



THE SUMMER I TURNED PRETTY



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Note about the story

The Summer I Turned Pretty is the first of three famous books about Belly. Every year, Belly and her family **spend*** the summer with their best friends in a beach house. This is a story about love, family, and becoming an adult.

Belly **turns** 16 in the story. Sixteen is an important birthday in the United States of America, because you are now an adult. The birthday is called your “**sweet sixteen**.” In the United States, you can drive at age 16.

The Fourth of July is another special day in the United States. It became its own country on July 4th 1776. Now, people have parties on that day to remember that.

Jenny Han wrote the *The Summer I Turned Pretty* in 2009. In 2022, it became a television program.

Before-reading questions

- 1 Read the back cover of the book, and read the title. Then quickly look at the pictures in the book. What was Belly like before the story begins, do you think? What is she like now?
- 2 Look at the “People in the story” on page 4. Conrad and Jeremiah are brothers, but they are very different. How are they different, do you think?
- 3 Think about someone that you love. The person could be in your family, or a friend, or a girlfriend or boyfriend. Why is that person special to you? What do you love about that person?

*Definitions of words in **bold** can be found in the glossary on pages 77–79.

CHAPTER ONE The beach house

The journey to the beach house was taking about seven thousand years. My brother, Steven, drove slower than our grandmother. I sat next to him in the front with my feet on the seat. My mother was sleeping in the back.

“Go faster,” I told Steven, hitting his arm softly. “Let’s pass that boy on the bike.”

Steven moved his arm away. “Never touch the driver, Belly,” he said. “And take your dirty feet off of my seat.”

My feet looked clean to me. “It’s not *your* seat. This is going to be my car soon.”

“You need to get your **license** first,” he said, laughing at me. “You shouldn’t learn to drive. You’ll be a terrible driver!”

My brother was so **annoying**. I turned on the radio and started to sing.

“Belly, when I hear you sing, I want to drive into the ocean,” said Steven, and he moved his hand to the radio.

But I hit his hand away and sang even louder. My mother woke up, and she started singing, too. We were both bad singers, and Steven **hated** it. He wanted our dad to be there because he hated it, too, but our parents were **divorced**.

We got closer and closer to the beach house. I couldn't stop smiling. I opened my window and felt the wind in my hair. The ocean looked like I remembered it, and it smelled like I remembered it. It all felt just right. Our summer at the beach house was waiting for us.

Steven looked at me. "Are you thinking about Conrad?"

Usually, I *was* thinking about Conrad. "No," I said, **annoyed**.

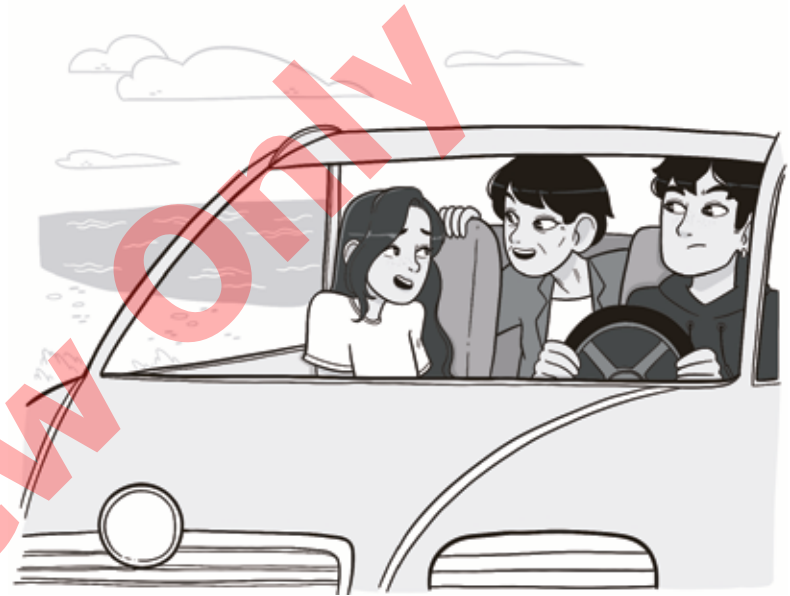
My mother put her head between the front seats. "Belly, do you still like Conrad? Last summer, I thought that you liked Jeremiah?"

"WHAT? You like Jeremiah?" Steven looked sick.

I could feel my face **flushing**. "No, Mom. We're just good friends. Please never say that again."

My mother sat back in her seat. "Fine," she said, smiling.

Conrad and Jeremiah were Susannah's sons. Susannah was my mother's best friend. They met



when they were nine, and they were like sisters. We went to Susannah's beach house every summer, even when I was a baby. Summer at the beach house was my favorite part of the year. I loved the beach and the pool, but, most of all, I loved it because of the boys.

Conrad was the older brother. He was 18 now, and he was dark, dark, dark. He was always quiet and **moody**. I loved that. He liked to be **alone**, playing his guitar. He had a really **cute** mouth. I thought about kissing it a lot. I wanted him to be mine.

Jeremiah was different—he was my friend. We usually **spent** most of the summer together, just us. We played games, watched TV, and rode our bikes to get ice cream. I felt closer to Jeremiah than to my own brother. Jeremiah was nicer to me. Maybe it was because he had a big brother, too, or maybe that was just him. He was nice to everybody.

We arrived at the beach house. Jeremiah and Conrad were sitting outside. The beach house was large and gray and white. It looked like all the other houses on the road, but it was better. It was our summer family home.

“Steve-O!” Jeremiah shouted.

Steven walked over to the boys and **hugged** them. I sat in the car. I just wanted a minute to look at them.

My mother got out of the car, too. “Hi, boys. Where’s your mother?” she asked, giving them both a big **hug**.

“Hi, Laurel. She’s sleeping,” Jeremiah replied. Usually, Susannah ran out of the house when we arrived.

I got out of the car then and stood near them. They didn’t even see me. But then they did. They really did. Conrad looked at me like boys do at the **mall**. He never looked at me like that before. I felt my face flush again. Jeremiah was just looking at me with his mouth open. It was like he wasn’t sure who I was. All this happened in about three seconds, but it felt much, much longer.

Conrad hugged me first. He smelled like the ocean. He smelled like Conrad.

“I liked you more with glasses,” he said, his mouth close to my ear.

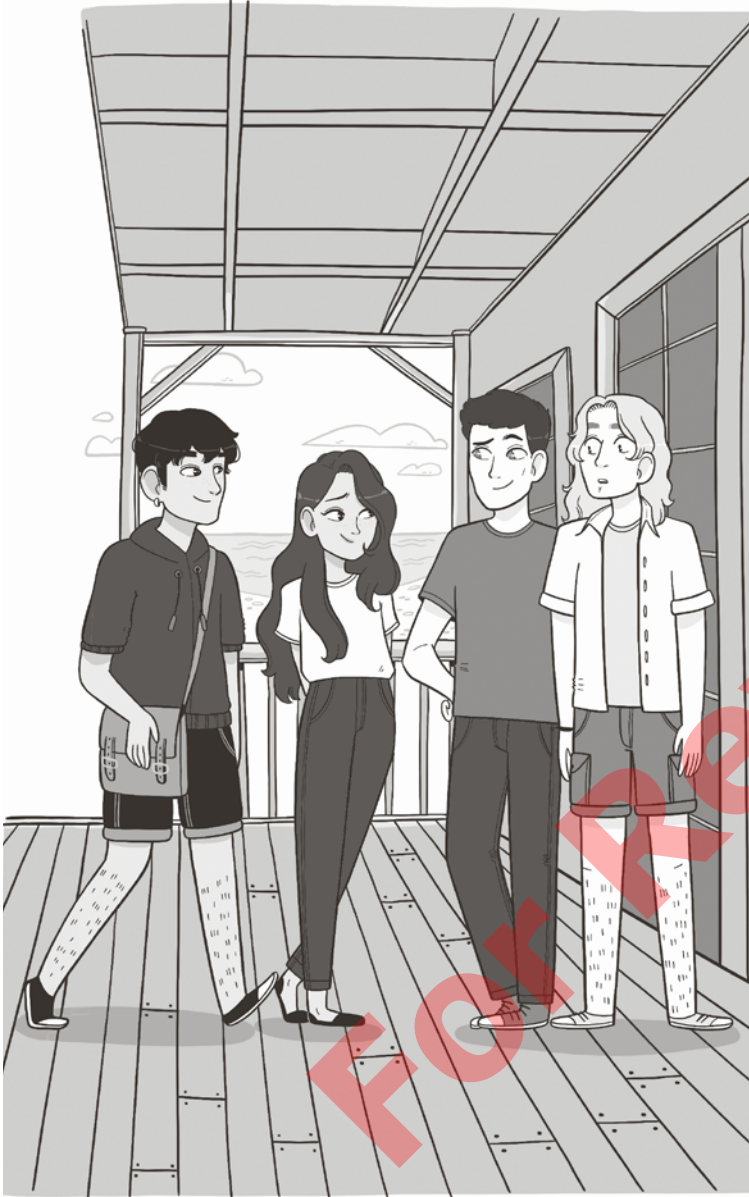
That **hurt**. I pushed him away. “I don’t need them any more,” I said.

He smiled at me, and then I wasn’t mad. His smile did that to me every time.

Jeremiah hugged me next. “Where has little Belly gone?” he said in a funny baby voice.

I laughed. “Shut up, Jeremiah. You smell bad.”

Jeremiah laughed loudly. “You sound the same, Belly,” he said, putting his head on one side and looking at me. “But something looks different about you.”



Susannah woke up later and found us in the kitchen. She still looked tired, and her hair was all flat on one side. She and my mother hugged first. My mother looked so happy. I thought that she might cry, and my mother never cried.

Then Susannah hugged me for a long time. I did not want it to end. Susannah was like a mom to me, and I was like a daughter to her. When I was with her, I always felt that I was the most interesting person in the room.

“You look thin,” I told her, because it was true, and because Susannah liked to hear it.

“Thanks, Belly,” Susannah said, still holding me. Then she smiled and said, “When did you become this wonderful woman? You’re so pretty. You’re going to have the best summer ever. You’ll never forget this summer. It’s going to be so special.”

And do you know something? Susannah was right. I will always remember that summer. It was the summer I **turned** pretty. Things were different. *I* was different.