

What Happened to Lani Garver Study Guide

What Happened to Lani Garver by Carol Plum-Ucci

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Plot Summary

What Happened to Lani Garver is the story of the unlikely friendship between a seventeen-year-old leukemia survivor and the androgynous new kid who moves to town and who just might be a "floating angel."

At the opening of the novel, Claire McKenzie is happy in her life. She's been in leukemia remission for a few years, and has managed to keep her past illness a secret from many of her schoolmates, allowing her to skyrocket in popularity to the cool crowd. Claire has just lost a bunch of weight, secured a spot on the cheerleading squad, and snagged a hot boyfriend from the Fish Frat. Claire's perfect life is rattled by the introduction of a new kid at school, Lani Garver, an androgynous and puzzling teenager. On his first day at school, Claire's best friend Macy boldly approaches him in the hallway demanding to know whether he's a boy or girl. Lani skillfully dodges the question and makes Macy uncomfortable in turn. It's clear that Lani is reaching out for friends, but since Macy doesn't think it would be a good idea to hang out with someone who's obviously gay, then no one is allowed to. It isn't until Claire faints on the school steps and Lani is the only person around to care for her that she starts to reconsider her initial disdain. As it turns out, Lani is nice person, interesting, smart, and intelligent.

Claire and Lani's lives become intertwined when she finds herself confiding in him about her leukemia and her fears that these dizzy spells might be a sign of relapse. Lani, who has spent years living on the streets, knows of a clinic in Philadelphia that can test Claire's blood without informing her parents, and Claire jumps on the opportunity. At the hospital, Claire learns that she is still cancer free, but that she has an eating disorder, which has caused her strange symptoms. From that moment on, Claire realizes that she can confide in Lani in ways she never could with her other friends, yet she feels a need to keep their friendship secret, especially when Lani is accused of coming on to the toughest, most popular guy in school, Tony Clementi. As time passes, Claire realizes that the rumors being passed around about Lani are completely false. In fact, Tony has been harassing and molesting Lani. Unfortunately, no one believes either Lani or Claire and the sexual harassment escalates. Tony begins sending pornographic magazines to Lani's house and calling his phone hundreds of times a day while he's masturbating on the other end. It's clear that Tony is a closeted homosexual using gay bashing to cover up his shame. Tony's abuse toward Lani escalates when it appears that he might "out" Tony, and that Claire knows the truth.

Throughout the novel, Claire has had suspicions that Lani is not entirely human, and may be a "floating angel," an earthly angel that floats from troubled person to troubled person repairing the damage in their lives. At the end of the novel, Tony and his gang of friends kidnap both Claire and Lani, beat them senseless, and throw them in a fishing net at sea. While the rest of the gang doesn't really want to kill anyone, Tony is ferociously reckless. When everyone wants to pull Lani back into the boat, Tony cuts the rope, sending Lani and Claire hurdling into the water. Tangled in the nets, Claire tries to save Lani, but the water is too cold, her lungs screaming for oxygen. In the dark, murky waters, Lani disappears. His body never resurfaces or washes up on shore, yet Claire



isn't entirely convinced he's dead. Bags of Lani's belongings went missing from his house, and she can't seem to convince anyone - from Lani's mother to the state police - that he's dead, not just run away. In the end, the decision is left up to the readers to decide, what happened to Lani Garver?



Preface, Chapters 1 - 3

Preface, Chapters 1 - 3 Summary

Claire McKenzie has never believed the myth that when an Indian Summer strikes Hackett Island, curses follow the unseasonable warmth. Yet she cannot forget the autumn when she met Lani Garver, the mysterious, androgynous boy who was eventually tortured and drowned at the fishing docks. When she sees him in her dreams, the fog around his body seems to take the shapes of wings. Since his death, she's been filled with questions, like why she was unable to save him. Why he came to Hackett Island in the first place, why she was drawn to him when no one else was, and where he is now. The rest of the novel traces back Claire's few months of friendship with Lani with the hope of answering some of these questions.

Ever since Claire started at Coast Regional High School, she's been trying to bury a piece of her past. In middle school, she had leukemia and was forced to undergo chemotherapy, which robbed her of her beautiful hair and youthful appearance. Fortunately, Coast Regional is such a huge school that it's possible to meet people who never heard of you in middle school, and so it's possible to reinvent yourself there. A few weeks into school, Lani met Macy Matlock, one of the popular girls in school, who took Claire under her wing and eventually, the two became best friends. Before long, she was a regular member of Macy's gang, including new friends Eli, Geneva, and Myra. These girls hung out with the Fish Frat guys, a group of popular upperclassman boys who drank, partied, and were all around reckless. When Claire finally managed to nab a boyfriend from the Fish Frat, Scott Dern, she cemented her place in the group.

On the day Lani Garver comes to town, the girls are sitting around the cafeteria gossiping. When Lani walks in, they can't stop staring at him: "Is that thing a boy or girl," someone asks (Page 12). Immediately, Claire feels a pang of guilt making fun of the new kid. Even though she stops the verbal mockery, Claire can't help breaking Lani down, inch-by-inch wondering the truth herself. He's either a very effeminate boy or a tall, gangly - yet beautiful - girl. Macy decides that she's had enough hypothesizing and walks up to Lani herself to confront him. Claire tags along, hoping to quell Macy's blunt approach. They make small talk with Lani for a few tense moments before Macy finally blurts out her question, "Are you a girl?" Lani doesn't flinch and even looks amused when he answers, "No. Not a girl. Sorry" (Page 20). The threesome pass a pleasant, albeit awkward, conversation for a few more minutes, with Lani hinting that he'd like to have someone show him around the island. Macy immediately starts to back away, hinting to Claire that she doesn't want to be seen hanging around with a gay kid. Claire rushes away from the situation because she's started to feel dizzy and worries that she might faint. At cheerleading practice, she hides behind the rest of the cheerleaders, trying to hide her body from the coach. Still, after practice she feels so dizzy she has to sit down. Out of nowhere, Lani Garver appears and puts his arm around her. He asks if she's okay and if she needs help getting home. When it's clear that Claire can't walk to her own home, he takes her to his to lie down until she's feeling better.



Preface, Chapters 1 - 3 Analysis

In the preface of the novel, it is revealed that Lani Garver dies. The reader knows that Claire is looking back on this strange friendship, trying to come to terms with her loss. She has many questions about Lani Garver, their relationship, and where he is now. From the beginning, readers should be prepared for a winding, confusing, complicated story, and the novel delivers. The preface also introduces Claire's emotional struggle. The reason why she's obsessed with finding out what happened to Lani Garver is because she fears she could have saved him. She will carry these questions and her guilt with her for the rest of her life.

When the reader finally meets Lani, the first thing that stands out is his physical appearance. He's described as tall, thin, tan-skinned and having dark, chocolate-colored eyes. The strangest thing about Lani's appearance is that upon first glance, it's almost impossible to tell whether he's a boy or a girl. He wears his hair long and sleek, curled under at the bottom. His gorgeous eyes appear to be lined, and his lips appear juicy. He speaks in a high-pitched, effeminate voice, has limp wrists and delicate gestures that leave everyone automatically assuming that he's gay. For his part, Lani does nothing to dispel these rumors. Although he does say that he's not a girl, he never says, "I'm a boy," which Claire finds strange.

In this section, the reader also gets to know Claire a bit better. It's revealed that she is in remission from leukemia, a fact that she keeps hidden from most of her friends at school, that she has low self-esteem and a constant desire to lose weight, and that she has disturbing dreams about cutting. Every night, Claire fears going to bed because her mind fills with bloody images of girls parting their hair with razorblades, or wearing rings of razorblades around their fingers. From these dreams, it's clear that Claire has serious emotional issues that she hasn't dealt with, and that she has no one safe to talk to about her emotions. Her parents are divorced, her father is distracted by his new wife, her mother is an alcoholic, and her friends are too shallow to understand deep emotional problems. When Lani walks Claire home after her fainting episode, Claire glances back over her shoulder "to make sure my friends weren't coming to see Lani Garver half carrying me into the sunset," cinematically symbolizing to the reader that Lani Garver will be her hero (Page 31).



Chapters 4 - 6

Chapters 4 - 6 Summary

Lani's house is just like the rest of the duplexes on Hackett Island, nothing special. Lani's mother seems pleased to meet Claire, even though she's bent double, slack against Lani's side. Lani half carries Claire up the stairs to his bedroom and she's too weak to fight him. She does wonder what Lani's mother will think they're doing up there with the door closed, but Lani doesn't seem concerned. In Lani's room, the two teenagers share secrets about themselves - Claire tells Lani that her mother is an alcoholic living vicariously through her teenage years, and that she had leukemia when she was younger. Not many people at Coast Regional know that, and she isn't sure why she's told Lani. In return, Lani tells Claire that his father is dead and that he has only returned to his mother after a few years of living on the streets as a runaway. As he talks, Lani suggests that Claire doesn't have enough close friends to confide in, especially if she feels she can't confide in her friends or her alcoholic mother. Claire agrees, acknowledging that her friends aren't used to "big problems" and she doesn't want to burden them with hers. Lani suggests speaking to a priest or joining a support group for cancer survivors, but Claire just laughs. That's not her style. When Claire starts to feel herself falling asleep, she warns Lani that she has brutal nightmares and not to be concerned if she wakes up screaming.

When Claire wakes up, Lani is still lying peacefully beside her. He invites her to stay for dinner, but Claire can't stand the thought of eating fatty meatloaf, no matter how enticing it smells. As she leaves the house, Lani's mother practically pleads with her to stay, clearly thrilled that Lani has had a girl up in his room. Outside, Claire admits that she fears her leukemia is returning, which would explain the bouts of dizziness. Without missing a beat, Lani tells her about a hospital in Philadelphia - a few hours bus ride away - that will test her without needing parental permission. If she wants to find out what's happening, without worrying her parents, he can take her there. Claire doesn't like the fact that Lani seems to have her figured out so quickly, particularly when he's been quite vague about his own past, but she agrees to meet him at the bus stop the next morning.

That night, Claire contemplates what to eat for dinner - of course her mother hasn't prepared anything - and then rushes out of the house to meet her friends. She jumps into the car of Vince Clementi, so packed with bodies that she has to lie horizontally across her friends' laps. When she's situated on top of them, Vince guns it, sending gravel shooting from the tires as he speeds away. Her friends crack up with laughter as Phil, Macy's boyfriend, cranks open the window and pushes Claire's head outside. They're speeding along the road, with Claire hanging halfway out of the car, half laughing half screaming, when she sees another Vince's brother Tony standing in the middle of the road. She shouts at Vince to swerve, and he does slow down, but everyone is egging Vince on, urging him forward. Tony stands in the road, ready to leap,



and when the car is inches from him, he jumps, running up the hood to the roof, where he spins and falls off the side, hitting Claire in the chest and smashing her out of the car.

Chapters 4 - 6 Analysis

Throughout her afternoon with Lani, Claire can't shake the idea that there's something very strange about her new friend. He seems much older, much wiser than the rest of the teenagers she's met, as if he has an old soul. When she asks Lani how old he is, he refuses to answer, saying that he doesn't like being labeled or put in a box. The theme of identity is an important one in the novel. Through Lani's story, the message is made clear: people should be judged by their character, not by their age, gender, or sexual orientation. For his part, Lani lives by the same rule. He has friends from all over the country, from rich students to homeless drug addicts, black, white, gay, straight, young, old, and everyone in between. It is perhaps his wide range of friends and life experience that makes him sound wiser than the average teenager, but the novel is clearly hinting that his wisdom might come from another realm. Lani's experiences on the street have introduced him to a wide variety of individuals, including many suffering from life threatening illnesses. As a result, he knows of a hospital comfortable treating patients who may not want their families to know where they are. He suggests this hospital to Claire, so she can have her blood tested without alerting her parents, whom she thinks would overreact to the situation. It's interesting to note that even though Lani has been nothing but kind to Claire today, she still fears what her "friends" will say about spending time with him. She's more concerned with being cool than being healthy, one of the many reasons why readers might feel a dislike for Claire. As the novel progresses, many critics have wondered if Claire truly cares about Lani, or if she's simply using him.

When the reader meets Claire's real friends, they are likely shocked by their behavior. The boys are raucous, completely out of control. Claire's girlfriends openly flirt with her boyfriend with a complete disregard to the way this makes her feel. They put her in horrifically dangerous situations living with the mentality that because they are young, rich, and healthy, nothing bad can happen to them. It's clear that Claire wants to embrace that same mentality, but she's faced death once before and knows how fragile life can be. She does her best to push these thoughts aside and "act cool" but it's clear, that she, like Lani, is different from the rest of them.



Chapters 7 - 9

Chapters 7 - 9 Summary

As Tony hits Claire, he wraps his arms and legs around her in some kind of death grip that manages to protect her as they roll down the gravel hill. When she stops rolling, Claire feels blood running down her face. Her forehead is gashed open and she has scrapes and cuts covering the rest of her body, but she's alive. Her friends whoop and holler with laughter, unaware of the fact that both Tony and Claire could have died. To Claire, there's nothing funny or awesome about the situation. All she wants is the first-aid kit from Scott's father's boat down at the wharf. Although Scott is worried about Claire's bleeding, he's more worried about the fact that she'll drip blood on his father's boat and he'll get in trouble. Outraged, Claire pushes past Scott and marches toward the boat. Out of obligation, Scott follows her. Scott finds a butterfly bandage and sloppily presses Claire's wound together with it. The bandage gets stuck in Claire's hair but she's too tired to ask him to redo it. By the time Claire leaves the boat to join her friends on the dock, she hears them already planning their next dare. Tony has dared Phil, Macy's boyfriend, to climb into the fishing net and be lowered into the icy water. If he hasn't freed himself from the tangled net in three minutes, they'll pull him back up again. Claire is horrified. She knows how dangerous icy water can be, especially if you're trapped in a net. She knows it would be suicide, but Phil accepts, not wanting to look weak in front of his friends. Angry that her friends could act so stupidly after just escaping a serious accident, Claire walks back to the car, ignoring the dare. She thinks about her own bad luck - getting cancer, having an alcoholic mother, being faced with the fear of relapse - while her friends embrace their good luck, their invincibility, outside. Macy is also angry about this round of chicken - she thinks Tony is punishing Phil for Macy calling him a "drama queen" - but stays to see whether her boyfriend lives or drowns in the water. Phil survives.

The next morning, Claire meets Lani at the bus stop to travel to Franklin Hospital in Philadelphia. When she arrives, Lani looks agitated. He's just seen a guy from his past, a guy he used to hook-up with. Now the guy is traveling with his girlfriend and clearly terrified that Lani will "out" him. On the outside, this guy was a clear homophobe, calling Lani names and even threatening to beat him up, but behind closed doors, would come on to Lani strong, begging him for sex. Although Claire feels terrible for the bullying Lani has endured, she wonders if he brings it on himself - with his haircut and the way he dresses, there's no mistaking that Lani is gay. When they arrive at the hospital, Lani seems to know everyone in the waiting room. He flits from person to person, leaving Claire alone, worried about her own situation and jealous that Lani's attention is on other people. When the nurse finally calls her in for a blood draw, Claire is stewing. The nurse, who also knows Lani, tells her not to be jealous. Lani is a floating angel - an angel who floats down from heaven in human form to help those on earth who are in need.



Chapters 7 - 9 Analysis

Most readers will be horrified by the treatment Claire gets from her friends after the accident. Something as horrible as falling out of a moving car should be enough to sober most rational people, but Claire's friends don't seem to mind that she's bleeding profusely from the head. Even Claire's boyfriend is more concerned with getting blood on his father's fishing boat than he is with her health and safety. This foreshadows the callous nature with which her friends will treat her later in the novel. This chapter also foreshadows the way that Lani Garver will die: hanging from a fishing net on Scott Dern's boat. The readers also meet the Clementi brothers in this chapter: two out of control, reckless teenagers who have a complete disregard for the safety of their friends. It's immediately clear that these boys are dangerous, but without them, Claire admits she and her friends wouldn't have a car to drive them around. Tony Clementi is immediately characterized by his extreme homophobia. When Macy angrily shouts that he's a drama queen - insinuating that he's effeminate - Tony snaps. He punishes Macy by daring her boyfriend to climb into his fishing net. Tony knows that Phil won't want to appear scared in front of his friends, and he also know that the stunt is just dangerous enough to teach Macy a lesson. This is not the last time Tony Clementi will manipulate a situation to show-off his masculinity.

At the hospital, Claire is introduced to the idea of a floating angel: "They're called floaters because they float from person to person, you know? This one's in trouble so they float here. They fix up that person's life, so they can move over there" (Page 91). The nurse suggests that Lani is a floating angel, flitting in and out of people's lives when they need him the most. Claire isn't convinced by this, but the nurse is emphatic. Biblically, angels have no gender, so it would make sense that floating angels look like effeminate men or masculine women. The nurse even suggests that floating angels are meant to be killed: "They're like the Good Lord, you know? They killed him, but he just jumped back up again when nobody was looking, see? Faked 'em all out" (Page 90). This statement foreshadows the ending of the novel, when Lani Garver dies but no one can find his body. It leads readers to believe that he might not be dead at all, but simply moving on to the next place he's needed.



Chapters 10 - 12

Chapters 10 - 12 Summary

Claire is called into Dr. Lowenstein's office for her blood test results. As soon as she walks through the door, Dr. Lowenstein offers her half an egg salad sandwich. Claire recoils at the food, desperate to hear the results of her tests. Casually, Dr. Lowenstein informs her that she's not relapsing. She's still cancer-free, but she seems more concerned by Claire's eating habits than her medical history. Claire, she says, is dangerously underweight. The dizziness, bruising, and thin blood are all symptoms of an eating disorder. She promises not to tell Claire's parents what's going on as long as she starts gaining weight. She gives Claire the assignment to eat an ice cream sundae. If she can manage that, she may be able to manage her eating disorder. If not, the problem may be worse than she thought. When they leave the office, Lani takes Claire to a café and orders two ice cream sundaes. She's hesitant to eat the treat, despite receiving the great news that her leukemia has not returned. She avoids picking up her spoon by asking Lani more questions about himself. She learns that he went to an arts high school around the corner last year, and that he loved taking part in the plays. As he's talking, two of Lani's old friends walk past and the three start up a lively conversation. Lani blurts out that Claire might have an eating disorder so she's on a special assignment to fatten up. The girl, Ellen, looks sympathetically at Claire before telling Lani to back off. Ellen had an eating disorder last year and knows how difficult it can be to overcome. She sits next to Claire and talks about her own struggle, eating the ice cream as she speaks. Ellen, her friend Cooper, and Lani all talk about how having tragedy in your life makes you a better artist, a benefit Claire had never considered before. Ellen tells Claire about the final play Lani was in. He had played a fallen angel sent down from heaven to condemn wicked humans. It had been a stunning performance, she says, which reminds her that she still has Lani's angel costume. She offers to send it to him if he's still interested in it.

When she gets home later that afternoon, Claire tells Macy about the afternoon she's just had with Lani. She hopes that telling Macy about Lani's supportive, friendly nature will encourage other kids to befriend him. Macy is silent on the line. She's clearly shocked and tells Claire that she had better stay away from Lani Garver. She says that last night, she and the boys from the Fish Frat walked past the bar and saw Tony Clementi and Lani having an argument. Tony claimed that Lani was coming on to him. Macy swears she heard Lani say to Tony, "If you don't want anything, then you shouldn't be standing alone on a street corner, blowing smoke rings. Don't you know that's a gay thing" (Page 125)? Claire is confused. She can't imagine Lani coming on to Tony Clementi, especially after their conversation about the bullies who used to come onto him in Shinoquin. Claire knows she's being lied to by one of her closest friends, either Macy or Lani, and she bursts into tears.



Chapters 10 - 12 Analysis

This chapter functions mostly to introduce the character of Ellen: a new friend on whom Claire will rely when Macy turns her back on her. Immediately, the difference between Ellen and Macy is stark. Claire finds it easy to open up to Ellen and share her dark secrets. Claire never felt like she could tell Macy the truth about herself - her fears of a leukemia relapse, her eating disorder, her mother's alcoholism - because she feared Macy would reject her. Also, Macy has a history of breaking promises and sharing secrets, so even though Claire calls Macy her best friend, she doesn't really trust her. Macy proves this later, when Claire phones to say that she's just spent an amazing afternoon with Lani. Even though Lani was emotionally supportive when Claire desperately needed a friend, Macy rejects him. Though she says it has nothing to do with the fact that Lani is gay, it clearly does. It's interesting to note that Lani has never expressly stated his sexuality, nor has he given any hint about which gender he's attracted to. Outsiders, Claire included, immediately assume that he's gay because he's effeminate. Later in the novel, Ellen will say, "Problem is, people put together effeminate with perverse, like they automatically go together. In reality? There's no correlation" (Page 231). This coincides with Lani's distaste of labels, saying they lead to stereotyping, which is why he never offers up personal information about himself.

Also in this chapter, the inciting incident of the story is revealed: Lani's interaction with Tony outside the Rod & Reel. Macy, Phil, and Scott walked up to Tony on the hill with Lani. Tony and Lani had already been interacting for some time, and the bystanders only overheard the last few minutes of the argument. Macy is adamant about what she heard: Lani coming on to Tony. Immediately, the story sounds strange to Claire, particularly because Lani had just told her about how the idea of gay sex makes him sick to his stomach. She knows that someone is lying to her, and to figure out the truth, she must draw an allegiance with one side or the other.



Chapters 13 - 15

Chapters 13 - 15 Summary

Even though Claire swore Macy to secrecy about her flyaway visit to Franklin Hospital, the next morning, all her friends drag her to the doughnut shop around the corner and plead with her to eat. It's also clear that Macy has told everyone about Tony's fight with Lani Garver. Over breakfast, everyone gossips about how gay Lani is, and how they should have seen his sexual aggression coming. When Claire starts crying, all the girls pat her shoulder and smooth her hair, making it clear that Macy has blabbed about Claire's friendship with Lani, too. Everyone thinks Claire, too, has been victimized by Lani's terrible lies. At school, the bullying of Lani begins. Throughout the day, guys shove Lani or say horrible things to him under their breath. After school, Claire rushes over to Lani's house to hear his side of the story. When she walks into his bedroom, he hangs up the telephone in his hands. He's clearly in a bad mood, and the phone won't stop ringing. Sometimes Lani answers, and sometimes he simply hangs up without speaking. Claire demands to know who's on the phone, but Lani won't tell her. In fact, he refuses to answer any of her questions about what happened outside the Rod & Reel bar. He tells Claire that he never defends his actions because everyone suffers from "convenient recollection" which places his word against theirs. He's been in the situation too many times where his word is not considered credible simply because he's new or simply because he's gay. He's not willing to go up against Tony Clementi because there's no possible way anyone will believe him. Throughout their conversation, the phone hasn't stopped ringing. Annoyed, Claire finally answers the phone herself and demands to know who's there. The voice on the other line is breathing heavily and letting loose a string of disgusting sexual talk. It's clear that the person on the other line is masturbating, harassing Lani with their sexuality. Determined to put an end to this, Claire glances at the caller ID box and is shocked to see that the calls are coming from the Clementi house.

When Lani is certain that Claire sees the way Tony Clementi is harassing him, he tells her his side of the Rod & Reel story. According to Lani, he was walking home from the library last night when he saw a man passed out in the field across from the bar. He walked up to him and asked if he was alright. When Tony opened his eyes and saw that it was Lani standing over him, he grabbed him and tried to molest him. As soon as Tony's friends arrived, he stood up and accused Lani of coming onto him. When Claire recounts Macy's version of the story, Lani is intrigued. He has no idea where the "smoke rings" idea came from, but promises that Macy was not close enough to actually overhear their conversation. This puts Claire in an interesting position. Macy has no reason to lie to her about what she heard, and "smoke rings" would be a bizarre idea to invent, but she believes Lani's story as well. As they're talking, Lani's mother walks in and throws a gay pornography magazine at him. It just arrived in the mail, and Lani's mother seems sure Lani ordered it for himself, that, in a way, he's bringing the bullying on himself. After this, Claire makes an executive decision that they both need to get away for a while. She calls her father and asks if it would be okay if she and Lani came



to visit him for the weekend. Her father happily agrees. Rather than tell her mother where she's going - because she knows her clingy mother will forbid it, Claire leaves her a note and starts packing. As she's packing, Macy arrives to check whether she's eaten anything today. When it becomes apparent that Claire has not cut off her relationship with Lani, Macy is shocked. She starts a fight with Claire, warning her that Lani is dangerous. Claire shouts that Macy has it all wrong. She tells her about the phone calls that came from the Clementi house. Macy refuses to believe her, saying that Lani is so sneaky, he probably rigged the caller ID to show Clementi's phone number just to trick her into believing him. Again, she swears she overheard Lani's entire conversation with Tony, and if Claire doesn't believe her, that's the same as calling her a liar. As Macy storms out of the house, Claire begs her not to tell anyone about the phone calls. If Tony finds out what he's being accused of, someone could get seriously hurt.

Chapters 13 - 15 Analysis

According to Lani, he was walking home from the library last night when he saw a man passed out in the field across from the bar. He walked up to him and asked if he was all right. When Tony opened his eyes and saw that it was Lani standing over him, he grabbed him and tried to molest him. As soon as Tony's friends arrived, he stood up and accused Lani of coming onto him. The interesting thing about Lani's story is that no one else was close enough to hear what he and Tony were actually saying. Lani swears that there's no way Macy, from nearly a block away, could have heard his conversation with Tony. He suggests that Macy may be suffering from convenient recollection: "a memory recalled inaccurately, to unconsciously protect against guilt, anxiety, or unwanted associations" (Page 132). Macy's certainty about what she heard highlights the power of convenient recollection in one's life. Macy is unaware that's lying, or that she's invented a new truth. Although the novel doesn't address the truth directly, it seems that Macy has conveniently recalled this dialogue as a way of blocking out the truth: that Tony is gay. Perhaps Macy is afraid of what will happen to her if anyone discovers Tony's true sexuality, or perhaps she's subconsciously lying to cover-up her own guilt about tormenting Lani. This theme carries through the entire novel and every character's behaviors, most notably Macy and Tony. Tony, who is clearly a closeted homosexual, refuses to acknowledge - either subconsciously or consciously - that he tried to molest Lani. He believes with 100% certainty that Lani came on to him, that Lani is the monster. Even Claire begins to doubt her own memories, constantly questioning whether what she remembers is truth, or a convenient recollection. At the end of this chapter, the battle lines are drawn. Claire is standing with Lani, while Macy, out of fear or true allegiance, is standing with Tony.

This chapter also brings up the idea that somehow, homosexuals deserve to be bullied, or that they bring the bullying upon themselves. Lani's mother insinuates that if he didn't act so gay, people wouldn't pick on him. Even Claire thinks that if Lani just cut his hair or spoke in a lower voice, bullies would leave him alone. This is a mentality that many people across America share. Plum-Ucci is clearly sending the message that no one

deserves to be bullied. No one brings bullying upon themselves. The guilt of abuse lies with the abuser, not the victim.



Chapters 16 - 18

Chapters 16 - 18 Summary

That night, Lani and Claire walk slowly to the bus stop. Trying to cheer Lani up, Claire asks him about his favorite philosophers and what they might have to say about his situation. Not even philosophy cheers Lani up; he says the philosophers he once idolized were all talk and no action. They "would probably have stepped over a guy trying to slit his wrists outside a bar - to get to all the people [they] could sit and bullshit with inside" (Page 156). Hoping to bring Lani back to a happy time in his life, Claire asks him about his childhood, his first happy memory. Lani tells her about the sick kitten he found dumped on the side of the road that he loved for three days before it died. He also tells her about dressing up in women's clothes for the first time, until his father found him and beat him bloody for it. Knowing her words won't comfort Lani at all, Claire simply wraps her arms around him and they walk that way for a while, with their arms draped around each other's waists. When they arrive at the bus stop, however, they're both horrified to see Scott, Phil, and Vince waiting for them. Scott grabs Claire's wrist and pulls her away from Lani, saying there's no way he's letting her get on a bus with him. Claire tries to pull away, but Scott's just too strong. As he holds her back, Vince lays into Lani, taunting and shoving him. After shoving Lani the second time, Vince reaches in his pocket to take out a cigarette and is startled to see a gay pornography magazine tumble out of his jacket. Calmly, Vince says that someone must have planted it on him. Egging him on, Lani says, "oh, somebody absolutely could have planted that." He tells Vince to call the police and ask for someone to come fingerprint the magazine. That will tell everyone, once and for all, whose fingerprints are all over the pages. Quickly, he swipes Macy's phone from her hand and dials 9-1-1. When the operator answers, he manages to say that he's at the Greyhound bus stop before Vince smashes the phone out of his hands. Vince tackles Lani and starts pounding him, laying punches into his head and body. Claire breaks away from Phil's grip and leaps on Vince. She feels her knuckles split open as she pounds Vince's face into the cement. Moments later, Lani pulls her off Vince and carries her to the bus, leaving everyone else shouting at them in the parking lot.

As the bus pulls away, Lani pulls a handkerchief and wet wipes out his backpack and starts cleaning Claire's wounds. All Claire's emotions boil over, and she can't decide if she's mad at Vince, Lani, or herself for getting into this terrible situation. It's clear that her social life is over, all her friends hate her, and she's going to be labeled a nutcase for the rest of her high school career. Even though he's angry and hurt too, Lani encourages Claire by saying that sometimes it has to get worse before it can get better. Now, everything is out in the open and Claire can start healing. This statement makes Claire realize that yes, everything in her life has been turned upside down and the only person she has to cling to is Lani. She's so grateful to have him in her life, so happy to have someone to guide her through as her version of reality crumbles. She decides once and for all that angels are real, and Lani is one of them. Leaning against Lani's chest, Claire closes her eyes and falls asleep. She wakes up when they arrive at the



station and leans over to wake him. She's shocked to see that Lani isn't there. His bag is gone and his seat is empty. He's disappeared, as if he was never there at all.

Chapters 16 - 18 Analysis

Many interesting relationships are highlighted in this chapter. First, Tony's control over his minions - Vince, Scott, and Phil - is plainly seen. He convinces them to come beat up Lani simply because he's different, simply because his account of what happened outside the Rod & Reel questions his sexuality. Vince is the first to make a violent move toward Lani, and when he does, the pornographic magazine falls out of his pocket. It should be clear to the reader that Lani somehow planted the magazine there, but Vince's reaction is what's interesting. He folds the magazine back up and puts it in his pocket. It seems as if he's seen the magazine before. This is the first of many clues that Tony's family might know the truth about his sexuality, but they can't yet admit it. Vince picking up the magazine so he can dispose of it later is a form of repression - another psychological term discussed in greater detail later in the novel. Vince is trying to cover something up for his brother, even if he hasn't consciously acknowledged the truth himself. Regardless, this chapter proves that the Clementi brothers are violent and this fistfight is not the end to their torture.

While they're on the bus, Claire and Lani discuss floating angels again. Lani says that, "you don't often find angels in places like happy homes and rich people's backyard parties. [Andovenes, the philosopher] says that angels flock to places like hospitals and homeless shelters and jails, because those people realize they need help. And so they are able to believe in strange phenomena" (Page 177). This hints at the idea that angels never reveal they're angels because if they did, humans would act differently when they were around. Since the whole point of having an angel in disguise is to test which humans are kind and which are evil, it would make sense, then for floating angels to take the form of society's least loved: the homeless, homosexuals, or the ill, for example. When Claire wakes up from her nap, she discovers that Lani has disappeared. Although the situation is somewhat confusing for the reader, and never fully resolved, it is meant to foreshadow the way Lani disappears at the end of the novel. He has slipped away without a trace after being beaten and bloodied. The next time Claire sees him, he is healed.



Chapters 19 - 21

Chapters 19 - 21 Summary

When Claire arrives at her father's house, she feels like a zombie. She can't figure out what happened to Lani, and she's exhausted from the fight, so she falls asleep as soon as she walks through the door. The next morning, her father says that Lani called; he's back at home, but he is dead set about Claire visiting his therapist, Dr. Erdman. Out of principle, Claire does not believe she needs therapy: she is saner than half the population of Hackett Island, her parents included. She phones Lani to shout at him for abandoning her on the bus, but he sounds frantic when she answers the phone. Earlier that morning, a package had arrived for him on the front steps. He assumed it was the angel costume Ellen promised to send him. But when he went out to pick up the package, it was gone. Clearly someone one from Coast Regional High - most likely the Clementi brothers - has stolen it. The problem isn't just that the costume is angel dress, the problem is that it's made out of layered women's lingerie. Knowing that Sydney's café is just across the street, Claire urges Lani to ask Sydney if she saw anything, and agrees to visit Dr. Erdman.

Ellen accompanies Claire to her first meeting with Dr. Erdman, because she, too, had been treated by him. Claire is violent and defiant in the office, refusing to answer any of his questions or acknowledge her eating disorder as a problem. When she starts to talk about Macy and the issue of Lani and Tony outside the Rod & Reel, Dr. Erdman suggests that Macy's powers of persuasion might be more influencing than Claire ever gave her credit for. Before she goes, Dr. Erdman gives Lani a business card of a local band, suggesting that she call them to jam sometime. Claire is shocked by this generous offer and immediately begins to regard Dr. Erdman in a new light. She and Ellen head to the shopping mall to buy a new outfit for when Claire meets the band. As they shop, they get a phone call from Lani. He's spoken with Sydney and discovered that it was definitely Macy who stole the package. Ellen is outraged: she can't believe her best friend would be so bold. Before they hang up, Lani tells Claire to visit the clothing store RazorBacks, sure she'll find the perfect outfit for her big gig there. When Claire arrives at the store, she sees that Lani is right. The store only sells leather clothing items, and immediately, Claire picks out a leather jacket and a pair of leather pants that she likes. Unfortunately, the store is out of her perfect size in both items. Disheartened, Claire is just about to leave the store when the sales associate calls her name. She hadn't realized who Claire was, but hours before she arrived, someone had called in a special order for her, an early birthday present. When Claire opens the box, it holds the exact leather jacket and pants she had picked out, in her perfect size.

Chapters 19 - 21 Analysis

It's interesting to note that every time Lani moves from one place to another, Claire is sleeping. Every time they take public transport together, she falls asleep. During the



many attacks when Lani is physically moved, Claire is either asleep or unconscious. This may be because Plum-Ucci doesn't feel comfortable creating actual images for these scenes, or because she's trying to insinuate that Lani is an angel and that he moves around differently. Either way, some readers might be annoyed by the fact that when tragedy strikes, Claire always seems to be asleep, so the reader is forced to relive the events through summarized dialogue later.

In this section, Claire begins to reinvent herself. Now that she's free of the crippling constraint her friends had over her life - they had even made her feel embarrassed about the fact that she played guitar, calling the hobby "dorky," she is free to spread her wings - another hint toward the theme of angels on earth. Although she never would have admitted it a month ago, Claire is overwhelmed with excitement when she is invited to practice with a real Philadelphia band. In an earlier chapter, she told Lani that she would love to wear black leather, even though she wouldn't be caught dead in it at Coast Regional High. Once Claire starts to explore her own identity, without the popular kids harassing her into conforming, she decides that now's the time to embrace leather. The fact that Lani has picked out the same clothes for Claire, in the exact same sizes, showcases how close their friendship is even though they've only known each other a few weeks. It's also possible that Plum-Ucci wants the reader to believe that Lani has special, heavenly powers. At times, she pushes the idea that Lani could be an angel a bit too far, bashing the reader over the head with clues and angelic symbolism.



Chapters 22 - 25

Chapters 22 - 25 Summary

When she gets home, Claire immediately calls Lani to thank him for the generous gift. She stuffs her face with food and rushes to get ready before her first band practice with Calcutta. On the phone, Lani says that the nightgowns are still missing, but Macy hurled the angel book Ellen mailed into the gutter outside his house. He doesn't care much about the nightgowns, and is pleased to have this rare and valuable book back in his possession. At band practice, Claire is shocked to see how much older the rest of the musicians are than her, and she's amazed by their talent and prowess on their instruments. She's even more surprised to see that these older musicians are impressed by her talent as well, and ask if she'd like to jam with them full-time. It isn't until practice is over that Claire realizes that most of the band wear matching hospital bracelets. She discovers that each member of the band suffers from a life threatening illness, from cancer to AIDS. She, too, suffered from a major disease, but unlike most of them, she is a survivor: "I never spent much time feeling proud of being a cancer survivor. All of a sudden I was never so proud in my life" (Page 220). When Claire is walking home, she spots a few middle school girls who first compliment Claire's new leather pants and then ask if she's the girl who hangs out "with that faggot" (Page 223). Claire snaps and threatens to beat the girls up if they ever use that word again, and the frightened girls tell her that everyone in town is calling him that because they've seen the women's lingerie he likes to wear. Macy has hung the nightgowns from her front porch with giant signs proclaiming that they belong to Lani Garver. Seeing Macy's callous, homophobic behavior snaps something inside Claire. She grabs Macy by the head and starts pummeling her with punches. She holds Macy in a headlock and demands that she tell the truth about Lani and Tony. She couldn't have overheard what she claimed to hear. Bawling, Macy swears that what she said is true. She heard Lani coming on to Tony. After the fight, Claire runs over to Lani's house. He opens the door with panicked eyes and tells her they need to get out of Hackett, fast.

Chapters 22 - 25 Analysis

Claire has fully embraced her new self-esteem. Her relationship with food has greatly improved. She's gaining weight and no longer struggles to control the calories she eats. For the first time in her life, Claire is proud of her musical abilities and the fact that she's a cancer survivor. Claire even has newfound self-esteem. She no longer cares what others think about the way she dresses, who she hangs out with, or how she spends her spare time. Claire has spent her entire life refusing to be angry. She's never been angry about the fact that she had cancer, never been angry with her parents for divorcing, never been angry with her mother's alcoholism. After spending her entire life burying, or repressing, her anger, Claire finally snaps. She begins shouting at everyone and even engages in a physical altercation with Macy. Again, Macy's certainty about what she heard highlights the power of convenient recollection in one's life. She truly

believes what she heard and no amount of convincing will change her mind. It's interesting to note that even though Macy was at the bus station when the pornographic magazine fell out of Vince's jacket pocket, she later began telling people that she saw Lani throw the magazine at him. She is just as adamant about what she saw that day, proving that she honestly believes her own lies.



Chapters 25 - 27

Chapters 25 - 27 Summary

Lani says that in the last phone call from Tony, Tony threatened his life. Before Lani slipped the porn magazine into Vince's pocket, he removed the centerfolds, just enough evidence for Tony to know he was on to him. Now, Tony wants the centerfolds back or he says he'll kill Lani. Lani has been threatened by lots of homophobes in the past, but something about Tony's vicious anger forces Lani to believe him. Claire's mind flashes back to the horrible night at the wharf when Tony put Phil's life in jeopardy by forcing him into the fishing net, all because Macy had called him a queen. She can't imagine what Tony would do if Lani threatened to out him, so she believes Tony's threat too. Claire begs Lani to call his mother for a ride off the island, but Lani says she won't do it. She thinks Lani brings this bullying upon himself, so she won't help him escape it. This is the real reason why he ran away those years ago. His mother turned his back on him when he needed her the most. Claire hears the floorboards creak downstairs and fears that someone might already be in the house. Rather than barricade his door against the intruder, Lani slips into the angel costume Claire returned to him. When she sees what he's doing, Claire starts shouting. If Tony Clementi sees Lani in women's lingerie, it will only egg him on. Lani refuses to cover up who he is truly is. If Tony is afraid of Lani's homosexuality, he's going to force him to look it in the eye as he kills him. Knowing that she has to take the situation into her own hands, Claire calls all the responsible adults she can think of, begging for a ride off the island. No one except her mother picks up the phone. It's clear that Claire's mother is drunk, and she's unwilling to listen to Claire's pleas. She says that if Tony Clementi is threatening her, she probably deserves it for hanging around with a lunatic. As Claire screams into the phone, Tony bursts through the bedroom door and snatches the phone out of her hand. He tells Claire's mom that Claire was just joking, and that he's going to bring her home now, save her from the lunatic.

When Lani sees Tony in the room, he falls to the floor and starts weeping. At first, Claire thinks he's faking, but when Lani turns his face up to the light, she can see that the tears are real. Claire is horrified; she always thought Lani was good at thinking on his feet. She never expected him to crumble like this. As Tony taunts and hits Lani, Claire picks up her phone with shaking hands and tries to dial 9-1-1. The beeping of the keys alerts Tony to what she's doing and he smashes the phone out of her hands. Tony grabs Claire by the throat and hurls her into the wall. Lani digs the centerfold photos out of his closet and hands them to Tony, begging him to take the photos and leave him alone. As Tony burns the photos one by one, Claire manages to escape the room. She sprints down the stairs and onto the front lawn, where Vince, Phil, and Scott immediately tackle her. When Claire starts throwing punches, Scott, her own boyfriend, slaps her hard across the face and throws her into the back of Vince's car. Claire screams that Tony is upstairs burning evidence of his own homosexuality while all his friends sit stupidly outside, oblivious to his manipulation. Before she can finish her sentence, Vince jumps on her and starts bashing her head against the side of the car. Claire blacks out.



Chapters 25 - 27 Analysis

In this chapter, all the questionable relationships are finally revealed in black-and-white. Claire's friends have no regard for her safety, and her own boyfriend turns against her, helping beat and kidnap her to prove his masculinity. The theme of self-identity is clear. Scott, who deep down is probably a decent guy, is afraid of revealing his true identity to his friends, fearing they will view him as weak. In contrast, rather than barricade his door against Tony, Lani slips into his angel costume. When she sees what he's doing, Claire starts shouting. If Tony Clementi sees Lani in women's lingerie, it will only egg him on. Lani refuses to cover up who he is truly is. If Tony is afraid of Lani's homosexuality, he's going to force Tony to look it in the eye as he kills him. It's also interesting to note that Claire's mother refuses to send help when Claire says she's in trouble. Mrs. McKenzie seems to think that by hanging out with Lani, she deserves to be bullied, an echo to Mrs. Garver's earlier statements about how Lani brings the bullying upon himself. There has been much outcry over Mrs. McKenzie's callous treatment of Claire, particularly because throughout the novel, she's been portrayed as an alcoholic but loving mother. Turning her back on a clearly distressed child seems out-of-character and unbelievable for almost any parent.

What's most interesting, however, is the way that Lani crumbles under Tony's gaze. For the first time in the novel, he's portrayed as weak, vulnerable, afraid. It's difficult to believe that a teenager who grew up on the streets and has been dealing with bullies his entire life would suddenly break. It seems out of character, and everyone, from Claire to the reader, is confused by his behavior. It's never fully explained in the text, but in the final chapters, it's insinuated that Lani knew his time was coming. By practically inviting Tony to take him to the marina, saying "I can't swim" rather than "I'm an excellent swimmer," which might have delayed the crime, Lani is accepting the fact that it's time to move on to a new needy person. Keen readers might remember the nurse's statement in Chapter 9 that floating angels need to die before they can move on: "They're like the Good Lord, you know? They killed him, but he just jumped back up again when nobody was looking, see? Faked 'em all out" (Page 90). In a way, Lani needs Tony to think he's dead so he can carry on with his mission. There's no point in fighting back now. Although he appears weak, Lani is actually in control the whole time.



Chapters 28 - 30

Chapters 28 - 30 Summary

When Claire comes-to, she knows that she has been brought to the wharf in the back of Tony's truck. She can hear the fishing net being cranked into the air. When her eyes focus, she sees Lani curled up in a ball inside it. Her heart sinks. She knows there's no way for her to save him, so she has to pray that Tony only wants to scare him, not actually kill him. To her horror, Tony laughs as he sends the net soaring into the water. White, foamy bubbles are the only evidence of Lani's struggle in the icy, black water. Minutes later, Tony hauls the net back up: Lani is still curled in a ball but he isn't screaming anymore. He's shaking like a leaf. Tony demands that Lani repeat, "Tony Clementi, you hold my life in your hands. And I would lick your boots if I was good enough" (Page 259). Instead of doing as Tony demands, Lani calmly says, "You are a closet-reading, homo-porn fanatic, scum wad, hypocrite ... who dials nine-hundred numbers to get off on pretty boys" (Page 260). Tony plunges the net back into the water, screaming at Lani to die. Phil begs Tony to pull the net back up before he kills the kid, but Tony refuses. With a strength she didn't know she had, Claire rises from the ground, grabs the hatchet near her feet, and swings at Tony. He puts up his hands to block her blow, and the hatchet crashes hard between his fingers, spurting blood everywhere. The guys haul up the net and throw Claire inside. They argue back-and-forth about how they should punish her. Tony is adamant that they both have to die, but neither Phil nor Scott actually thought they were going to kill anyone, just scare them. As Phil reaches to pull the net back in, Lani looks at Claire with terrified eyes. His last words to her are, "Claire, are you a good swimmer?" From the corner of her eye, Claire sees an enraged Tony running toward them with the hatchet, He swings, cleanly severing the rope that holds the net above the water. As soon as they hit the icy blackness, Lani grips tightly to Claire, so tightly that she can't move her arms or legs. She feels herself sinking, drowning, and has no choice but to fight Lani off her so she can save herself. As she flails up to the surface, she sees Lani's eyes, huge and white with fear. She kicks up to the surface, chokes in some air, and immediately dives back down to save Lani. She dives three times before Phil leaps into the water to take over searching. Scott hauls Claire from the water and moments later, Phil surfaces with Lani's white nightgown in his hand. The body was nowhere to be found.

Chapters 28 - 30 Analysis

In this chapter, the title of the novel is revealed as everyone, the reader included, wonders what happened to Lani Garver. There's no doubt that Tony Clementi is 100% responsible for Lani's disappearance / death. It's interesting to note that even though Claire dove for Lani seconds after his disappearance and Phil dove in moments later, no one ever saw his body. Lani was last seen wearing a white nightgown, with white being a strong symbol for purity, in the water. If the nightgown were found floating in the water, it is safe to say that wherever Lani's body resurfaces, he will be naked. This is an



important symbolic image: a nude body resurfacing from water is a strong symbol for rebirth. Still, because Claire feels there was more she could have done to help Lani, she will live with the guilt of his death - if that's what really happened - for the rest of her life. Even though she considers calling the police from the wharf, Claire doesn't. This fact has outraged critics. If Claire truly loved Lani, she would have called the police before the guys could destroy any evidence. Even if she felt too intimidated to call the police while the Clementi brothers were around, Claire could have called them when she got home. Instead, Claire falls asleep. This highlights the complaint many readers have had that Claire is an unlikable character, and that she deserves whatever guilt she lives with.

Lani's disappearance / death has sparked other controversy. While some readers have heralded this novel as a milestone in gay literature, some members of the gay community argue that it is actually a step backward. For young gay teens searching for literature that represents their unique emotional struggles, this novel provides a dark, depressing message. Lani is yet another gay character to be killed by the straight community. Turning his gayness into a mythical heavenly force does nothing to educate the community about the reality of bullying, homosexuality, and homophobia.



Chapters 31 - 33

Chapters 31 - 33 Summary

In the days that follow Lani Garver's death, Claire goes through a strange assortment of emotions. She allows Scott to carry her home, clean up her injuries, and make her promise not to go to the cops. The guys decide that they will return to the wharf in the morning and search for Lani's body. Either way, they plan to tell everyone that Lani ran away again. As long as there's no body, there's no proof of murder. Claire walks back home, passes her mother passed out on the couch, and falls asleep. In the morning, her mother wakes her up demanding answers. Claire's father is on the phone demanding to know what happened to her the night before. He says that he wants to take her in to the hospital to check if she's having a relapse. Claire fights the urge to laugh in his face. She screams at both her parents, accusing them of being out-of-touch with her life, selfish, and of not caring what happens to her. She threatens to call child protective services on her mother, whose alcoholism partially led to the situation Claire found herself in the night before, and threatens both parents that she's going to run away, live on the streets. She pushes through the front door knowing that she has to tell Mrs. Garver what happened. Lani secretly hopes that when Mrs. Garver hears the news, she'll be overwhelmed with guilt knowing that homophobia partially led to Lani's death. When Mrs. Garver opens the door, however, she's already crying. She fears that Lani has runaway again, and begs Claire to give him a message if he calls her: "Tell him I love him. Tell him I was never, ever sorry we adopted him. Tell him that when I said mean things to him ... it wasn't because I hated him. It was that ... I was scared. I liked him just the way he was, but other people were always hurting him, and I just wanted to prevent some of it. I was scared if he didn't change, that he would get in some very serious trouble" (Page 282). Suddenly, Claire feels overwhelmed by Mrs. Garver's grief, like she can't possibly tell her the truth. She lies and says that she left some homework hoping to find evidence of a struggle, evidence that Lani had been murdered. She finds that Lani's room is completely cleared out, even his backpacks are gone. If the room had been full when they were kidnapped the night before, what happened to all his stuff? One thing that was left behind was Lani's book on angels. Claire flips through the pages and stumbles across some haunting words about floating angels: "It behooves thy mission to rely on thy superior intellect when trouble befalls thee ... and to refrain from thy greater forms until thy suffering is complete" (Page 291). The words sear Claire's heart. Perhaps the medic at Franklin Hospital had been right all along. Maybe Lani truly was an angel. Maybe he wasn't dead at all, which is why there was no body, but that he managed to escape and used the moment to run away, toward the next person who needed his help.

In the following days, Claire is admitted to the hospital with pneumonia and bronchitis as a result of her dip in the sea. She calls the police and tells them what really happened that night, but without a body, there is no case. To be safe, the police force orders the marina to be dredged, but still, they find nothing. Not even Mrs. Garver is willing to believe that Lani is dead. She is adamant that Claire is making the whole story up. Lani



ran away. Why else would his belongings be missing? In the end, the case against Tony and his gang is dropped, but they still reach a sense of justice. It seems that everyone, both good and bad, got what was coming to them.

Chapters 31 - 33 Analysis

The reaction to Lani Garver's death is interesting on many levels. Perhaps Mrs. Garver's reaction is the most alarming. She refuses to believe that Lani is dead, even going so far as to call Claire mentally unstable for suggesting it. Mrs. Garver is clearly suffering from some form of repression. She represses the possibility that her son might be dead and that she might be partially responsible for alienating him. The missing backpacks make the situation questionable, but it's very possible one of Tony's friends could have disposed of the bags, or that Mrs. Garver could have unpacked them herself, refusing to believe that Lani was really gone. Of course it's also possible that Lani escaped from the water, collected his bags, and went on his way. How he could have slipped unnoticed from the sea and traveled, naked, back to the house freezing and wet is not explained. Even Claire begins to doubt her own memories, constantly questioning whether what she remembers is truth, or a convenient recollection. Claire is forced to face the truth when she must decide whether she believes Lani is dead, or if he escaped and is a floating angel. Claire makes her final decision, but the reader is left to decide for themselves: was Lani represented accurately through Claire's narration, or did she conveniently recollect their friendship?

In this final chapter, Plum-Ucci gives a long explanation of what happened to each of the characters after Lani Garver's disappearance. Tony Clementi intentionally drives his car off the highway saying that he was "sick of looking in his rearview mirror all the time and seeing some faggot standing in the middle of his flatbed, staring back at him" (Page 301). Soon after, Vince commits suicide in his car leaving a note that cryptically says, "I ain't waiting around here to get haunted. I'm going after him" (Page 302). Phil and Scott go on with their lives, but unhappily. Claire's mother joins AA, and Claire enjoys a life of great musical success. In a way, the closing chapter seems to simplify the effects Lani Garver's presence has had on the Hackett Island community. It's too simple to say that everyone got what was coming to them. In reality, justice wasn't served. The police refused to open a case against the Clementi brothers and Lani Garver's body was never found. The ambiguous ending - was Lani an angel or was he human - does little more than absolve Claire of her guilt. Deciding that Lani is a floating angel makes everything easier for Claire: she doesn't have to tell Mrs. Garver the truth about what happened on the pier, doesn't have to endanger herself by testifying in court against the Clementi brothers, and she doesn't have to face the crippling guilt that Lani died in front of her eyes. The ending has divided critics with some calling it a shameful cop-out and others calling it a literary masterpiece. In the end, like so much of the novel, it is up to the reader to decide how they feel and to decide what really happened to Lani Garver.



Characters

Claire McKenzie

Claire McKenzie is the seventeen-year-old protagonist of the novel. She's described as being moderately pretty, thin, and with long hair that has grown back beautifully since she left chemo in middle school. At the opening of the novel, Claire McKenzie is happy in her life. She's been in leukemia remission for a few years, and has managed to keep her past illness a secret from many of her schoolmates, allowing her to skyrocket in popularity to the cool crowd. Claire has just lost a bunch of weight, secured a spot on the cheerleading squad, and snagged a hot boyfriend from the Fish Frat. Claire's perfect life is rattled by the introduction of a new kid at school, Lani Garver, an androgynous and puzzling teenager. Although Lani is ousted by the rest of the cool kids, Claire feels strangely drawn to him, particularly after he takes her to a special hospital in Philadelphia where she can get her blood tested for a leukemia relapse without her parents knowing or worrying. Halfway through the novel, Claire is forced to rethink all her friendships when a strange incident involving Lani and the most popular guy in school, Tony Clementi, takes place. Everyone has a different version of the events, and Claire must decide which friend to believe. Soon, Claire learns that her friends have been lying, or conveniently forgetting crucial details about the incident and Claire realizes that it was Tony who assaulted Lani, not the other way around. At the end of the novel, Claire is forced to come to terms with many things: her friendships, her relationships with family, her own mortality, and the idea that angels may live amongst us.

Lani Garver

Lani Garver is the new kid in town. He's described as tall, thin, tan-skinned and having dark, chocolate-colored eyes. The strangest thing about Lani's appearance is that upon first glance, it's almost impossible to tell whether he's a boy or a girl. He wears his hair long and sleek, curled under at the bottom. His gorgeous eyes appear to be lined, and his lips appear juicy. He speaks in a high-pitched, effeminate voice, has limp wrists and delicate gestures that leaves everyone automatically assuming that he's gay. For his part, Lani does nothing to dispel these rumors. He's painfully vague about everything from his gender to his age, refusing to be labeled or put in a "box." Although Lani seems to have come out of nowhere, he seems to know everyone - or something about everyone - with whom he comes in contact. After spending a lifetime in libraries to escape the bullies outside, Lani is well read on human psychology and can pinpoint tiny eccentricities about a person by simply glancing their way. Lani uses his knowledge to deflect the pain of years of abuse, from both his parents and his classmates. On Hackett Island, nothing is different: Lani is immediately isolated, ostracized, and tormented for being different, yet Lani refuses to back down to the bullies. He even encourages their abuse by talking back to them, teasing them, and when absolutely necessary, physically attacking them. One bully in town, Tony Clementi, takes a



particular interest in Lani because he's a closeted homosexual himself. Rather than admitting his own sexuality, Tony torments and abuses Lani, desperately afraid that if he doesn't, someone will discover the truth about him. At the end of the novel, Tony hangs Lani in a fishing net and threatens to drown him in the sea if he doesn't grovel at his feet. Lani refuses and disappears into the dark, icy water. Although various people dive in and try to save him, no body is ever discovered, leaving the reader, and the entire town of Hackett to question, what happened to Lani Garver?

Macy Matlock

Macy Matlock is Claire's best friend. She's popular, arrogant, and outrageously nosy. Macy has a habit of pinpointing the worst characteristic of a person - whether real or imagined - and highlighting that flaw whenever possible, preferably to turn others against that individual. Macy is the first to accost Lani in the hallway, demanding to know whether he's a boy or a girl. It's clear that Lani makes Macy uncomfortable, but no one was expecting Macy to take part in his torment. Macy helps the Fish Frat steal a package from Lani's house, informs Claire's mother that she's leaving with Lani, and even steals Lani's nightgowns to hang in a public display of shaming.

Phil

Phil is Macy's boyfriend. He is part of the Fish Frat and one of the many boys who torments Lani Garver while he's at Coast Regional High School. Phil is at the wharf on the night Lani disappears beneath the water, and he dives in to try to save him.

Scott Dern

Scott Dern is Claire's boyfriend. He is part of the Fish Frat and one of the many boys who torments Lani Garver while he's at Coast Regional High School. Scott's father owns a fishing boat where the teenagers often hang out on the weekend. Scott is terrified of his father finding out about their activities, a fear that augments his understanding of right and wrong.

Tony Clementi

Tony Clementi is the main villain in the novel. He is a closeted homosexual who torments and abuses Lani as a way of punishing himself for his shame. Tony tries to molest Lani outside a bar one evening, and when his friends approach, Tony swears that Lani was coming on to him. From then on, Tony is on a mission to torment Lani. He phones him hundreds of times a day, masturbating on the other line. He sends gay porn to Lani's house, and at the end of the novel, breaks in to Lani's house, kidnaps him, and kills him. In the aftermath of Lani's disappearance, Tony is so haunted by Lani's ghost that he drives his truck off the highway.



Vince Clementi

Vince Clementi is Tony's younger brother. He's a reckless driver and a terrible bully, just like his brother. It's unclear whether or not Vince knows about Tony's homosexuality, but he fights tooth-and-nail to cover up any evidence of his brother's sexuality. After Lani Garver's disappearance, Vince commits suicide, saying that he's not waiting around to be haunted. He's going after Lani Garver himself.

Ellen

Ellen is Lani's friend from the therapist's office. Ellen proves to be an excellent friend for Claire, particularly when she has her falling out with Macy. Ellen has overcome an eating disorder and started to gain control over her emotions when she befriends Claire. A lot of her emotional maturity rubs off on Claire, who starts to feel better about herself in Ellen's presence.

Dr. Erdman

Dr. Erdman is Claire's therapist. Despite the fact that Claire wanted nothing to do with therapy, Dr. Erdman takes his time, patiently waiting for Claire to open up. Dr. Erdman is a great lover of music and encourages Claire to join the band Calcutta in her spare time.

Mrs. McKenzie

Mrs. McKenzie is Claire's mother. Ever since Claire was diagnosed with leukemia, Mrs. McKenzie has been self-medicating with alcohol. Now, she's a terrible alcoholic who lives vicariously through her teenage daughter's life. Mrs. McKenzie has inappropriate relationships with many of Claire's friends, and often sides with them in fights rather than siding with her own daughter. At the end of the novel, Claire is forced to call child protective services on her mother in the hopes that they will force her into Alcoholics Anonymous.

Mrs. Garver

Mrs. Garver is Lani's mother. She adopted Lani when he was six-years-old and always seemed to know that something was different about him. Although it often seems like Mrs. Garver doesn't love Lani, at the end of the novel, she says she acted that way to protect him. She knows that he is bullied and she doesn't care who's responsible for it: she simply wants it to stop. After Lani's disappearance, Mrs. Garver refuses to believe that he's dead, insisting that he must have run away.



Dr. Lowenstein

Dr. Lowenstein is the doctor who diagnoses Claire's eating disorder at Franklin Hospital. Dr. Lowenstein is a no-nonsense doctor who promises not to call Claire's parents as long as she starts gaining weight.



Objects/Places

Indian Summer

Indian Summer is the colloquial name for unseasonably warm seasons. Indian Summers typically happen in the fall, when the weather has already begun to cool off and suddenly turns warm again. On Hackett Island, people believe that curses follow the warmth of an Indian Summer, like the autumn Claire met Lani for the first time.

Old Sweat Sock

Old Sweat Sock is the name for the whiskey drunk by most of the fishermen on Hackett Island. It earned its name because of its atrocious quality and flavor, tasting like an old, sweaty sock. This is also the whiskey Claire's mother drinks every evening to dull the pain of having a sick child.

The Fish Frat

The Fish Frat is a group of upperclassman boys at Coast Regional High School, the school Claire and her friends attend. The boys in the Fish Frat are either fishermen's sons or closely related to the fishing culture. They're gorgeous, popular, and often, violent homophobic drunks.

Sydney's Cafe

Sydney's Café is where Claire works during her high school years. It is also where she plays her guitar on Saturday nights, earning rave reviews from those brave enough to be seen in a café on a Saturday night.

Hackett Island

Hackett Island, where the novel is set, is a small town where everyone knows everyone else's gossip. Throughout the year, it is mostly native islanders who live on Hackett, yet in the summer, it floods with tourists. Lani Garver's family had been summer visitors until his mother decided to move to the island permanently after her husband's death. The island is generally blue-collar, working class, with most of the residents making their living in the fishing industry.



The Library

The Library is Lani's safe haven. It's where he goes to escape the bullies because the tough kids don't want to be seen reading books, and librarians are some of the kindest, most intelligent people on earth. Rather than deal with the bullies outside, Lani buries himself in philosophy books learning all he can about human behavior.

Franklin Hospital

Franklin Hospital is the hospital in Philadelphia where Claire receives her leukemia testing without parental permission. Lani takes her to this hospital because it's equipped to deal with runaways and homeless people, performing tests and treating illnesses for individuals that might fall through the cracks at traditional hospitals. The doctors at Franklin Hospital diagnose Claire with an eating disorder.

Les Girls

Les Girls is Claire's mother's clique of divorced or single girlfriends who get together once a week and drink. It's really an excuse for depressed, alcoholic women to put on too much makeup and flirt with local men. Claire is deeply embarrassed by her mother's behavior in the group and wishes they would sober up together rather than enable each other's addictions.

Chicken

Chicken is the dangerous game the Fish Frat play with each other that involves dares that could easily end in serious injury or death. While playing chicken, Tony dares Phil to climb inside the fishing net and be lowered into the icy water for three minutes. Often, the boys in Fish Frat accept the dares simply because they don't want to look weak in front of their friends.

Floating Angels

A Floating Angel is an angel that comes down from heaven in human form to take care of needy people on earth. They're called floaters because they float from needy person to needy person, dipping in and out of people's lives. Floaters look like humans - but they have no age, gender, or sexuality - rather than a heavenly figure so that humans won't know when they're around. Most of the narrative is concerned with convincing the reader that Lani Garver is a floating angel sent from heaven to care for Claire.



Calcutta

Calcutta is the band Claire plays for after visiting with Dr. Erdman. The entire band is composed of musicians suffering from life-threatening illnesses, like cancer and AIDS. These musicians make Claire feel proud of her remission-status for the first time in her life.

RazorBacks

RazorBacks is the leather-goods store where Claire finds the perfect leather jacket and pants to complete her new, confident persona. When she tries to purchase the items in her size, however, the store is out of them. It isn't until later that Claire discovers that Lani has already bought her the exact items she picked out, in exactly the right size.



Themes

Convenient Recollection

The main theme of the novel is convenient recollection. Lani says that most humans suffer from convenient recollections: "a memory recalled inaccurately, to unconsciously protect against guilt, anxiety, or unwanted associations" (Page 132). The first time the reader is introduced to the idea of convenient recollections, Lani is trying to convince Claire that Macy has invented the moment when she swears she overheard Lani tell Tony not to blow smoke rings. As the novel progresses, Claire realizes that it would have been impossible for Macy to overhear this dialogue, but Macy is emphatic that this is what she heard. Macy's certainty about what she heard highlights the power of convenient recollection in one's life. Macy is unaware that she's lying, or that she's invented a new truth. Although the novel doesn't address the truth directly, it seems that Macy has conveniently recalled this dialogue as a way of blocking out the truth: that Tony is gay. Perhaps Macy is afraid of what will happen to her if she discovers Tony's true sexuality, or perhaps she's subconsciously lying to cover-up her own guilt about tormenting Lani. This theme carries through the entire novel and every character's behaviors, most notably Macy and Tony. Tony, who is clearly a closeted homosexual, refuses to acknowledge - either subconsciously or consciously - that he tried to molest Lani. He believes with 100% certainty that Lani came on to him, that Lani is the monster. Even Claire begins to doubt her own memories, constantly questioning whether what she remembers is truth, or a convenient recollection. At the end of the novel, Claire is forced to face the truth when she must decide whether she believes Lani is dead, or if he escaped and is a floating angel. Claire makes her final decision, but readers are left to decide for themselves: was Lani represented accurately through Claire's narration, or did she conveniently recollect their friendship? At the end of the novel, readers must decide for themselves what happened to Lani Garver.

Identity

When Lani Garver comes to town, everyone is immediately struck by his physicality: He's described as tall, thin, tan-skinned and having dark, chocolate-colored eyes. The strangest thing about Lani's appearance is that upon first glance, it's almost impossible to tell whether he's a boy or a girl. He wears his hair long and sleek, curled under at the bottom. His gorgeous eyes appear to be lined, and his lips appear juicy. He speaks in a high-pitched, effeminate voice, has limp wrists and delicate gestures that leave everyone automatically assuming that he's gay. For his part, Lani does nothing to dispel these rumors. He's painfully vague about everything from his gender to his age, refusing to be labeled or put in a "box." Through Lani's story, the message is made clear: people should be judged by their character, not by their age, gender, or sexual orientation. For his part, Lani lives by the same rule. He has friends from all over the country, from rich students to homeless drug addicts, black, white, gay, straight, young, old, and everyone in between. Lani embraces the idea of love without defining identity. Unfortunately,



many characters in the novel are intimidated by Lani's free spirit. One of the best ways to identify one's self is to say what you are not: I am not gay therefore I am straight. I am not black therefore I am white. I am not old therefore I am young. Lani refused to acknowledge the categories into which mainstream society often boxes individuals, but he wasn't so lucky himself. Bullies are often frightened by their own identities, the truth that lurks deep down in their souls, so they act out to cover up their insecurities. Because Tony was so terrified of his true identity as a homosexual, he violently fought against that box and killed Lani. At the end of the novel, Claire realizes why Lani had been so adamant about refusing to accept "boxes." They stereotype individuals, making it impossible to see the soul beneath the label: "You're supposed to be kind to everyone, because you never know when you're meeting an angel" (Page 307).



Style

Point of View

This novel is told in first-person limited omniscience narration through Claire McKenzie's perspective. This means that Claire speaks using "me" and "I" and that the only character to whose thoughts the reader has access are Claire's alone. The reader is held very close to Claire's emotions and thoughts, since these are the most important factors to understanding the novel as a whole. Because the reader is held so close to Claire, the point-of-view is completely reliable. As Claire struggles to understand what is happening around her - why her friends are lying to her and why they hate Lani so viciously - she has no reason to manipulate the circumstances for the reader.

Claire's situation, and ultimately her confusion, provides the perfect opportunity for the reader's questions to be answered. Whenever the reader is confused about the events in the novel, particularly questions about Lani's identity (whether physical or spiritual) Claire often asks the same questions simultaneously. This strengthens the bond readers form with Claire, which is important because Claire isn't necessarily a likeable character. Claire is popular, arrogant, self-centered, and by her own admission, "bitchy." Because of these traits, many readers will automatically feel an aversion to Claire's character, and may even believe that she deserved to die at the end of the novel. However, it is Claire's unabashed fear, curiosity, anger, and eventual acceptance of the truth that leads to the novel's satisfying end. Claire's point of view narration, however frustrating and naive, eventually endears her to the audience. Claire's experiences force readers to examine their own lives and make up their own minds about the ending, which makes for an incredibly powerful novel.

Setting

This novel is set on Hackett Island, somewhere off the Pennsylvania coastline. Hackett Island is a small town where everyone knows everyone else's gossip. Throughout the year, it is mostly native islanders who live on Hackett, yet in the summer, it floods with tourists. Lani Garver's family had been summer visitors until his mother decided to move to the island permanently after her husband's death. The island is generally blue-collar, working class, with most of the residents making their living in the fishing industry. The sons of the local fishermen are generally considered to be the most popular boys in school, and expected to take over their father's businesses someday. While the small-town feel might sound cozy and family-oriented, there are many problems within this society. First, residents have little to no access to the outside world, which makes them xenophobic and fearful of change. When Lani Garver arrives to town, no one knows how to treat him. He isn't easily defined (boy or girl, straight or gay), so he is treated with skepticism. As time passes, that skepticism turns to fear, which then turns into anger. Lani represents change, something different than what the islanders are used to, and they hate him for that. Additionally, because everyone has grown up together, they



work as a pack. Even if someone didn't agree with the way Lani was being treated, they would be too afraid of going against the pack and isolating themselves within the community to stand up for him. Similarly, police officers and judges are more likely to believe the word of someone they've known since childhood over the word of a new kid in town.

Language and Meaning

This novel is written for teenaged, young adult readers, and stars characters of the same age range. Because of this, the language is very conversational, with the voice of each character ringing true to what readers would hear everyday in their high school hallways - or what they remember of their high school hallways. Carol Plum-Ucci has clearly researched the voice of her characters deeply, which makes all the language, including the inner thoughts and dialogue completely believable; however, some critics have argued that the dialogue between the teenage boys is stilted, dated, and unnatural. Plum-Ucci does not shy away from the over-sexualization and profanity in teenage language and it is clearly evident in the text. Perhaps the most honest aspect of the language is the banter between the teenage girls, the way they playfully tease each other, flirt with their boyfriends, and bully their victims. The language with which readers might struggle the most is Lani's. Because Lani is so intelligent, well-read, and philosophical, some readers might struggle to meet his dialogue in the same headspace. Despite this, it is certainly the language of the novel that has skyrocketed this novel into nationwide success. Because the reader is held so close to Claire's personal thoughts, there are rarely, if ever, moments of confusion. Even when Claire is considering complex philosophic ideas, psychological terms, or theories on death, the reader is never confused. Because Claire's story takes place in the busy place of her high school hallways, many different characters occupy the same space simultaneously, with many of them moving in large packs. Through Claire's narration, Plum-Ucci deftly creates individuals within the masses, drawing precise attention to the characters, images, moments, and bits of dialogue that matter most. Moments like this draw the reader into - or back into - a vivid and distinct high school world.

Structure

What Happened to Lani Garver is composed of 33 chapters averaging twelve pages in length. The first half of the novel is decidedly slower paced than the second half of the novel, primarily building relationships, creating a vivid setting, and introducing key themes. The inciting incident, or the event that starts the plot rolling, is the strange interaction between Lani and Tony outside the Rod & Reel bar. Both characters have a different account of the events that night, which draws a line in the sand: you either believe Tony or you believe Lani. From there, the pace of the novel picks up, particularly as the bullying of Lani escalates. Once the readers reach the novel's climax, Lani's kidnap and drowning, they will likely be unable to put the book down. Although the plot itself is engaging, Plum-Ucci spends a lot of time describing complicated psychological terms, such as convenient recollection, repression, and monsterizing. Although heady,



these themes give readers deeper insight into character motivations as the plot progresses. Without this insight, the action could appear overly dramatic or shallow. Other attempts to complicate the novel aren't as successful. Plum-Ucci gives Claire every difficulty a teenage girl could possibly overcome: cancer, divorced parents, an alcoholic mother, tendencies toward self-mutilation, ostracization, and an eating disorder. These many obstacles overshadow the heart of the novel: Claire's relationship with Lani, and take away from this beautiful story of love and friendship.



Quotes

"The deep doesn't bother swallowing just anybody. The sea takes the extraordinary and leaves the rest be" (Page xi).

"I feel like God has entire, whole control over whether my illness stays away or comes back. And my only bargaining power is to be, like, super nice. Only problem is, I've probably got some killer-bitch tendencies" (Page 37).

"If you can understand human behavior, it can't hurt you nearly as much" (Page 47).

"I could hear them giggling and sparking up a doobie on the stern, kind of a subdued version of the usual. Sets of eyes kept looking at us, but I could not get over the feeling that everyone's biggest wish was to pretend the whole thing never happened" (Page 66).

There are times in life to grow, and there are times in life to shine. One can't grow and shine at the same time; it just doesn't work that way. Now you're growing. Tomorrow you'll shine" (Page 84).

"People generally have to be in a lot of trouble before their orderly little versions of reality crack open. People around here? They're in a lot of trouble. So, they can believe in lots of stuff" (Page 93).

"We're all dying, baby. But we're all living, too" (Page 115).

"There's a problem when you try to change what you actually believe. You can change what you say, you can change what you do ... but you can't just change what you believe" (Page 129).

"The truth will set you free, and then you shall be free indeed" (Page 153).

"You don't often find angels in places like happy homes and rich people's backyard parties. He says that angels flock to places like hospitals and homeless shelters and jails, because those people realize they need help. And so they are able to believe in strange phenomena" (Page 177).

"Complete happiness can feel so much like complete terror that it's hard to tell them apart" (Page 217).

"There is truth. There is a truth. And what you want, or you feel, or you need, isn't going to change the truth. Any more than it's going to topple a skyscraper. There's truth, and there's belief. Don't call a mule a stallion" (Page 245).

"It behooves thy mission to rely on thy superior intellect when trouble befalls thee ... and to refrain from thy greater forms until thy suffering is complete" (Page 291).



"I would love to say, 'You're supposed to be kind to everyone, because you never know when you're meeting an angel.' I could say that much and know I was speaking the truth" (Page 307).



Topics for Discussion

Describe the theory of convenient recollection as defined in the novel. How does convenient recollection serve Macy and Tony? Do you think Macy and Tony believe their own stories, or do they know the truth deep down? Be sure to include examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.

What aspects of his life is Lani vague about? Why do you think he isn't forthcoming about things like his age and gender? Do the answers to these questions actually matter? Why or why not? Should they? Be sure to include examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.

What do you think Claire means when she says, "Complete happiness can feel so much like complete terror that it's hard to tell them apart" (Page 217)? How does this line foreshadow her final image of Lani in the water, and her subsequent discovery of the angel book? Be sure to include examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.

Do you think Tony's family knows about his homosexuality? If so, why do they support his abuse of Lani? If not, how do you think he's managed to hide it from them? Why do you think Vince lashes out when Claire laughs about the pornographic magazine at the bus stop? What does this tell you about his relationship with Tony? Be sure to include examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.

Based on the opinions of the characters in the book, why do you think Claire suffers from an eating disorder? What does Claire struggle to control in her life? How does this affect her relationship with food? How does Claire manage to overcome her eating disorder? Do you think this treatment is realistic? Why or why not? Be sure to include examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.

Who / what do you think Lani Garver is? Is he really a floating angel, or just a highly intelligent kid? What clues does the novel give you to support either side of the argument? When you finished the novel, what did you believe? Be sure to include examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.

After Lani's death / disappearance, Claire, Tony, and Mrs. Garver all have very different ideas of what happened to him. Compare / contrast these three theories. Then, explain what you think happened to Lani Garver and why. Be sure to include examples from the text to help strengthen your arguments.