“It is my first morning of high school. I have seven new notebooks, a skirt I hate, and a stomachache.” (3) This first quote tells us the narrator does not feel good about herself and does not look forward to going to school.

As she enters the bus, she hesitates where to sit due to her idea that she will be judged. She is trying to fit in.

“…but I figure it’s the best chance I have to make eye contact with one of my friends, if anyone has decided to talk to me yet.” (3) This is **FORESHADOWING**: this means something happened between she and her friends, an encounter or dispute. She ends up sitting alone and a student behind her throws a wrapper at the back of her head, which gives as a clue about her social status, she is retracted.

As she walks into her school, she notices the school board changed their mascot from “Trojans” to “Blue Devils” so it sends a “strong abstinence message” (4) to avoid sexual references.

In the Auditorium, she notices everyone falls into packs and clans, everyone except her; she is an observer; she retracted herself from others by watching bad cartoons the last week of August and not going to the mall or answering the phone. She isolated herself. She is an “Outcast” (4).

“I have entered high school with the wrong hair, the wrong clothes, the wrong attitude.” (4) She clearly does not have a good self-image of herself, she has low self-esteem.

Her ‘friends’ have each taken a different path:

- Nicole: now hangs with the Jocks
- Ivy: has “enough personality” (4) to hang with both, the Artists and the Thespians
- Jessica: moved to Nevada
- Rachel Bruin: was the narrator’s best friend. She mouths “I hate you” (5) which **FORESHADOWS**: something happened that made her hate the narrator. The narrator bites her lips, which is a sign she tries to endure pain without confronting it

She stands in the center aisle of the auditorium as a “wounded zebra” (5).

A teacher who she claims he has a thick neck approaches her and tells her to sit, she calls him Mr. Neck

She took a seat beside another “wounded zebra” (5) who introduces herself as Heather

She claims that High School teachers and employees are all a lie; they are not here to help you.

The narrator can’t find her biology class and gets punished for wandering down the hall. She looks forward into graduating even though its 4 years away

**OUR TEACHERS ARE THE BEST**

- She says her English teacher has no face due to her long hair that droops on her shoulders; she takes a long time to take attendance because she won’t look at the students. She names her “Hairwoman” (6). The narrator’s description of her is similar to her self’s, both of them are kept to themselves and interact little with others. They have journals and the narrator writes about how weird Hairwoman is

  In social studies class, they are studying the same topics she had studied for the past 9 years, only reviewing American History, her teacher is Mr. Neck, who she claims he suffers of post-traumatic stress disorder from of the “TV wars.” (7). The use ‘TV wars’ means she does not care about what is going on around the world.

  The narrator addresses her teachers not by their real names, but by physical features, this means she has no respect for authority for some reason

**Spotlight**

- The narrator finds her locker and enters the cafeteria in time for lunch; she does not bring her lunch because “There is no way of telling what the acceptable fashion will be.” (7) This is another sign she struggles with being accepted in her high school.

  As she tries to scoot around a tall basket ball player in front of her, one of his friends throw mashed potatoes
at him but hit the narrator instead. She is embarrassed and runs out the cafeteria dumping her lunch, but is caught by Mr. Neck, who stops her and gives her a demerit for roaming the halls.

Sanctuary

- The narrator describes art class as the “dream” that follows the nightmare. Art is where you can express your feelings. The art teacher’s name is Mr. Freeman, who she calls by his real name. This means she feels respect for him and admires for him, probably because his class is about finding “your soul... Where you can touch that part of you’ve never dared look at before.” (10) Which is the problem the narrator is facing. She identifies herself with this class.
- Mr. Freeman holds up a huge globe that is missing a hemisphere and asked what happened to it, the students responded with literal answers, so he claimed their imagination was taken from them.
- He then announces the class project which consists of creating an art out of a word in a piece of paper they will take out from the globe. The narrator picks a tree, since she thinks it’s easy and tries to pick another piece; but Mr. Freeman says she can’t because she just chose her destiny.

ESPAÑOL

- The Spanish teacher is going to try to get through the year without speaking English to her students; the narrator believes this is amusing and useful because it is easy for her to ignore her.
- To explain herself, the teacher uses gestures, which the students cannot perceive, they are unwilling to learn.

HOME WORK.

- Melinda manages to make it through the first two weeks of school without a “nuclear meltdown” (14) Heather now sits with her at lunch and she calls her to talk about their English homework, she can talk for hours.
- In the hall she is constantly harassed and bumped into in the hallway.
- Melinda’s family communicates throughout notes left on the counter, since her mom works downtown and is home for a little amount of time.
- Melinda says her room belongs to an “alien” (15) it represents her when she was in 5th grade and it hasn’t changed since then, it represents someone who is not her. She has a stuffed-rabbit collection she likes.
- Melinda claims Homework is not an option since she gets sleepy and goes to bed.
- Melinda watches herself in the mirror across the room and does not have a good image of herself; she sees her lips are chewed up from all the time she bites it enduring pain. She gets up and puts the mirror in the closet.

OUR FEARLESS LEADER

- Melinda observes from the bathroom how the principal encounters an errant student who is late, the student says he is in a hurry to get the pass and fools the principal, Melinda finds this situation amusing.

FIZZ ED

- Melinda finds Gym Class humiliating, Heather is embarrassed to change in front of everyone, so she wears here sports clothe underneath, while Nicole strip changes without embarrassment. Nicole does not talk to Melinda. Nicole is a star athlete at every sport, she is nice with Heather and has a good attitude, and Melinda doesn’t hate her because of this.

FRIENDS

- Rachel has claimed her European heritage and now calls herself Rachelle, because she is hanging out with the foreign-exchange students.
- Melinda and Rachelle are in the bathroom; Melinda is putting on her contacts while Rachelle is smudging mascara under her eyes.
- Melinda tries to talk with her but she just ignores her.
Melinda realizes she needs a friend so she doesn’t look stupid or feel stupid

HEATHERING

Melinda rides along Heather to Heather’s house. Heather tries to become popular by joining clubs at school, one for each day, Heather tries to find a club with the ‘right people’ (popular).  
- Heather’s mom asks about their day, Melinda thinks it’s nice she cares, she’s thinking about her parents who don’t talk to her or her “Friends” that don’t listen to her  
- Heather’s idea of joining clubs comes from her anxiety of being accepted and becoming popular  
- Melinda rejects Heather’s idea of joining clubs  
- Heather insists of setting goals, Melinda’s goal is to “go home and take a nap” (24), this is a clear sign she has gave up on life

BURROW

- Hairwoman yanks Melinda out of the library to make up for missing work, she then is late to Study Hall since it was changed to the library, and nobody had told her. The librarian was comprehensive and didn’t punish Melinda. Her missing work is a sign of her depression.  
- Escaping Mr. Neck who was scolding her for missing work she hides in the old closet, which used to be the janitors’. In this place she feels safe, away from her real-world problems, this is her burrow, like a rabbit, this is a link to her stuffed-rabbit collections, rabbits symbolize how scared she is.  
- Melinda has also stolen a pad of late passes from Hairwoman

DEVIL’S DESTROY

- Merryweather High is having a Pep-Rally, Melinda is trying to skip it but is met by Heather who introduces her to her friends from the newspaper club  
- A girl in the back hears her names and scorns her for calling the cops at a party on summer, this is the first time we hear why Melinda was being hated, she doesn’t have time to explain what happens because the words get stuck on her mouth  
- Heather didn’t defend her, which means she cares more about being popular than Melinda’s feelings

CHEERLEADERS

- Melinda comments on the two “Universes” the cheerleaders are on.  
  - Universe #1: gorgeous, straight-teethed, long-legged, fashioners. ‘perfect’  
  - Universe #2: attend wild parties, have sexual intercourse, drink, etc.  
- Melinda hates the cheerleaders because they have it all. She is pushed down the benches

THE OPPOSITE OF INSPIRATION IS…EXPIRATION

- Melinda has been painting a tree hit by lightning since the pep-rally, Mr. Freeman does not comment, he just raises his eyebrows  
- People complain about their subject and begins talking about famous painters who don’t complain  
- He then starts complaining about the school board who has not given him supplies  
- The title of this section tells us Melinda is worried that if she isn’t inspirational she will die out, figuratively

ACTING

- Melinda gets a day off because of Columbus Day; Melinda goes to Heather’s house even though she does not want to.  
- Heather’s room is remodeled; Melinda says it screams “‘Heather!’”(33), she wants her room to whisper her name  
- Heather is determined to sign up for the musical, Melinda always shakes her head and agrees everything
Heather says, this means she is desperate to have someone to talk to, no matter the circumstances

- Melinda says acting would be easy for her, since she acts all around school (pretending to have friends, just smile, etc)
- Melinda disagrees to joining the musical and explains herself by saying “We are nobody” (34). Heather gets mad at that way of thinking
- Heather plans to work their way into a group and join the Musical next year; Melinda spills chocolate on the carpet and leaves without saying bye

**DINNER THEATER**

- Melinda’s situation at home is like a theater, Melinda thinks they are all lies or “acting”, she takes the role of the victim while her dad screams at her because of her grades while her mother tries to soften the situation

**BLUE ROSES**

- Melinda describes her biology class, she tries to pay attention
- She feels sorry for Ms. Keen the teacher, because she could have ended up being a famous scientist
- Melinda’s lab partner is David Petrakis, who talks little with Melinda

**STUDENTS DIVIDED BY CONFUSSION EQUALS ALGEBRA**

- Melinda has a hard time concentrating in Algebra, although last year she was one of the best. She stares at the windows only
  - Students constantly question the importance of algebra
  - Melinda gets called up by Mr. Stetman, described as a “nice guy” (39), when she can’t solve the problem he calls Rachelle up to the board to help, but both can’t solve it

**HALLOWEEN**

- Melinda’s parents declare Melinda is too old to go trick-or-treating, this is her excuse for not going.
- Although she seems thrilled, she is overwhelmed by memories of her past Halloween with her old friends
- She checked out a book from the library to read instead of moping, *Dracula*

**NAME NAME NAME**

- After Halloween, the board decided to change their mascot from Devils to Tigers
- In Spanish class, Melinda gets bothered by her name
- Melinda’s theory is that she was abducted by aliens to study her reactions

**THE MARTHAS**

- Heather has joined the Marthas clan, which are fashion girls that are always updated on the new fashion.
- Heather’s first job is to decorate the faculty lounge for Thanksgiving, she asks Melinda for help, she only accepts because she is curious about the staff room
- Heather feels good about being accepted by the Marthas, as they entered the room, Melinda leaves

**NIGHTMARE**

- Melinda’s nightmare is a person she names IT, which is a clue he was involved in the party where her problem was born