves on her bed. Halley asks Scarlett what made her decide to sleep with Michael, and Scarlett asks her if she is considering sleeping with Macon. Halley tells her that Macon wants to and doesn't understand why it is such a big deal to Halley. Scarlett says that Macon does know why, and she tells Halley that it isn't about Macon. It is about her, and when she is ready. Halley asks Scarlett if she was ready, and Scarlett says probably not, even



though she loved Michael and thought she was ready. She tells Halley that she must consider that Macon might be gone afterwards, not necessarily dead like Michael, but gone. Scarlett thinks aloud that as much as she loved Michael, she doesn't know what would have happened if he hadn't died. Scarlett tells Halley that if she sleeps with Macon it will change things, and she tells Halley to be sure before she does anything.

Part 2, Chapter 11 Analysis

In this chapter, Halley grapples with whether to lose her virginity to Macon Faulkner. Halley's sense that so many changes have happened to her in the last few months and that one more change wouldn't be such a big deal is worrying. The thought of Scarlett is the one thing that keeps Halley from giving in to temptation. When she thinks of the sketched black outline of the girl she is becoming, she knows she isn't ready to take on that "new color" yet. For the first time here, Halley takes authority over the colors that are filling her metaphorical outline, instead of relying on Scarlett or Macon to fill them in for her. Scarlett again shows what a wonderful friend she is to Halley, with wise and compassionate advice.



Part 2, Chapter 12

Part 2, Chapter 12 Summary

Halley and her dad leave early the next morning for Buffalo to see Grandma Halley. Halley couldn't sleep the night before, worrying about the way she and Macon left things. Halley hopes that Macon cares enough about her not to look elsewhere for what she has been denying him. When Halley walks into her grandmother's room in the Evergreen Rest Care Facility, she is struck by how pale and small her grandmother looks and how tired her mother looks. Halley's mother keeps squeezing Halley's shoulders reassuringly. When Halley's grandmother wakes up, she doesn't immediately recognize Halley, which makes Halley feel for a moment as if she has already turned into another, unrecognizable Halley. The family watches Grandmother Halley eat turkey and cranberry Jell-O off a tray, and then the three Cookes go to a downtown hotel for a Thanksgiving buffet. Halley calls Scarlett, and Scarlett tells her that Steve came to Thanksgiving dinner wearing a tunic. Marion didn't even care because she is crazy about him. Halley misses Macon and Scarlett and mashed potatoes with lumps.

While Halley and her family stay in Grandma Halley's house, Halley looks through her grandmother's old photos, letters and memorabilia, and she begins to feel she knows her grandmother better than before. Halley learns that her grandma was in love for two years with an Indian boy she met in a park when she was nineteen. Halley tells her mom, who hadn't known before. Halley and her mother enjoy a moment of closeness, before Halley's mother tells Halley she will one day understand why she forbade her to see Macon. Halley tells her she is wrong, and the distance opens up between them all over again. Halley tells her mother that she remembers sitting on her grandmother's lap and watching Halley's Comet in the sky, and Halley's mother tells her she was too little to remember and that the sky had been too cloudy to see anything. Halley feels like her mother is trying to take everything from her, even her own memories, and she knows that her mother is wrong. Halley knows she saw the comet. The next morning, they all go to the hospital to say goodbye to Halley's grandmother, and Halley sees her mother weep. She feels scared in the same way she felt scared when Scarlett called her crying at camp. Halley thinks that when the things you rely upon most in the world let you down, it shakes your faith to the core.

Part 2, Chapter 12 Analysis

Halley's visit to her grandmother in Buffalo is thoroughly upsetting for her, as she must watch someone she loves and respects struggle with her sanity. The moment when Halley's grandmother fails to recognize her is an interesting one, because it underlines how significantly Halley has changed over the course of the last months. Although Halley's grandmother's failure to recognize Halley is the result of health problems, Halley feels so different inside that it seems conceivable to her that someone could legitimately fail to recognize her.



Halley and her mother continue to struggle with their relationship, continuing their pattern of experiencing moments of closeness followed by sudden gulfs of distance. This happens in this chapter when Halley's mother brings up Macon and again when she discounts Halley's memory of seeing the comet with her grandmother. Just as Halley felt in earlier chapters that her mother was trying to get her hands in all parts of Halley's life, now she feels that "my own memories did not even belong to me." (p. 196) However, when Halley sees her mother crying in her grandmother's room she is also reminded of how much she relies on her mother's strength. Her crying has the same frightening effect on Halley that Scarlett's did in the first chapter.



Part 2, Chapter 13

Part 2, Chapter 13 Summary

Scarlett is now in month five, and her pregnancy is obvious. She is called into Mr. Averby's office at Milton's Market, and Halley goes with her for support. Mr. Averby cannot fire Scarlett by law, but he is clearly worried about what customers will think about a pregnant sixteen-year-old checkout girl. He awkwardly suggests Scarlett may want to quit. Scarlett cheerfully refuses. Laughing afterwards, Scarlett tells Halley that she isn't ashamed, and even if other people believe she is doing the wrong thing, they can't make her believe it. Halley wonders why the right thing is always met with so much resistance. It is nearing Christmas, and she still hasn't decided what to do about Macon. She has been able to avoid a decision largely because she hasn't seen much of him, but she misses the way things were before. A few times in December, she finds she has to push him away, which is growing harder for her too. Scarlett asks her if she loves him, and Halley says yes. She has to admit, though, that Macon hasn't told her that he loves her yet. Halley casually notes that many people have sex without saying "I love you," and Scarlett says, "Not people like us."

Halley's mother, who is crazy about the holidays, suggests that they all go get a Christmas tree together that evening. At the tree lot, Halley sees Elizabeth Gunderson with her family. Elizabeth asks how things are with Macon and tells Halley that she has seen a lot of him at Rhetta's. Halley has never heard of or been to Rhetta's, and she tries to figure out what that means. She hates Elizabeth Gunderson and hates her own virginity. She even hates Christmas, just because she can. She wonders if she was right originally that Macon belongs with someone like Elizabeth. Even worse than not being right for Macon, Halley fears maybe Macon isn't right for her.

The next afternoon, when Macon's hand creeps towards their battleground, Halley asks him who Rhetta is. Macon sighs dramatically and tells Halley she is just a friend. He says that he isn't used to being accountable to anyone and can't tell her where he is every second, because often he doesn't know himself. Halley thinks how different this is from the early days when they had fun. Now they just park and "battle for territory while arguing about trust and expectations." It reminds Halley of dealing with her mother. He tells Halley she just needs to trust him, and Halley feels so good kissing him and being in his arms that she is tempted to tell him she loves him. Instead, she wills him in her to head to say it first. He gets frustrated when she pushes him away again, and he seems dissatisfied when Halley tries to explain that it isn't about him, but about her and the way she is.

Halley and Scarlett go shopping for Christmas presents, and Halley buys Macon new sunglasses. Halley feels like she sees Macon less and less. He is always with other people, and Halley can feel she is losing him and knows she needs to act soon. Meanwhile, Halley's mom seems so happy, convinced that she has fixed their relationship. On Christmas Eve, Macon stops briefly by Halley's house to give Halley



her present, a thick silver ring. Halley asks him if he is going over to Rhetta's, and Macon sighs and says he doesn't know. Halley asks why he never takes her to those places, and Macon says they aren't her kind of places. Halley tells him she wants to spend New Years Eve with him, and she hopes that he understands the significance of what she is saying. Halley feels like she has made a choice and must now stick with it, but she also feels off-balance. Suddenly, she hears Scarlett calling her and runs frightened to Scarlett's house in crisis mode. Instead, Scarlett lets Halley feel the baby kicking for the first time, and Halley is wowed. She wants to talk to Scarlett about her decision, but she decides to wait. She just puts her hand over Scarlett's and enjoys the kicks.

Part 2, Chapter 13 Analysis

Again, the phraseology of "someone like you" comes up several times in this chapter, first when Scarlett tells Halley that "people like us" don't have sex unless they are loved and in love.

Then, Halley wonders if Macon belongs with "someone like Elizabeth" and thinks that there is a difference between not being right for Macon, and Macon not being right for her. This difference is important even for someone like Halley, "for someone who things didn't come so easy for, someone like me." (p. 207) The distinction that Halley makes between being right for Macon and Macon being right for her is a sophisticated one, and it shows that she is growing into someone of emotional intelligence. However, her decision at the end of this chapter to sleep with Macon also shows how powerful the pressures upon her are and how scared she is to lose the first boy she has ever cared about. Halley's theory that her arguments with Macon about trust and expectations have come to feel just like her arguments with her mother is an interesting one, and it underscores the importance of these two issues in the novel. This is especially true when trust is misplaced, as Halley's trust in Macon and Halley's mother's trust in Halley eventually prove to be.



Part 2, Chapter 14

Part 2, Chapter 14 Summary

On New Year's Eve, Halley's mother wants Halley to spend New Years with her family and the Vaughns, but Halley's heart is set on spending the evening with Macon. Her mother studies Halley's face and tells her that she trusts her and not to make her regret it. Halley finds it hard to keep looking at her. Halley stops at Scarlett's house on the way out, where Scarlett gives her a giant handful of condoms. Halley can tell something is wrong with Scarlett, and Scarlett confesses that she is worried that Halley is about to sleep with Macon in order to hold onto someone who can't even say that he loves her. Scarlett believes that isn't the right thing to do. Halley, angry that Scarlett is questioning her, tells Scarlett to look at how right she was. Cameron looks at her with the expression Halley reserves for people who hurt Scarlett. Scarlett leaves the room, and Halley leaves the house and gets into Macon's car waiting outside. Halley sees Steve coming to get Marion, completely dressed in warrior gear, and she thinks that both of their evolutions are complete.

Halley and Macon go to a party outside of town. It is a rough-looking house and a rough-looking crowd, and Halley immediately wonders what her mother would think. She quickly and nervously chugs a beer, and Macon refills her cup. They wander into a bedroom, where they find Macon's friend Ronnie and Elizabeth Gunderson, who have clearly just had sex. Macon, Elizabeth and Ronnie begin smoking marijuana, and Halley takes a hit, thinking she is capable of fitting in anywhere. Macon and Ronnie leave the room, and Halley and Elizabeth are left alone. Elizabeth asks Halley about Scarlett's baby and tells her that she thinks it will ruin Scarlett's life. Halley defends Scarlett, feeling hatred for Elizabeth. Elizabeth leaves, and Halley sits alone in the room for what feels like hours.

When Macon returns, he tells Halley that he has been mingling and says it is eleven-thirty. Halley and Macon start kissing on the bed, and she tries to lose herself in the feeling. The bed smells bad, though, and she can hear people in the toilet next door. She keeps thinking about how Elizabeth Gunderson preceded her there. She suddenly feels sick, pushes Macon away and stands up. Macon pleads with her to lie down again, but she needs fresh air and begins fumbling with the lock. Halley starts crying, hating Macon and herself, and hating her mother and Scarlett for being right about him. She can feel herself about to throw up as she busts out of the room, and she can hear people counting down the New Year as she runs outside. Kneeling in the woods as the New Year begins, Halley is violently sick and all alone.

Part 2, Chapter 14 Analysis

Before Halley leaves the house to go out for New Year's Eve, her mom uses what Halley calls her "last weapon: trust" by saying that she is trusting her. Because Halley is



about to do something that she knows is wrong, she finds this "weapon" particularly effective. Halley feels that her transformation is complete in this chapter after she has betrayed her mother's trust to her face, knowingly hurt Scarlett and run off to sleep with Macon. However, even as Macon shows his true nature by neglecting and bullying Halley, Halley also shows her true nature by standing up to Macon's pressure and making the decision that is right for her. This moment of self-empowerment is somewhat ironic, as Halley throws up immediately afterwards from abusing alcohol and marijuana, but it is nevertheless important. She also reveals this inner strength in defending Scarlett to Elizabeth Gunderson.



Part 2, Chapter 15

Part 2, Chapter 15 Summary

As Macon drives her home, Halley apologizes for getting sick and not sleeping with him. Macon is furious and driving way too fast. Halley tells him that she wanted to do it, but it hadn't felt right. He doesn't understand. Halley can tell he isn't going to stop for the red light ahead, and as they speed through the intersection, she sees bright yellow lights come over his face and then hears something big and loud hit her door, sending glass flying everywhere.

Part 2, Chapter 15 Analysis

The car accident in this chapter serves as a physical manifestation of the troubled route Halley and Macon's relationship is on. Macon's carelessness in driving parallels his carelessness with Halley's feelings, her virginity and her person. Macon's inability to understand Halley's reasons for not sleeping with him also emphasizes how right her decision to wait actually is.



Part 2, Chapter 16

Part 2, Chapter 16 Summary

What Halley remembers of the accident is the cold, red lights and Macon holding her hand, apologizing and telling her he loves her and will be right there. The ambulance takes Halley to the hospital, and she gives them Scarlett's phone number as her contact. The doctor tells Halley that she has a sprained wrist, back lacerations, a cut eye and two bruised ribs, but he says she is very lucky. Scarlett comes to the room, looking scared, and tells Halley that Macon isn't there, even though the police released him an hour ago. As Halley drifts off to sleep, she tells Scarlett he must be on the way, and Scarlett sadly tells her she is sorry. When Halley awakes, her mother and father are in her room, and her mother immediately launches into reprimands, telling Halley that she knew this would happen and reminding Halley that she promised she wouldn't see Macon again. As Halley drifts off to sleep, she can hear her father telling her mother to let it go. She can also hear a voice (maybe Macon's, maybe her mother's, maybe imagined) saying, "I'll be right here."

Part 2, Chapter 16 Analysis

In this chapter, the doctor explains Halley's injuries from the car accident to her, but in some ways it seems the damage to her heart is even greater when she discovers Macon hasn't come to the hospital to wait with her. Macon has finally told Halley that he loves her, but the circumstances under which he has done it make almost meaningless the words Halley has waited for so long, especially when he doesn't come to the hospital afterwards. In spite of the cruel way Halley treated her hours before, Scarlett is a good, strong friend to Halley in this chapter. Interestingly, it is Halley's mother who isn't able to control her fear and anger when she sees Halley injured in her hospital bed, and she immediately attacks her with "I told you so." It is never made explicitly clear whose voice Halley hears as she drifts off to sleep, but the reader may imagine that it is Halley's mother, comforting Halley and promising to stay near even through her anger and resentment.



Part 2, Chapter 17

Part 2, Chapter 17 Summary

Halley spends the next week in bed, and everything aches. She and her mother don't talk about Macon, and Halley finds it hurts even to try to picture him. She can tell he is trying to get in touch with her, because she can hear him idling and beeping outside her house, but she ignores him, feeling hurt, angry and foolish for what she believed about Macon and how she turned on Scarlett. Scarlett, who is full of pregnancy hormones, is so angry at Macon she says she could kill him with her bare hands, but Halley finds she can't turn her heart off all at once. Around midnight one night, Halley hears Macon throwing stones at her window, and she goes outside to see him. He makes an excuse for not showing at the hospital and tells Halley he has been miserable without her, but she doesn't believe him. Suddenly Halley realizes that all the things Macon said to her that she treasured, he had said a million times before to a million different girls. She realizes that she deserves better. She deserves I love yous, affection and space "to grow, and to change, to become all the girls I could ever be over the course of my life, each one better than the last." (p. 243)

Halley backs away from Macon through her front door and bumps into her mother, who is furious that Halley has gone right back to Macon. Halley feels like her mother is trying to take away her moment of strength by assuming the worst about her, and Halley tells her mother that she never gives her a chance. For the first time, Halley feels like her mother is starting to understand, and Halley tells her that she will never learn, unless her mother lets her. Halley feels like they have struck a new deal and like she and her mother are in new, undiscovered country, where they will have to make up the rules as they go along.

Part 2, Chapter 17 Analysis

This chapter is the critical turning point in Halley's self-transformation, when she finally rids herself of Macon and begins to reconcile with her mother. She realizes that she deserves more than Macon can give her, which means not only that she deserves more respect and love, but also that she deserves someone who will allow her to grow. Halley thought in previous chapters that her transformation was complete, but she realizes here that she has many more versions of herself to become, "each better than the last." It is partly this revelation that enables her to begin to bridge the distance that has sprung up between her and her mother. Halley is finally able to communicate to her mother that she needs more space in order to grow and learn. Halley compares their new deal to learning another way of doing something that comes instinctively, like walking or talking. She also feels like she has gone back on track, and she suddenly remembers what it was like to see Halley's Comet while sitting in her grandmother's lap. The image of the comet's fiery brilliance is a metaphor for the hope and possibility of Halley's life.



Part 3, Chapter 18

Part 3, Chapter 18 Summary

As Halley and Scarlett get ready for prom, Halley's mother fusses over them and takes photos. Scarlett, who is nine months pregnant, is going with Cameron, and Halley is going with Noah Vaughn, due to careful engineering by Halley's parents and Noah's. Halley has noticed a difference in her mother, who seems to be trying to hold her tongue and not dominate Halley as much as before. Halley hasn't seen much of Macon, and although she still feels a pang when she sees him, she feels she is getting better. She cried for two days when she learned he was dating Elizabeth Gunderson, but she made herself concentrate on Scarlett's baby to get through it. Halley throws a baby shower for Scarlett, helps her consider names and attends Lamaze classes with her. Marion ultimately comes around from her adoption plan, and Halley sees her surveying the baby's lovely new nursery with a smile. Halley also goes with Scarlett to mail her letter to Michael's parents telling them about the baby.

Halley isn't excited about going to prom with Noah Vaughn, but she tries not to complain because she can tell it is an important night for Scarlett, the end of something before the baby comes. Halley can see that Noah is drunk when he comes to pick her up, but she tries to smile for her mother's and Marion's cameras anyway. On the way to prom, Noah continues to drink, and he tears Halley's dress as they get out of the limo. As Halley tries to fix the back of her dress in the bushes, Noah lunges at her, puts his hands inside her dress and tries to kiss her. Halley pushes him off, and he stumbles off alone. Halley wants to go home, but she decides to stay for Scarlett's sake. Inside she sees Macon and Elizabeth Gunderson looking on, and as Macon grins at her, she feels the same giddy rush she felt on Topper Dam. Suddenly overwhelmed, Halley rushes to the bathroom, holding her dress together. In the mirror she looks disheveled and ragged, her dress hanging open in the back. The prom chairwoman helps her use her bobby pins to fix her dress together, and just as Halley is wondering how the night could get any worse, Elizabeth Gunderson comes into the bathroom in a tight black dress. Elizabeth tells her that Macon still loves her, and Halley realizes that doesn't mean anything to her anymore.

Just then, Ginny Tabor bursts into the bathroom and tells Halley that Scarlett is having her baby. Halley rushes to Scarlett, who bursts into tears when she sees Halley. Scarlett doesn't want to wait for an ambulance, so Halley helps her outside and flags down the first car that screeches around the corner. Macon is behind the wheel with Elizabeth Gunderson, and Halley, Scarlett and Cameron pile in the backseat. Halley tries to get Scarlett to breathe and think peaceful thoughts about lakes and flowers, but Scarlett tells her to shut up. Instead, Halley reminds her of all the happy times they have had together. Scarlett calms down and makes Halley promise she won't leave her.

At the hospital, Halley calls Marion, but she is at a medieval festival with Vlad. No one answers the phone. Halley calls her mother and asks her to tell Marion about the baby



when she comes home. Outside, Halley can see Macon and Elizabeth arguing in the car. When she gets back to Scarlett, Scarlett is hysterical and in pain, and Halley feels frightened and overwhelmed. Scarlett won't do her breathing exercises and only lies in the bed, moaning. Halley feels like she is falling apart and backs out of the room slowly, as Scarlett begs her not to leave. As Halley leans against the door outside, terrified, her mother rounds the corner and walks Halley back inside, telling her that Scarlett needs her. Halley watches her mother comforting Scarlett and realizes there will never be a way to cut her mother completely out of her life. She is a part of Halley, as crucial as her heart.

Part 3, Chapter 18 Analysis

When Scarlett has her baby, Halley's new sense of self is tested, and Halley finds herself both stronger and weaker than she believed herself to be. Although she can withstand the embarrassment and pressure of the prom experience, she finds that when Scarlett actually goes into labor, she is too frightened and overwhelmed to be supportive of her in the way that Scarlett needs her to be. When Halley's mother arrives, she helps Halley get back the strength she needs for the experience, and Halley realizes that the thing she hated most about her mother, the way she seems to always want a piece of Halley, is now one of the most wonderful things about her. Halley sees that she can't separate her mother from the person she is and "no matter how strong or weak I was, she was a part of me, as crucial as my own heart. I would never be strong enough, in all my life, to do without her." (p. 275)



Part 3, Chapter 19

Part 3, Chapter 19 Summary

Scarlett has a little girl, and she names her Grace Halley. Halley feels overwhelmed when she looks at Grace, who represents for her the year she and Scarlett have shared, from the summer with Michael to the winter with Macon. Halley goes out to the waiting room to deliver the good news, and she is shocked to see half of their class in their prom finery filling one half of the waiting room. Vlad, Marion and twenty other warriors and maidens in full attire wait in the other half. Halley sees Ginny Tabor, Macon talking to Cameron and even Maryann Lister. When Halley tells them Scarlett has had a girl, they all start clapping and cheering and hugging. That night, Halley sits up with Scarlett, watching her sleep, and feels excited about Grace Halley. She wonders about what kind of girl she will be, and she hopes she gets the best of Scarlett, Marion, Michael and Halley's mother. Halley isn't sure what she will give her yet, but she knows she will take Grace to see the Comet one day. She will be able to explain it all to her then.

Part 3, Chapter 19 Analysis

Although Scarlett's pregnancy often makes her feel like a pariah at school, at the end of the day, her fellow students come out in droves to support her. As Scarlett looks at baby Grace Halley, she is filled with love and the desire to protect her - the same sort of maternal feelings she has been rebelling against with her own mother. Halley also knows she will have much to teach Grace, about comets, the book's symbol of hope and possibility, and also about "the girls we all become, in the end." (p. 281) This phrase suggests that Halley is still on a path to becoming someone even stronger and better, and it also suggests that Halley will like the person she will become and may even be able to help Grace with her own journey one day.



Characters

Halley Cooke

Halley is the novel's protagonist, a sixteen-year-old girl struggling with her relationship with her mother and her new feelings for her troubled boyfriend Macon, as well as struggling to support her pregnant best friend, Scarlett. Halley is shy, gets nervous easily and had a hard time making new friends before she met Scarlett. Halley has long thick hair, and she tans easily. Halley is used to Scarlett supporting her emotionally, and when Michael dies and Scarlett finds out she is pregnant, Halley finds that she must be the "strong one" in their relationship for the first time. Halley feels throughout the novel that she is going through a transition from Old Me to New Me, which involves putting a greater distance between herself and her mother, starting a relationship with Macon Faulkner, and rebelling against the quiet, respectful girl she has always been. After Macon pressures her constantly to sleep with him, Halley almost gives in, and she tries to justify it as just one more change in her huge transformation. However, on New Years Eve, she decides not to go through with it, and then she has a terrible car accident while Macon is driving her home, angry and speeding. After this event, Halley and her mother work towards a new peace and understanding, and when Scarlett has her baby, Grace Halley, Halley knows she will have much to teach Scarlett's daughter about becoming the girl she will become.

Scarlett Thomas

Scarlett is Halley's best friend and her fellow protagonist in the novel. Scarlett and Halley have been best friends since they were eleven, when Scarlett and her mother moved next door to Halley's family. Scarlett is bold and self-confident with fiery red hair, and she immediately takes Halley under her wing. Scarlett's mother is irresponsible, and Scarlett has been taking care of both of them for a long time. She falls in love with Michael Sherwood the summer before their junior year, and she sleeps with him once before he dies. She becomes pregnant from this one time, and she decides to keep the baby in spite of all of the pressures not to. Scarlett's strength and bravery are evident throughout the novel, as she stands up for what she believes and even finds the strength to ask for Halley's support, which is a new development in their friendship.

Michael Sherwood

Michael is Scarlett's first boyfriend. He dies in a motorcycle accident at age sixteen, when he is hit by a BMW. Michael grew up in the same neighborhood as Halley and Scarlett. He is the first boy Scarlett loves, and he is the father of her child. He is good looking and well-liked, but he hung out outside of the popular crowd, with his best friend Macon Faulkner. He was famous for his pranks and great stories, and Halley sees him



as "the great equalizer of our high school" because liking Michael was something everyone had in common.

Ruth

Ruth is the camp director of Camp Believe. She wears Birkenstocks and has short hair. She gets Halley out of bed when Scarlett calls and coordinates Halley's departure with her mother.

Julie Cooke

Halley's mother is a therapist and an expert on adolescent behavior. Although she has written two books on the topic, Halley feels she hasn't yet figured out how to deal with her daughter.

Brian Cooke

Halley's dad is a successful radio personality on T104, which often causes Halley embarrassment. He lets Halley's mother run the show within their family, but it is clear he loves Halley and always tried to make peace between Halley and her mother after they have argued.

Mr. Averby

Mr. Averby is Halley and Scarlett's boss at Milton's Market. When Scarlett's pregnancy begins to show, he tries to get her to quit, but Scarlett stands up to him.

Ginny Tabor

Ginny is a cheerleader with whom Scarlett and Halley become friends the summer before their junior year of high school. Her family is wealthy and live in the Arbors, and Ginny has a reputation for being wild. Her mother throws money at her and lets her prowl the streets of the Arbor at night and meet up with boys. She dates Michael briefly before Scarlett does, and she is the one who spreads the news of Scarlett's pregnancy throughout the school.

Noah Vaughn

Noah is Halley's first boyfriend, whom she dates for a year. The Vaughns are Halley's family's close friends, and they spend Friday nights together watching movies. Noah and Halley call each other and kiss sometimes, but she finds him boring and breaks up with him after she become friends with Ginny Tabor. He sulks around afterwards. Later



that year, he takes Halley to prom, gets drunk and tears her dress while trying to kiss her outside of prom.

Elizabeth Gunderson

Elizabeth is the head cheerleader, blond and beautiful. She dated Michael Sherwood for several months before Scarlett, and after his death, she begins to run with a darker, wilder crowd. She tries to warn Halley about Macon Faulkner while they are dating, and then she dates him after he and Halley break up.

Macon Faulkner

Macon is Michael Sherwood's best friend and Halley's boyfriend for much of her junior year in high school. He is blond and dangerous, and he always smells of jolly ranchers, smoke and aftershave. Although he is kind to Halley at first, he later spends much of his time with Halley pressuring her to sleep with him, and he crashes his car on New Year's Eve with Halley in the passenger seat.

Irma Trilby

Irma Trilby is Halley's family's neighbor and Halley's mother's best friend. She is known for her beautiful azaleas and her big mouth.

Marion Thomas

Marion is Scarlett's mother. She works at Fabulous You at the Lakeview Mall, where she makes up women for glamour photography sessions. According to Halley, she doesn't look like a mother, with her blond hair, green eyes, long red fingernails and arsenal of lingerie. She smokes constantly, drinks too much and is generally disorganized and somewhat irresponsible. Scarlett takes care of her much of the time. She had Scarlett when she was in high school, and she discourages Scarlett from having and keeping Michael's baby, although she ultimately comes around to Scarlett's way of seeing things.

Steve Michaelson

Steve becomes Marion's boyfriend over the course of the novel. He is an accountant, but he is a member of a history club and dresses up as a medieval character on the weekend, when he jousts and attends festivals with other club members. His alter-ego name is Vlad the Warrior, though Scarlett calls him Vlad the Impaler. Scarlett makes fun of him for this reason and because she doesn't trust any of the men Marion dates, but it turns out Steve is a good guy. Over the course of the novel, he begins to increasingly show his alter-ego in regular life.



Vlad the Warrior

Vlad is the medieval alter-ego of Marion's boyfriend, Steve.

Brett Hershey

Brett is the captain of the football team and Ginny Tabor's boyfriend.

Grandma Halley

Halley is named for her grandmother, who was named after Halley's Comet, which passed through her town on the day of her birth in May of 1910. She is a little eccentric, but she is wonderfully kind. Halley thinks her almost magical. She lives in a tiny Victorian house outside of Buffalo with a fat cat named Jasper. When Halley is in eleventh grade, her grandmother falls ill and becomes easily confused and addled.

Cameron Newton

Cameron transfers to Halley and Scarlett's high school in September from a school in France, and he gets even weirder looks than Scarlett does. He is short, skinny and pasty white, and he always wears black. His father is a famous chef, and his mother is a seamstress. Scarlett befriends him because he is funny, nice and a talented artist. He is Scarlett's prom date.

Macon's mother

Macon's mother lives in the penthouse of a fancy apartment building, sells real estate and has been married three times, most recently to a developer of steak houses. Macon hardly ever talks about her, and Halley never meets her.

Dr. Roberts

Dr. Roberts is Scarlett's obstetrician. She wears bright pink running shoes.

Grace Halley Thomas

Scarlett names her baby girl, Grace Halley, in honor of her best friend Halley.



Objects/Places

Lakeview

Lakeview is the neighborhood that Halley and Scarlett grow up in. It consists of several streets and cul-de-sacs, bracketed by posts and hand-carved signs that say, "Welcome to Lakeview - A Neighborhood of Friends," although someone changed all the "Friends" to "Fiends" one year. Lakeview is three miles from the airport, so planes often fly over Halley and Scarlett's houses.

Camp Believe

Nicknamed Sisterhood Camp by Halley's dad, Camp Believe is the two-week summer camp Halley's mom forces her to attend the summer before her junior year in high school. The camp is supposed to improve self-esteem and help campers find themselves, but Halley hates it and leaves halfway through after Michael dies.

Brain Freeze Chocolate Milkshakes

Halley's father stays out of the fights between Halley and her mother, but he always brings a milkshake to Halley's room afterwards as a peace offering.

Milton's Market

Milton's Market is the grocery store at the mall down the street from Lakeview, where Scarlett and Halley work as cashiers.

The Grand Canyon Road Trip

Halley and her father and mother take a two-week road trip to the Grand Canyon at the beginning of the summer. The trip serves as a landmark event in the book during the transition between "old Halley" and "new Halley." On the trip, Halley and her mother are very close, but Halley looks back on it as the last time they feel that way. A picture of Halley and her mom from the trip sits on their family mantle, and Macon steals a copy of the same photo from Scarlett's room.

Kiwis

Michael always slipped Scarlett exotic fruit while she was working, especially kiwis. They become a symbol of love in the novel.



T104

T104 is the radio station Halley's dad works for as a radio DJ in the mornings.

P.E.

P.E. is the third-period class that Halley and Macon share. This is where they begin flirting and talking, and it becomes Halley's favorite time of the day, although she would never admit it.

The Beast

The Beast is Halley's father's lawnmower.

Jolly Ranchers

Macon always slips Jolly Ranchers into Halley's back pocket or backpack when she isn't looking. She collects every one in a dish in her bedroom.

Alfredo's

Alfredo's is Halley's favorite Italian restaurant and the location of her sixteenth birthday party with her family, Scarlett and the Vaughns.

Topper Lake

Topper Lake is where Macon takes Halley on her sixteenth birthday. It is a place he discovered with Michael Sherwood, and she finds the experience exhilarating.

Halley's Comet

Halley and her grandmother are both named for the comet, which passed through Halley's grandmother's town when she was born in May of 1910. When Halley is six, her grandmother takes her to see the comet again, and even though everyone says the sky is too cloudy to see the comet, Halley and her grandmother believe that they see it.

Setting

Unspecified suburbia forms the setting for the story. Halley and Scarlett live in Lakeview, a "Neighborhood of Friends"— or fiends, as kids frequently change the sign to read— whose only distinguishing characteristic is the new airport three miles away so that a constant stream of airplanes fly over the houses.

The setting could be almost any middle class enclave. Halley and Scarlett work at Milton's Market, the grocery store at the mall down the road. They attend high school where the counselor messes up schedules; go to the lake for picnics and other recreational activities; and explore new relationships both at school and away from it; They eat at McDonald's, shop at the mall, and speak with no perceptible dialect.

While no specific date is given for the story, Halley talks about watching Halley's Comet with her grandmother the winter she was six years old. Since Halley has her sixteenth birthday during the novel, this makes 1996 the approximate time of the story.

As a result, setting is secondary to the plot and allows for the universal appeal of the story. What happens to Halley and Scarlett is not dependent on time or place; their story could be any teenage girls' story.



Social Sensitivity

The recognition of the problems involved with growing up, especially in "love" relationships, is especially well handled. Both Scarlett and Halley face difficult decisions and make poor choices but both the situations and the decisions are typical of those faced by many teens.

Most teenagers experiment with alcohol and drugs at least once and the fact that both of Halley's experiences resulted in unpleasant consequences—both physically and with her parents' reaction—illustrates a sensitivity to the social issues involved.

Getting sick, being injured in an accident, and being grounded are natural and expected consequences.

The skipping school and sneaking out to meet a boy also portray actions in which teenagers frequently engage. This breaking of rules and rebelling against authority does not go unpunished. Halley's parents catch her in the act, and despite the initially good reason for skipping school, she still gets in trouble. Her lying about visiting Scarlett so that she can see Macon and sneaking out at night to meet him has somewhat less serious repercussions, but she does not manage to completely escape punishment.

The way the issue of teenage pregnancy is handled might be an issue for some readers, especially since Marion is so pro-abortion. Also, Scarlett's decision to keep the baby and raise it as a single mother, the support she receives, and the joy at the birth of baby Grace might be problematic for those with strong feelings about the subject.

For those readers the idea that Halley even considers having sex and the fact that Scarlett's pregnancy results from protection not working properly are just as problematic. Most readers, though, will find the subject handled objectively and tastefully.

The lack of graphic description and the emphasis on both the issues and consequences makes this book one that foregoes the problems that often cause librarians selection difficulties.

Literary Qualities

Dessen has written *Someone Like You* in a very straightforward manner told from Halley's first person point of view. While some flashback—generally about past events in the lives of Scarlett and Halley and their friendship—has been used for clarity and background, the plot moves forward in a mostly linear pattern. Flashbacks focus on Halley's trip with her parents and Scarlett's activities while Halley was gone, how the two girls became friends, problems with Scarlett's mother, and Halley's relationship with her grandmother. For the most part, though, the plot begins with Scarlett's frantic phone call to Halley after Michael dies and ends with Grace's birth. Dessen's use of foreshadowing is generally fairly obvious and reserved for fairly predictable events such as Scarlett's choice not to get an abortion and the consequences of some of Halley's actions while dating Macon.

Plot and theme are closely interwoven.

The novel is a story about friendships, a friendship that weathers difficult times and becomes stronger as well as a friendship between a boy and a girl that is not a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship. It is also a story of what friendship is not, as shown by the reactions of girls in their class to Scarlett's pregnancy and Halley's relationship with Macon. Mother/daughter relationships play an important part in the structure of the plot with good times, bad times, uneasy truces, and changing patterns all impacting actions. Choices made in the course of emerging boy/girl relationships also give impetus to the plot. Dessen manages to avoid the pitfall of sounding didactic as she shows the consequences of both wise and poor choices.

Symbolism plays only a small part in this straightforward coming of age novel and that is in the name chosen for Halley's baby.

In Christian belief, grace is a gift freely given and richly undeserved. Baby Grace becomes a catalyst that strengthens an already strong friendship, partially repairs damaged mother/daughter relationships, and gives birth to new maturity, hopes, and dreams for both Scarlett and Halley. She is a truly welcome gift.



Themes

Finding/Becoming One's Self

For much of the novel, Halley Cooke is defined as Scarlett's best friend, her mother's daughter or Macon Faulkner's girlfriend. Although her mother and Scarlett both encourage her to improve her sense of self - Scarlett by encouraging her to be less of a "wuss" and Halley's mother by insisting Halley attend camp to find herself and improve her self-esteem - Halley continues to define herself by those around her. This starts to change over the summer before Halley's junior year, during which Halley begins to rebel against her mother and considers herself, "the New Me, someone I was evolving into with every hot and humid long summer day." (p. 18)

However, at the beginning of Halley's junior year, she still sees herself as "just an outline in a coloring book, with the inside not yet completed ... But the colors, the zigzags and plaids, the bits and pieces that made up me, Halley, weren't yet in place. Scarlett's vibrant reds and golds helped some, but I was still waiting." (p. 23) Later, after she first kisses Macon, she feels different and bolder, as if Macon has given "that black outline some inside color, at last." (p. 84) It isn't until she actually stands up for herself and refuses to sleep with Macon that she takes some responsibility for her own development, recognizing that sex is a "new color, that particular shade, which I wasn't ready to take on just yet." (p. 183)

Halley's inner transformation is also mirrored in other characters. Scarlett's transformation is a very obvious physical one. Marion's boyfriend Steve also goes through a transformation as he becomes more comfortable showing the "Vlad the Impaler" part of his character to Marion and Scarlett. Like Halley, he becomes more comfortable with his inner self in the course of the novel, finally embracing it in his full warrior regalia in the final chapter. When Halley is being most dishonest with her family, reckless with Macon and unkind to Scarlett, she imagines that her transformation, like Steve's, is complete.

However, once Halley stands up for herself with Macon, she realizes that she deserves better and "deserved to grow, and to change, to become all the girls I could ever be over the course of my life, each one better than the last." (p. 243) By realizing that she is more than just good, quiet Old Halley or wild New Halley, Halley recognizes that she will go through many more transformations before she becomes the person she will ultimately be. This is the lesson that she wants to impart to Grace Halley one day, "The language of solace, and comets, and the girls we all become in the end." (p. 281)

Trust

Much of *Someone Like You* is concerned with ideas of trust. It is the primary battleground between Halley and her mother. Halley feels her mother doesn't trust her



enough, and Halley's mother is devastated when Halley betrays her trust by seeing Macon behind her back. Halley, who once shared everything with her mother, finds herself with "secrets now, truths and half-truths, that kept her always at arm's length, behind a closed door, miles away." (p. 74) Ultimately, Halley sees trust and its invocation as her mother's "last weapon," used to induce guilt and control behavior. (p. 219) Halley's mother tells her at one point that she and Halley are alike because they are both bad judges of character, and this is true. Halley initially trusts Macon, who is highly untrustworthy, and Halley's mother trusts Noah, who also proves himself unworthy of trust.

During a period when Macon is constantly pressuring Halley to have sex, when all they do is argue about trust and expectations, Halley is reminded of dealing with her mother. Ultimately, Halley and her mother are able to begin to rebuild the bonds of trust. Scarlett also shows an early inability to trust Marion's boyfriends. She tells Halley she has given lots of them a fair chance, but there is only so much faith you can have in people. By the novel's end, the reader hopes that warrior Steve will, through his kindness and patience, help rebuild Scarlett's ability to trust.

The Mother-Daughter Bond

Halley struggles in her relationship with her mother throughout the novel. At the beginning of the summer, Halley and her mother are very close. After they return from their family trip to the Grand Canyon, Halley finds that a great distance has opened up between them. Halley feels like her mother "had to have her hands in whatever I did, keeping me with her or herself, somehow, with me, even when I fought hard against it." As Halley's mother struggles to remain close to Halley, Halley feels she is trying to encroach on her personality. Halley also feels like her mother speaks in a secret language full of hidden meanings and is always trying to grab any part of Halley she can reach for herself. When her mother suggests that Halley is like her, Halley rejects this idea, even though she knows it hurts her mother and even though she suspects her mother's statement may be true.

When Halley's mother gets sick and Halley watches her mother worry and take care of her, the process of seeing her mother become a daughter again begins the process of reconciliation between Halley and her mother. When Halley feels overwhelmed and finds her strength insufficient to deal with Scarlett giving birth, her mother helps her get back the strength she needs for the experience. Halley realizes that the thing she hated most about her mother, the way she seems to always want a piece of Halley, is now one of the most wonderful things about her. Halley sees that she can't separate her mother from the person she is and "no matter how strong or weak I was, she was a part of me, as crucial as my own heart. I would never be strong enough, in all my life, to do without her." (p. 275) Ultimately, her mother's strength is one of the things that Halley wants to pass along to Grace Halley. Scarlett's unconventional relationship with her own mother and her new relationship with her daughter also play into this theme.



Themes/Characters

Scarlett moved in across the street from Halley when both girls were eleven and they have been best friends ever since.

Scarlett, popular, flamboyant and mature, has always taken care of her mother who has had a drinking problem. Halley, quiet, smart and steady, has a close knit family.

Her father is a popular radio host and her mother a well-known child psychologist who uses her relationship with Halley as the basis for a series of books on parenting and mother/daughter relationships. The differences between Halley and Scarlett have only strengthened their friendship.

The summer before their junior year, the two find jobs working as checkers at Milton's, the only place in town with enough positions to hire both of them. Since Halley spends the first two weeks of summer with her parents on their yearly vacation, this time a cross-country trip to California and the Grand Canyon, Scarlett begins work without her. During Halley's absence, Scarlett runs around with Ginny, "a cheerleader with a wild streak." Scarlett also begins dating Michael, the handsome, enigmatic schoolmate who has just this year returned from living in California since they were all in middle school. Halley comes home, begins to run around with Scarlett and Ginny, breaks up with her boyfriend Noah, and decides she cannot stand her mother. Despite these changes, the two girls remain best of friends.

Halley's mother, unhappy with their deteriorating relationship, decides to send Halley to a two week self-esteem camp.

Scarlett calls Halley at camp to tell her of Michael's death and Halley begs her mother to let her return home. Once home, she tries to help the grieving Scarlett who soon discovers she is pregnant with Michael's child.

Scarlett's mother Marion pushes for an abortion, but when Scarlett decides to keep the baby, Halley's mother convinces her that the choice is Scarlett's to make. Halley again proves her support and friendship as Scarlett faces the gossip and rude treatment from her peers. Cameron, a new, rather unpopular student befriends Scarlett and the three frequently spend time together.

Halley also has many changes in her life.

She has broken up with Noah, the son of family friends whom she has known all her life and begun dating Macon, a wild underachiever whose parents let him do pretty much as he pleases. As a result, Halley attends several wild parties, drinks and smokes marijuana for the first time, and cuts school to be with Macon. Understandably, her parents are upset and her mother forbids Halley to see Macon any more. This decree adds to Halley's estrangement from her mother. The two have always been exceptionally close and Halley's struggle for independence meets with resentment and



anger. Adding to the stress is the declining mental and physical health of her beloved grandmother and the resulting problems and sadness.

Early in the novel, Halley says that she and Scarlett have led perfectly parallel lives, going through same phases at the same time. But this year, their lives begin to diverge and the dominant theme of the strength of their friendship emerges. This theme forms the unifying thread throughout the entire novel, providing a framework for the plot. Halley has always been the quiet one, the one known as "Scarlett's friend Halley," but she proves her love, her loyalty, and her strength by being there for Scarlett when Michael dies and during the pregnancy. Halley tells her friend that they can handle this and they do. When Scarlett tells her mother, when she decides not to have the abortion, and when the baby comes, Halley is beside her, offering her support and picking up the pieces.

The friendship is not one-sided, though.

Although Scarlett has given Halley a way to be part of the crowd, she needs her sensibleness and stability. During Marion's years of drinking heavily, Halley and her family took care of many of Scarlett's needs.

When Halley first begins dating Macon early in Scarlett's pregnancy, Scarlett helps assuage her doubts about whether he really likes her. In fact, Scarlett's friendship with Macon, who was Michael's best friend, leads to the relationship. When Halley wants to meet Macon at a party, Scarlett accompanies her despite not wanting to attend. When Halley needs an excuse to see Macon after her mother forbids her to see him anymore, Scarlett allows herself to be used as the excuse for leaving the house. When Halley feels that she is not worthy of having a boyfriend, Scarlett tells her that she is beautiful, smart, loyal, and funny and that any boy would be lucky to have "someone like you." Scarlett even names her baby Grace Halley Thomas.

Another major theme is that of mother/ daughter relationships. This theme of conflict and separation, common in many adolescent novels, provides the undercurrent for the actions of Halley and Scarlett. The two mothers are contrasting characters.

Scarlett's mother Marion is a single mother who has numerous problems and a lack of maturity. At one point in her life she drank heavily, leaving Scarlett to bear much of the household responsibility. Even in the first introduction to her, Scarlett acts in a motherly role by telling her where to locate the checkbook. Halley describes her friend as "the girl who kept a house, and her mother, up and running since she was five, now playing mother to a thirty-five year old child." When Scarlett tells Marion about her pregnancy, Marion can not handle it and leaves to go out on a date. When she does decide to handle it, she orders Scarlett to get an abortion. When Scarlett chooses not to, Halley's mother calms Marion, and while Marion never really accepts her daughter's decision and encourages her to put the baby up for adoption, she does allow Scarlett to make her own choices.



Halley's mother Julie (whose name is rarely mentioned) is the consummate mother figure. Until the summer of the narrative, the two have been best of friends with Halley sharing everything with her. But after the trip to the Grand Canyon, Halley, in an attitude typical to many teenage girls, finds that everything her mother does annoys her. She breaks up with Noah, her boyfriend and the son of her parents' friends with whom they spend every Friday night.

She begins dating Macon, the school badboy. With Macon, she sneaks out at night, skips school, tries alcohol and marijuana, and considers sex. When her mother forbids her to see him anymore, the rift between the two widens and Halley resents her mother even more so. As Halley tries to explain to her mother that she never gives her a chance to say what she is planning or thinking before bursting in with her opinion. "I can never trust you with anything, give you a piece of me without you grabbing it to keep for yourself." Only with the birth of Scarlett's baby is Halley able to begin to reconcile with her mother.

Young love, along with the choices involved in this type of relationship, is another theme in *Someone Like You*. Scarlett chooses to have sex with Michael, and despite using protection, gets pregnant. She also realizes that even if Michael had not died, their relationship may not have lasted.

Scarlett, in her friend/boyfriend relationship with Cameron, finds contentment, support, and safety. Halley breaks up with a boyfriend that her parents approve of in order to date the more exciting Macon.

During the time that they date, Halley chooses to sneak out at night, skip school, disobey her parents, drink, and try marijuana. She and Macon also have a car accident after a New Year's Eve party, which included the drinking and marijuana. While her injuries are not serious, Macon runs away from the situation and leaves her to face the consequences by herself. She also considers having sex with him but, because of Scarlett's situation and her unease that he cannot—or will not—say he loves her, decides not to do so. Eventually, Halley decides that dating Macon is not what she wants, that she deserves better. She breaks up with him because she wants to, not because her mother orders her to do it.

The moral decisions involved in growing up are another important theme in the novel. Both Scarlett and Halley make unwise choices, usually as a result of peer pressure, but in most incidences realize that these are poor choices. Dessen gets this point across without being preachy by showing the natural consequences of certain actions.

The themes of death and birth/rebirth also provide a framework for the novel. The story begins with Michael's death and concludes with the birth of his and Scarlett's baby girl. Halley's grandmother is dying, as is the close relationship Halley has with her mother. Grace's birth initiates a realization for Halley of the connectedness of lives and the uniqueness of self. As she goes home from the hospital, she does not want "anyone to start this journey with me."



She says, I hoped that Grace would be a little bit of the best of all of us: Scarlett's spirit, and my mother's strength, Marion's determination, and Michael's sly sense of humor. I wasn't sure what I could give, not just yet.

But I knew when I told her about the comet, years from now, I would know.

And I would lean close to her ear, saying the words no one else could hear, explaining it all. The language of solace, and comets, and the girls we all become, in the end.

This birth/rebirth theme connects with the coming of age or maturation theme. In young adult fiction, coming of age generally refers to the reconciling of the individual's inner self with the expectations and responsibilities of the outside world. Both Halley and Scarlett emerge from the events of the novel with maturity as they begin the transition into adulthood. Both girls know who they are, and while they may not yet know where they are going in their lives, they are equipped with the skills to handle whatever might happen next.

Dessen's use of opposites in characterization is evident in both Scarlett and Halley and in their mothers. Scarlett is seen as flamboyant, popular, and perhaps rather wild while Halley is sensible, quiet, and content just to be Scarlett's best friend.

Scarlett, though, has also had to be the adult in her family and has shouldered adult responsibilities, even as a child. Halley has been loved and protected in a secure family. Her problems, a mother who uses her as an example in her psychology books and a father who embarrasses her on his radio show, are small. On the other hand, they make the struggle for independence harder, both for her mother to accept and for her to accomplish. Scarlett and Halley are wellrounded, dynamic characters who change in the course of the novel. Just as she has always taken care of her mother and will take care of her daughter, Scarlett acknowledges and accepts the responsibility for her actions, realizing that she could have made better choices. Her decision to go to attend the prom is the fulfillment of a dream and a last fling before the baby comes and everything changes. She knows that with Halley's help, she can handle everything. Halley has grown into a more self-sufficient person.

She has made choices, some good and some bad, but has done it on her own terms.

She has convinced her mother that she can handle her own life, even if she does not do it perfectly. She has supported Scarlett and looks forward to being there to help raise Grace.

The two mothers are also dynamic characters. Marion is irresponsible and selfish and has been taken care of by her daughter since Scarlett was a young child. When Scarlett tells her about the pregnancy, she cannot handle it, yells, and goes out on her date. She first insists on abortion and then adoption but slowly comes to accept the idea that Scarlett will keep the baby. While her changes are subtle, the book ends with the feeling that perhaps she sees in Grace a second chance to be a good parent. Julie, Halley's mother, is both the epitome of a perfect mom and a controller who does not want to let her daughter go. She finds it difficult to accept that Halley is growing away from her and



wants to force Halley back into the closeness they once had. The growing health problems of her mother, Halley's grandmother, compound her problems, making her feel abandoned both as a mother and as a daughter. Her sense and resilience shows, though, in the fact that Halley was finally able to make her listen and that she steps back and lets Halley make her own choices. She also reexamines her role as a daughter. While neither relationship is perfect or the way it used to be, she is learning when to be part of the picture and when to step away, knowing that the bonds of love are strong, and while they may bend and stretch, they will not break if each person is allowed to grow.

Macon and Cameron also provide contrasting characters. Macon is a "rebel without a cause" type character who goes his own way and obeys no rules except his own. He is constantly in trouble at school and pressures Halley to do things she would not normally do. Despite coming from a fairly affluent background, he has little connection with his parents. He also tends to date a girl for what he can get and then drop her. While he seems to genuinely care for Halley and is upset when she drops him, he cannot—or will not—express his love to her. His self-centeredness leads to an accident in which both he and Halley could have been seriously injured. He never visits her in the hospital and disappears. While a pivotal character, Macon is virtually static with little change or growth shown.

Cameron, while also being relatively static, is kind, concerned, and caring.

Described as "one of those short, skinny kids with pasty white skin" who always wears black, he is new at school and does not have many friends. Highly talented with a good sense of humor, Cameron befriends Scarlett when most of her so-called friends are calling her names and talking about her behind her back because of the pregnancy. Eventually Halley grows to really like him. He takes Scarlett to the prom with his mother even making her a maternity prom dress and sewing a layette for the baby. When the baby decides to come, despite being terrified, he does the best he can to help. The two boys, while almost diametrically opposed and perhaps almost stock characters, provide extreme contrasting views as to what girls might expect from boyfriends and boys who are friends.

Michael, despite his death, must be included an important character. Not only did he set off the chain of events that leads the baby and Halley dating Macon, but he also allows the two girls a chance to contemplate and question how things might have been different. Scarlett admits that even if he had not died they might not have continued their relationship, baby or no baby, but his presence cannot be ignored.

His relationship with Scarlett both divided and strengthened the friendship between the two girls. It also changed their lives.

Style

Point of View

Someone Like You is told from the first-person point of view of protagonist Halley Cooke. Halley is sixteen years old, and consequently, her narrative is peppered with some of the frustrations and prejudices of a teenage girl, namely that her parents live to embarrass her and ruin her life. The author challenges the reader through her choice of Halley's point of view to sift through Halley's narrative in order to make sense of her story. Halley is an honest narrator, but especially in her interactions with her mother, Halley displays a sense of anger and victimhood which is often more reflective of her age than actual injustices wrought against her. Halley's conversational style of narration gives a great indication of the motivations and emotional reactions of the novels' main characters.

Setting

The novel is set in the community of Lakeview in an unnamed town at an unnamed time. Although Lakeview is endowed with specific traits of its own and depicted as a quirky middle-class neighborhood near the airport with funny street signs, the story could otherwise be set in any city in America at any time in the last twenty years. The only context for the community of Lakeview is the neighboring community of the Arbors, which is somewhat more moneyed and refined. Lakeview as a setting is critical to character development in the novel because it represents the world that Halley and Scarlett know and the world that they rebel against. Macon is not trusted immediately by Halley's mother because he is not "from Lakeview" (though in an interesting twist, Halley remembers that he used to live there). Although many of the most important moments in the novel occur outside of Lakeview, in Topper Lake, at a party or at the hospital, Lakeview is where Halley and Scarlett met. It is where they return to process all the significant things that happen to them in this year.

Language and Meaning

Dessen labors throughout the novel to capture the tone and emotions of sixteen-year-old girls, and much of this is accomplished through language and word choice. The dialogue between characters, especially the teenagers, rings very true, and it is employed successfully to express their fears and joys, as well as to indicate the closeness of Scarlett and Halley's friendship. Halley's imagination is expressed colorfully throughout the novel, as she imagines her mother melting into a puddle like the Wicked Witch of the West, describes Marion's boyfriend Steve or even describes herself as the black outline, waiting for color.

Structure

Someone Like You is divided into three parts and nineteen chapters. Part I is entitled "The Grand Canyon," Part 2 is entitled "Someone Like You" and Part 3 is entitled "Grace." Each of three parts represents different stages of Halley's journey of self-discovery. As Halley grows and changes as a character, these section headings acts as markers for the changes she is going through. Dessen also employs a somewhat unusual structure in the early chapters, in which she alternates sections of paragraphs that capture the present moment and sections in which Halley explains background to the story. In this way, the author allows the reader to catch up on Halley and Scarlett's back-stories even as we follow their current activities in the early chapters.



Quotes

"I wasn't used to seeing her this way. Scarlett had always been the stronger, the livelier, the braver. The girl who punched out Missy Lassiter, the meanest, most fiendish of the pink-bike girls that first summer she moved in, on a day when they surrounded us and tried to make us cry. The girl who kept a house, and her mother, up and running since she was five, now playing mother to a thirty-five-year-old child. The girl who had kept the world from swallowing me whole, or so I'd always believed." Chapter 1, p. 20

"Because life is an ugly, awful place to not have a best friend." Chapter 2, p. 23

"When I pictured myself, it was always like just an outline in a coloring book, with the inside not yet completed. All the standard features were there. But the colors, the zigzags and plaids, the bits and pieces that made up me, Halley, weren't yet in place. Scarlett's vibrant reds and golds helped some, but I was still waiting." Chapter 2, p. 23

"I just looked up at him, wondering what I could be getting myself into, but it didn't matter. I put my hand into Macon's, feeling his fingers close over mine. I let him pull me towards him, to my feet, and my eyes were wide open." Chapter 4, p. 70

"... I thought again how she always had to have her hands in whatever I did, keeping me with her or herself, somehow, with me, even when I fought hard against it. If I told her about Macon, I could hear her voice already, asking questions...I knew I had to keep him to myself, as I'd slowly begun to keep everything. We had secrets now, truths and half-truths, that kept her always at arm's length, behind a closed door, miles away." Chapter 4, p. 74

"But then he pulled me back in, kissing me hard, his hands smoothing my hair, and I closed my eyes to the light, the noise, the water so far below, and I felt it for the first time. That exhilaration, the whooshing feeling of being on the edge and holding, the world spinning madly around me. And I kissed him back hard, letting loose that girl from the early summer and the Grand Canyon. At that moment, suspended and freefalling, I could feel her leaving me." Chapter 7, p. 131

"It was like those stop-action films of flowers blooming that we watched in Biology. Every frame something is happening, something little that would be missed in real time - the sprout pushing, bit by bit from the ground, the petals slowly moving outward. To the naked eye, it's just suddenly blooming, color today where there was none before. But in real time, it's always building, working to show itself, to become." Chapter 9, p. 148

"I faced my reflection and committed this girl to memory: the girl who had risen out of that night at Topper Lake, the girl who belonged with Macon Faulkner, the girl who broke her mother's heart, never looking back. The girl I was." Chapter 9, p. 161

"...I thought of that sketched black outline, the colors inside just beginning to get filled in. The girl I'd been, the girl I was. I told myself the changes had come fast and furious



these last few months, and one more wasn't that big of a deal. But each time I did I thought of Scarlett, always Scarlett, and that new color, that particular shade, which I wasn't ready to take on just yet." Chapter 10, p. 183

"And that was it; it was so easy for her. My own memories did not even belong to me. But I knew she was wrong. I had seen that comet. I knew it as well as I knew my own face, my own hands, my own heart." Chapter 12, 196

"In September I'd told Scarlett that Macon belonged with someone like Elizabeth, and maybe I'd been right. I wasn't ready to think about the other yet: that it wasn't that I wasn't right for Macon, but that maybe he wasn't right for me. There was a difference. Even for someone who things didn't come so easy for, someone like me." Chapter 13, p. 207

"The truth was I knew, after all those flat January days, that I deserved better. I deserved *I love yous* and kiwi fruits and flowers and warriors coming to my door, besotted with love. I deserved pictures of my face in a million different expressions, and the warmth of a baby's kick under my hand. I deserved to grow, and to change, to become all the girls I could ever be over the course of my life, each one better than the last." Chapter 17, p, 243

"I watched my mother do what she did best, and realized there would never be a way to cut myself from her entirely. No matter how strong or weak I was, she was a part of me, as crucial as my own heart. I would never be strong enough, in all my life, to do without her." Chapter 18, p. 275

"I hoped that Grace would be a little bit of the best of all of us: Scarlett's spirit, and my mother's strength, Marion's determination, and Michael's sly humor. I wasn't sure what I could give, not just yet. But I knew when I told her about the comet, years from now, I would know. And I would lean close to her ear saying the words no one else could hear, explaining it all. The language of solace, and comets, and the girls we all become in the end." Chapter 19, p. 281

Adaptations

Dessen's two other books *That Summer* and *Keeping the Moon* both deal with first love and family relationships. In *That Summer*, Haven's dad remarries and her sister marries. Sumner, one of her sister's former boyfriends and the one she liked the best, reappears and Haven has a major crush on him. Since she and her sister are not getting along very well and she is not happy about her father's remarriage, she finds him to be a safe refuge. The summer ends with her discovery that "The first boy is always the hardest." In *Keeping the Moon*, Colie's mother, a popular aerobics guru, leaves Colie with her overweight, eccentric Aunt Mira for the summer while she tours Europe. While living in the small North Carolina town, Colie meets two older girls who teach her what friendship really is and discovers a new sense of self-confidence as she deals with her first boyfriend and her aunt's eccentricities.

Readers might want to read other books about teenage pregnancy. Ruth Pennebaker's *Don't Think Twice*, while set in 1967 when very few girls kept their babies, looks at the problem from several angles as seventeen year old Anne spends her time in a home for unwed mothers. *Annie's Baby: The Diary of an Anonymous Pregnant Teenager*, edited by Beatrice Sparks, Ph.D., focuses on a fourteen year old who first decides to keep her baby but after several months puts the baby up for adoption. The book also deals with abusive relationships. A third book, Sheila Cole's *What Kind of Love: The Diary of a Pregnant Teenager* Valerie tells her story.

The book ends before the baby comes and before she makes her final decision as to put the baby up for adoption or keep it. Two books that look at the difficulties of being a teenager mother are *Where the Heart Is* by Billie Letts and *Make Lemonade* by Virginia Euwer Wolff.

Younger readers might enjoy Paula Danziger and Ann Matthews Martins' two part series *P.S. Longer Letter Later* and *Snail Mail No More*, the story of best friends Elizabeth and Tara Starr who also are totally different but whose friendship survives Tara's move to Ohio.



Topics for Discussion

1. How would the story be different if it were told from Scarlett's point of view? From the point of view of Halley's mother?
2. Scarlett considers three options when she discovers she is pregnant: abortion, adoption, and keeping the baby. Discuss or debate what are the pros and cons of each of the choices.
3. Compare and contrast the two mother/ daughter relationships.
4. While Halley is going out with Macon, she makes choices regarding disobeying her parents, drinking, using marijuana, having sex, sneaking out, skipping school, and lying. What choices does she make and what consequences result?
5. Halley and Scarlett have very different personalities. Does this make their friendship stronger or weaker?
6. After reading *Someone Like You*, how would you define friendship?
7. Discuss how Macon and Cameron are different. Why do you think many girls are attracted to someone like Macon rather than someone like Cameron?
8. List and characterize the different types of friendships illustrated in the novel.
9. Predict what the reaction from Michael's mother will be when she receives Scarlett's letter telling her about the baby.
10. What is the significance of the title *Someone Like You*?



Essay Topics

Discuss the similarities and differences between Halley's mother and Scarlett's mother. What kind of mother do you think Scarlett will be?

What effect does seeing her mother worrying about her grandmother have on Halley? How does this change the way she looks at her own relationship with her mother?

The Grand Canyon trip is an important event in Halley's life, but it also becomes a recurrent symbol in the novel. Discuss this symbolism.

How does Halley and Scarlett's friendship change over the course of the novel?

Halley's mother tells Halley they are alike because they are both bad judges of character. Discuss other ways that Halley is like her mother. How are they both like Halley's grandmother?

The novel's title is repeated frequently in things that Halley and Scarlett think or say to each other. What does it mean to be someone like Halley or someone like Scarlett? Why is Halley's mother so hurt when Halley tells her she is not like her?

What does Halley discover about herself and her mother on the night that Scarlett gives birth? How does this effect Halley's sense of herself and her emerging "New Me" self?



Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. Write a letter to yourself to read when you have a teenage daughter about the type of mother (or parent) you intend to be. Give it to someone to mail to you in 15-20 years.

2. If you were in Scarlett's position, what would you decide to do about the baby?

Write a paper that explains your decision.

3. Plan an informal debate with classmates in which all three of Scarlett's choices are argued. Find factual information to support each stance.

4. Write a poem or a series of poems about friendship.

5. Interview a teenage mother. Find out how she feels about her decision to keep her baby, the problems she has encountered, and what she would do the same/differently if she had the choice.

6. Visit Planned Parenthood and talk with someone about options that are available to teenagers.

7. Interview your mother and your grandmother. Ask them about how they got along with their mothers when they were teenagers.

8. When was Halley's Comet discovered and who discovered it? How often is it visible? What other major comets periodically appear?

Further Study

November, Sharyn. "I'm Not a Teenager—I Just Read Like One." *The Horn Book Magazine* 74:6 (1998): 775-780. Discusses how one publishing house listens to the opinions of middle schoolers and uses Dessen's book as one of novels discussed.

Richmond, Gail. Review of *Someone Like You*. *School Library Journal* 44:8 (1998): 143. Short, complimentary review.

Rochman, Hazel. Review of *Someone Like You*. *Booklist* 94:19/20 (1998): 1745-1746.

Short positive review by one of the most important people in young adult literature circles.

Vasilakis, Nancy. Review of *Someone Like You*. *Horn Book Magazine* 74:4 (1998): 486.

Longer, positive review.

Related Websites

"An Interview with Sarah Dessen." In Dream/Girl Magazine: the Arts Magazine for Girls. <http://www.dgarts.com/content/saradessen.htm>. Extensive on line interview with Sarah Dessen.

Taylor, Art. "Native Daughter: 10 Questions with Novelist and Teacher Sarah Dessen." Spectator Online, <http://www.spectatoronline.com/1999/011699/notebook3.html>.



Copyright Information

Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

Editor

Kirk H. Beetz, Ph.D.

Cover Design

Amanda Mott

Cover Art is "Pierrot," 1947, by William Baziotès Oil on Canvas, 42 1/8 x 36 Donated by the Alisa Mellon Bruce Fund, ©, 1996 Reproduced with Permission from the Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

Includes bibliographical references and index

Summary: A multi-volume compilation of analytical essays on and study activities for the works of authors of popular fiction. Includes biography data, publishing history, and resources for the author of each analyzed work.

ISBN 0-933833-41-5 (Volumes 1-3, Biography Series)

ISBN 0-933833-42-3 (Volumes 1-8, Analyses Series)

ISBN 0-933833-38-5 (Entire set, 11 volumes)

1. Popular literature—Bio-bibliography. 2. Fiction—19th century—Bio-bibliography. 3. Fiction—20th century—Bio-bibliography. I. Beetz, Kirk H., 1952-

Z6514.P7B43 1996[PN56.P55]809.3—dc20 96-20771 CIP

Copyright ©, 1996, by Walton Beacham. All rights to this book are reserved. No part of this work may be used or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or in any information or storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the copyright owner, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information, write the publisher, Beacham Publishing Corp., P.O. Box 830, Osprey, FL 34229-0830

Printed in the United States of America First Printing, November 1996