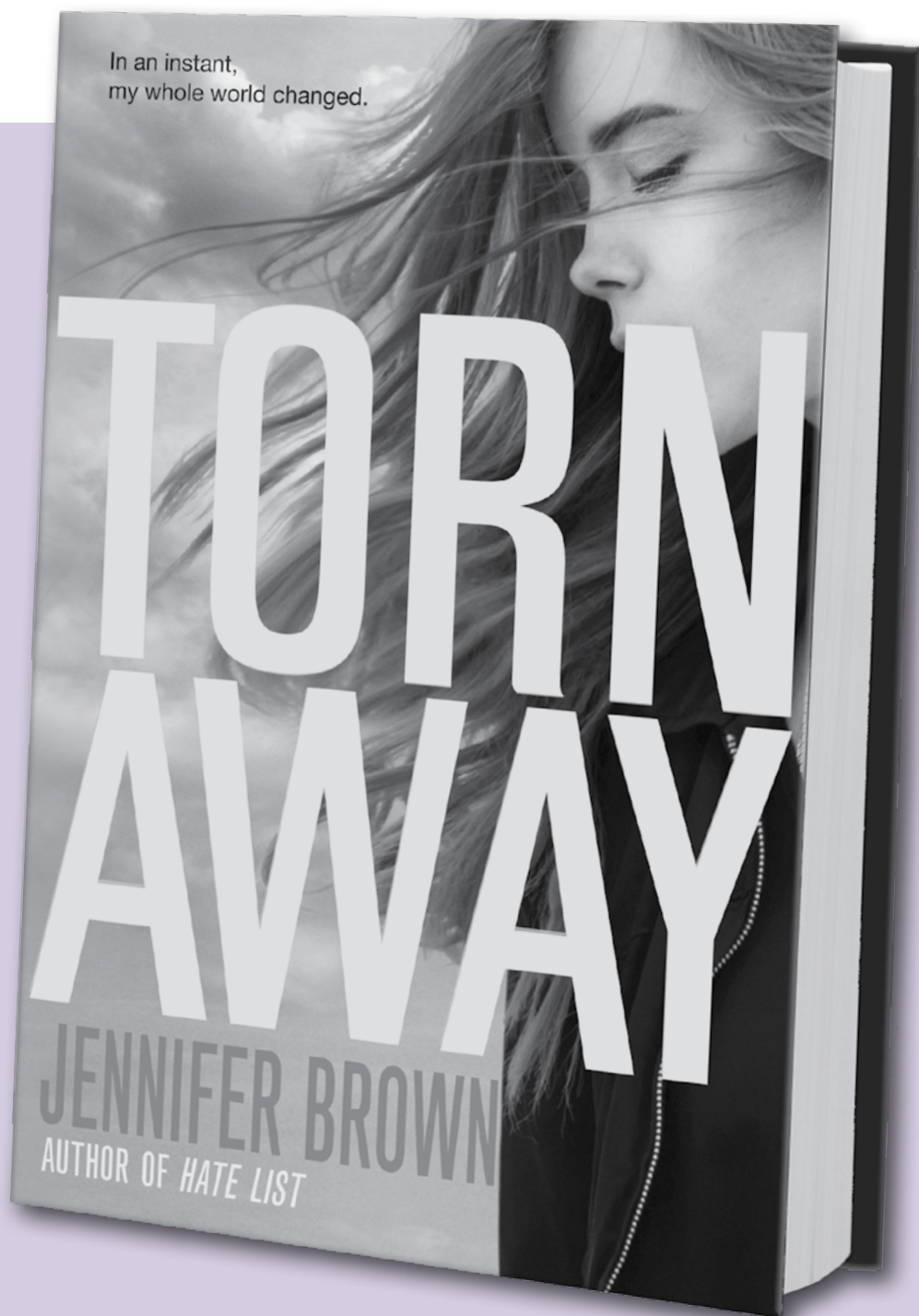


TORN AWAY



Thematic connections

- ❖ Loss and Death
- ❖ Family life
- ❖ Friendship

Curriculum connections

- ❖ Literature
- ❖ Psychology
- ❖ Climate and weather

Ages 12 and up

By
**Jennifer
Brown**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Right from the opening pages, how does the author prepare the reader for what is to come? How does she establish a mood of loss and regret?
 2. Jersey loved her little sister, Marin, but she also resented her. Why? Would you feel the same way?
 3. Deadly tornados are common in the Midwest, but no place on earth is immune from natural disasters. How well prepared was Jersey's community for its monster storm? How well prepared would your community be for a similar sort of tragedy?
 4. "Our relationship had always been about playing pickup games of basketball or tag or building forts and riding bikes," Jersey says about her neighbor Kolby (page 38). How does disaster transform their friendship?
 5. Grief is an unpredictable and highly personal emotion. What is Jersey's initial response to the death of her mother and sister? How do her feelings change over time? How does her stepfather, Ronnie, respond to his loss? How does her grandmother respond? How does Jersey's biological father react to the death of his first wife?
 6. Dani, Jane, and Jersey were nearly inseparable before the tornado hit. How does the storm pull them apart, both physically and emotionally?
 7. Back home in Elizabeth, Jersey thought of herself as poor. How does that perception change when she goes to live with her father's family?
 8. Why is Terry the only Cameron family member who is kind to Jersey? Why do Grandfather Harold and Grandmother Billie take Jersey into their home? How does Clay treat his long lost daughter?
 9. "It was all up to me now," Jersey realizes in Caster City, "a thought that was both empowering and frightening as hell." (page 169.) What is empowering about her situation? What is frightening? Which feeling do you think is stronger in Jersey?
 10. How does Marin's purse become Jersey's lifeline? What is the significance of the drawings and notes that she makes on Marin's gum wrappers? Why is Jersey so enraged when her half-sisters take the purse?
 11. "You're a coward," Jersey says (page 203) to her stepfather when he tells her that he is going back east. Do you agree? Why couldn't Jersey attend her mother and sister's funeral?
 12. Although Jersey begs to be helped by Dani's mom, she isn't. Why? Was the woman's cautiousness justified? Why or why not?
 13. Why does Jersey believe that loyalty to her mother's memory requires her to reject her grandparents? When does she change her mind? Why?
 14. "I guessed Mom was right – family had nothing to do with blood," Jersey decides (page 133). Do you agree? Before the storm, what role did Jersey's blood relatives play in her day-to-day life? Afterwards, what happens to those relationships?
 15. As the novel progresses, Jersey learns more and more about her mom, and she discovers how often her mother lied about the past. What do you think was the greatest of those lies? How did it harm Jersey and others?
 16. Until her grandfather told her that prayer was just speaking from the heart, Jersey wasn't sure she knew how to pray. What does Jersey's prayer to her mother reveal about Jersey's heart?
 17. The novel begins and ends with the East Coast Swing. Why do you think the author structured her novel this way? Why is the dance so important to Jersey? What does learning it signal about her future?
-

TORN AWAY

about the book



Born and raised in the Midwest, Jersey Cameron thought she knew all about tornados...until a storm devastates her hometown, destroying her home, and killing her mother and sister. Unable to cope, her stepfather sends Jersey to live with relatives she doesn't know: first her biological father, and then her grandparents. Still grieving the loss of her mother, Jersey is also discovering just how little she really knew about her mom's complicated past. In this gripping, heartrending novel, the acclaimed author of *Hate List* writes about a life that is torn apart in an instant and then rebuilt in unexpected ways.

Torn Away
by Jennifer Brown

HC 978-0-316-24553-1

Also available in e-book and downloadable audio formats

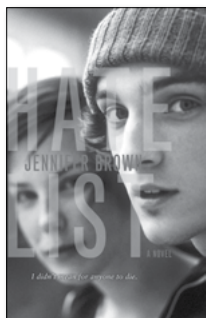
about the author



Photo © Lacey Crough

Jennifer Brown's debut novel for young adults was *Hate List*, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, a *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year, and a VOYA "Perfect Ten." Her *Bitter End* was on the YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults list. She is also the author of *Perfect Escape* and *Thousand words*. She lives with her husband and three children in Kansas City, Missouri. Visit Jen online at JenniferBrownYA.com.

also by Jennifer Brown

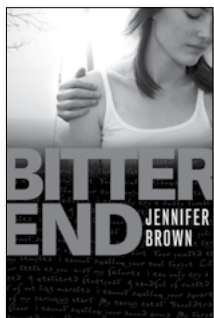


Hate List

by Jennifer Brown

PB 978-0-316-04145-4

Also available in e-book and downloadable audio formats



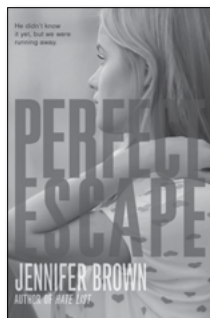
Bitter End

by Jennifer Brown

HC 978-0-316-08695-0

PB 978-0-316-08696-7

Also available as an e-book



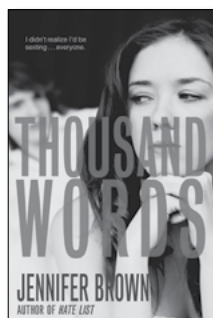
Perfect Escape

by Jennifer Brown

HC 978-0-316-18557-8

PB 978-0-316-18558-5

Also available as an e-book



Thousand Words
by Jennifer Brown

HC 978-0-316-20972-4

PB 978-0-316-20970-0

Also available as an e-book



Say Something
A Hate List Novella
by Jennifer Brown

e-book 978-0-316-24555-5

Also available as a downloadable audio



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

LittleBrownLibrary.com

This guide was created by Anne Quirk.