

Something, Maybe Study Guide

Something, Maybe by Elizabeth Scott

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Plot Summary

"Something, Maybe," written by author, Elizabeth Scott, is a novel that tells the story of Hannah Jackson James and her journey of self-acceptance as she comes to terms with her past, her parents, and, most importantly, herself. The story begins by introducing Candy Madison, Hannah's mother, who is known for being a sex symbol and for being a past "special girl" of Jackson James, a 72-year-old man and also Hannah's father. Hannah describes herself as a 17 year old girl living in Slaterville, as small town where she tries to blend in because of who her parents are. Also at the beginning of the story, the reader meets Josh, Hannah's "soul mate," Finn, a mostly nice but annoying co-worker and classmate, and Teagan, a 19-year-old who is Hannah's best friend, as well as her voice of reason and truth.

As the story progresses, the reader becomes more familiar with the major and minor characters of the book. It is revealed that Hannah's step-father, Jose, passed away five years ago, causing her and her mother to leave Queens, New York and move to Slaterville. It is clear that Jose was an important and loving person in both Candy and Hannah's life. Hannah and Candy's relationship appears positive overall however Hannah seems easily embarrassed by Candy. Hannah begins to notice that Josh may not be her "soul mate" and that she has an effortless connection with Finn. A conflict starts for Hannah when realizes that she may have feelings for Josh and Finn and this conflict continues for her throughout the book.

When Hannah's father is more thoroughly introduced, it becomes clear that Hannah feels unloved and that she harbors feelings of resentment towards him. After insisting that she come to New York and that no cameras would be present, Hannah agrees to visit Jackson. When she arrives, she feels that he is sincere when he apologizes for his absence in her life and says that he wants to give their relationship a second chance. Hannah quickly finds out, however, that Jackson lied to her again when a camera crew arrives. Despite her attempts to escape the situation, Jackson is able to use her brief appearance on camera against her in order to boost his show's ratings. When this causes problems for Hannah at school and she realizes that Jackson is selfish and will never change, she chooses to end their relationship for good.

In the midst of her struggles, Hannah continues her relationships with Josh and Finn. She finds it harder to deny her connection with, and attraction to, Finn although her focus remains on Josh. However Hannah's opinion about him changes permanently when she realizes that he is using her to get close to Candy. After an important conversation with her mom, she realizes that her mom sincerely enjoys her job, is still grieving Jose's death and is now scared to love for fear of being left alone. Seeing that she has also been scared to love and be loved, Hannah realizes that her feelings could also lead to loneliness and she allows herself to acknowledge and act on her feelings for Finn, who is only too happy to return her feelings. The story ends with Hannah accepting who her parents are and where they are in their life journey, understanding how their life choices and perspectives have influenced her and realizing that she no

longer needs to define herself by her parents and their choices, leading Hannah to a place of true self-acceptance.



Chapters 1-3

Chapters 1-3 Summary

Chapter 1 begins with an introduction of the book's main character, although the character's name or gender is not provided in the chapter. What the reader learns about the character is that her mother is a semi-famous, but not taken too seriously, actress by the name of Candy Madison. The main character discusses that her mother is known for being the naked woman in the Super Bowl pizza commercial, but that she has had other, not as successful acting jobs. The reader also learns that Candy is an ex-girlfriend of Jackson James. The character informs the reader that she is one of 2000 students who attends Slaterville High School and that they have purposely made themselves invisible at school. While at the grocery store, the main character and Candy have a conversation about whether or not the public remembers Candy. The main character reassures Candy that she is memorable and points out to the reader that Candy is wearing bright, tight t-shirt and a short white shirt. When Candy sees that she is in the magazine *Celeb Weekly*, she becomes excited and loses her focus on getting the necessary groceries. During Candy's excitement, the reader learns that James Jackson, a 72 year old who acts much younger, is the main character's father. Before going to work, the main character gives Candy a hug, reassures her that no one will pay attention to the negative caption underneath her picture in the magazine and pulls down her shirt.

Chapter 2 reveals the main character to be Hannah, a 17-year-old girl who lives in a small town. She describes herself as blonde and implies that she would look "like a stripper" if she didn't try to blend in. Hannah talks about her job at BurgerTown USA and introduces the reader to her secret crush Josh, whom she describes as her "soul mate," as well as several other coworkers including Finn, with whom she is frequently annoyed, Polly, who is the boss' 22 year old daughter who never actually works, and Greg, Hannah's boss who mostly smokes marijuana in his office. Hannah describes Josh as politically and socially active, smart, serious, handsome and kind. Hannah gets caught up in her thoughts about how Josh is not interested in girls like her, how she doesn't like her name- Hannah Jackson James-, and how she didn't like moving to Slaterville because of the judgmental looks and remarks she received because of her mother's lifestyle. Hannah discusses making herself invisible at school because of this, as well as her desire to move back to Queens, New York. She also references someone named Jose, who used to be her step-father. Hannah and Josh have a brief conversation and he gives her a snack, causing Hannah to feel special and to wonder if he also likes her. She briefly mentions his girlfriend, Micah. Finn points out Hannah's crush on Josh however Hannah denies this. At the end of the chapter, Hannah makes plans to talk with her friend, Teagan, about Josh's thoughtful action.

The third chapter opens with a conversation between Hannah and Teagan, Hannah's best friend and 19-year-old fashion designer. Teagan tells Hannah that Josh giving Hannah the animal crackers is a meaningful action. Teagan mentions that she has



never been to Hannah's house and Hannah reminds her that no one is allowed at her house because she doesn't want anyone seeing her mother in her "natural state." Hannah and Teagan make a plan that Hannah will buy Josh his favorite coffee tomorrow as a way to thank him for the snack and to keep their conversation going. Upon entering her house, Hannah finds her mother sitting at the kitchen table wearing a silver bikini. Her mom says that she was asked to be on TV to discuss her past role on the show *Cowboy Dad* and she mentions that, at the strip club they will be going to after the show, there is a stripper who is trying to imitate her look. Although embarrassed, Hannah understands how this recent increase in "sort-of-fame" boosts her mom's confidence. Candy states that she made enough money from her website to pay their bills and Hannah offers to chip in, too, although Candy declines her offer. Hannah thinks about how her mother has not been truly happy for many years.

Chapters 1-3 Analysis

Chapters 1-3 focus on introducing and developing the major and minor characters of the story. The reader's first introduction to the main character, Hannah, does not include her name or gender but an insight is provided into the dynamic between Hannah and her mother, Candy, who is described as living a lifestyle that is often judged negatively. It becomes clear that Candy and Hannah interact more like friends than mother and daughter and there are several instances throughout all three chapters in which Hannah appears to protect her mother from the media, the judgment of others and financial hardships. Hannah introduces her friends and coworkers in Chapter 2, including Josh, Finn, Polly, Greg, and Teagan. Through her introduction and discussion of Josh, her secret crush and "soul mate" in chapter 2, as well as Hannah's discussion of the ways in which her mother's lifestyle choices affect her life at school, her relationships with others and the ways she defines herself in chapter 3, the reader begins to get the sense that Hannah struggles with feeling insecure about who she is and about the way others may perceive her. The reader is also able to begin to see how Hannah's conflict between loving her mother, feeling embarrassed by her but feeling the need to protect her affects Hannah's life. During chapter 2, Hannah references Jose, a man she says was her step-father, and she mentions him in a positive way. The text suggests that Jose may become a bigger part of the story, as it implies that he played a large role in Hannah's life and in the way she continues to think about certain aspects of her life.



Chapters 4-6

Chapters 4-6 Summary

In Chapter 4, Hannah starts by discussing her move to Slaterville in more detail. She states that her mother was "destroyed" at the time and that they drove to Slaterville on an impulse. Hannah also mentions that her step-father Jose's ashes were also in the car, although she does not mention how he died. Hannah remembers having a more "normal" life when Jose was alive and she shares her thoughts on feeling embarrassed that her mother's current job is running a website on which she talks on camera with customers about her past ventures and relationships while wearing lingerie. Hannah discusses further how her mother's lifestyle choices have affected the way others view both of them, specifically focusing on her neighbors, the Howards, who continue to stare at Hannah and her mother, despite having lived next to each other for several years. Hannah shares how she met Teagan after Teagan moved home to help her mother after having hip surgery, and how she became friends with Teagan when she failed to see why others make a big deal about Hannah's mother's occupation and past. Hannah thinks about how she will miss Teagan when she inevitably returns to New York to continue studying fashion design and wonders what it would be like to engage in "normal" high school activities.

Chapter 5 finds Hannah in the Government class that she shares with Josh. She is sitting in an uncomfortable pose in order to see what Josh is writing, which turns out to be poetry. Hannah thinks of the book she attempted to read in order to impress Josh, the book he's currently reading- *The Brothers Karamazov*. Sitting next to her in class is Finn, who passes her notes occasionally, and points out how much she is straining to see Josh's desk. When Hannah and Josh begin to talk about wanting coffee at work, Finn joins the conversation and implies that Josh is fake and only pretends to care about the world. The three of them have a discussion about the book Josh is reading and Hannah and Josh realize that Finn may be smarter than they thought. When Josh leaves for coffee, Finn points out to Hannah that he actually cares for people and takes action on this, in contrast to Josh who only pretends to care but does nothing. Finn comes close to kissing Hannah, with Hannah being somewhat wrapped up in the moment as well, but they are interrupted by Josh, who seems angry and instructs them to get back to work.

Josh asks Hannah and Finn in Chapter 6 why they did not notice the calls coming in that need to be answered. Hannah believes that Josh is mad at her until he slides over to her work space and gives her mint candies. Although Hannah hates mints, she is thankful and is sure that Josh getting her a second gift means something. She also knows that Josh walking her out to her car after work, giving her a third gift-CD with classic songs on it- and touching her face while he tells her that he wanted to get her all of the gifts, means something, too. When Josh gets into his girlfriend's car to leave, Finn points out that, although it looks like Josh was flirting with her, she may be reading into his gifts too much. When Hannah points out that Finn isn't getting her any gifts, his tone



changes and he asks her if she wants him to. Hannah remembers their near-kiss and the way it made her feel. As Finn gets in his car, she notices that he's not unattractive and feels guilty for thinking so given her feelings for Josh. She worries that she is like her father and will only ever care about herself and sex. She realizes she needs to talk to Teagan.

Chapters 4-6 Analysis

Chapter 4 reveals that Hannah's step-father, Jose, has passed away, although the reader is not sure why or how at this point. Through sharing her thoughts about what her life was like when he was alive, as well as about how her life has changed since his death, it becomes clear that Hannah is, perhaps more than anything, longing for a stable, normal life. The beginning of Chapter 5 further defines Hannah's feelings for Josh and her attempts to impress him. The text in chapter 5 also begins to suggest that Finn may have stronger feelings for Hannah than just friendship, although she does not appear to return these feelings. However, despite her feelings for Josh, when Finn comes close to kissing her at the end of chapter 5, Hannah does not try to stop him or seem to mind. Chapter 6 finds Hannah in somewhat of a bind, as both Josh and Finn seem to be expressing interest in her. Hannah begins to reference her father more in chapter 6 and, at the end of the chapter, she begins to worry that her positive reaction to both Josh and Finn means that she is like her father. Up to this point, Hannah has said that she dislikes her father and that he is the last person she wants to be like.



Chapters 7-9

Chapters 7-9 Summary

Hannah and Teagan are talking about Hannah's interactions at work today with Josh and Finn, as Chapter 7 opens. Although Teagan continues to point out that Josh obviously likes Hannah, and that Josh is Hannah's long-time crush, Hannah continues to worry about whether or not her positive reaction to her almost-kiss with Finn means anything. She remembers that she thought about doing more than just kissing Finn-but not much more. When Teagan points out that Hannah appears more concerned about what happened with Finn than with the fact that Josh seems to like her, Hannah responds that she is only worried about being like her father. Unconvinced, Teagan instructs Hannah to actually buy Josh coffee tomorrow and ask him out. Hannah asks Teagan when she will talk to her parents about moving back to New York and Teagan hesitantly says she will talk to them soon. When Hannah gets home, she finds her mom on the phone. Her mom then hands the phone to her and says that her father is on the phone. This shocks Hannah, as they have not spoken since she was 12.

In Chapter 8, Hannah quickly realizes that it's not her father, Jackson, on the phone. It's his secretary, Fran. Hannah feels immediately angry, as Jackson has not called in 5 years and he's not calling now, either. Hannah hears the sounds of the video camera in the background and knows that this conversation is being taped for Jackson's TV show. She also knows that Jackson is listening. Fran implies that Hannah is aware of what's going on in Jackson's life and Hannah, with her anger quickly growing, corrects her. Fran asks if Hannah would like to come to New York and visit Jackson on Friday. Hannah accuses Fran and Jackson of using her visit is to boost the ratings on the show. She hears the cameras turn off and Jackson begins to speak, stating that he is excited to see her and that she can most easily find him by looking for all of the beautiful women. He hangs up without Hannah confirming that she will go and she tells her mother that she doesn't want to go. Candy encourages Hannah to think about it however Hannah remembers how, in 7th grade, she found out that Jackson tried to deny her as being his daughter and how she punched someone at school for saying so.

Chapter 9 focuses on Hannah discussing her relationship with Jackson and the ways in which it has changed over the years. She says that she used to like and love him, call him Dad. She remembers how fun it was to visit his castle in upstate New York, be friends with the girls that live there and spend time with their pets. Hannah thinks that, while Jackson is portrayed positively in the media, she knows him differently- that he left his dying wife and frequently and thoughtlessly replaces his "special girls," of whom Hannah's mom was one. The reader learns that Candy lived with Jackson from the ages of 19-21 but was replaced and kicked out while 2 months pregnant. Hannah remembers that, after paternity was proven, Jackson spent time with her initially but that, as she got older, he took less interest, that she was more of a pet and only important when needed. Hannah shares that she learned what a real dad is from Jose, who taught her many things about what it is to love and be loved. She questions whether or not she will



be able to feel or give that love anymore, noticing that she feels like an incomplete person. She wonders if wanting real love is too much to ask.

Chapters 7-9 Analysis

Chapters 7-9 begin to further develop the intricacies of Hannah's emotional and mental state, her family and the connection between the two. In chapter 7, Hannah's worries about becoming like her father get stronger as she realizes that she may have feelings for both Finn and Josh. She seems highly uncomfortable with this thought and, as the story progresses, it becomes more evident that this thought appears to be motivating factor in Hannah's mind at all times. The events in chapter 8 serve to further the gap between Hannah and Jackson, as she feels he is using her to improve his TV show ratings when he asks her to come visit him in New York after not speaking to her for five years. Chapter 9 provides a deeper analysis of Jackson and the events that have contributed to Hannah's growing hostility towards him. Through Hannah sharing her childhood memories and current thoughts, it becomes clear that Jackson's selfish actions have left Hannah feeling unimportant and unloved, causing her to use sarcasm, humor, isolation and anger as defense mechanisms in her interactions with others. Furthermore, Hannah's inner thoughts suggest that, although her step-father, Jose, taught her about real love, she is scared she is unable to love or feel loved again, thanks to a combination of her father's genetics and her childhood experiences.



Chapters 10-12

Chapters 10-12 Summary

When Hannah arrives at school, in Chapter 10, she notices that something is different because everyone is looking at her. After proceeding to gym class, where she accidentally offends an acquaintance about wearing a chastity ring, Hannah finds out from her classmate, Brent, that Jackson advertised her trip to visit him in New York on the most recent promo for his show. Feeling provoked by Brent's jokes, she twists his thumbs backwards, causing him and his friends to shout vulgarities at her. As Brent walked away down the hall, Hannah notices that Finn somehow knocked Brent hard into a locker. At that moment, Josh begins talking to Hannah about the incident and Hannah is shocked and excited, as he has never talked to her at school before. Josh makes a joke about Finn and asks if Brent did anything to hurt her. When Finn joins the conversation, he congratulates Hannah for her actions against Brent and points out that Josh watched the situation and helped. Hannah takes Josh's side in the moment but, after hearing the story, Teagan points out that Finn purposely hurt Brent and that Hannah should be flattered. Although Hannah realizes that Teagan may be right, she continues to focus on Josh talking to her at school and having a crush on him.

Chapter 11 finds Hannah at work and interacting with both Josh and Finn. She compares the two, noticing that Finn is focused on eating a large amount of cheese puffs while Josh is eating a granola bar and focusing on work. Despite their differences, Finn and Hannah passed notes and played games throughout their shift. Finn apologizes for Brent's actions at school and explains that he and Brent are no longer good friends. The text suggests that Finn was about to ask Hannah out when they were interrupted by Josh. Before leaving, Josh talks to Hannah about Jackson and says he wishes his own father would care about spending time with him. Josh doesn't seem to realize that Hannah feels uncomfortable, however Finn does and encourages Josh to leave. After work, Teagan discusses feeling disappointed when she realizes that she may never get back to New York, although Hannah encourages her to think positively. Hannah realizes that she did not like Josh talking about Jackson and, after telling Teagan the story, Teagan suggests that Josh does not know Hannah very well and that Finn seems to be protecting her a lot. Teagan implies that Hannah is scared of Finn liking her and, although she denies this to Teagan, she realizes that she may be right.

In Chapter 12, Hannah walks in from work to find her mother fully dressed and eating macaroni and cheese, two signs that clearly indicate something is wrong. Her mother informs her that Jackson sent something in the mail: train tickets for Hannah to come for one day only, confirming for Hannah that his only interest in her visit is for his show. Then Hannah's mom informs her that he also sent a letter for her along with the tickets, stating that he hopes she and Jose are doing well and congratulating them for being together all of this time. Hannah is angry with her father for his insensitivity, although her mom understands that Jackson is older and has always been forgetful. However, Hannah's mom can't help but be upset when she thinks about what their lives could



have been like had Jose not passed away. Hannah knows that her mother means they could have been truly happy.

Chapters 10-12 Analysis

Chapters 10-12 focus mostly on providing character analyses, with some analysis being more subtle, and developing the relationships between Hannah and Josh and Hannah and Finn. The more subtle character analysis in chapters 10 and 11 begins to suggest to the reader that Josh may not be as wonderful as he first seemed, as makes several insensitive remarks to Hannah in both chapters and does not appear willing to speak up for Hannah. The story in chapters 10 and 11 shows Finn protecting Hannah from the words and actions of others, including Josh. The text suggests that Finn has a better understanding of and connection with Hannah and, even though her friend Teagan continues to suggest as much and some part of Hannah seems to recognize this as well, Hannah continues to believe that Josh is the right person for her and she puts her focus into becoming the type of girl that she thinks he will like. While chapter 12 is relatively short, it provides important information about Jackson's personality and the fragility of Candy's emotional state. Hannah finds herself consoling her mother after Jackson thoughtlessly mentions Jose, an act that causes Candy and, consequently, Hannah to remember the true happiness that is no longer found in their lives.



Chapters 13-15

Chapters 13-15 Summary

Chapter 13 begins with Hannah helping her mother to bed, as her mother is still upset about the comment that Jackson made in his card about her late husband, Jose. After leaving her mother to rest, Hannah begins crying and spends time with his things - sweaters, photographs, etc. Hannah remembers the conversation she and Jose used to have about how Jose met her mother while she was stranded on the side of the road with a broken-down car. She also remembers how they decided to get married that same day, knowing they were meant for one another. Hannah shares that Jose became sick when she was 12. After experiencing severe headaches for an extended period of time, Jose finally went to the doctor and found out that he had a tumor. Three months later he passed away and, soon after, Hannah and her mom left Queens to find a new home. Hannah says that her mother decided on Slaterville because she saw a sign near the Slaterville interstate exit: a woman being helped by a tow truck driver. Hannah wishes that her mother would have seen that Jose was sick and needed to go the doctor sooner but she decides to go to bed, as she knows that nothing can change the way things are.

As Chapter 14 opens, Hannah finds her mother back to her normal routines the day after Jose was referenced in a letter from Jackson. Although she tries to talk with her about her feelings, her mom minimizes the incident. Once at school, Hannah realizes that her classmate, Michelle, still seems to be upset by Hannah's comments regarding her chastity ring. Hannah apologizes to Michelle and Michelle says she wants to ask Hannah a question. Hannah hopes the question is not about sex, although she admits that she is a virgin and has never been kissed, because she worries that her parents' lifestyles will cause others to doubt her honesty. Instead, Michelle asks Hannah why she never wears her hair down. When Hannah says that it looks bad, Michelle insists that she try it and takes Hannah to the bathroom. On the way there, Hannah is somewhat jealous of Michelle as she realizes that Michelle's problems are insignificant compared to her own. In the bathroom, Michelle takes Hannah's hair out of the ponytail and is disappointed when she sees that Hannah's hair is not curly like her mom's. Despite this, they have positive conversation and Hannah wonders if they will become friends. When talking with Teagan after school, Teagan points out that Hannah may not be as alone as she thinks.

Before going to work, in Chapter 15, Hannah is unable to buy Josh a coffee for the second time and goes to work early instead. While waiting for her shift in the break room, she sees Finn lying on the couch reading *The Brothers Karamazov*. Hannah learns that Finn is in the accelerated English class and she is shocked. As their conversation continues, Finn and Hannah engage in some seemingly flirtatious physical behaviors (Finn puts his feet in Hannah's lap and gives her a difficult time about moving them) and sarcastic exchanges. At one point, Hannah again experiences a weird sensation when she notices Finn and their connection. She leaves the break room but



re-enters work for her shift. After Finn begins an awkward conversation about love with Josh and Hannah, Hannah learns that Josh does not believe love means being with one person and that, as a result, his girlfriend Micah ended their relationship. Excited about this, Hannah attempts to console Josh. But she is put off when she learns that Josh is a musician and she is somewhat offended when she tries to help Josh get Micah a birthday gift and he calls her suggestion, naming a star after her, "cheesy," as Jose did this for her mom. Finn tells Josh that Hannah was serious but Hannah denies this.

Chapters 13-15 Analysis

Chapter 13 is relatively short but it answers questions about Hannah and her mother's relationship with Jose and the details surrounding his death. Hannah discloses that her mother and Jose decided to get married the day they met and that they had a "normal" family until his death when she was 12. Hannah's discussion of her emotional state in chapter 13 reveals that she has some resentment towards her mother for not pushing Jose to go to the doctor sooner however she appears to mostly disregard her feelings, as she is resolved to the fact that nothing can change how things are. Avoiding, denying, and minimizing feelings is something that Hannah and her mother appear to have in common and they each seem to work hard to maintain a tough exterior. In chapter 14, Hannah begins what could be a new friendship with a classmate and realizes, through Teagan's insightful observation, that Hannah may not be as alone as she feels. Although Teagan's character has not been developed that much yet, she plays an important role in the story because she seems to be the voice of truth and reason in Hannah's life. Chapter 15 develops Hannah's relationships with both Finn and Josh. Hannah's continued interactions with Josh and Finn seem to further confirm that her connection with Finn may be stronger than her connection with Josh and although Hannah tries to deny this to herself, she is finding it harder and harder to do so.



Chapters 16-18

Chapters 16-18 Summary

Hannah is glad to be busy at work, in the beginning of Chapter 16. While on break, Finn tells her that their boss, Greg, wants to talk to her. This is worrisome, as Greg is not usually seen or heard around the office. Greg informs Hannah that Jackson called her. Wondering if something is wrong for Jackson to be calling her at work, she calls him back. Her call is answered by Fran and she realizes that Jackson didn't call her, Fran did. Immediately angry with Jackson and for believing that he actually called her, Hannah demands to know what Jackson wants. She is surprised to hear Jackson, saying that he's excited to see her. When she realizes that their conversation is being taped for his show once again, she tells him she's not coming to visit him. Jackson says that he really wants to see Hannah and that he misses her. This causes Hannah to become even angrier and she tells him that she doesn't believe him because she hasn't seen or heard from him in five years. She says she will not visit him and he hangs up. Fran tells Hannah that she should be proud of Jackson but then reveals that his show's ratings are down. Angry, Hannah hangs up. Josh hugs Hannah after the conversation is over, but Hannah finds it not as comforting as she'd hoped. Before leaving work, Josh tells Hannah that he thinks she is special. After making fun of Josh, Finn tells Hannah that he is proud of her for saying what she said to Jackson, which Hannah likes.

In Chapter 17, Hannah fills Teagan in about what happened in her conversation with Jackson at work. She tells her that she feels stupid for thinking that Jackson actually wanted to talk to her. Teagan asks if anything happened with Josh. Hannah tells her about Josh's comment regarding getting someone a star, as well as hugging her after hanging up on Jackson. Teagan questions Hannah about why she doesn't seem more excited. She then tells Hannah that she doesn't understand why Hannah doesn't ask Josh out, as she has liked him for a long time and he is showing clear interest in her. At first Hannah says that she's not Josh's type but she then says that she is worried what would happen if she and Josh are alone, given the fact that she is Jackson James' daughter. Teagan points out how this worry seems to be controlling Hannah and she encourages her to ask Josh out. Hannah agrees to do so. When she walks in her house, the phone is ringing and, when she answers it, she hears Jackson's voice.

In the beginning of Chapter 18, Hannah hears Jackson's voice on the phone and, although this is the first time he's ever called her, she is cautious and short with him. He apologizes for their previous conversation and, while Hannah is listening for the sounds of the camera crew or others, she doesn't hear anyone. Jackson confirms that he is alone and Hannah begins to realize how serious he must be about talking with her. She says that she is not coming to New York because she doesn't want to be on camera. Hannah tells Jackson how upset she is with him for letting the camera crew portray her the way they did the last time she was filmed for the show. Jackson says he can't handle if Hannah's upset with him and he says that he wants to see her, that she is his only child and he misses the good times they used to have spending time together.



Hannah tries not to become emotional when she tells him she only had a good time because she thought he actually cared. When Jackson shows his own emotions, asks Hannah to come visit and promises there will be no cameras, she realizes that he is being sincere and she agrees to go, once again feeling the joy of a little girl.

Chapters 16-18 Analysis

Chapters 16-18 begin to further reveal and develop Hannah's somewhat hidden emotional state. While she has been working hard to conceal her true feelings from anyone, Jackson's continued phone calls and insistence that she visit him force Hannah's childhood feelings and hurts to resurface. In chapter 16, Hannah experiences the familiar pain of rejection after realizing that her father did not call her and that he wants her to visit to boost his TV show ratings. In addition, she finds herself feeling foolish for believing that Jackson actually wanted to talk to her and see her, furthering the gap between her and her father. Hannah's feelings begin to soften, however, during chapter 18 when Jackson calls her again, this time when he's alone. When Jackson begins to show his true emotions towards her, and she realizes that she made him do something he's never had to do before: ask for what he wants, she starts to believe that his feelings for her could be sincere. Hannah allows herself to feel the joy and excitement she felt as a little girl when she decides to visit him and it seems as though Hannah and her father are making a breakthrough. Also during this section the book, particularly in chapter 16, the text continues to suggest that Josh is somewhat inconsiderate and self-absorbed while Finn is sensitive and kind. Hannah continues to experience inner conflict about whether or not Josh is the person she first thought and the person she would like to date.



Chapters 19-21

Chapters 19-21 Summary

Hannah tells her mom that she decided to go to New York to visit Jackson and is shocked by her mom's lack of response, as Chapter 19 opens Hannah asks her mom why she cared so much when the tickets came but not now and her mom says that she wasn't upset about the tickets and that Hannah is old enough to make her own choices. Hannah says that they can talk about Jose but her mom cuts her off and returns to work. Then Hannah gets a phone call from Teagan, who is crying. Teagan's parents told her she can go back to New York now because her mom is recovered. Hannah asks why this is not good news and Teagan reveals that she flunked out of school. When Hannah tries to encourage her to apply to other schools, Teagan says she can't handle flunking again, says she has to get off the phone and hangs up. When her phone rings again, Hannah answers and expects it to be Teagan it's Finn. Hannah is surprised but experiences butterflies in her stomach. Finn stumbles while speaking to Hannah and, while the text implies that he was calling for a different reason, he asks for a homework assignment, tells her to get the belts in her truck checked and hangs up.

In Chapter 20, Hannah's mom drives her to the train station and, when they arrive, Hannah asks her mother if she is alright. Her mom bursts into tears and says that she is upset about Jose. Hannah feels angry with her mom for always hiding her feelings and making her feel bad for wanting to talk about him. Her mom discusses her place in the grieving process and how difficult her life is without him and Hannah apologizes. When Hannah arrives in New York, she does not see Jackson anywhere and begins to feel angry for allowing herself to be excited, only to be let down by him again. Hannah then notices a man holding a sign with her name on it and, when she approaches him, she learns that Jackson waited outside the train station to avoid causing scene. When Hannah gets Jackson's car, she realizes that there are no cameras, as promised, and that he looks older. Their conversation is tense at times but then Jackson says that Hannah still has a room at the castle, which will never change. This brings forth emotions in Hannah. Hannah then reveals that she has not spoken with Jackson since Jose's death because he would not let her move in with him, something her mother doesn't know.

Chapter 21 begins with Hannah remembering the last time she saw Jackson. It was a few months after Jose passed away and, wanting to escape the sadness of Jose's death, she asked Jackson to live with him. Hannah remembers that Fran told her no. She connects this to the incident of her on his show where she is screaming at Jackson and states that her appearance on the show is what made transitioning to a new school so difficult. Hannah also remembers how hurtful it was to see Jackson on the same episode appearing not to care about her feelings. In response to her question, Jackson says that he said no for her mother's sake. Hurt and angry by this, Jackson continues to explain that he didn't want Hannah's mother to be alone. He says that he was hurt by Hannah's reaction to being told that she couldn't live with him and that he didn't know



how to talk to her afterwards. Hannah questions him about his reaction on his show about the situation and he says that the producers made it appear that way but it wasn't true. Hannah sees Jackson's true emotions and believes him when he says that their visit will be like old times. She calls him "Dad" for the first time in years.

Chapters 19-21 Analysis

Chapter 19 provides further information about Teagan, as she reveals that she failed out of fashion design school in New York and is afraid to go back to school because she doesn't want to fail again. This is the first sign of insecurity seen in Teagan as, until now, she has appeared strong and confident. Also in chapter 19, Finn calls Hannah, causing Hannah to experience butterflies in her stomach, which is a surprise for her. Although he talks about homework and her car, the text clearly implies that Finn has feelings for Hannah and was possibly calling to act on those feelings. Chapters 20 and 21 focus on the relationship between Hannah and Jackson. It is clear that Hannah's feelings of excitement and joy are fragile at this point. She assumes that Jackson is letting her down or is about to let her down, as he has throughout her life, any time something doesn't go exactly as she thinks it will. Despite her skepticism, however, Hannah appears committed to trying to get her relationship with Jackson back on track and trying to stay as optimistic as possible. She is being more forthcoming about her feelings with her parents throughout chapters 19-21 as well, which is proving to be beneficial. Chapters 20 and 21 also reveal Jackson to have a deeper character than previously thought, as he discusses his perspective on what happened with Hannah and how much he's been hurt by their lack of a relationship. Chapter 21 ends with the text suggesting that things are going to get better for Hannah and Jackson.



Chapters 22-24

Chapters 22-24 Summary

In Chapter 22, Hannah and Jackson arrive at a crowded restaurant and are seated right away, although there is some confusion about who Jackson is at first. A new waitress is sent over to their table and Jackson signs an autograph while inviting her out to dinner with him and others tonight. As Jackson talks about how well-known he once was, Hannah feels badly for him and thinks maybe she's been too hard on him. She gives him a hug and feels good about her decision to give him another chance. When their food arrives, the chef talks to Jackson excitedly about a girl in a previous magazine and asks if he should repeat what he said when the cameras arrive. Jackson informs him that no cameras will be coming today and, when the restaurant manager begins to say that he received other information, Jackson interrupts him and the manager leaves. Turning his attention back to Hannah, he discusses how happy he is to have her here. He asks her to spend the night in New York, saying that he will have everyone else go out tonight without him. Before Hannah can answer, five of Jackson's girls, and a camera crew, enter the restaurant.

Jackson addresses the girls entering the restaurant, acting surprised to see them in Chapter 23. Hannah asks to speak with Jackson but he appears concerned only with making a good impression in front of the camera. Hannah begins to feel angry and trapped, realizing that Jackson lied to her and that she fell for it. As she goes to the bathroom, all of the girls follow her. In the bathroom, Brandi confirms that Jackson planned this and, instead of going back to the table, Hannah attempts to escape through the kitchen. She bumps into the waitress that seated them, Thalia, who shows Hannah how to leave the restaurant through the back exit. However, when she opens the door to leave, Jackson is standing there and it's clear that Thalia informed Jackson about Hannah leaving to get on the show. When Hannah continues to walk away, the girls and camera crew follow her but she refuses to have a reaction on camera. Sandi asks her not to leave, telling her that Jackson has many activities planned. Pointing out that she is only here for one day and that Jackson's plans seem last minute for ratings, Hannah proceeds to walk away. Brandi finds her and gives her money and directions to the train station. Once on the train, Hannah allows herself to cry.

In Chapter 24, Hannah returns home from her visit in New York with Jackson. On the way home, she tells her mom everything that happened and feels happy and relieved to be with someone who truly loves her. While Hannah's mom is comforting, it becomes clear to Hannah that she is not being completely honest with her thoughts. Hannah's mom reveals that she was scared this would happen, that Jackson would lie to her, and Hannah agrees that she thought it could happen, too, but that they were both hoping it wouldn't. Hannah and her mom are able to comfort each other by sharing how Jackson was able to make them both feel that they were the most special person to him. While Hannah seems to agree with her mother's belief that Jackson truly cares about Hannah but doesn't know how to show it, Hannah realizes that he will always care about himself



more and she wants nothing more to do with him. Sad, Hannah spends the weekend in bed, wishing she had something to distract her from feeling so stupid that she believed Jackson when he said he wanted to see her.

Chapters 22-24 Analysis

The beginning of chapter 22 focuses on continuing to develop the relationship between Hannah and Jackson. With each passing moment, Hannah is more convinced than ever that her father is sincere about his feelings for her. She allows herself to begin putting her guard down when she hugs him, considers staying the night in New York to spend more time with him and allows herself to believe that she may have the relationship with Jackson she's been longing for after all. Hannah's hopes are quickly dashed, however, when Jackson's "special girls" and camera crew enter the restaurant. In Chapter 23, it becomes increasingly clear to Hannah that Jackson lied to her about everything and, in an instant, the familiar feelings of her childhood return: anger and embarrassment, for being lied to by Jackson and for allowing herself to believe him, and rejection. Chapter 24 finds Hannah returning home. Hannah and her mother process what happened and, in doing so, they realize that they have a lot in common because they have both been tricked by his lies. Hannah's anger with Jackson seems to become sadness and fatigue as she begins to understand that, no matter what she does, what happens or how much Jackson may actually care about her, he will always care about himself more and their relationship will likely always be defined by this.



Chapters 25-27

Chapters 25-27 Summary

Hannah finally leaves her bedroom on Sunday and shares a quick meal with her mom, at the beginning of Chapter 25. She is still thinking about Jackson, how she is angry with him and how, even though she doesn't like it, she still wishes he would care about her- i.e. call her, ask if she got home ok, etc. Hannah tells herself that the part of her life including Jackson is over now but, later that night she sees the latest promo for Jackson's show. He has, yet again, portrayed himself as a caring and hurt father who was rejected by his mean and unloving daughter. Although Hannah tells her mom that she prepared herself for this, her mom says that Teagan is waiting in the kitchen with more bad news. Teagan informs Hannah that, while she was at work tonight, several of her classmates came into the store and were watching the promo and saying bad things about Hannah. Hannah learns that Brent was a leader in the group, as was a dark-haired girl. Hannah wonders how everyone knew about her trip to New York and briefly suspects Finn of telling everyone, but realizes quickly that he is too kind. Despite this situation, Hannah decides to go to school the next day and have a real conversation with Josh.

Chapter 26 finds Hannah at school, experiencing the same looks and laughter of judgment she received when she first moved to Slaterville. Several students have asked her about the promotional video for her father's show and/or made rude comments to her about her father, however Hannah attempts to ignore everyone and make it through the day. When she bumps into her classmate, Michelle, in the hallway she is surprised when Michelle says that she saw the video and thinks her father is inconsiderate and selfish. Having someone say something nice to her at school makes Hannah feel somewhat better. In class, Finn gives her concerned looks and passes her notes to see if she is ok. He says that he heard some girl told Brent about the video but he doesn't know who she is. Finn is able to get out of class with Hannah and, as they walk out, one of his friends makes a joke about the video, causing Finn to hit him in the knee. Once out of class, Finn buys Hannah some food from the vending machine and they have a brief conversation. Finn's kindness makes Hannah want to hug him and, as he leaves, she notices that he was looking at her mouth and that she noticed him looking.

In Chapter 27, Hannah has finally reached the end of the school day and she is in a hurry to go home and relax before going to work. While leaving school someone calls her name and, when she turns around, she sees that it's Josh. He says he's calling in sick to work and, although he continues talking, Hannah misses what he says because she is caught up in how gorgeous he is. When he repeats himself, she realizes that Josh has asked her to also skip work and hang out with him. Beyond excited, Hannah accepts his offer but becomes nervous when Josh insists on coming over to her house. Hannah rushes home and instructs her mom to get dressed for company. As she is getting dressed, Hannah can't help but think what it would be like to have Josh in her room. She also wants to improve her look so she wears clothing that doesn't hide her



curves and takes her hair out of the ponytail. When Josh arrives, Hannah's mom tells her to go upstairs and then walk down when he comes in so he can see her. Hannah follows her mom's instructions and feels wonderful when she sees Josh's smile- until she notices that Josh is smiling at her mom.

Chapters 25-27 Analysis

In chapter 25, Hannah continues to feel angry and embarrassed that her father lied to her and that she allowed herself to believe that her father actually cared about her. She has tried to emotionally close this part of her life but Hannah still wishes that her father would care about her. Seeing the promotional video for his show in which he again shows himself as a loving father being shut out by his daughter, Hannah is more convinced than ever that Jackson cares only about himself. Angry but not surprised about the video, Hannah finds herself in Chapter 26 re-experiencing the emotions and events that took place when she moved to Slaterville- judgmental looks and comments from others and the need to isolate herself for protection. Despite the problems she experiences at school, Hannah begins to realize more and more that she can rely on Finn to be kind, to try to protect her from others and to have her best interests at heart. Although she is finding it harder to stop thinking about Finn, she is overjoyed when Josh asks her out in Chapter 27. Her excitement causes her to rethink her hair and wardrobe and to realize that, for the first time, she doesn't want to blend in and hide her looks. While she was nervous for Josh to see her, she instantly felt more comfortable when she saw Josh's smile. However, almost as instantly, she realized that Josh wasn't smiling at her, he was smiling at her mom. The text at the end of Chapter 27 suggests that Hannah's view about Josh is about to change dramatically.



Chapters 28-30

Chapters 28-30 Summary

in Chapter 28, as Josh continues to stare at her mom, Hannah feels as though she's in a bad dream. She realizes that all of the gifts Josh brought for her are her mom's favorites. Josh tells Hannah's mom how much he and his older brother enjoyed her TV show and thought she was the most beautiful woman. Josh tells Hannah how much he appreciates getting to meet her. Then, without warning, he kisses her. Hannah realizes quickly that the kiss is awful because of how aggressively Josh kisses her. When they stop kissing, Josh asks if they can watch Hannah's mom web show. He makes it obvious that he's watched her show before and that he is interested in her. Josh also says that he told Peyton, his new girlfriend, about Hannah going to New York when explaining how much he likes Hannah and her mom. Hannah knows that Peyton is the girl responsible for everyone seeing Jackson's promo video. Now seeing Josh for who he really is, and feeling dumb for believing that he liked her, she directs him towards the kitchen to talk to her mom and she leaves. When Hannah arrives to work, Finn asks if she's ok. Hannah tells him that hanging out with Josh didn't work out because he likes her mom.

Chapter 29 begins as follows. While at work, Hannah notices that Josh never comes to work and she wonders if he's even noticed that she's not at her house anymore. When Hannah calls her mom, her mom says that Josh won't leave and that he seems like a jerk. Hannah tells her mom that she knows he likes her and that she doesn't blame her, but she hangs up quickly. Finn notices that Hannah is upset and they are able to connect by agreeing how arrogant Josh is. Finn asks Hannah to take a break with him and, afterwards, Finn notices that Hannah is still looking at Josh's desk. He tells her that Josh is an idiot and, coming closer to her, he tells her that she is beautiful. Finn kisses Hannah and she immediately realizes how much she likes and wants his kiss. They continue to kiss passionately, losing track of their actions and of time, and, while kissing on the floor, a co-worker enters the room to tell them something. Hannah realizes that they may have done a little more than kiss and, for the rest of the shift, she and Finn don't talk, both embarrassed and unsure what to say. After work, she leaves in a hurry.

In Chapter 30, Hannah comes home from work to find a note from her mother, saying that she decided to work from her backup site to get rid of Josh. Hannah sees that Josh has left a message on their answering machine, mostly directed towards her mother but mentioning her at the end, like an afterthought. Hannah feels embarrassed when she remembers thinking that Josh was her soul mate and she draws a connection between Josh and Jackson- they are only interested in getting what they want. Trying to sleep, Hannah can't stop thinking about Finn and their kiss. She hears rocks hitting her window and assumes it's Josh, whom she does not want to see. After getting to the window, she realizes it's Finn and she eventually lets him in, as the neighbors are watching. Hannah thinks that Finn came over to say that their kiss was a mistake but she soon realizes that he doesn't see it that way. She learns that he's wanted to kiss her since first



meeting her and, after saying that Josh isn't who she thought he would be, Hannah tells Finn that she liked kissing him. Shocked at first, Finn eventually believes Hannah and they begin kissing again. As they are kissing in Hannah's kitchen, Hannah's mom walks in.

Chapters 28-30 Analysis

Chapters 28-30 provide a climax to the story of Hannah's relationship with Josh and with Finn, as well as Hannah's view about herself. In Chapter 28, Hannah truly realizes that Josh is not the sensitive, kind and caring person she thought he was and she realizes that they could not be soul mates. She makes the first connection between Josh and Jackson in this chapter as well, observing that Josh and Jackson both made her feel important and she allowed herself to believe them. In chapter 29, Hannah's relationship with Finn becomes more than a friendship, as she can no longer deny her attraction to him and the effortless connection they have. Both Hannah and Finn, however, feel awkward after their kiss and it's not until chapter 30 that Finn reveals to Hannah his honest feelings for her and Hannah truly embraces and reveals her feelings for Finn. Also in Chapter 30, Hannah makes another important connection between Josh and Jackson- they are both only interested in what they want. In chapter 30, Hannah realizes and accepts who Josh is and knows that he is not the one for her. Chapter 30 ends with her and Finn kissing again, after their true feelings have been revealed, and Hannah exhibiting a new confidence. She has now allowed someone into her house and is no longer seems ashamed of her looks. She acts on her feelings for Finn without any regret.



Chapters 31-32

Chapters 31-32 Summary

Chapter 31 begins with an awkward interaction between Hannah, her mother and Finn, as Hannah's mom has just walked in on Hannah and Finn making out. Hannah is not sure how her mom is feeling about what she saw. After they all eat together and have an uncomfortable conversation, Hannah's mom says Finn should leave. Her mom follows them to the front door, where Finn asks if he can speak with her privately. When their conversation is over, Hannah's mom tells her that she is confused about Hannah bringing home two guys today and that she is worried Hannah is making decisions that she could regret. She also says that she hopes Hannah's kiss with Finn wasn't to get back at her for Josh liking her. Hannah tells her mom that she has no right to give her advice in this area and that she thought she liked Josh but genuinely likes Finn. Hannah learns that her mom is truly upset because she is worried that Hannah will end up alone if she falls in love, like she did after Jose passed away. She tells Hannah that Finn also told her that Hannah's truck engine should be looked at and that he likes Hannah.

In Chapter 32, Hannah asks her mom if she ever wants Jackson to call her. Her mom says "sometimes" because he was the first person to make her feel special. She offers to call Jackson to make sure he calls Hannah but Hannah says she doesn't want that. Hannah talks to Teagan and tells her what happened with Josh and Finn. Teagan is not surprised about Hannah and Finn. She encourages Hannah to be straightforward with Finn about her feelings and Hannah encourages Teagan to find another school. Teagan says she is not going back to school because she doesn't want to fail. When Hannah sees Josh in the hallway, he is with a crowd and thanks her for yesterday, implying that something happened between them. Realizing she deserves better, Hannah embarrasses him by apologizing for leaving after he got to her house and by pointing out that his efforts to impress her mom didn't work. Then Hannah sees Finn and she realizes how cute he is. He gives her a piece of paper revealing he bought a star for her. She asks him if he would like to try and find it with her one night. Finn says that he knew she would realize they were meant to be and the story ends with Hannah kissing Finn.

Chapters 31-32 Analysis

In Chapter 31, Hannah's relationship with her mother reaches a climax when Hannah's mom acting like a mom rather than a friend forces them to discuss several important issues. Hannah's disapproval of her mother's career and life choices surfaces when her mom attempts to warn her about the dangers of making quick decisions about sex. Some of Hannah's statements to her mother also seem to imply that she resents her mother not acting more like a mother. When Hannah's mother apologizes for the many mistakes she's made (although not apologizing for her career) and reveals that her real fear for Hannah is rooted in not wanting Hannah to end up alone because of love, like she did, Hannah comes to a better understanding of her mother's perspective.



In Chapter 32, Hannah and her mother realize that they have several things in common: being tricked by Jackson into believing they were special, having a part of them which still longs for Jackson to show that he truly cares and being scared to love. Hannah realizes that, even though she has stayed away from love in order to not end up like her mother, it is a lonely and sad place to end up and she doesn't want to be scared of love anymore. As the story comes to a close, it is clear by Hannah's ability to acknowledge her feelings, not hide her outward appearance and attempt to blend in, give her point of view to Josh and act on her feelings for Finn that Hannah has a new perspective on life and that she is more comfortable with her family and with herself.



Characters

Hannah James Jackson

Hannah is a 17-year-old girl who, early on, makes it clear that she is somewhat uncomfortable with who her parents are and what they do but that she is even more concerned with how her parents' lifestyle choices cause others to perceive her. While Hannah is clearly embarrassed by her mother at times, the reader also gets the sense that she feels the need to protect her mother from the judgment of others, financial troubles and emotional pain, revealing Hannah's mature and responsible nature. Through her relationship with her father, however, the reader sees that several of Hannah's emotions are rooted in her childhood experiences. She reveals feeling abandoned, rejected and unloved by her father and these emotions surface in some capacity during every interaction with him. However, her hope that he will realize the errors of his ways and take a true interest in her surface as well, often leaving Hannah feeling angry, hurt and disappointed after their interactions because she allowed herself to believe that he cares about her. Hannah's self-esteem seems to be directly connected to her father's treatment of her and the skepticism, anger and hurt she's experienced, and that she's seen her mom experience, cause Hannah to employ several defense mechanisms in her everyday life, including anger, denial, humor and sarcasm. By using these and other defense mechanisms, she is able to control how close others get to her and how close she allows herself to get to others, which she initially believes to be a good thing. It isn't until she recognizes that her father's faults are his own and have nothing to do with her, as well as the fact that her mother is experiencing the potential side-effects of long-term loneliness and pain that accompany emotional isolation, that she begins to acknowledge her perspective and act on her feelings in new romances and friendships. In doing so, Hannah comes into her own socially and emotionally, bringing her happiness and peace.

Candy Madison

Candy is the mother of the main character, Hannah. She is the first character the reader meets and it is clear from the beginning that she lives an alternative lifestyle. More specifically, she works in jobs that have a sexual nature, including being semi-naked in a pizza commercial, being the sex symbol on an old TV show, Cowboy Dad, and currently owning and operating a website on which she speaks with her subscribers about her relationship and show business experience while wearing lingerie. The reader is also informed that she was a past "special girl" of Jackson James, a now 72-year-old man who is also Hannah's father, and that she lived in his castle from the ages of 19-21. Her character's description suggests that she is strong and confident, as well as somewhat self-absorbed and more of a sister figure than a mother. However, as the story progresses, she becomes a more sympathetic character as her insecurities are revealed. Based on her thoughts and dialogue, it seems that Candy is insecure about whether or not others like and accept her and that she desperately wants them to do so.



She also seems to decide her personal worth on the thoughts of others. Perhaps the main driving force behind her actions in the book is that she continues to grieve for her late husband, Jose, who passed away five years ago. The book discloses that Candy and Jose had a whirlwind romance but were very happy together and it's clear that, because of his death, Candy is still struggling with feelings of anger, depression and guilt, as well as with creating an identity for herself outside of Jose. Candy and Hannah share in common their use of defense mechanisms to protect themselves from others but, by the end of the story, Candy begins to share her thoughts and feelings more openly with Hannah, only serving to strengthen their bond.

Jackson James

Jackson, a 72-year-old man, is the father of the main character, Hannah. The reader learns early on that he is a Hugh Hefner-like character, with frequently changing "special girls," an "empire" that includes a magazine, a website, a television show, a large castle, many people working under him and a large amount of money. Hannah's mother, Candy, was one of Jackson's "special girls" from the age of 19-21. At times, the text suggests that Jackson's outward strength may not match his inner emotions, as there are times in the story when Jackson seems to realize that he has gotten older and less popular. As the story progresses, the reader learns that, to the public, Jackson is a caring, loving, generous family man who is highly involved in charities and cares deeply about his girls' educations. However, from the perspective of Hannah and Candy, he is an absent father, selfish, inconsiderate, manipulative and interested only in getting what he wants. When he does reach out to Hannah in the story, she hasn't seen or heard from him in 5 years and she quickly realizes that he only wants to see her in order to boost his TV show ratings. There is a part in the book where Hannah and, consequently the reader, believes that Jackson has genuinely identified his mistakes as a father and is going to change his behaviors towards Hannah however, he reveals his true and staying character when he not only lies to Hannah about not putting their visit on camera but when he uses the small amount of footage he gathers against her to boost his show's ratings. It is clear that Jackson has taken advantage of and hurt both Hannah and Candy and, at the end of the book, he appears to have learned and changed nothing about himself.

Josh

Hannah's co-worker and classmate. From the beginning of the book she describes him as her "soul mate," unbeknownst to him, as he is smart, handsome, kind, serious, poetic, romantic and socially and politically aware and involved. Although he appears true to Hannah's description throughout the first several chapters, it starts to become more evident to the reader that Josh is somewhat arrogant, insensitive and pretentious based on comments he makes to Hannah including believing that love doesn't mean being tied down to one person, wishing his father were more like hers and demeaning a gift that has significance to her. Josh's true character is not revealed until towards the end of the book, when it becomes clear that he has been buying Hannah presents (her



mom's favorites, as it turns out), talking to her and asking to spend time just to get closer to her mother. He also discloses that he has been a big fan of Candy's for years and that he still watches her webcast. Seeing Josh for who he is, realizing that he has no genuine interest in her and realizing that he is like Jackson-only interested in getting what he wants-, Hannah's romantic feelings for him disappear, she recognizes that she deserves to be treated with more respect and she discontinues her friendship with him.

Finn

Hannah's co-worker and classmate. Hannah describes Finn as an "average 17 year old Slaterville male." The text suggests that he is athletic, funny, somewhat of a nuisance and a class clown. It is clear that Finn and Hannah have a good rapport from the beginning of the book and that he may be interested in being more than friends however it is also clear that Hannah views Finn as mostly annoying and doesn't pay much attention to him because of her interest in Josh. After the first few chapters of the book, though, Finn's kindness, intelligence, leadership, quiet confidence and tendency to protect Hannah begin to surface and Hannah begins to realize that she may have misjudged him. Finn and Hannah have an effortless connection and, when he comes close to kissing her, they realize that they may have a spark as well. Throughout the story, Finn attempts to defend Hannah against rude comments made about her and her family, as well as from any emotional pain she may endure. He tries several times to tell Hannah his feelings for her, but appears sensitive to her emotional state at all times and seems to wait until the time is right to share his love for her. Although she denies her feelings for Finn until almost the end of the book, Hannah eventually realizes that she can't deny her feelings or their relationship any longer and she allows herself to enjoy his many positive qualities and their relationship.

Teagan

This is a 19-year-old girl who is Hannah's best friend. Teagan graduated from Slaterville High and works in the mall. Although not much is revealed about her character throughout the story, the reader knows that she is a fashion designer who left school in New York City to move back to Slaterville and take care of her mom after a surgery. It isn't until approximately half way through the book that Teagan discloses that she moved back from New York because she failed school. While the reader is aware of Teagan's insecurities- she refuses to return to school for fear of failing again and she frequently minimizes the quality of her work- she is largely portrayed throughout the book as strong, confident, and wise, as well as Hannah's voice of reason and truth.

Jose

This is Candy's husband and Hannah's step-father. He passed away from a brain tumor when Hannah was 12. Candy and Jose had a whirlwind romance that led to marriage



quickly however Hannah discusses that he was closer to her than her own father and that he taught her what it meant to love and be loved.

Michelle

This is Hannah's classmate and acquaintance. Although Hannah believes that Michelle judges her and doesn't like her because of her parents, like everyone else in school, Hannah learns throughout the book that Michelle has a genuine interest in being her friend and, by the end of the book, it is clear that they have developed a true friendship.

Polly

This is Hannah's co-worker. She is 22 and the boss' daughter. According to office gossip, she is having an affair with her father's wife's 47-year old brother-in-law. She has a reputation for not working her shifts.

Greg

This is Hannah's boss at BurgerTown USA and Polly's dad. He is described as being lazy and smoking marijuana in his office most days.

Micah

This is Josh's girlfriend for part of the book.

Fran

This is Jackson's long-time secretary. She organizes his affairs and is often the one to call Hannah rather than Jackson.

Peyton

This is one of Josh's love interests towards the end of the book.

Brandi

This is one of Jackson's current "special girls." She seems to see Jackson for who he really is and is kind and honest with Hannah.

Sandi

This is one of Jackson's current "special girls." She has been with Jackson longer than the other "special girls" and seems to only want to promote his interests.



Objects/Places

Slaterville

This is the main setting of the book.

Queens, New York

This is Hannah and Candy's hometown.

BurgerTown USA

This is Hannah's place of employment.

Slaterville High School

This is Hannah's school.

Cowboy Dad

This is the name of the TV show that Candy Madison was on.

Candy Madison: Taking It All Off

This is Candy Madison's autobiography.

Jacksonjamesonline.com

This is Jackson James's website.

JJ: Dreamworld

This is Jackson James' TV show.

Jeans Hut

This is Teagan's place of employment.



Themes

Self-Acceptance

From the very beginning of the book, it is clear that Jean feels uncomfortable in her own skin. She is highly self-conscious about her chronic bad luck, which shapes the way she views herself and the way she believes others view her. Jean references several times throughout the first part of the book that she believes others automatically do not like her for one reason or another, be it that her mother is a preacher, that she is musical and spends a large amount of time practicing, that she has somewhat untamed red hair, that she is from a small town, that she has a boring name or that she is not up-to-date on the current TV shows. Her assumption that others will dislike or judge her for these or any other reason, as well as her tendency to let others treat her as they wish, indicates that Jean struggles with feeling secure about who she is.

When Jean is confronted about being a witch, it becomes clear that Jean feels uncomfortable with fully accepting that witchcraft is part of her heritage and that she is likely the witch foretold to be in her generation, despite Jean noticing that she indeed has special powers. With the knowledge that she must stop Tory and that everyone at her school now believes she is a witch, Jean begins to use her power of witchcraft and, surprisingly to her, she does not lose any relationships. Instead, Jean begins to realize that her family and new friends accept her for who she is and, in turn, she begins to acknowledge her many positive qualities, find her voice and appreciate the overall advantages of being Jean. The message of the importance of self-acceptance found throughout the book proves to be encouraging and meaningful.

Having the Courage to Define Yourself

From the beginning of the book it is clear that Hannah believes her parents' lifestyle choices influence the way others perceive her. Her belief is not completely unfounded, as she has received judgmental looks and stares from others, however the reader gets the sense that, because Hannah has her own feelings of embarrassment about her parents, she feels even more self-conscious about how others perceive her. As a result, Hannah has gone to a lot of trouble to blend in to the crowd, wearing her hair in a ponytail every day and wearing clothes that are too big in order to hide her figure, keeping to herself at school, not inviting others to her house and not pursuing friendships or romantic interests.

As the story progresses, the reader learns that Hannah not only fears that others will perceive her more negatively due to her parents' lifestyles, but that her parents' characteristics have been passed on to her. There are several parts of the story in which Hannah worries that she is going to be like her father, including if she were to kiss someone and because she experiences physical attractions and desires for love interests. Hannah seems more worried about inheriting her mother's emotional traits



throughout the story, mostly her mother's fear of loving and allowing herself to be loved. At this point, it becomes clear to the reader that Hannah mostly defines herself by the decisions and characteristics of her parents. However, as Hannah begins to interact with her parents on a more adult level, she begins to realize that their characteristics and choices are a result of their own life experiences and faults and have nothing to do with her.

When Hannah begins to see the long-term effects of her parents' choices and that, for one reason or another they are both alone, Hannah realizes that she is her own person who should not be afraid to live her life by her rules. She accepts that she can be in relationships without being like Jackson and without having the same fear of love as her mother, a fear that she had adopted. With this new confidence, Hannah is able to begin to truly define herself by accepting and celebrating her physical appearance with more flattering clothing and hairstyles, pursuing new friendships and engaging in a romantic relationship with someone she knows values her for exactly who she is.

Accepting Others for Who They Are

As a character, Hannah seems to develop large expectations for those around her. She also appears to make generalizations about the characters, intentions, thoughts and feelings for those around her. This is first seen in Hannah's relationship with her mom, who she clearly loves and has a mostly positive relationship, but who she wishes could have a "normal" job and be a more "normal" mom. Hannah also attributes a lot to Josh, including that he is kind, thoughtful, socially/politically active and poetic, to Finn, that he has little substance to his character and is a class clown, to Teagan, that she is unbreakable, confident and motivated, and to her classmate Michelle, that she could not really be interested in being her friend because of who her parents are. While Hannah seems to have a clear understanding of who her father is- selfish, manipulative and unreliable- Hannah continues to have hope that he will realize the errors of his ways and change his behaviors and feelings towards her.

As Hannah continues to interact with her friends and family throughout the story, her relationships with her friends and family are shaped by her assumption of their characters, at times creating conflict and confusion within her. When she begins to realize that she may have been wrong about her perceptions, she struggles to process and adjust to this. However, by coming to the realization that her friends and family members have their own personalities and intentions, she is able to get to know them for who they are and make more informed decisions about who she should continue relationships with. This allows her to get to know and appreciate those who truly care for her and prevent herself from continuing to get hurt and disappointed by those who don't.

The Use of Defense Mechanisms

As the reader gets to know Hannah, it becomes evident that she has seen many disappointments in her life, some of which being the actions of her father, the death of



her step-father, the absence of a "normal life," her mother's career choice and moving to Slaterville. Hannah's mother, Candy, appears to have shared many of these disappointments with her, as well others of which the reader is unaware. Possibly due to these disappointments, Hannah and Candy share a common feature: the use of defense mechanisms to protect them from further emotional pain. Candy appears to mostly use denial, as she rarely talks about the emotional pain she is clearly experiencing, and avoidance, as she moved from New York to escape negative memories. Her use of these defense mechanisms affects her relationship with Hannah, as shutting out the memory of her husband's death has left her mostly emotionally and physically unavailable for Hannah. Hannah appears to use sarcasm, humor, denial and anger to defend herself from the emotional pain caused by the judgment of others, engaging in romantic relationships and the disappointments she experiences from her father.

Despite their attempts to protect themselves, Hannah and Candy realize throughout the book that it is easier to face their feelings and fears and, as a result, their relationship improves when Candy starts to be honest and talk about her emotions with Hannah and Hannah reaches a new understanding of who her mom is. Hannah is also able to utilize defense mechanisms less when she realizes that she can control the level at which others affect her and with whom she interacts, as well as the fact that she can create her own definition of "normal" and what she wants her life to be. This causes Hannah to fully pursue her own interests, friendships, and romantic relationships, which leaves her feeling happier, more relaxed, and more peaceful about herself and her life.



Style

Point of View

"Something, Maybe" is written from a first-person perspective. The author tells the story through Hannah's eyes and the reader is privy to her thoughts, reasoning, emotions and bodily sensations. As a result, the reader is able to immediately gain a feel for the type of person Hannah is, the way she thinks and feels about herself and the reasons as to why she has the perspective on life that she has. Hannah's perspective offers an insight into her insecurities however this provides the reader with a sense of who she truly is. Additionally, her sense of humor and use of sarcasm is displayed through her perspective. Because Hannah and the reader learn about the plot simultaneously, Hannah's perspective and keen observations offer the reader several interpretations about the behaviors and intentions of others. Overall throughout the story, the reader is able to easily experience Hannah's discomfort with her parents' lifestyle choices, the embarrassment she feels when judged by others for her parents' choices, the nervousness and excitement she feels when near her crush, the disappointment she experiences when realizing that her crush is not who she thought, the hurt and resentment she feels when she learns that her father was using her and does not seem to have a real interest in her, the anxiety and conflict she goes through as she learns to accept others and herself and the joys she encounters while making new friends, developing a new love and finding herself.

Setting

"Something, Maybe" takes place in the small town of Slaterville, described as being known for being close to the interstate and having large amount of strip malls and subdivisions. It is portrayed as the type of town that many people find hard to escape because of the lack of opportunities provided by the small town. Based on suggestions in the text throughout the book, it seems that Slaterville a small, conservative town where everyone in town knows each other's business, where residents were not too happy when Hannah and her mother moved to town and where residents continue to judge Hannah and Candy for Candy's past and current careers. Another relevant setting in the story is Slaterville High, where Hannah attends as one of the 2,000 students. Also mentioned often in the story is BurgerTown USA, Hannah's place of employment. She doesn't work at the restaurant, but at a call center, where she takes to-go orders. The text suggests that the building is worn down, with vending machines that never work. Other locations mentioned throughout the book include Jackson James' "castle," his home located in upstate New York, New York City, where Hannah visits her dad and where Teagan attended fashion design school for a period of time, and California, where Candy and Hannah lived for a period of time when Candy was on a TV show. Although Hannah appears motivated to pursue educational opportunities when the time comes, she appears to have a new-found respect and love for Slaterville at the end of the book.



Language and Meaning

"Something, Maybe," is a young adult novel aimed primarily at adolescent females. Although no deep sexual elements exist, the text does include discussions and thoughts of experiencing a new crush and falling in love, as well as several passages that include kissing and suggest further sexual activity. Overall, the sexual content found in the book appears appropriate for its target audience.

The story focuses mostly on Hannah's journey of self-discovery and the ways in which her relationships with her parents, possible love interests Josh and Finn and friend, Teagan, impact that journey. The language throughout the book is straightforward and clear. It is meant to move the reader along quickly, to keep the pages turning. Consequently, the sentences are of moderate length and tend to focus on the development of Hannah's relationships with family and friends. There is no hidden meaning in the text, only foreshadowing or suggestions aiming at the final outcome.

The story is balanced between sections of dialogue and sections that illuminate Hannah's past experiences, thoughts, feelings and/or reasoning. The author's overall use of vocabulary and uncomplicated sentence structure makes the story easy to read and understand, although the reader will encounter difficult vocabulary words at certain points throughout the book. The author also capitalizes on telling the story through the eyes of an adolescent girl by displaying a sense of humor and sarcasm in the dialogue with which many in the book's target audience would appreciate. In sum, the language and meaning of the text in "Something, Maybe" is simple, easy to comprehend, and enjoyable.

Structure

"Something, Maybe" is two hundred and seventeen pages long. It is divided into thirty-two unnamed chapters. Several chapters can be read in a single sitting, as many of them are short and concise. "Something, Maybe" is a quick, enjoyable read built around a relatively straightforward plot with a small number of plot twists along the way.

Chapters 1-3 focus on introducing Hannah, her mother, Candy, her father, Jackson James (briefly) and several other major and minor characters in the book, including Josh, Finn, Teagan and several of Hannah's co-workers. The next large section of the book, roughly Chapters 4-21, consists of chapters that are either of short or moderate length. The chapters focus on providing character development for all of the characters introduced, providing details about Hannah's past experiences and the circumstances surrounding the death of her step-father and the current tension between her and her father, developing the relationships between Hannah, Josh and Finn, the developing relationship between Hannah and her father and revealing Hannah's somewhat hidden emotional state. In this part of the book, Hannah is beginning to learn that Josh may not be who she thought he was and that she and Finn have an undeniable connection. Another significant event that happens in this stage of the book is that Hannah's father begins to reach out to her, i.e. calling her several times at home and at work and



sending tickets for her to come and visit him. The end of Chapter 21 finds Hannah and her father visiting in New York City, where Hannah is able to get some answers from her father about his behaviors.

The last section of the book, roughly Chapters 22-32, consists of somewhat longer chapters that provide more explanations for the reader about what's been happening in the book. The section also brings Hannah to a place where she finds out some hard truths about the people in her life. Chapter 23 is the first climax of the book, where Hannah's worst suspicions about her father are confirmed when she realizes that he was only using her and her visit in order to boost his TV show's ratings. In the following chapters, the reader sees how Hannah emotionally processes this ultimate hurt and disappointment, as well as how the part of the story between Hannah and her father is ended. In chapter 28, Hannah finally sees Josh's true character and realizes that he has no real interest in her, as he is only using his relationship with her to get closer to her mom. After realizing the intentions of these two important figures, and that they will likely not change, Hannah identifies that she deserves better and discontinues her relationships with them. Chapter 31 provides a second climax for the story, as Hannah and her mom have an important talk during which Hannah gains both a better understanding for her mother and herself. After this discussion, Hannah decides that she no longer wants to live in fear of judgment, love, or rejection and Chapter 32 provides an explanation and ending to each major and minor story found throughout the book.



Quotes

"Everyone's seen my mother naked" (Chapter 1, p. 1).

"I don't understand. I got so much e-mail from my fans after that interview, and they all said they'd write to the magazine and ask for more. Do you think I wasn't memorable enough" (Chapter 1, p. 3).

"Oh no. I'm not taking your money. I've never taken a handout from Jackson, and I'm certainly not taking one from you. And now I gotta get back to work. Do I look okay" (Chapter 3, p. 24).

"I just hate this place so much. It's so...I don't know. Soul-sucking. And why are your neighbors staring at us like that" (Chapter 4, p. 28).

"It figures tonight was busy. I was hoping we could talk more. But in the meantime" (Chapter 6, p. 41).

"So I really like Josh. I mean, really like him. And tonight was so perfect. But then there was this...thing with Finn. It was just for a second, but you have to promise that if I start talking about sharing my love or anything like that, you'll smack me, okay" (Chapter 7, p. 45).

"Here. It's Jackson" (Chapter 7, p. 48).

"Ratings must be down, right? So...let me guess, it's time for a reminder that Jackson James is a devoted family man. Tell the producers it's sweet of them to think of me, but I'll pass" (Chapter 8, p. 51).

"For highlights of my previous trips to the city, be sure to check out the archives and see just how well I took a bite out of the Big Apple. Here's hoping my daughter can keep up with me" (Chapter 10, p. 65).

"Look, Hannah, I think you aren't as alone as you think you are, okay? I think you're just scared" (Chapter 14, p. 94).

"Pot, meet kettle. See how perfect we are together" (Chapter 15, p. 97).

"You mean those certificates that say a star is named after you? Micah loves making fun of that kind of cheesy stuff. Thanks, Hannah" (Chapter 15, p. 102)

"The phone call. Your dad called. Wants you to call him" (Chapter 16, p. 104).

"Is this my lovely daughter" (Chapter 16, p. 106).



"Stop. Just—you pushed way past the bounds of believability by the second sentence, and I'm not coming to see you tomorrow or any other time. Fran, what's really going on" (Chapter 16, p. 108).

"Oh, sorry. How come you don't call him Dad" (Chapter 16, p. 109).

"Can we talk? Later, I mean" (Chapter 16, p. 110).

"Nothing but you and me. Just say you'll be on that train and I'll—Hannah I'll be so happy" (Chapter 18, p. 119).

"All right. I'll come" (Chapter 18, p. 119).

"Look, I've been thinking about stuff, and I just wanted to tell you that I" (Chapter 19, p. 123).

"Hannah, you don't know...you don't know how hard it is. I have to live without him. Every day, I wake up and think that. And every day, I get up anyway" (Chapter 20, p. 125).

"Then why...why wouldn't you let my stay with you" (Chapter 20, p. 128).

"He planned this" (Chapter 23, p. 143).

"I think he believes what he says when he says it" (Chapter 24, p. 151).

"I don't know. I just know she isn't a fan of yours. And that she really, really doesn't like your mother" (Chapter 25, 162).

"Josh. But he's not...it's not a big deal. He's just coming over to hang out" (Chapter 27, p. 175).

"Wow, she's amazing. I've been dying to meet her—for real, you know—and when you agreed to let me come over—well, thank you. You're so special" (Chapter 28, 180).

"He...it didn't work out" (Chapter 28, p. 184).

"Me. Finn. The idea of being with someone who's real, who I actually know. Who knows me" (Chapter 31, p. 207).

"I told you we were meant to be" (Chapter 32, 217).



Topics for Discussion

In what ways can the reader relate to Hannah's story? Give three examples.

Discuss the changes Hannah made within herself throughout the story.

Discuss the factors that contribute to the relationship between Hannah and Jackson.

Discuss the similarities between Hannah and Candy. Give three examples.

Discuss Hannah's decision to discontinue her relationship with Jackson.

Provide three specific examples throughout the book that illustrate the differences between Josh and Finn.

Identify two specific examples in the story that demonstrate Josh's true character.

Provide two examples of the ways in which Hannah worries that she is like either her mom or her dad.