

Discussion Questions

1. How does Ivy use her artistic talents to describe the world around her? How does art help her describe her physical world and her feelings?
2. How is the storm its own character in the story? How does the storm act as a catalyst for change in each character's life?
3. Why does Ivy feel "more comforted" by Robin's words than anyone else's (page 95)? How does this comfort help Ivy connect to Robin?
4. When Ivy's mom finds her drawing of her family, she praises it as "perfect" (page 120). However, Ivy gets upset and doesn't want her mother to hang up the drawing. Why does Ivy get upset? Why doesn't she try to explain herself to her mom?
5. Ivy and her mother are both artists, but how else are they similar? Does their shared love of art put pressure on their relationship?
6. When Ivy and Taryn are "pondering mysteries" and Ivy classifies herself among the mysteries, she then cuts the conversation short. Do you think Taryn understood more than Ivy realized? Why do you think Taryn let Ivy move on and didn't press her for more details?
7. How does Ivy's relationships with everyone in her life change drastically over the course of the novel?
8. When Ivy finds out Taryn was the one leaving her notes, she is angry, but Taryn believes she was just trying to help. Why is Ivy's anger justified? How is this situation similar to Ivy looking at June's notebook? Why do they forgive each other in the end?
9. The end of the novel flashes forward to a year after the storm. Why does the author do this? How does it further elaborate on the theme of resiliency? Why is it important to illustrate how the characters are continuously evolving?
10. After finishing the novel, go back and reread the epigraph, the same quote from Emily Dickinson that Ivy and June see in the library: "This is my letter to the world, that never wrote to me. . . ." What does this quote mean in the context of Ivy's story, and how does it relate to her journey? Why do you think the author chose to include it before the story begins?

