

Er Yan

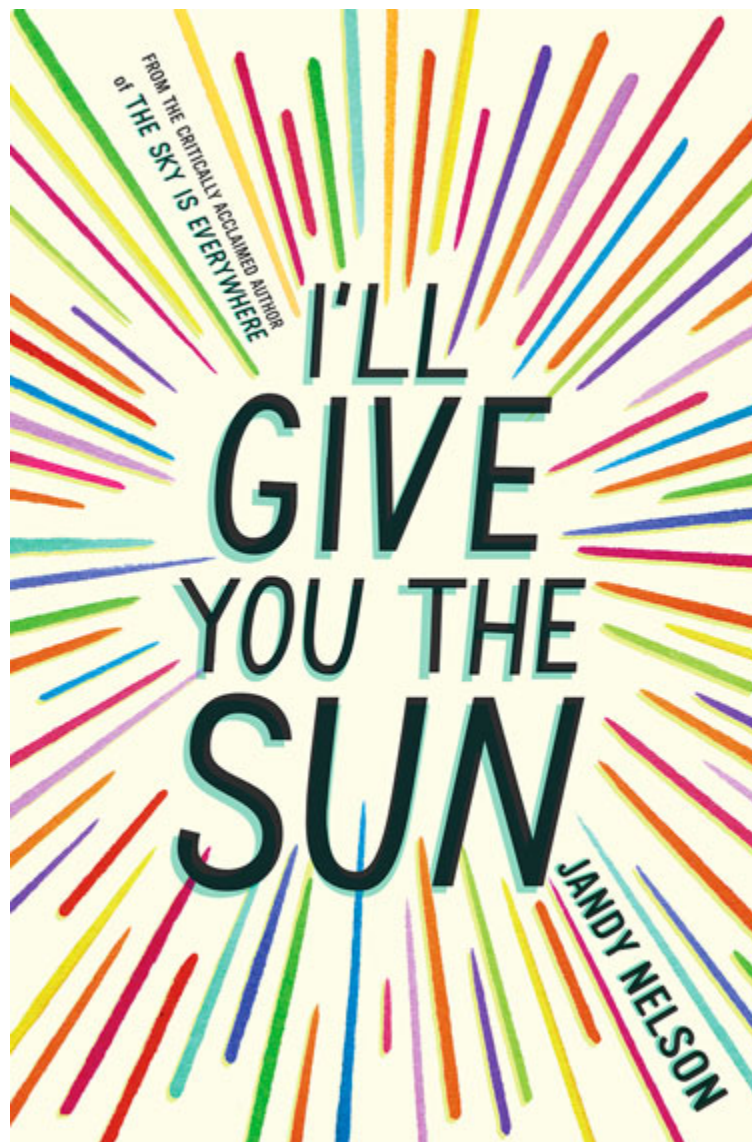
ENGL112B

Dr. Warner

30 October 2023

I'll Give You the Sun

By: Jandy Nelson





Author Website (Photos Source): <https://jandynelson.com/>

Author Biography

Jandy Nelson was born in New York; she moved to California with her mom when she was 12 years old. Jandy Nelson holds a BA from Cornell University and an MFA in poetry from Brown University. She also has an MFA in Media and Performing Arts from Brandeis University. She was a literary agent at Manus & Associates before she became an author. She has written several popular young adult novels, notably *The Sky Is Everywhere*, and *I'll Give You the Sun*. Both books feature lyrical prose, intricate characterization, and in-depth exploration of family dynamics and love. Both novels have been loved and widely acclaimed by young readers. In addition to writing, Nelson has a passion for the arts, including dance and visual art, which often influences her creation of stories.

Book Summary

This story unfolds from the perspective of two twins at different ages. Jude and Noah are twins who became distant as teenagers due to competition and personal secrets. Competing for admission to an art school and their mother's attention, the twins conceal every aspect of their lives: Noah's secret affair with Brian and Jude's hidden artistic talent. Meanwhile, their mother, Diana, is having an affair with a sculptor named Guillermo. After a series of intense events, including Diana's discovery of Noah's romantic relationship with Brian, Jude's sexual trauma, and Diana's death, their life turned upside down. Jude seeks guidance from Guillermo and unknowingly connects with his mother's past. Amidst all the revelations and reconciliations, including Noah's near-death experience and the revelation of Diana's affair, the family begins to heal. In the end, relationships are mended, secrets are revealed, and the twins reconcile for a hopeful future.

Three Quotes Analysis

Quote 1:

“Sandy asked me if there was something I needed in the world that only my two hands could create.” I swallow, meet his eyes. “My mom, she was really beautiful, My dad used to say she could make trees bloom just by looking at them.” Guillermo smiles. I go on. “Every morning she used to stand on the deck staring out at the water. The wind would stream, through her hair, her robe would billow behind her. It was like she was at the helm of a ship, you know? It was like she was steering us across the sky....” (192, this and all other quotations in this Book Talk are taken from *I'll Give You the Sun* by Jandy Nelson).

This quote occurs when Jude is asked to create a sculpture, and she clarifies to Guillermo why she wants it to represent her mother and how badly she misses her. Jude's desperate attempts to get through to her signify her love for her mother and her grief over her death very well. Through her vivid memories and actions, Jude's love, trauma, guilt, and the significance of her mother in her life and her whole family are powerfully conveyed.

The metaphor “It was like she was steering us across the sky” evokes the image of a woman who is a guide for her family to Jude, Dianna, who is not only a mother but also a stronghold of the family. “And all she does is break what I make” reveals how Jude feels that her mother is angry with her and displays this emotion by destroying her artwork. This shows that Jude has a deep-rooted sense of guilt over her mother's death, and she internalizes her mother's death as a punishment.

Quote 2:

“One by one, I empty each tube of paint into the laundry. Sink. I need color, rich, bright, fuck-you, fuck-off, fuck-everything color, mounds and mounds of it...”(337).

This quote portrays the dramatic emotional ups and downs and destructive thoughts and behaviors of teenagers in response to significant changes very well. The intensity of this quote illustrates Jude's emotional turmoil after finding out that his mother has determined to divorce his father. Noah's desperate use of bright, vivid paints reflects his emotional state. Not only do these colors represent the intense, uncontrollable emotions he experiences, but they also highlight Noah's closeness to art: his emotions are shown and released through art, which is the color here. Noah's desire to immerse himself in paint suggests a longing to lose himself, a desire

to drown his emotions in tangible sensory things. His desire to "eat" and "drown" in paint suggests a willingness to be immersed entirely, a way of escaping emotional pain.

Moreover, The tension between anger and love is also emphasized by the contrast between his intense actions of yelling "I hate you" and his mother's silent response of "I love you." This strong contrast brings about one of the novel's most dominant conflicts, Noah's unforgivable attitude towards his mother and his mother's unbreakable and deep love for Noah, which sets the stage for his feelings of guilt later.

Quote 3:

"Come with me," he says. Fifteen minutes later, we're on an abandoned construction site, looking at a crumbling cement wall. On it, in a range of colors, is..." (351).

This is a description of Noah's artwork, a massive painting on the crumbling cement wall. This quote emphasizes Noah's ability to perceive the depths of human emotion, his gift for art, his ability to translate these perceptions into powerful visual stories, and his commitment to using art as a lens to see, understand, and re-imagine the world around him. In essence, the mural is like a visual imaginative diary, reflecting the intricate lives of the characters and their interconnections. His painting of "Mom and Guillermo kissing into tornado" represents his forgiveness and understanding and support of her mother's relationship. Noah's paintings vividly recreate precious moments, intertwining them with the overarching themes of forgiveness and resolution, ultimately leading to a joyful climax in *I'll Give You the Sun*. The painting not only serves as a timeless reminder of the characters' different experiences but also symbolizes their journey toward reconciliation and happiness.

Classroom Use

This novel consists of two different perspectives of twin siblings, which can be used in the classroom to provoke discussion about the subjectivity of memory and the various ways that individuals perceive and react to things.

Nelson's lyrical prose is a highlight of this novel. To help students recognize and understand this style, I will assign an assignment where students choose their favorite passage from the novel. Then, ask them to write in a style that draws inspiration from the selected passages to create their own work. Such an exercise not only enriches their writing skills but also deepens their understanding of the text.

Given the book's length, it is very appropriate to assign it during a long vacation to ensure that students have plenty of time to read it. I recommend this book to a group of students around the same age as the main characters, Noah and Jude, around 13-16 years old.

Teens should read *I'll Give You the Sun* because it emphasizes the therapeutic benefits of hobbies such as art that promote self-expression, fulfillment, and healing. The novel also offers valuable insights for young readers experiencing challenges such as parental separation, grief over the loss of a loved one, struggles with self-identity, or complicated sibling relationships. Through its narrative, the book provides a guiding light for teens facing similar issues, helping them to confront and find ways to reconcile with themselves and these issues.

Application for Chapters 4-8 in *Adolescents in the Search for Meaning*:

Chapter 4: Books about Real-Life Experiences (Making Life Choices, Living through Family and Relationship Issues)

- Noah and Jude each confront their own pursuits of art and experiences in love. As the story unfolds, they struggle to make important life decisions about their future, their art, their love, their identity.
- The novel delves into the intricacies and effects of family relationships. Not only does it tell the story of twin sibling competition, but it also touches on the effects that parental relationships can have on children, especially separation as well as the effects of divorce. Reading about the effects of these family relationships can give teens insight into love, betrayal, trust, and healing.

Chapter 5: Books about Facing Death and Loss

- The death of their mother, Diana, is a major plot point that deeply affects the lives and choices of the main characters, Noah and Jude. The novel explores their own individual grief journeys in detail, showing how each twin copes with the void left by their mother's unexpected death.

Chapter 6: Books about Identity, Discrimination, and Struggles with Decisions

- Noah and Brian encountered various challenges in understanding and accepting their sexuality, both from their own internal conflicts and external challenges from prejudiced people. In the end they both accept themselves with courage and pride.
- The decisions the characters make, driven by jealousy, grief, love, or fear, shape their future paths and relationships. Like how Noah deleted Jude's sculpture's photos, Jude

didn't submit Noah's application. The novel emphasizes the complexity of decision-making and how choices, large and small, can affect the trajectory of one's life.

Chapter 7: Books about Courage and Survival

- With the death of their mother, the revelation of her secrets, and the twins' personal mistakes, they are faced with a harsh reality that takes courage to face and overcome.
- For Noah and Jude, art is a means of survival. They both use art to process their emotions, heal their traumas, and rediscover themselves.

Text Complexity

-Quantitative:

1. NEW DALE-CHALL READABILITY FORMULA

Score: 39.9

Reading Difficulty: Average-Slightly Difficult

Grade Level: 7-8

Age Range: 12-13 years

2. LEXILE RANGE

810L - 1000L (Grade 6-7)

-Qualitative

1. Structure

- The story alternates between the perspectives of twins siblings, Noah and Jude. Each perspective has different experiences, emotions, and narrative tones, giving the reader a full and deeper understanding of stories
- The novel does not unfold in direct chronological order. Instead, it shifts between time periods. This non-linear approach enhances the mystery and tension of the

work, forcing the reader to become more involved in the story and put the stories together.

2. Language Conventions and Clarity

- This novel is characterized by its lyrical prose. This writing style makes the sentences poetic and intensely emotional.
- Stream of consciousness is used when digging deeper into a character's thoughts or memories to give the reader a sense of what's going on inside the character's head in real time, though it can sometimes be difficult for the reader to understand.

3. Knowledge Demands

- Understanding the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ youth and society's view of homosexuality would help readers empathize with Noah's experience.
- Understanding the basics of the art form and some of the artistic terminology will help readers better understand the nuances of the story.

4. Levels of Meanings

- On the surface, the novel tells the coming-of-age story of twins Noah and Jude, who go through the ups and downs of adolescence, including family changes, first love, artistic development, jealousy and misunderstanding. The novel depicts the relationship between the siblings, and the trials and tribulations of growing up.
- Upon deeper level, the novel unravels a complex themes: how individuals cope with profound loss and guilt in the face of betrayal, family turmoil. *I'll Give you the Sun* is an exploration of human resilience, the ability to heal, and the redemptive power of understanding and forgiveness.