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## *I’LL GIVE YOU THE SUN*

## by Jandy Nelson

## Louisiana Teen Readers’ Choice Nominee 2017

**Grade 9-12**

Submitted by Rebecca McMillian, Student,

School of Library and Information Science, LSU, Baton Rouge

**Title:** *I’ll Give You the Sun*

**Author:** Jandy Nelson

**Publisher:** Dial Books

**Pages:** 384

**SUMMARY**

There are two sides to every story. Artistic twins Noah and Jude tell theirs in alternating chapters, one from the perspective of age thirteen and the other from age sixteen. Much can happen in three years, and in the interim, the Jude who was once a fearless surfer interested in older boys has adopted an “invisibility uniform” and lost herself in superstitions while the Noah who was once constantly dreaming of new art and quietly discovering his own interest in boys has forsaken art entirely and taken to diving daringly from cliffs. The competitive and extremely close siblings have suffered a tragedy, sabotaged each other, and split apart in a seemingly permanent way, and it is only by learning both sides of the story that the two can make sense of their misfortunes and piece their family back together again. *I’ll Give You the Sun* explores the world-shaking effects of losing the things we hold most dear and the consequences of being untrue to ourselves. Jandy Nelson offers a reminder that acceptance and forgiveness are the only ways to move through life happily.

**AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY**

Jandy Nelson lives in San Francisco, California. She began her career as a literary agent and is the author of one other book, *The Sky Is Everywhere*,which has received several highly rated reviews and been featured on several Best Book of the Year lists. She loves poetry, art, and magic and has two Master of Fine Arts degrees, one in poetry and one in writing for children and young adults.

Bibliographical information found on Jandy Nelson’s Website: <http://www.jandynelson.com/about>

Accessed October 11, 2015.

**AWARDS**

2014 Publisher’s Weekly, School Library Journal, Amazon, and Booklist Best Book

2015 Printz Award winner

2015 Stonewall Book Award Honor

Bank Street’s 2015 Josette Frank Book Award winner

2015 YALSA Top Ten Best Fiction for Young Adults

2016 Volunteer State Book Award nominee

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Author’s website <http://www.jandynelson.com>

**OTHER TITLES BY AUTHOR**

*The Sky Is Everywhere* (2010)

# RELATED TITLES

*All the Bright Places*, Jennifer Niven

*Fangirl*, Rainbow Rowell

*We Were Liars*, E. Lockhart

*Will Grayson, Will Grayson,* John Green and David Levithan

**CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS**

**English:**

* Ask students to pick a specific theme from the story (divorce, bullying, sexuality, adultery, tragedy, etc.) and write a paper relating the story to their own life. How might students feel if very private information about themselves were exposed without their permission or a parent’s adultery were discovered?
* Jandy Nelson was inspired by the magical realism used in Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* when writing this book. Discuss magical realism with students, and have them find instances of it in the book. Have each student write a 3-5 page short story using conventions from magical realism. Afterwards, hold a discussion about what they found easy or difficult about writing magical realism and how the experience might improve their writing, even other styles and genres (academic, journalism, other fiction).

**Art:**

* Noah is a painter while Jude is a sculptor. Have students make a representation of a piece of art made by the twins in the book using paints, sculpting, charcoal, etc.
* Major artists are discussed in *I’ll Give You the Sun*. Have students choose an artist and write a research paper on his or her most famous work and its relevance today. Major artists mentioned in the book include:

Picasso

Renoir

Michelangelo

Franz Marc

Pollock

Kandinsky

Cezanne

Kahlo

Chagall

Frances Bacon

Van Gogh

Gauguin

Brancusi

Klimt

Da Vinci

**Social Studies:**

Have students choose a time or place and compare it to modern day America in terms of women’s roles in the family and the consequences for adultery or requesting a divorce. What would have happened to Noah and Jude’s mom if she wanted to separate from her husband in Ancient Greece, for example? What are the consequences for following her heart and leaving Noah and Jude’s father in the book? Does the present or another time/place offer the better practice? Why?

**Vocabulary:**

Clandestine

Critique

Cubism

Duplicity

Impressionism

Motif

Preternatural

Resilience

Retaliation

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What does the author accomplish by telling the story from two different points of view that she could not accomplish with one narrator and time of narration? Does the double narrator model lead you to prefer Noah or Jude? How?
2. Analyze either Noah or Jude’s relationship with their mother before the accident. How had the relationship evolved before her death, and was that change inevitable? Use evidence from the text to support your response.
3. There is a saying, “Blood is thicker than water.” What does it mean, and is it true for the characters in *I’ll Give You the Sun*? Consider the relationship between Noah and Jude versus that of Jude and Oscar, the relationship between the twins and their mother versus that between the mother and Guillermo Garcia, or any other relationship pairing you choose. Cite evidence from the text to support your response.
4. Many of the characters in *I’ll Give You the Sun* use art as a coping mechanism. Find instances of this in the text, and recreate one of the pieces. Are there any other ways that characters cope in the book? What are they? Which are the healthiest, and why?
5. The power of forgiveness is very strong, and it is a constant theme in the book as something that all of the characters seek. Choose one character and analyze his or her path to finding forgiveness, citing specific actions that he or she takes.

**RELATED WEB SITES**

**Jandy Nelson**

<http://jandynelson.com/books/ill-give-you-the-sun/>

This site provides a biography of the author, as well as a synopsis of the book, a gallery of pictures of things that inspired her when writing the book, and contact information. This site may be used to show students some of the art discussed in the book or to have them learn more about it.

**School Library Journal**

<http://www.slj.com/2014/08/interviews/portrait-of-an-author-slj-chats-with-jandy-nelson-about-ill-give-you-the-sun/>

An interview with author Jandy Nelson. Provides students with a different perspective when discussing *I’ll Give You the Sun* and could be used to discuss the writing process.

**Nursing Schools**

<http://www.nursingschools.net/blog/2011/01/100-excellent-art-therapy-exercises-for-your-mind-body-and-soul/>

Provides students with a list of ideas and coping strategies involving art. Includes 100 different activities as well a venue to discuss and express feelings.

**Stop Bullying**

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/>

Noah is bullied in the book, making it difficult for him to be himself. This website defines bullying, describes what students can do to stop it, and provides a list of actions for victims of bullying to take.