

A WORK IN PROGRESS

BY JARRETT LERNER



Novel Study Includes:

Vocabulary

Parts of a Narrative

Literary Devices

Novel Activities

Quick Write Topics

Discussion Questions



Reading Schedule:

Section 1: Pages 1 – 54

Section 2: Pages 55 – 105

Section 3: Pages 106 – 173

Section 4: Pages 174 – 225

Section 5: Pages 226 – 285

Section 6: Pages 286 – end

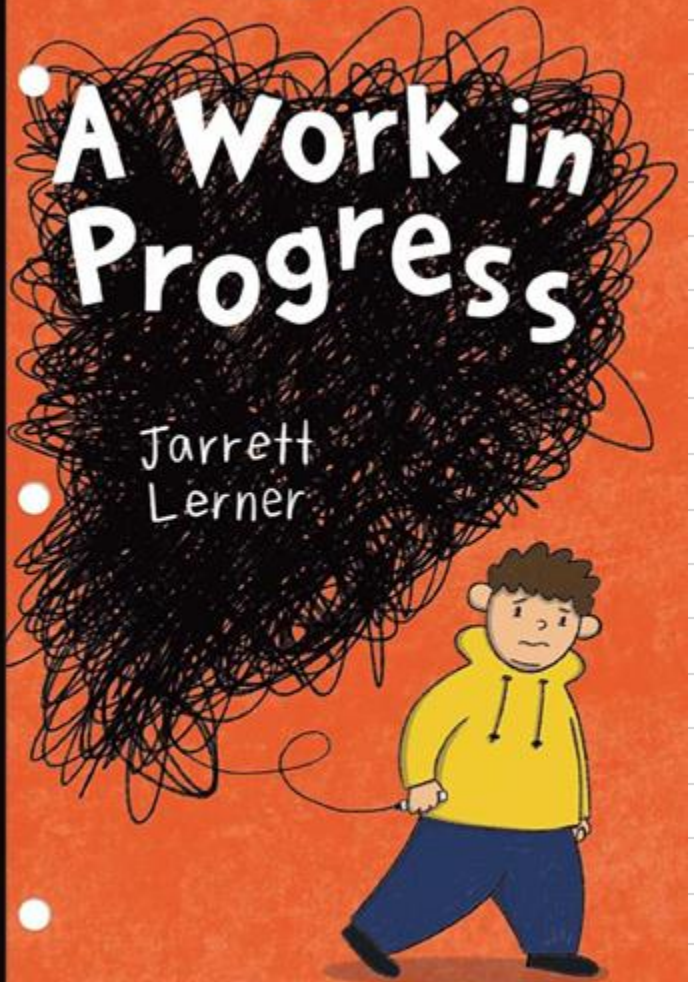


PRE-READING

Judge a Book by it's Cover

What questions do you
have?

What predictions can you
make?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Author-illustrator Jarrett Lerner is the award-winning creator of the EngiNerds series of Middle Grade novels, the Geeger the Robot series of early chapter books, the activity books Give This Book a Title and Give This Book a Cover, The Hunger Heroes series of graphic novel chapter books, and the Nat the Cat series of early readers. Jarrett is also the creator of the illustrated novel in verse *A Work in Progress*, which has received multiple starred reviews, was a Kids' Indie Next List pick, and was selected for the 2023 Global Read Aloud. All of Jarrett's books are published by Simon & Schuster. In addition to writing, drawing, and visiting schools and libraries across the country, Jarrett co-founded and co-organizes the #KidsNeedBooks and #KidsNeedMentors projects, and regularly spearheads fundraisers for various reading- and book-related causes. He is also the founder and operator of Jarrett Lerner's Creator Club. He can be found at jarrettlerner.com and on Twitter and Instagram at @Jarrett_Lerner. He lives with his wife and daughters in Massachusetts. (<https://jarrettlerner.com/>)



3 - 2 - 1 INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR



3 Facts you learned - 2 Inspirations or Interesting Things - 1 Question you are left with

SECTION 1

PAGES 1 - 54

Section 1 - VOCABULARY

- Scowling
- Fled
- Inferior
- Hurling
- Sneer
- Factual
- Oblivious
- Casually
- Former
- Hunch

Section 1 - QUICK WRITE



Will says what happened with Nick Fisher is “in there forever. PERMANENTLY. The memory might as well be tattooed on your brain.”

What is a memory, positive or negative, that is tattooed on your brain?

Describe it.



**WHAT ARE
LITERARY
DEVICES?**





SIMILES & METAPHORS

A simile is a comparison of two objects or actions using “like” or “as”

Ex. You are as bright as a ray of sunshine

A metaphor compares two objects or actions without using “like” or “as”

Ex. You are my sunshine

SIMILES



**“I stick out like a sore
thumb.” Pg 41**

METAPHORS



“The memory might as well be tattooed on your brain.” Pg 8



IDIOMS

An idiom is an expression or a figure of speech whose meaning cannot be understood from the literal meaning.

Ex. Piece of cake

On the ball

She spilled the beans

IDIOM



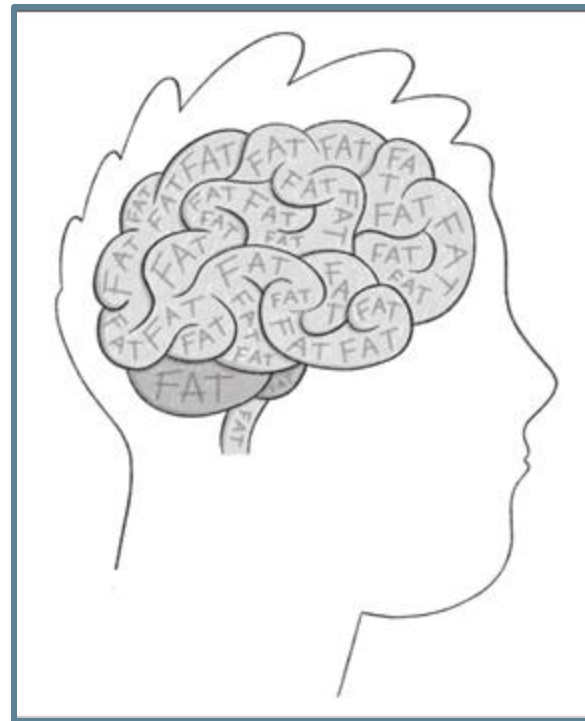
**“It sneaks up on you. It
just pops out. Out
of the blue.” pg 10**

What does the idiom “out of the blue” mean.

WHAT WOULD YOUR BRAIN LOOK LIKE?

Will draws his brain and what he thinks about.
What would your brain look like?

Draw it!



CHARACTERS

Parts of a
Narrative



Protagonist	Main character
Antagonist	Main opposition to the main character
Supporting	A major character
Extra	Minor or incidental character
Round	Complicated and interesting
Flat	Simple and underdeveloped
Dynamic	Grows, learns, or changes as the plot progresses
Static	Remains the same or changes very little



DIRECT VS INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION

Characterization is the creation and description of a fictional characters features, personality, and character. It can be direct or indirect.

Direct	Indirect
<p>The author tells the reader information about the character.</p> <p>Personality can be summarized in a line.</p> <p>Eg. “Laura is a positive and upbeat person.”</p>	<p>The author shows the reader information about the character.</p> <p>Actions, words, and other details all work together to create the character.</p> <p>Eg. “She smiled as she approached the stage and her contagious cheer took over the crowd.”</p>

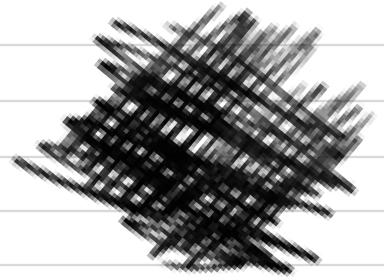


CHARACTERS

Name	Role in Book	Physical Description	Personality Description	Round/Flat?	Static/Dynamic

TYPES OF NEGATIVE SELF TALK

1. Personalizing
2. Filtering
3. Catastrophizing
4. Polarizing



Section 1 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. Why do you think Nick said what he did? Use what we know about Nick from how Will describes him.
2. “You’re FAT,” Nick said. No no no - he SPAT it.” Why does Will correct his wording? What other words can you think of to replace “said” in this situation?
3. The author chose to write this novel using stanzas and doodles. Why did he decide to make this story so visual?
4. Why doesn’t Will tell his friends that he isn’t over what Nick said to him? Explain.
5. “You become your own bully. And you do the job better than anyone else possibly could.” What does Will mean by this? Do you agree or disagree? Provide examples.

SECTION 2

PAGES 55-105

Section 2 - VOCABULARY

- Protectively
- Cram
- Linger
- Fascinated
- Slogging
- Dawdle
- Overwhelm
- Pathetic
- Dread
- Rare

Section 2 - QUICK WRITE



Will says that “Fat people are never heroes”.

Who else are “never heroes”?

Write a short story starring an unlikely superhero. What makes them unlikely? How did they get their powers? What do they do with them?





SETTING

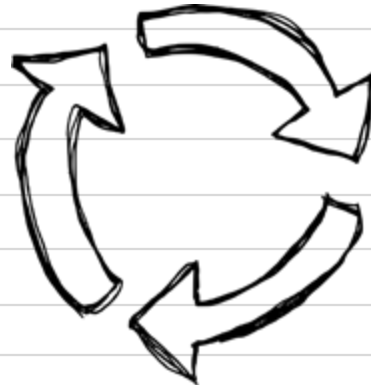
The time and location in which a story takes place. There are many things that contribute to a story's setting.

- **Place:** Where is the story taking place? Geographical location
- **Time:** When is the story taking place? Historical period, time of day, year etc.
- **Weather:** What is the weather like? Sunny? Rainy?
- **Social Conditions:** What is daily life of the characters like? Could include speech, dress, mannerisms etc.
- **Mood and Atmosphere:** What is the feeling of the story? Is it bright and cheerful or dark and frightening?

REPETITION



Repetition involves intentionally using a word, phrase or idea two or more times in a speech or written work. It is used as an effect or to emphasize an idea.



REPETITION



**“I eat and it takes me farther
and farther from that aisle in
that store.**

**Farther and farther from
myself.**

**Farther and farther from my
sad, crappy, pathetic life.” pg
86**

ALLITERATION



The same letter or sound at the beginning of multiple words in a phrase.

Ex. Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.



ALLITERATION



**“There are moments -
brief
beautiful
blissful
moments”**

Pg 87

HYPERBOLE



Exaggeration used for dramatic or comedic effect.

Ex. My bag weighs a ton



HYPERBOLE



**“Mom reads ONE email-
One of the nine thousand
messages my school sends out
each week.”**

pg 91



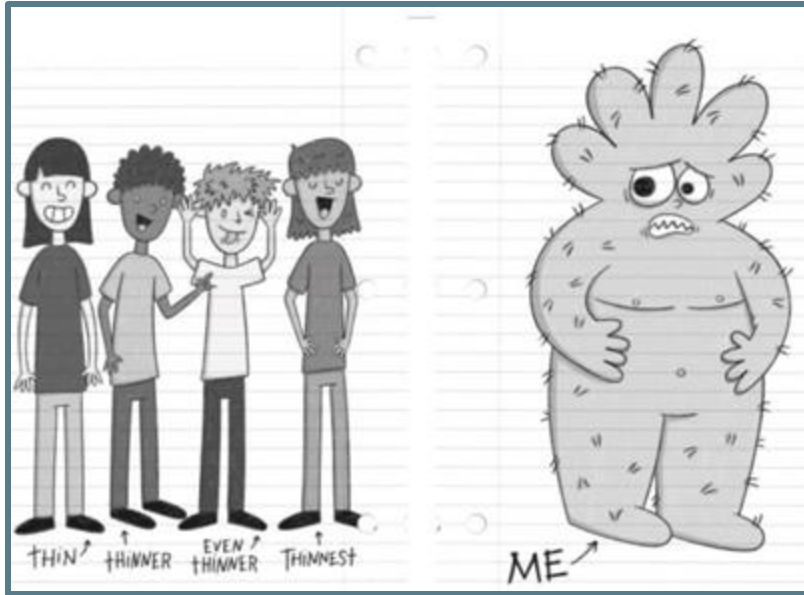
**“It was like an atom bomb
going off and wrecking
everything in its path.”**

Pg 52

Identify the Literary Device.

A PICTURE IS WORTH 1000 WORDS

Select one of the following images and describe Will's thinking behind the drawing.



Section 2 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. Will uses a lot of negative self talk in his journal entries. Provide an example of this from the section.
2. Will goes to the store to buy chips but after running into Dave he doesn't buy them. Why doesn't Will buy the chips? Explain.
3. Research the different types of eating disorders. Based on what we have read, which do you think applies to Will?
4. If you were to start a school club, what kind of club would it be?
5. Will says a kid that looks like him can't "put himself out there" and "that's just asking for trouble." What does he mean by this?
6. Will's notebook is filled with scribbles. What do the scribbles mean/represent?

SECTION 3

PAGES 106 - 173

Section 3 - VOCABULARY

- Wince
- Massive
- Devour
- Verging
- Clenching
- Humongous
- Obliterated
- Frantic
- Slunk
- Mound



Section 3 - QUICK WRITE



Will's journal entries are written in stanzas and full of interesting doodles.

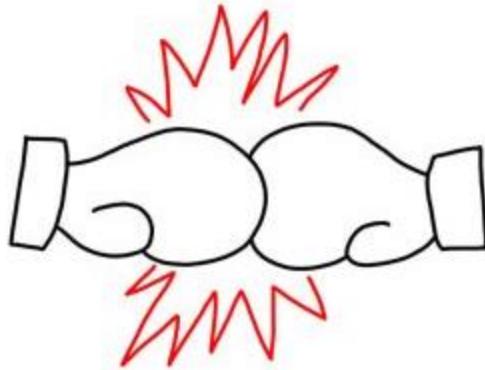
Write a journal entry describing a recent day of your life using the same style as Will... but without the negative self-talk.



INTERNAL & EXTERNAL CONFLICT

Internal Conflict: a struggle within the mind of a character. It can be mental or emotional

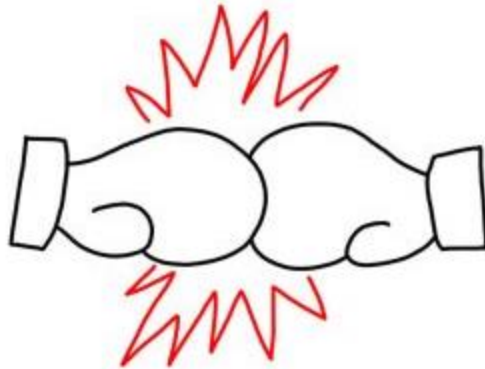
External Conflict: a struggle that occurs between a character and an outside force.





6 TYPES OF STORY CONFLICT

Person vs Self	Person vs Person	Person vs Nature
Person vs Technology	Person vs Supernatural	Person vs Society

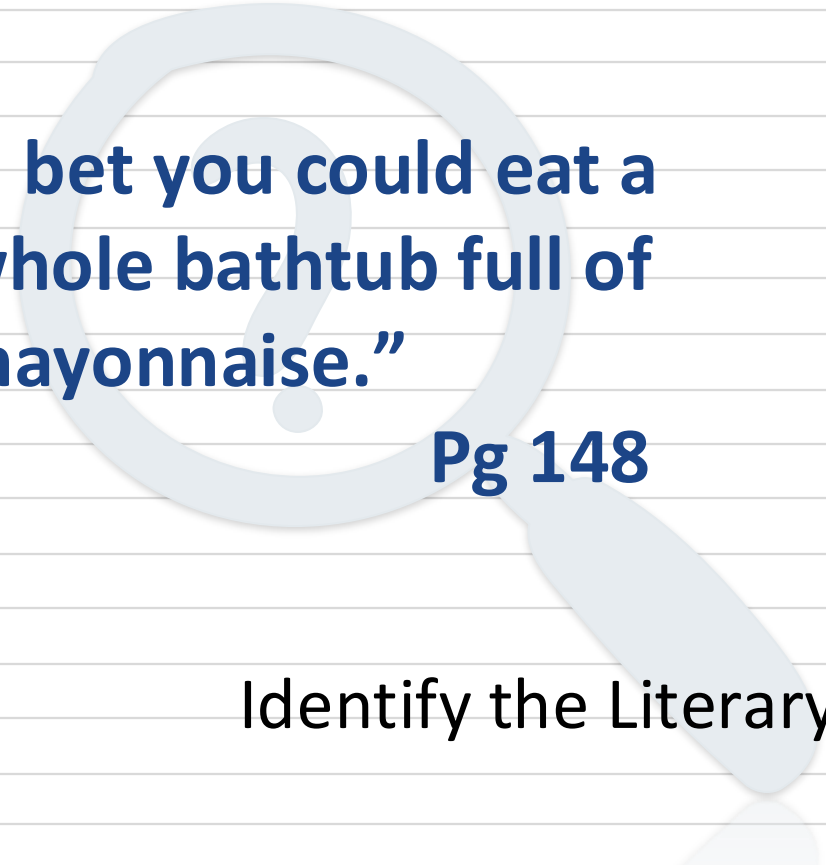




**“I was so hungry.
Like I hadn’t eaten
in weeks.”**

Pg 146

Identify the Literary Device.



**“I bet you could eat a
whole bathtub full of
mayonnaise.”**

Pg 148

Identify the Literary Device.



**“I bolted out of class
like an animal -
like some sort of crazed
creature.”**

Pg

153

Identify the Literary Device.

Section 3 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. “When it rains it pours” What kind of literary device is this? What does it mean? How does it apply to the situation in the novel?
2. Make a list of all the adjectives used on page 114-115 when Will describes what he sees in the mirror. What do these all have in common?
3. Will says he has to stop himself from throwing out all the food in the house. Why does he do this? Explain his thinking.
4. “I bolted out of class like an animal - like some sort of crazed creature.” Is this a simile or metaphor? What does it compare and what is the author trying to convey?
5. What would you say to your friend if they were going through what Will is going through?

PREDICTION

This reading section ends with feeling like he is losing weight after skipping meals. Predict what you think is going to happen in the next section of the story.

When making a prediction, remember to use...

- Your prior knowledge

- The characters' behaviour

- Details from the text

- Does it make sense in the story?



SECTION 4

PAGES 174 - 225

Section 4 - VOCABULARY

- Fluorescent
- Skittering
- Brutal
- Dumbfounded
- Awkward
- Peer
- Exceptionally
- Extraordinarily
- Grimacing
- Veered

Section 4 - QUICK WRITE

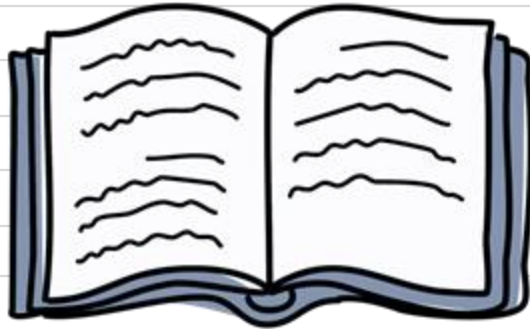


Markus shared his story with Will which makes wonder what his story is.

Will

What's your story?

What has happened in your life to shape you into who you are?





POINT OF VIEW

**First
Person**

A character within the story recounts his or her own experiences. Uses "I".

**Second
Person**

The story is told from the perspective of you. Uses "You".

**Third
Person**

A narrator tells the story as a viewer of what happens. Uses "he", "she", "they".

ONOMATOPOEIA



A type of word that sounds like what it describes.



ONOMATOPOEIA



“Crck - crack FWOOH
Crck - crack FWOOH
Crck - crack
FWOOH”

Pg 174



**“He’d opened a door and
he was letting me decide if
I wanted to walk through
it.” pg 204**

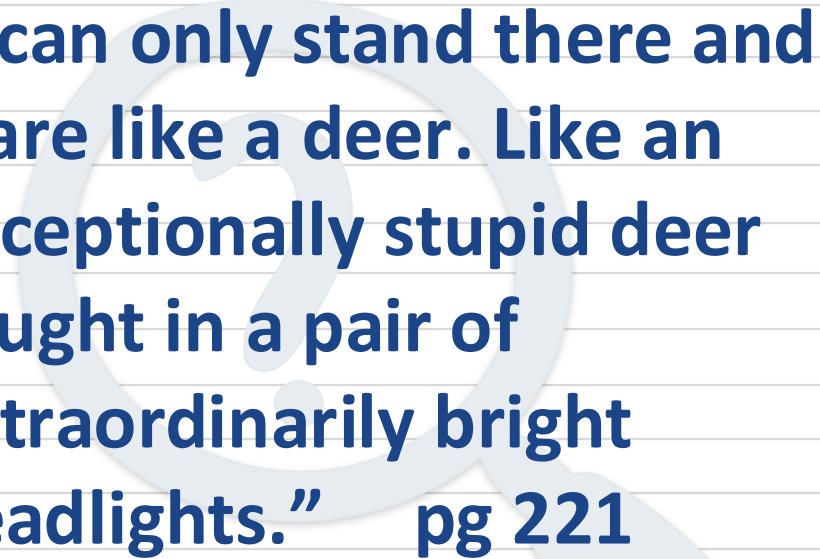
Identify the Literary Device.



**“I feel like
I’m on
a rollercoaster.”**

Pg 212

Identify the Literary Device.



**“I can only stand there and
stare like a deer. Like an
exceptionally stupid deer
caught in a pair of
extraordinarily bright
headlights.” pg 221**

Identify the Literary Device.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

What connections can you make to A Work in Progress?
Make 1 connection of each kind.

Text to Self

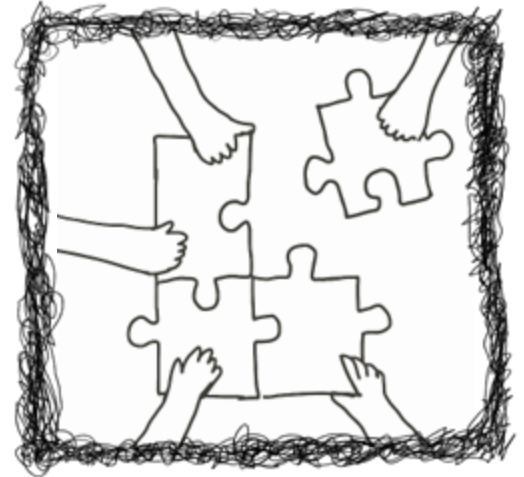
A connection between the book and your life or experiences.

Text to Text

A connection between the book and another book/text you have read.

Text to World

A connection between the book and events in the real world.



Section 4 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. Why is Will excited to go to school for the first time in a long time?
2. “I’d slammed my notebook to keep him from seeing too much of ME but by slamming my notebook I’d actually shown him ALL of me.” What does Will mean by this?
3. If Markus came to your school and wanted to fit in, what would he have his mom buy him?
4. Markus decided that he would be himself even if that makes him different and not fit in. Is being unique a positive or negative thing?
What about yourself is different and unique compared to your classmates?

SECTION 5

PAGES 226 - 285

Section 5 - VOCABULARY

- Glared
- Scribble
- Scrawl
- Seizes
- Growl
- Narrow
- Barreled
- Staggered
- Entire
- Teeters

Section 5 - QUICK WRITE



Will overhears a group of girls' conversation in the bathroom.

Write a fictional story about where the narrator overhears a conversation they weren't supposed to.





THEME & MAIN MESSAGE

The theme is a recurring concept in a novel.

The main message is an opinion, moral or life lesson that the author wants you to learn.

View these examples below:

Theme	Main Message (opinion on subject)
Family	Family can take many forms.
Grief	Grief is a complex emotion.
Death	It can't be avoided, not one can cope with it.

IMAGERY



Imagery is the use of descriptive language which is experienced through the senses.

Sight	Gloomy, bright, foggy, vibrant
Touch	Sticky, slimy, woolly, gritty
Sound	Squeaky, buzz, whisper
Taste	Juicy, sweet, spicy, bitter
Smell	Rotten, pungent, stinky

IMAGERY



**“I bite my lip and feel it bleed
and taste the blood and grab
my face and dig my fingers in
my eyes and make it hurt and
hurt so loud it fills my head.”**

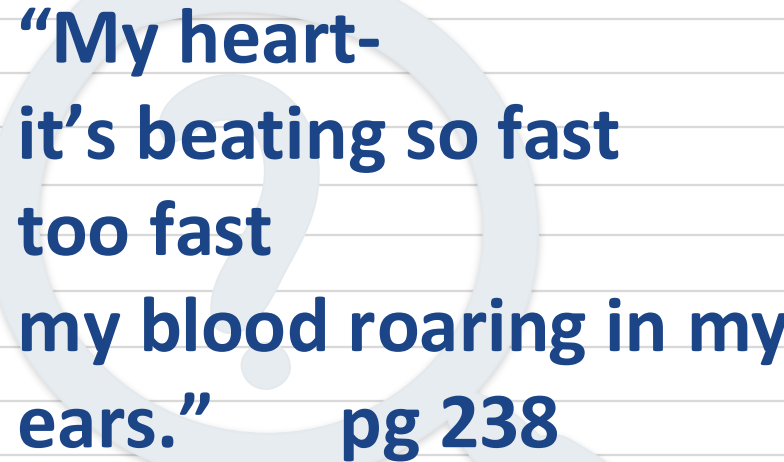
Pg 247



**“Hungry.
Hurting.
Hating.”**

Pg 235

Identify the Literary Device.



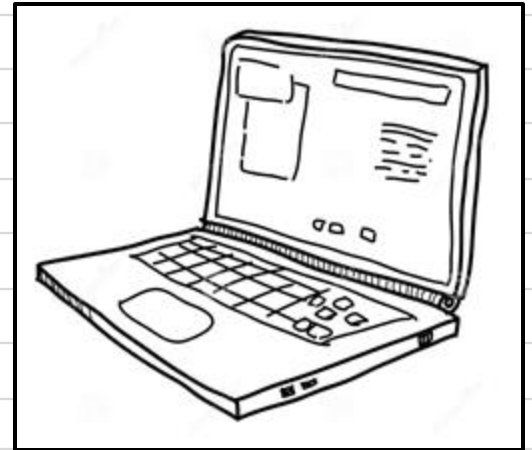
**“My heart-
it’s beating so fast
too fast
my blood roaring in my
ears.” pg 238**

Identify the Literary Device.

RESEARCHING EATING DISORDER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Research has found that as many as 22% of children and adolescents showed disordered eating behaviors.

Work with a group to research support programs, groups or resources available to individuals struggling with eating disorders. What do they provide? How can they be contacted? Share your findings with the class.



Section 5 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. Imagine you were in Markus' shoes and you notice a friend of yours isn't eating. What would you say to them?
2. What do you notice about the positioning of words on page 261 and so on? Why does the author write this section in this way?
3. What do you notice about the grammar on pg 261 and so on? Why does the author write this section in this way?
4. On pages 276-278 there are very few lines and the pages are black. What is happening? Who is talking?
5. What happens to your body when you stop eating? Research this with a partner. Does this match what happened to Will in this chapter?

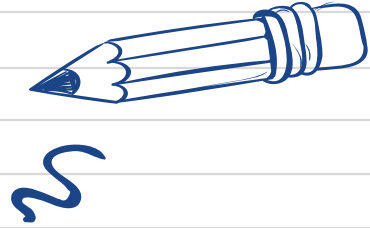
SECTION 6

PAGES 286 - END

Section 6 - VOCABULARY

- Manufactured
- Delay
- Neon
- Hurtling
- Ecstatic
- Physically
- Appreciate
- Verge
- Contort
- Consumed

Section 6 - QUICK WRITE



A Work in Progress: The Sequel

What happens next? It is up to you to plan and create a title for the sequel to this novel.

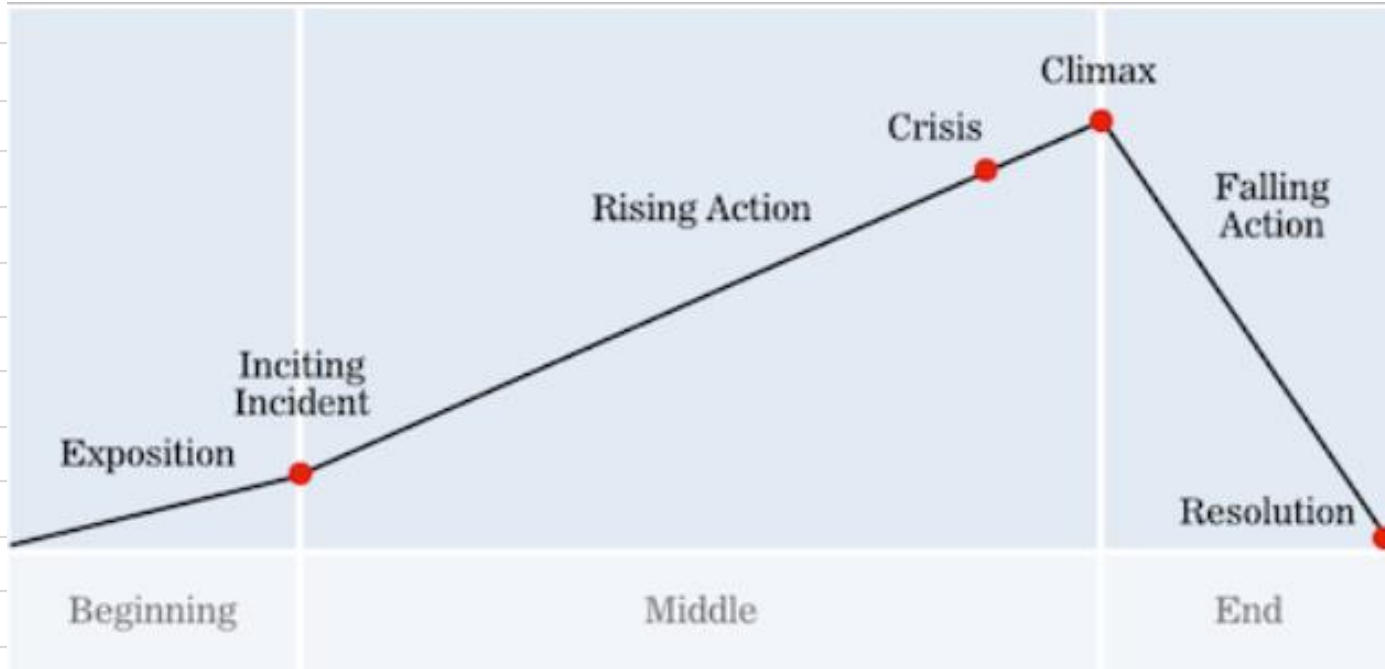


CHARACTERS REVISITED

Name	Role in Book	Physical Description	Personality Description	Round/Flat?	Static/Dynamic



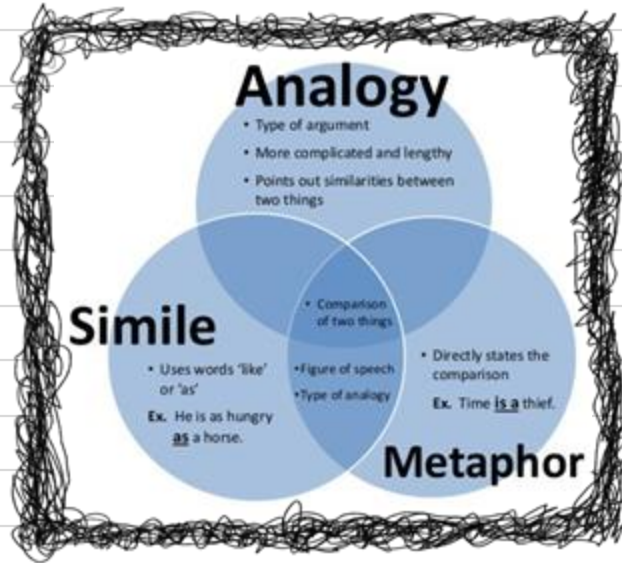
PLOT LINE



ANALOGY



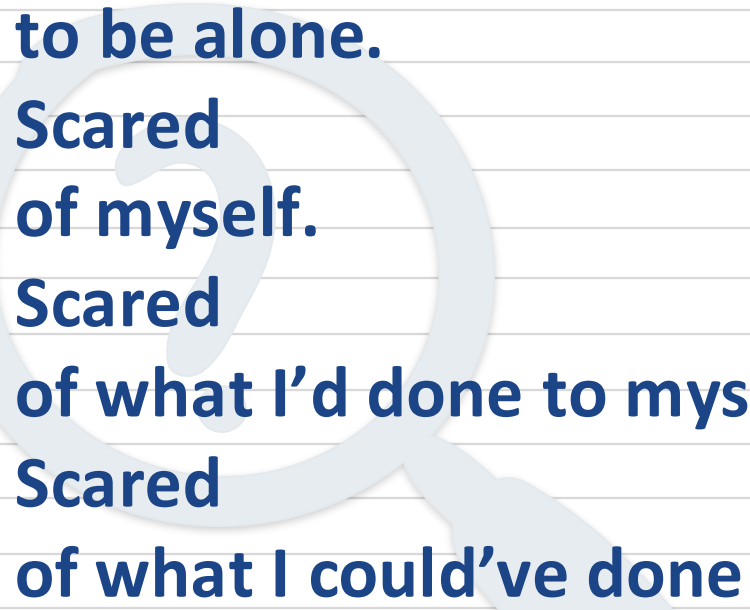
A comparison between two things for the purpose of explanation or clarification.



ANALOGY



**“It was like...
like I’d been sitting in a
burning building for the past
few years and I’d finally called
for help.”** **pg 301**



**“Scared
to be alone.
Scared
of myself.
Scared
of what I’d done to myself.
Scared
of what I could’ve done to myself.**

Identify the Literary Device.

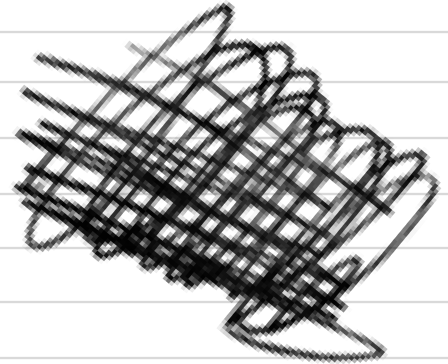


**“I learned about it
at one of my fifty-seven
middle schools.**

Identify the Literary Device.

5 WAYS TO CHANGE NEGATIVE SELF TALK

1. Identify Negative Talk
2. Consider what is driving it
3. Step outside yourself
4. Replace negative talk with positive
5. Surround yourself with positivity



Section 6 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. How does Will describe the light coming through his window on pg 286? What kind of literary device is this?
2. When Will wakes up he sees George, his pink elephant stuffy from his childhood that he couldn't bring himself to get rid of. What childhood item do you hold onto even though you don't use it anymore?
4. Why does Will start making noise in the hallway after he wakes up? Explain.
5. Markus says he could tell he liked Will when they first met. Who is someone you knew you liked and wanted in your life when you first met? How did you know?
6. Why does thinking of oneself as a "work in progress" allow us to be kinder to ourselves? Explain?



AFTER THE NOVEL

AFTER THE NOVEL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What did you learn from this book?
2. If this book were being made into a movie, who would you cast in the roles of Will and Markus? Why did you pick that actor?
3. If you could ask the author of this book 1 question, what would it be?
4. What made this book unique from others that you have read?
5. If you could rename this book, what would you title it? Explain why.

Perspectives Drama Assignment

In your assigned group, you are going to create a short dramatic script and scene based on A Work in Progress.

Your scene requirements are:

- Recreate a scene from the novel
- Include a minimum 10 second **tableaux**
- Each student will **step out** of the tableaux to perform a mini **soliloquy** 1-3 lines from the **perspective** of their character

TIP: Costumes and props to your not mandatory

You Will Be Assessed Based On:

Physical Presence: eye contact, body language, gestures

Voice and Articulation: volume, pace, rhythm, intonation, pronunciation

Evidence of Understanding: lines demonstrate understanding of character's perspective
may help convey

Overall Performance: maintains character, engaging to the audience

Participation: contributed to presentation, actively involved in planning, peer assessment
audience your role but are