

DICEY'S SONG

CYNTHIA VOIGT

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS

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SYNOPSIS

Untitled Preface At age 13, Dacey and her brothers James and Sammy and sister Maybeth end a summer of hardship and live with their Gram Tillerman, a woman who owns an old house and barn set back from the road and a motorboat near Crisfield, Maryland, on the Chesapeake Bay. Dacey anticipates the first day of school and after-school time with a sailboat that she will return to the water to sail.

Chap. 1 Gram shows little surprise when her sailboat sinks into the bay. She intends for it to swell with water. The children haul it from the marsh to the barn for scraping and painting on the first three days of school. Dacey says little in class and thinks of her former home in Provincetown. After failing the third grade, Maybeth appears slightly retarded. James, at age ten, is the star learner of the family. Dacey acknowledges that she must start dressing like a girl and resolves to ask Millie Tydings for a job in her grocery store. Millie agrees to seven hours a week at a dollar an hour.

Gram, once more a mother to young children, begins adoption proceedings. Dacey maintains a frail hope that her mother will return. She teaches Maybeth fractions. Gram and Sammy play checkers; James reads the bible. Recorded on the pages are his grandparents' name and marriage date—John Tillerman md. Abigail, 1936, and the births of their children, John, Elizabeth, and Samuel. Dacey recognizes her mother's handwriting in the recording of deaths for her grandfather and for uncle Samuel "Bullet" Tillerman at age 19 in the Vietnam War. Gram inscribes the children's names.

James worries how the family will cope and fears he will never fit in. Dacey has her own troubles functioning in Miss Eversleigh's boring home ec class. Gram forces herself to fill out papers requesting welfare assistance. Maybeth, a slow learner, thrives at singing and playing the piano. Feeling a duty to her siblings, Dacey has difficulty freeing herself from the burden of being in charge. Gram urges her to let go.

Chap. 2 Dacey believes that school merely fills up her time. She causes no trouble, but makes no effort to establish friendships with schoolmates. Wilhemina Smiths, a black friend whose father is a minister, supports Dacey and forms a partnership with her. At work, Millie teaches Dacey to cut meat.

At home, Gram reports that Isaac Lingerle, Maybeth's teacher, wants Maybeth to have piano lessons. James informs her of upcoming six-weeks conferences with teachers. Gram provides each with clothes from the attic and takes an interest in their school assignments. James gets a job delivering Baltimore and Annapolis papers by bike for \$12 a month.

Chap. 3 In early October, Sammy rides along during James's paper route. Gram maintains no contact with Dacey's mother since she left home and never mentions her name.

When letters arrive from the hospital, she conceals them from Dacey and stresses that Dacey must think of life as hard. Because Gram realizes that her daughter can never function as a parent, she pursues the adoption.

Dacey meets Jeff, who plays guitar. Her job improves as the grocery business picks up. Because of Millie's error in purchasing corn flakes, Dacey suggests a special sale. She works hard at helping in the store and assisting Maybeth with reading and vocabulary. Gram makes a blouse for Maybeth to wear to a birthday party.

When Mr. Chappelle assigns the class a character sketch, Dacey writes about Momma. Mr. Lingerle comes to the house to teach piano to Maybeth. Gram invites him to a supper of crabs and baked potatoes. At school, students laugh at Dacey's poorly made apron, which she hurls into the trash. At home, Gram buys steak with her first welfare check. She becomes angry at the boys' quarrel and Maybeth's late return home after Mr. Lingerle injures his fingers changing a tire. He was unable to call because Gram has no phone. She intends to get one and invites Mr. Lingerle to eat with them. Dacey realizes how much Gram has sacrificed to take them in.

Chap. 4 On Halloween, Gram goes for conferences. James gets into trouble for going to the attic, where he had no business. In November, Gram takes Dacey to the Salisbury mall to shop and leaves Mr. Lingerle in charge of the other children. Gram buys yarn to make sweaters. She confides that Mrs. Jackson believes that Maybeth needs a home tutor.

Over club sandwiches, Gram speaks plainly about the problem of supporting the family. Dacey recalls fighting with other children because they had no father and went under their mother's last name. Gram explains that Dacey must hold on to people. To Dacey's surprise, Gram buys her three bras, jeans, a jumper, high socks, and a brown dress. Dacey eases Gram's concern about maturity by confiding that she already knows about menstruation and sex.

Chap. 5 Gram invites James and Mr. Lingerle to discuss Maybeth. Dacey recalls how their father deserted them after Sammy's birth. She realizes that Sammy blames himself for the family's predicament. Just before first quarter report cards are issued, Maybeth is crushed by children's laughter at her attempt at reading. The incident causes James to check out stacks of library books on reading method. He chooses one on phonics and resolves to teach Maybeth himself.

Chap. 6 In the third week of November, Dacey gets an F in home ec and a C+ in English. At work, Millie describes Gram's smart mouth before she married John. Since the children came to Crisfield, Millie has seen a return of Gram's old self. That afternoon, Gram accompanies Sammy on the paper route while James and Dacey tutor Maybeth. Sammy is unable to get along with friends, who provoke fights by ridiculing the children's unusual grandmother. Miss Eversleigh

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encourages Dacey to take home ec. more seriously, especially meal planning.

Chap. 7 Mr. Chappelle reads two essays aloud. The students laugh at Mina's essay. After reading the second, he accuses Dacey of plagiarism for a sketch on her mother, a character she identifies as Mrs. Eliza. To protect her inner self, Dacey offers no defense. It is Wilhemina who defends her and disproves the teacher's error. He changes the grade to A+. After Gram reads the essay, she tells Dacey about feeling alone after her husband died. Dacey telephones Wilhemina to thank her for her kindness.

Chap. 8 On the walk home from school to the store, Wilhemina guesses that the person in the essay was Dacey's mother. Millie reminds Abigail to get a Thanksgiving turkey. Sammy can't ride the bus for a month because he was fighting. Dacey longs for Momma to be with them. Gram comments that her family were bootleggers. Mina surmises that Sammy fights over the things kids say about Gram. Jeff visits while Dacey sands the boat. Gram makes chocolate chip cookies.

Chap. 9 The next Monday, Sammy reports that, to prove that she isn't crazy, Gram beats the boys in Sammy's class at marbles. For the single performance, she named herself the Lone Marble Ranger. Dacey apologizes to Miss Everleigh for not paying attention in class. Gram completes the adoption. Jeff asks Dacey to go to a dance.

Gram asks Dacey to pack for a journey to Boston, but offers no other information. Mr. Lingerle remains with the children and gives Gram cash for the trip.

Chap. 10 The reason for the trip is obvious when Dacey arrives at her mother's bedside and realizes she is dying. Although Liza Tillerman never regains consciousness, Gram and Dacey talk to her. Because it is almost Christmas, Gram gives Dacey \$100 to buy gifts for the children. Dr. Epstein believes it is better for Momma to die.

Dacey buys gloves for Gram and a plane, carved chicken, and catapult for the boys. For Maybeth, she gets a songbook and bracelet. For James, she buys a wood chess set. The kind shop owner realizes that Dacey is facing a grim Christmas. Gram stays the night. When Dacey returns to the hospital, she learns that Momma died at dawn. Gram and Dacey hug to express their affection. Dacey knows she should relax, but she wants to retreat gradually from being decision-maker. She gives Gram the new gloves.

Chap. 11 Gram wants to ship Momma's body home for burial, but the price is \$700. She chooses to have her cremated and picks up the remains at 3:00 P. M. Gram opens the envelope from Mr. Lingerle and finds \$500. Bringing Momma's ashes home requires a long train ride from Wilmington. Dacey clings to the wooden box, realizing that Momma really died the previous summer.

Dacey congratulates Gram on doing everything right. Gram explains that she had no idea what to do and claims to have the Tillerman courage. She knows that she still has a son John somewhere. Sammy and the others run to meet Gram and Dacey and ponder the box of ashes.

Chap. 12 The family buries Momma under a mulberry tree, with each child helping with the digging. Dacey believes that Momma is finally home. Gram retrieves family albums from the attic. Through photos and stories, she brings the children up to date and fills in gaps in their family knowledge.

TIME LINE

1936	Abigail marries John Tillerman.
1960s	Samuel "Bullet" Tillerman dies in the Vietnam War
summer	Liza Tillerman abandons her five children at a mall.
fall	The children live with their grandmother, Abigail Tillerman.
early October	Mr. Lingerle comes to the house to teach piano to Maybeth.
Halloween	Gram goes for conferences.
November	Gram takes Dacey to the Salisbury mall to shop.
November	Dacey gets an F in home ec and a C+ in English.
	Mr. Chappelle accuses Dacey of plagiarism.
before Christmas	Gram and Dacey visit Liza before she dies..
dawn	Liza dies.
next morning	Liza is cremated.
later	The family buries Momma under a mulberry tree.
	Gram tells the children about family history.

AUTHOR SKETCH

Herself a reader herself of girls' stories, writer and teacher Cynthia Irving Voigt cherished young adult literature in girlhood. Born on February 24, 1942 in Boston, Massachusetts, she was the second of the five children of Elise Keeney and Frederick C. Irving, a business executive. Growing up in Connecticut near her grandmother, she learned to value the older generation, including a commanding old house stocked with Nancy Drew mysteries, Cherry Ames career stories, *The Black Stallion*, *The Secret Garden*, and Albert Payson Terhune's dog stories. With guidance from her mother, she began reading Albert Camus, Leo Tolstoy, Herman Melville, and Shakespeare's plays. After graduation from the Dana Hall boarding school in Wellesley, Massachusetts, she developed a love of Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope at Smith College, where she earned a B. A. in creative writing.

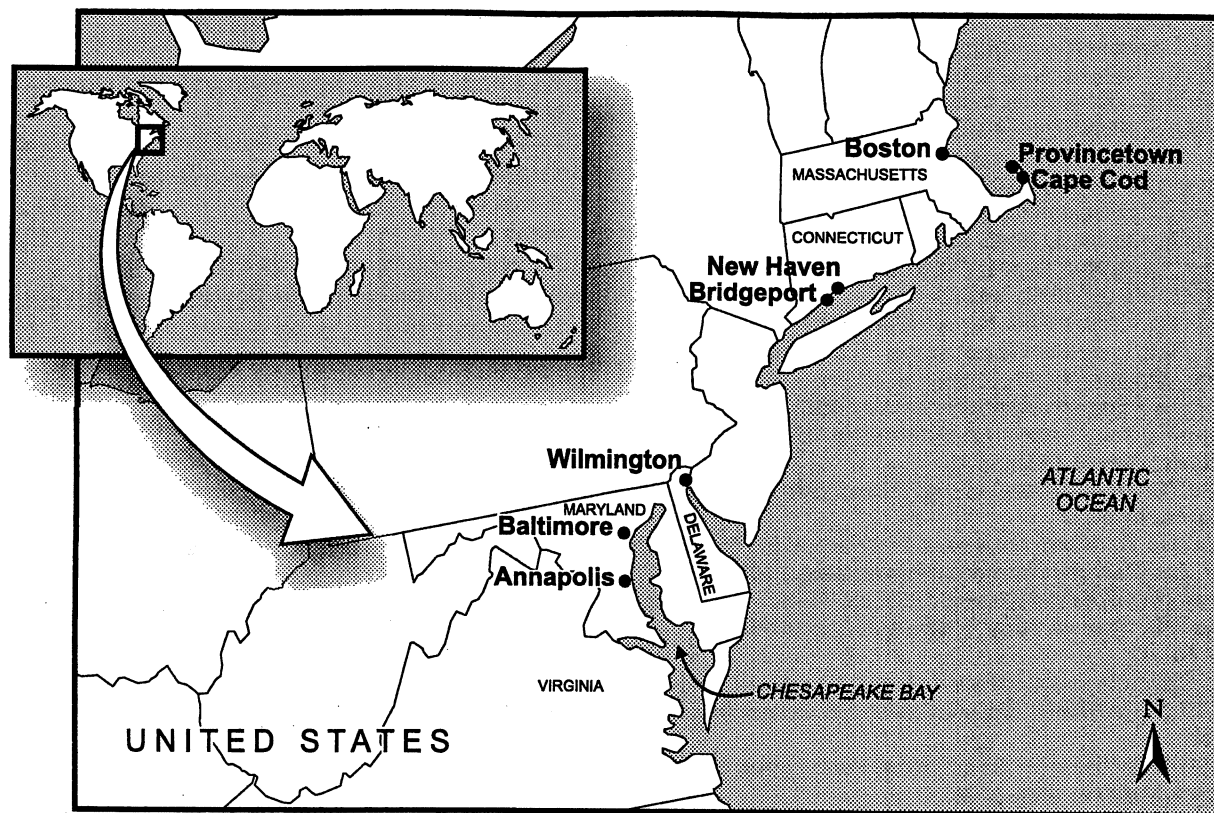
After work with the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency in New York City, she married at age 22 and settled in Santa Fe. While her husband attended college, she did secretarial work. After earning an education degree at Christian Brothers College, she began a classroom career that satisfied her ambitions. After a divorce, she and daughter Jessica moved to Annapolis, Maryland, where Voigt taught school at Glen Burnie, served as English department chair of Key School in Annapolis, and wrote her first young adult works.

In 1974, the novelist married Greek and Latin teacher Walter Voigt. During her second pregnancy, she taught part time and wrote for one hour each day. By the time that son Peter was a year old, she had published two young adult books, *The Callender Papers* and *Tell Me If the Lovers Are Losers*. Her third work, *Homecoming*, began the Tillerman saga and her fascination with the character of Dacey, the survivor of abandonment. The Voigts settled in Deer Isle, Maine.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Voigt has earned critical recognition for choosing realistic characters within engaging plots involving real-world issues—child abandonment, bullying and verbal abuse,

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insanity, homosexuality, adult illiteracy, illegitimacy, bootlegging, vicious gossip, and racism. Vivid in atmosphere and dialogue, she presents young people making decisions that require judgment and experience, but do not demand an ideal level of goodness or heroism. Her command of a gamut of emotions brings Dacey through a series of personal explanations of her siblings' quandary and reasons why Dacey should rescue all four children as well as herself. After winning a Newbery Medal in 1983, Voigt continued the Tillerman series with *A Solitary Blue*, a 1984 Newbery Honor book, and *Sons from Afar* and *Seventeen Against the Dealer*.

Voigt's stark, hard-hitting novels have earned her a Notable Children's Trade Book in the field of social studies, National Council for Social Studies/Children's Book Council, American Book Award nominee, two ALA Best Young Adult Books citation, Edgar Allan Poe Award for best juvenile mystery, and a Silver Pencil. She also received a Deutscher Jugend Literatur Preis, Alan Award for achievement in young adult literature, *New York Times* Outstanding books award, and California Young Reader's Award for *Izzy, Willy-Nilly*, a perusal of teen response to leg amputation. Voigt's books are perennial favorites on library reading lists and in classroom studies.

OTHER BOOKS BY CYNTHIA VOIGT

Bad, Badder, Baddest (1997)
The Bad Girls (1996)
Building Blocks (1984)
The Callender Papers (1983)
Come a Stranger (1986)
David and Jonathan (1992)

Elske (1999)
Glass Mountain (1991)
Homecoming (1981)
It's Not Easy Being Bad (2000)
Izzy, Willy-Nilly (1986)
Jackaroo (1985)
On Fortune's Wheel (1990)
Orfe (1993)
The Runner (1985)
Seventeen Against the Dealer (1989)
A Solitary Blue (1983)
Sons from Afar (1987)
Stories About Rosie (picture book, 1986)
Tell Me If the Lovers Are Losers (1982)
Tree by Leaf (1988)
The Vandemark Mummy (1991)
When She Hollers (1994)
The Wings of a Falcon (1993)

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the impact of orphanhood
2. To account for child abandonment
3. To interpret social and community attitudes toward underprivileged children
4. To contrast the morality and stability of family members
5. To discuss the themes of loss and courage
6. To recount the main events in the formation of a new family
7. To particularize the demands of schoolwork
8. To describe attitudes toward dyslexia and mental illness
9. To describe elements of atmosphere and tone
10. To analyze flashbacks as sources of information

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To explain how Dicey learns to be a child again
2. To analyze the symbolism of the sailboat
3. To account for Gram's silence about the letters from the hospital
4. To express the importance of trusting friends
5. To justify Dicey's importance to her siblings
6. To predict how Gram will reconstruct her family history
7. To summarize Mr. Lingerle's role as rescuer
8. To discuss the implications of James's erratic behavior
9. To summarize the roles of home ec teacher, grocery store owner, and English teacher
10. To list school events caused by suspicion, cruelty, and snobbery
11. To characterize events that cause Gram to take Dicey shopping
12. To analyze details that contribute to Gram's decision to reclaim her family

LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Cynthia Voigt's fiction, present the following terms and applications:

episode a coherent event, digression, or incident in a narrative or serial that stands out on its own merit, in particular, the confrontation between Dicey and Mr. Chappelle over the charge of plagiarism. The exchange that involves Wilhemina Smiths as defender of her friend helps Dicey restore faith in outsiders, especially teachers and schoolmates. The subsequent exchange with Gram after Dicey shares her essay on Liza eases some of Gram's coldness toward the children.

round character a realistic being who possesses a complex or multifaceted array of traits. Dicey, who is the most complex character of the novel, learns from maturity, experience, and trust in adults how to cope with the heavy sadness she experiences after her mother abandons the children at a mall. Her closeness with Gram and the shared experience of observing Liza on her deathbed assist Dicey in developing strengths as a sister, granddaughter, student, grocery store clerk, and friend.

symbol a concrete object that stands for a complex or abstract idea or relationship and implies more than the literal meaning of the word or words, such as the sailboat. Just as Dicey learns about the hard job of scraping a boat hull to prepare it for the water, she strips from her mind and heart the overlay of protective hardness to pain and loss. Working daily in the barn, she gradually cuts through the crusty layer of distrust and self-imposed martyrdom that inhibits her recovery

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from abandonment and loss of her mother.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The setting of *Dacey's Song* suits the story of children making a new home for themselves with a grandmother who is unsure of her relationship to family. Set on marshland along the Chesapeake Bay, the plot involves the sounds, smells, and changeable weather of the Atlantic Coast. Dacey and her siblings accept indoor and outdoor chores at Gram's house as part of their duty as residents. They learn that a boat sunk in water swells to a suitable tightness and that preparing a hull for service requires much work in the barn until the crust is removed from the hull.

Dacey moves carefully into the community, making few friends in school and learning to cope with snobbery. Walking to Millie Tydings's grocery store with Wilhemina Smiths places the two girls in a time and place that suits their discussion of friendship. In Gram's kitchen, Dacey has some moments alone with her grandparent to begin assessing the familial situation and Dacey's self-imposed role as pseudo-mother to James, Sammy, and Maybeth.

The classroom setting depicts the hardship of finding reality in home ec lessons that appear to have no bearing on a hard life and limited future after Liza abandons the children at a mall. Dacey fares poorly at home ec, a subject that seems overly prissy and worthless until her teacher explains personally her interest in Dacey's home skills, in particular, nutrition and health. In English, Dacey applies a mental distancing from the present that reunites her in the past with Liza, whom she memorializes in a character sketch. The writing recalls a different setting—an austere beach scene and tiny cabin battered by winds and within sound of relentless waves.

The journey to Boston by plane allows Dacey the interaction with mother and grandmother that restores some wholeness to the family situation. From a hospital room, Dacey moves into the community to spend \$100 for Christmas presents and to learn from a compassionate toy store clerk that caring for people is a state of mind and heart. Reunited with Gram for the hard decisions concerning returning Liza to her children, Dacey remains poised. She cherishes the wood box of ashes, wards off snooty questions from outsiders on the train, and presents the container to the children, who must learn on their own about Liza's death. The conclusion of her journey at the mulberry tree presents a place in the Tillerman yard and a symbolic return to roots as the children reverently bury the ashes and accept their position as the adopted children of Abigail Tillerman of Crisfield, Maryland.

CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

fiction

William Armstrong, *Souder*
Kaye Gibbons's *Ellen Foster*
Irene Hunt, *No Promises in the Wind*
Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree*
Alex Haley, *Queen and Roots*
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
Barbara Kingsolver, *The Bean Trees*
Gary Paulsen, *Nightjohn*
Robert Newton Peck, *A Day No Pigs Would Die*
Cynthia Rylant, *Missing May*
Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
John Van Druten, *I Remember Mama*

Internet

"Bright Solutions for Dyslexia," <www.dys-add.com/>

"Crisis, Grief, and Healing," <www.webhealing.com>
"Why Can't I Learn?," <www.ldiec.net/>

play

Jane Wagner, *J. T.*

poem

Robert Frost, "Birches"

nonfiction

Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Judith Berck, *No Place to Be*

Frank Gilbreth and Ernestine Carey, *Cheaper by the Dozen*

short stories

Toni Cade Bambara, "Blues Ain't No Mockin' Bird"

James Hurst, "The Scarlet Ibis"

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, "A Mother in Manville"

Videos/DVDs

Anna and the King

Daughters of the Dust

The Education of Little Tree

Ellen Foster

I Remember Mama

J. T.

Queen

Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here

THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in *Dacey's Song* should include these aspects:

Themes

- abandonment
- loss
- mental illness
- survival
- reunion
- victimization
- self-esteem
- maturity
- death
- family love

Motifs

- coping with a hopeless situation
- seeking a refuge
- making friends in a new school
- comprehending the decline of a family
- balancing responsibility to siblings with duty to self

MEANING STUDY

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the novel. Explain each in context. Chapter, part, and page numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. James finger pointed to an entry on the second page. John Tillerman md. Abigail, 1936, she read. (Chap. 1, p. 15)
(James discovers a Judaeo-Christian family tradition of recording births, deaths, and marriages in a family bible, which carries such gravity that it is admissible in court as evidence of times, places, and events. Gram makes a significant gesture of writing the children's names among the rest of the family.)
2. But it wasn't her momma's own face she saw, it was the photograph the police in Bridgeport had shown her for identification, that faraway face lying back against a white pillow, with the golden hair cut short all around it.

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(Chap. 1, p. 16)

(Dicey carries heavy memories of her mother's gradual withdrawal from reality, which Dicey describes in her character sketch of Mrs. Liza. She must acknowledge "the sadness of Momma lost to them, maybe forever.")

3. Dicey closed her eyes briefly, then turned her attention back outside. If she hadn't, just then, she would have missed seeing the straight-backed figure emerge from the main doors with a clumsy purse over its shoulder. Gram. (Chap. 2, p. 25)
(Voigt depicts in physical terms the stoic, courageous grandparent who is ill at ease in womanly dress, but assured of her position as head of household. Going to school to discuss Maybeth's musical talent introduces Gram to Mr. Lingerle, an important character who offers the backup she needs for times when she can't be in charge of all the children.)
4. "I've got an old treadle machine in my room," Gram said. (Chap. 2, p. 36)
(Before sewing machines were powered with electric motors, they connected by pulley to a platform at floor level that the user activated by treading down and up, controlling the speed of the action with a steady foot rhythm.)
5. Dicey would have liked to just leave the circulars or to have returned them to the senders, but Gram said they'd use them to start fires when the weather got cold. (Chap. 3, p. 38)
(Accustomed to making do on little cash, Gram recycles junk mail just as she clothes the children with items retrieved from the attic. Central to involving the children in family life is the recycling of the old boat, which becomes a unifying project that teaches them to follow through on plans.)
6. James had written about all the reasons why the Mayflower people wanted to come to America. (Chap. 3, p. 46)
(In expressing the human difficulties that impact human history, Voigt summarizes hardships not too far removed from the Tillerman family's experiences: "Some of the people came because they weren't welcome in the society of England, because they were sort of rotten apples there. Some came because they had to, like wives, children, and indentured servants. Some came because they wanted to live and work in a land that civilization hadn't already polished and divided, because they loved wildness, because they wanted to match themselves up against the wilderness and see how they did. . . . Some of the settlers were looking for easy money, gold or furs, to get rich quick.")
7. He wanted them to write a character sketch. (Chap. 3, p. 47)
(Mr. Chappelle's assignment causes English students to think about conflict in human life and to assess one model in a unified written summation. After discarding Will Hawkins as a suitable subject, Dicey decides to write about Momma anonymously as Mrs. Liza. The writing forces Dicey to order her thoughts about how mental illness gradually sapped Momma of purpose and direction.)
8. People can always find pleasure in music, no matter what else—hurts them, or goes wrong. (Chap. 3, p. 52)

(One of the most sensitive people in the Tillermans' lives is Isaac Lingerle, the skilled pianist and public music teacher who becomes family friend and caregiver when Gram is away from home. Isaac's belief in music as a means of escaping emotional pain and sorrow foretells his ability to ease Maybeth's insecurities about reading and encouraging her use of music as an outlet.)

9. Gram didn't like taking charity, Dicey knew that because Gram said so. (Chap. 3, p. 55)
(Like much of society, Gram thinks of financial assistance to poor families as charity and despises having to fill out forms and make a request that she feels demeans her. In reality, welfare is a fail-safe program provided by tax money that Gram's family had paid into the public coffers.)
10. "The bra is just the beginning," Gram said. (Chap. 4, p. 79)
(Gram is reticent about discussing maturity with Dicey, who already knows the rudiments of menstruation and sex. Gram has learned from experience with Liza's elopement that misguided growth results in multiple sufferings, including four grandchildren who have no parents and no financial support.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the novel.

Motivation

1. What caused Liza to abandon her children at a mall?
(Abandoned by her children's father, Liza Tillerman, a single unmarried mother working for low wages, slowly lost her ability to parent as her mind crumbled. Dicey summarizes the gradual decline in Momma in her character sketch for Mr. Chappelle's English class.

In the essay, Dicey explains that Liza lived away from Provincetown on Cape Cod in a seaside cabin. Dicey summarizes the hard work being a single parent, "waiting tables in a restaurant, serving drinks in a bar, night-clerking in a motel." She explains that, without an education, Liza had no choice but to work hard on holidays and shift to checking at a supermarket when her children were older.

The disintegration in Liza's mind began with a smileless-face as life turned sour. To Dicey, "Money worried at her the way waves worry at the shoreline, always nibbling away at the soft sand." Liza forgot necessities, like repairing holes in her sweaters. She lost her ability to speak to people and to care for her children. To survive at all, she went away entirely in her thoughts to "the farthest place she could find.")

Setting

2. Describe Gram's home.
(At Crisfield, Maryland, on a marshy strip along the Chesapeake Bay, "quiet with little waves and long tides," Abigail Tillerman lives away from the road in a run-down house with barn. The children enjoy living on the shore, where they get fresh crab from the bay and where Gram keeps a sailboat at the dock. When the four children take up residence, they manage to fit into the house with the lonely old woman. As a project, they tow the sunken boat on a homemade cradle on wheels a quarter mile up

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from the marsh to the barn and set about scraping the hull before painting it. Before school begins, under the stars in the patch of moonlight at the barn, Dicey enjoys the wind blowing off the water, "bringing the faint smell of salt and the rich, moist smell of the marshes."

Gram's house is surprisingly ample. The attic produces clothing for the children, who live in shorts with no shoes until fall demands school clothes. Also from the attic come photo albums, which Gram shares with the children after they begin to merge into a real family. The return of Liza's ashes to the mulberry tree with long, knotty roots symbolizes the aged woman's welcome of the four children and her receipt of Liza, returned home at last from years of separation from her mother.)

Character Development

3. How does Dicey improve her performance at school?

(Dicey, who is preoccupied with the real problems of caring for a family of four as well as herself, considers school a time-filler. She hates Miss Eversleigh's home ec class, especially the lecture on nutrition and food groups. To occupy her mind, Dicey doodles in her notebook. Acquiescent without giving trouble in class, she performs required work, such as peeling carrots, but becomes frustrated with assignments and with her efforts to make an apron.

A one-on-one conversation with Miss Eversleigh clears up her intent to impart important skills to Dicey and the other girls in home ec: "You owe it to yourselves to know how to prepare a meal, or sew a seam, or spend money wisely. You also owe it to yourselves to know how to hammer a nail straight or change a tire, to eat at table with appropriate manners, to plant tomatoes, to acquire information you have need of. If you do not understand that, your understanding is faulty."

In English class, Dicey is less withdrawn during Mr. Chappelle's discussion of conflict in human relations. After he assigns a character sketch, she gives it due consideration and rules out Will Hawkins, a circus worker, as a subject in favor of Momma, whom she disguises with the name Mrs. Liza. Accused of plagiarism, Dicey makes no effort to exonerate herself because she must protect the source of her writing. After Wilhemina intervenes and Mr. Chappelle apologizes, Dicey shares her writing with Gram.)

Historical Milieu

4. How does the story fit an historical era?

(The historical clues that set the story in an era are obvious from the events that affect the lives of the Tillermans. From a perusal of a family bible, James discovers that Abigail married John Tillerman in 1936. Gram, who loses a daughter to elopement and a son to employment in California, is widowed after John Tillerman dies of heart attack. The death of Bullet, her younger son, in the Vietnam War at age 19, adds to the constant burden of sorrow that Dicey recognizes in a fellow sufferer.

Additional information about social milieu comes from the cost of \$700 for Liza's funeral arrangements, \$300 for cremation, and Gram's shopping trip with Dicey at a nearby mall. In a contemporary setting, Dicey eats a club sandwich at the restaurant, shops for jeans and jumper, and buys a brown dress and high socks. A clerk helps her try on bras, which she buys at \$3 or \$4 each, an indi-

cation by price of the time. Additional price information from Dicey's Christmas shopping trip to the toy store adds to the creation of a period in United States history.)

Theme

5. What does Dicey learn about courage?

(Already possessed of more courage than most people, Dicey studies Gram during the request for welfare and adoption and assumes that "Gram probably knew something about carrying sorrow around." Dicey realizes how careful Gram is with money and how hard-working she is in planning a bigger garden to feed the family and insisting that they have a telephone. Dicey faces the problems of earning enough money for the children to have allowances and finding help for the children's educational and emotional needs, especially Maybeth's inability to read.

In Boston, Dicey recognizes a different kind of courage in Gram from her daily tough front. Without money, Gram approaches the hospital, meets with Dr. Epstein, and sits beside Liza for the last time. She and Dicey talk to the inert form about past losses and the current status of Liza's children. Overnight, Gram sits with the dying daughter who has no hope of recovery or of reuniting with her children. When Dicey returns the next day, Gram works out the means of returning Liza's remains to Crisfield by cremation, the most feasible solution to their lack of money for transportation of a coffin and burial. Dicey admires her grandmother's courage, but has to accept that Gram approaches a no-win situation with grit and resignation rather than bravery.)

Interpretation

6. What does Voigt indicate about hardships in children's lives?

(By presenting Dicey's struggles in establishing a new home for her sister and brothers with Gram, Voigt acknowledges the interrelated complexities of child rearing. While Dicey is learning her own role as a young lady and student, she loses her ability to concentrate on the abstracts of home ec, which seem far removed from her everyday problems of settling the children into Gram's life. After expending her energies at Millie's store, Dicey hurries home to scrape on the boat and help with dinner while settling minor squabbles and chastising Sammy for fighting on the bus. The hurdle of teacher conferences and report cards grows more difficult when it is Dicey herself who needs counseling. Floundering with too many issues, she allows James to take part of the load of concern for Maybeth by studying dyslexia and setting up home tutoring in phonics and sight vocabulary.)

Conflict

7. What does the author reveal about adoption?

(Gram goes through emotional and financial upheaval as she struggles to accept the Tillerman children as her own. From living alone to mothering four youngsters, she experiences additional need for money. Even though she disdains charity, she fills out the papers that will authorize her to receive welfare checks.

For adoption, Gram receives papers and pamphlets from the lawyer's office. She begins putting together the legal background, but says little about the process. From regular letters from Dr. Epstein at the Boston hospital, she obtains grounds for legal custody of the children,

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whose mother is too mentally ill to care for them. Without information on where the father has gone, Gram must shoulder responsibility. When the adoption is complete, she acknowledges that she is now in charge of her "heirs and assigns.")

Atmosphere

8. How does the bay influence the story?

(There is much delight in living on the Chesapeake Bay, especially fresh air, starry nights, late fall warmth, and colorful sunsets. The children, who are accustomed to harsh blustery fall winds on Cape Cod, come from a small cabin near the water, where they stayed outdoors as much as possible to give themselves space to play. At Gram's house, they live on an overgrown drive and inland a quarter mile from the dock. They work as a team to make a cradle on wheels to draw her sailboat to the barn for work.

The nearness of fresh crab and the pleasant atmosphere of lawn and garden enable the Tillermans to relax during a fall of getting used to living with Gram and acclimating themselves to a new school. By Thanksgiving, they think like a family. At Christmas, they can bury Momma under the mulberry tree with the assurance that she is home now on Tillerman land.)

Author Purpose

9. Why does Voigt permeate the story with complex social and personal issues?

(Voigt departs from the "happily ever after" fictions that depict children as somehow separate from real-life struggles. At dinner, they learn how to cope with the unspoken criticism of Mr. Lingerle's weight. With Millie Tydings, Dickey recognizes the hardship of running a grocery store without reading skills and compensating for errors in reading comprehension on order blanks. In assisting Maybeth with settling in at school, Dickey also learns that she can't fight the child's battles against rude students and must, instead, upgrade Maybeth's confidence with words and bolster her self-esteem with music.

Most complex of issues is the burden of having an insane mother who is incapable of rearing her family. The children recognize slights and rudeness as Liza begins losing hold and hear unpleasant comments about a single woman with no husband and children without a father's last name. The final frontier for Dickey is death and permanent separation from Liza, the Momma she fleetingly hoped would some day rejoin them at Gram's. As though clutching at the final earthly hold on her parents, Dickey cradles the wood box in her arms on the train, making no explanation to the curious conductor and others as to what the contents are or why they are precious to her. Settled at Liza's gravesite under the mulberry tree, Dickey is able to think of death and burial as home at last for Momma.)

Structure

10. What does the prologue add to the novel?

(Because Cynthia Voigt presents Dickey's Song as a sequel to Homecoming, she introduces the first fall with Gram Tillerman as a follow-up to a hard summer. As Dickey stands in the patch of moonlight in the old barn, she summarizes how the long journey from the family's rickety cabin on Cape Cod had ended at Gram's house, a rundown farm where the owner is not overly happy to become the mother of five children. However, the trek

south landed the children at a roomy space inside their grandmother's heart, "the kind of room that was what they really needed."

The introit warns the reader to expect "sharp corners and unexpected turns" in Gram, a tough character hiding a broken heart from widowhood, loss of son in the Vietnam War, and separation from a wandering son in California and a daughter rearing five children on Cape Cod. Yawning and contented with her new life in Crisfield after a long summer of disappointment and homelessness, Dickey looks forward to school and to afternoons sailing the boat on the bay. With pride in her characters, Voigt informs the reader through Dickey that the Tillerman children "made it through, made it home.")

HOW LANGUAGE WORKS

Voigt creates idiosyncrasies in description and character language to flesh out implications about motivation and behavior.

1. One of the characteristics for James's forced cheer is the comment "Good-o," his acceptance of the plans that Dickey works out for their life with Gram.
2. Gram's short, unexplained comments sound terse and reduce interaction with other characters, including the saleslady at the mall. When the clerk comments, "I don't know why [teenagers] dress the way they do," Gram retorts, "You don't? I do" and says no more on the matter.
2. Miss Eversleigh, who fails to connect with Dickey in class, makes a beginning at friendship while Dickey washes the grocery store windows. Miss Eversleigh begins, "I didn't know you could smile," a serious comment that is both light-hearted and critical of Dickey's public demeanor.
3. After accusing Dickey of plagiarism and recognizing his error, Mr. Chappelle says, "It's my mistake and I'm really very sorry. . . . I'm giving you an A for the marking period, of course." Dickey, who has retreated into toil, cares nothing for his apology, which makes no difference. Voigt remarks, "She rode home through a wind like a knife blade, but it didn't make her cold."
4. At the gravesite, newly changed from tight-lipped grandmother to the new Momma, Gram hears James's remark that "She's really gone now." Gram answers with a blend of logic and love, "You might say that or you might say she's come home now. Maybe it's both."

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Business and Economics

1. Describe the types of work that the Tillerman children choose to help Gram cope with expenses. Suggest additional sources of income, such as lawn work, babysitting, and peddling bay crabs door to door.
2. Chart in dollars and cents the income of a piano teacher, doctor in a mental hospital, train conductor, grocery store owner, minister, R. N., English teacher, and bootlegger.
3. Explain in a brief paragraph why Gram hesitates to ask for public assistance. Outline the paperwork she must complete for the welfare department, including income assessment and property evaluation.
4. Make a shopping list of goods and services that the children may need after they arrive at Gram's house in Crisfield.

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Cinema

1. Propose a film biography of Cynthia Voigt. Outline scenes to express her value to young adult literature, especially in public and school libraries and reading classes.
2. View films with troubled or outcast characters, such as *Ellen Foster* or *The Education of Little Tree*.

Drama

1. Create a storyboard account of the journey to the hospital, including two plane rides and return from Wilmington by train for a surprise meeting with the children and Mr. Lingerle. Accentuate Dicey's shopping trip to the toy store and her experience with the kind wood carver, selecting gifts, and admitting that there is no hope of a happy ending to her story.
2. Draw stage settings for a dramatization of a scene from the novel. Supply sketches of costumes and props.
3. Act out a family funeral service and burial of Liza's ashes. Select passages for each Tillerman child to read or recite to honor their mother. Choose an appropriate song for Maybeth to sing.

Geography

1. Use topographical maps to describe the land that Gram and Dicey cover on their journey to Boston. Explain why this area of the United States offers numerous forms of inter-city transportation.
2. Explain with current weather information why fall on the Chesapeake Bay is warmer than the autumn weather on the cape in Provincetown where the Tillerman children lived in a rickety cabin.
3. Shade a United States map to areas of the country where state expenditures on Aid to Families with Dependent Children is highest. Explain why urban areas have a high percentage of disadvantaged and abandoned children.
4. Make a web site or bulletin board that identifies these places: Wilmington, Crisfield, Boston, Bridgeport, Annapolis, Chesapeake Bay, Salisbury, Connecticut River, Cape Cod, Provincetown, Baltimore, and New Haven. Append a scale of miles to indicate relative distances between points, particularly between Boston and Crisfield and Crisfield and Wilmington.

History and Social Studies

1. Compose an extended definition of social isolation. Explain why the term describes Gram, Maybeth, Dicey, Mr. Lingerle, and Sammy. Explain why Millie sees some of Abigail's old self after she adopts her grandchildren. Project how living in a loving family may end feelings of separation.
2. Summarize Tillerman family history. Explain why researchers study courthouse records, wills, bills of sale, newspaper clippings, and family bibles for information concerning absent family members. To locate Gram's missing son who moved to California, suggest more recent sources of genealogy, including the archives maintained in Salt Lake City, Utah, and genealogical web sites.
3. Based on your understanding of the novel, lead a panel discussion of the effects of abandonment, homelessness, bullying and fighting, and mental illness on children. Support your opinions with facts from census

reports, sociological surveys, and statistics obtained from almanacs and economic and health surveys of the antebellum South.

Language Arts

1. Read aloud from nonfiction, novels, plays, speeches, and stories that describe abandonment, loss of home, insecurity, death of a parent, and reunion with family. Compare other characters with Dicey, who must learn to let go, hold on, and reach out to other people.
2. Record a dramatic reading of Robert Frost's "Birches." Apply to *Dicey's Song* the poet's belief that "Earth's the right place for love." Compare the boy living too far from town to play baseball with James and Sammy living at Gram's house on marshland on the Chesapeake Bay.
3. Summarize from scripture the story of Joseph's coat of many colors. Explain how his separation from family and subsequent reunion with father and brothers presents realistic family drama.
4. Draw contrasting posters of life with Gram.
5. Make a chart of advice to Gram on how and where to get advice on bringing up children without the aid of their parents. Include tips on chores, allowance, bedtime, holidays, friends, clothing, school assignments, after-school jobs, and questions about the past.
6. Write a paragraph on character names. Give reasons why "Tillerman" is a good choice for someone who pilots the way through rough waters. Account for the choice of "Dicey" and its slang meaning.
7. Read aloud from Kaye Gibbons's *Ellen Foster*. Explain in a theme why Ellen, like Dicey, grows up too fast and tries to shoulder responsibilities that really belong to adults.
8. Record aloud descriptive passages from *Dicey's Song*. Consider preparing for Thanksgiving, delivering papers with Gram, ordering corn flakes for the store, selecting the mulberry tree as a burial spot, wearing shirts from the attic, going to school in shorts, receiving a teacher's apology, piano lessons, buying Christmas presents, and setting allowances for the children.
9. Pantomime relationships within the children's everyday experience. Include Liza/Dicey, Gram/James, Maybeth/Mr. Lingerle, Dicey/Jeff, Mr. Chappelle/Wilhemina Smiths, Dicey/Millie Tydings, Maybeth/James, and Gram/Mr. Lingerle.
10. Post a mural or web site expressing the importance of these terms to the novel: undertaker, cremated, expedite, catapult, charisma, RN, pea jacket, folk hero, admiration society, plagiarism, sight vocabulary, Sam-I-Am, Little Big Horn, rat-tailed chisel, suffragettes, caulking, treadle machine, triplicate, Louis Pasteur, John Wilkes Booth, circulars, mannikin, indentured, *Mayflower*, strata, remediation, effective learning, affective learning, minuet, chilblains, detention, emotional overlay, turbo-prop, cranberry spoon, parchesi, and Joseph's coat of many colors.
11. Find the source of the poem beginning "Under the wide and starry sky." Describe in a theme why the poem became the epitaph for Robert Louis Stevenson, a great English writer and storyteller living in the South Seas.

Law

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1. Read aloud a definition of "heirs and assigns." Explain why Gram's decision to adopt will make life easier for the children.
2. Improve a booklet or web site explaining to grandparents how to assume responsibility for dependent grandchildren. Summarize adoption procedures, wills, and welfare assistance.

Psychology

1. Explain with a character web the pressures that impinge on Gram's choices, particularly expenses on the trip and a need to know her grandchildren's faults and weaknesses. Include summaries of her relationship with Mr. Lingerle, boys playing marbles, John, Liza, teachers, Dr. Epstein and Preston, and Millie.
2. Lead a debate concerning the harm that the children suffer from growing up without a father and without a father's last name. Propose ways that the children can accept their father's abandonment and think of Gram as their mother. Comment on what a reunion with Uncle John might do for the whole family.
3. Compose a lecture on emotional trauma. List causes, symptoms, and treatment for people like Maybeth, Dicey, James, and Sammy, who must overcome guilt, insecurity, fear for their mother, exclusion from school groups, and self-doubt before they can thrive in school.

Science and Health

1. Explain with posters the signs of approaching death, particularly blue coloration in the extremities. Discuss why Gram and Dicey's reassuring words to Liza may have comforted her, even though she gives no indication of hearing them.
2. Summarize types of learning problems, such as dyslexia and dysgraphia, which may cause Maybeth's reading difficulties. Set up a list of aids for the whole family and Maybeth's teachers to help her improve reading silently and aloud, for example, reading from a page while listening to a taped version of the same text.

Speech

1. Organize a discussion of guilt. Explain why Sammy feels guilty about his mother's illness and his failure to be good. Contrast his emotional burden with that of Gram for losing touch with Liza.
2. Compose a formal presentation on trust. Explain the parallel relationships of Dicey with Gram and with the children. Summarize what Dicey learns about duty to siblings and duty to self. Account for her developing friendship with Gram, especially over club sandwiches at the mall.
3. Deliver a brief chalk talk on the historic Chesapeake Bay. Outline short trips the children might enjoy at local historic sites, museums, aquariums, bridges, harbors, and battlegrounds.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List examples of emotion in major characters, for example, James's sympathy for Maybeth.
2. Compile a list of actions that demonstrate divided families.
3. Compose a scene in which the Tillermans sail the boat, Mr. Lingerle begins helping Maybeth write words to songs, Mr. Chappelle submits Dicey's essay to a writing

contest, Wilhemina visits the Tillermans for a sleep-over, Millie takes a vacation and leaves Dicey in charge of the store, or the children save their allowance to buy a headstone for Liza.

4. Make a character list and explain the difficulties each person faces.
5. Account for the recurrence of the motif of displacement among people who come and go in the Tillerman family.

DICEY'S SONG

VOCABULARY TEST

Select words from the following list to fill in blanks in the sentences below:

bosom	circulars	indentured	pea	suffragettes
catapult	expedite	mannikins	plagiarism	symmetrical
caulking	fluently	Mayflower	remediation	treadle
charisma	gunwales	minuet	simpering	triplicate
chillblains	harmony	overlay	strata	turbo-prop

1. "I've got an old _____ machine in my room," Gram said.
2. He used words she'd never heard before: dyslexia, dysgraphia, _____, word recognition, effective learning, affective learning.
3. Dicey had stared down at the chipped paint on the _____ of the boat, which still showed above the water.
4. But even if I can't prove _____, I can still smell it.
5. He clattered through the kitchen, his forehead red and flushed, a heavy _____ jacket buttoned up around his throat.
6. She thought Maybeth might like a fancy doll, but she couldn't find one that didn't have an empty, _____ face.
7. The different woods talked together, Dicey thought, looking at them; only it was more like singing in _____ than conversation.
8. She thought you would want to _____ the cremation.
9. Those bright red hearts, perfectly _____.
10. The black girl looked about eighteen, with a full _____ and long muscular legs and round hips.
11. It wouldn't do any good to think about how she was going to be able to buy _____ material and paint, if she ever got through the job of scraping the boat.
12. James had written about all the reasons why the _____ people wanted to come to America.
13. She thought Gram would go back to the bus stop then, but instead her grandmother went along the fancy department, past purses and hats, past sweaters, past racks of dresses and _____ leaning over in impossible poses.
14. That's what they call the emotional _____, when someone has reading problems.
15. They said in my book that learning to read with phrasing and _____, that was a sure sign.

DICEY'S SONG

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Match each of the following descriptions from the novel with a character name. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| _____ 1. places \$500 in an envelope for Gram | A. conductor |
| _____ 2. elicits from students varieties of conflict in human lives | B. Ab |
| _____ 3. died in the Vietnam War | C. carver |
| _____ 4. fears that misbehavior caused Momma's illness | D. Mr. Chappelle |
| _____ 5. conceals a price marker | E. Isaac Lingerle |
| _____ 6. questions Dicey about the wood box | F. Ernie |
| _____ 7. believes Ab is her old self again | G. Sammy |
| _____ 8. loses at marbles | H. Dr. Epstein |
| _____ 9. insists that nutrition is important | I. Dicey's father |
| _____ 10. apologizes to Dicey | J. Wilhemina Smiths |
| _____ 11. studies up on dyslexia and dysgraphia | K. James |
| _____ 12. leaves after Sammy's birth | L. Millie |
| _____ 13. stays all night with Liza | M. Jeff |
| _____ 14. plays "Pretty Polly" | N. Bullet |
| _____ 15. believes Liza is better off dead | O. Miss Eversleigh |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Jeff's assistance in scraping and caulking the boat proves to Dicey that he is a good friend.
- _____ 2. Gram's memories of Liza are filled with sorrow and regret.
- _____ 3. The hospital staff demands money before Gram and Dicey can visit Liza.
- _____ 4. The Tillerman children find weather on the Chesapeake Bay less harsh than fall on the Cape.
- _____ 5. Sammy's fights in school require Gram to visit his teachers, install a telephone, and agree to detention as a punishment.
- _____ 6. Maybeth believes that she reads better than people think.
- _____ 7. Dicey longs to return to the care of Cousin Eunice in Bridgeport.
- _____ 8. Dicey recognizes Momma's handwriting in the bible.
- _____ 9. Gram correctly guesses that Isaac is unmarried.
- _____ 10. The children join in the burial of Liza's ashes at the root of a mulberry tree.

DICEY'S SONG

Part III: Completion (20 points)

Fill in the blanks below with a word or phrase which completes the sentence. Place your answer in the space provided at left.

1. In early October, _____ rides along on the bike during James's _____.
2. Because Gram realizes that her daughter can never function as a _____, she pursues the _____ that will make the children officially hers.
3. Because of an error in purchasing _____ at the grocery store, Dicey suggests to Millie a special _____.
4. _____ becomes angry at the boys' quarrel and Maybeth's late return home after _____ injures his fingers changing a tire.
5. Gram buys yarn to make _____ and confides that Mrs. Jackson believes that Maybeth needs a home _____.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe how the Tillerman children get to know Gram.
2. Explain why Gram chooses cremation for Liza.
3. Compare Maybeth and Millie as readers.
4. Account for Dicey's attention to duty.
5. Summarize events that precede Mr. Chappelle's apology.

DICEY'S SONG

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Select the phrase that completes each of the following sentences. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. Gram accuses Dicey of
A. fighting on the bus.
B. never resting.
C. believing that Maybeth is retarded.
D. throwing an apron in the trash.
- _____ 2. Both Gram and Dicey
A. talk with Liza.
B. take turns carrying the heavy box.
C. work at scraping the sailboat hull.
D. visit Maybeth's teachers.
- _____ 3. John Tillerman
A. died in Vietnam at age 19.
B. eloped with Liza.
C. left a pea coat that fits Sammy.
D. moved to California.
- _____ 4. Instead of writing about Will Hawkins, Dicey chooses
A. the pilgrims who arrived on the *Mayflower*.
B. nutrition.
C. Momma.
D. a character sketch on conflict.
- _____ 5. Miss Eversleigh confesses that she
A. was speaking of Dicey.
B. intended to put an F on the report card.
C. dislikes Wilhemina for being smart.
D. preferred mechanical drawing.
- _____ 6. Dr. Epstein explains that
A. shipping the body to Boston will cost \$700.
B. Preston prefers cremation for families having no money for burial.
C. charity cases go to medical research.
D. Dicey may choose a china or metal urn.
- _____ 7. Dicey worries that
A. Maybeth must learn phonics.
B. James conceals his intelligence.
C. Sammy may never recover when he learns that Liza is dead.
D. their mother will have no place to stay when she comes home.
- _____ 8. Gram admits that she was right to
A. get Dicey a job with Milly Tydings.
B. save the pea coat and shirts in the attic.
C. leave the sailboat sunk in the sand at the dock.
D. trust Isaac Lingerle.
- _____ 9. Dicey is glad to
A. present gloves to Gram.
B. buy an expensive hand-carved chess set for James.
C. have her own motel key.
D. get out of the stinking air in Boston.
- _____ 10. On top of the grave.
A. Mr. Lingerle provides flowers.
B. James carves Liza's name.
C. Dicey scatters mulberry leaves.
D. James admits that Liza is finally home.

DICEY'S SONG

Part II: Matching (30 points)

Match the following actions with places from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| _____ 1. The children surprise Gram and Dicey. | A. mall |
| _____ 2. Wilhemina defends Dicey. | B. English class |
| _____ 3. The teacher speaks indirectly about Dicey's need to learn about nutrition. | C. lawyer's office |
| _____ 4. Momma grew distant and hazy in her thinking. | D. marsh |
| _____ 5. Gram spends the night with her daughter. | E. circus |
| _____ 6. Dicey admits to the carver that she is struggling with serious difficulties. | F. railroad station |
| _____ 7. Liza abandons her children. | G. attic |
| _____ 8. Will Hawkins befriends Dicey. | H. home ec class |
| _____ 9. Gram locates shirts for the children. | I. barn |
| _____ 10. Gram admits that she needs Dicey's help in solving family problems. | J. train |
| _____ 11. Dicey conceals from the curious the contents of the box. | K. restaurant |
| _____ 12. The children bring the sailboat a quarter mile on wagon wheels. | L. store |
| _____ 13. Dicey tussles with Sammy. | M. toy shop |
| _____ 14. Dicey realizes that Millie doesn't read. | N. cabin |
| _____ 15. Gram receives pamphlets. | O. hospital |

Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided.

- _____ 1. Who has \$17 saved?
- _____ 2. Who knows the laws about burying cremated remains in Maryland?
- _____ 3. What arrives the night of the steak supper?
- _____ 4. Who fights with people who belittle family members?
- _____ 5. What kind of vocabulary does James want to build in Maybeth?
- _____ 6. What does Dicey do during the lecture on food groups?
- _____ 7. What does Dicey choose to call the subject of her character sketch?
- _____ 8. Whom do students ridicule for being fat?
- _____ 9. Who rides along with James and throws papers wrong?
- _____ 10. Who died in Vietnam?

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain how and why Gram's family leaves her.
2. Contrast Wilhemina and Dicey as students.
3. Account for Gram's marble playing.
4. Summarize the events around Thanksgiving.
5. Describe Dicey's struggle to replace Liza as head of household.

DICEY'S SONG

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. treadle | 6. simpering | 11. caulking |
| 2. remediation | 7. harmony | 12. Mayflower |
| 3. gunwales | 8. expedite | 13. mannikins |
| 4. plagiarism | 9. symmetrical | 14. overlay |
| 5. pea | 10. bosom | 15. fluently |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. E | 6. A | 11. K |
| 2. J | 7. L | 12. I |
| 3. N | 8. F | 13. B |
| 4. G | 9. O | 14. M |
| 5. C | 10. D | 15. H |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. F |
| 2. T | 7. F |
| 3. F | 8. T |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part III: Completion (20 points)

- Sammy, paper route
- parent, adoption
- corn flakes, sale
- Gram, Mr. Lingerle
- sweaters, tutor

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. C |
| 2. A | 7. B |
| 3. D | 8. D |
| 4. C | 9. A |
| 5. A | 10. C |

Part II: Matching (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. M | 11. J |
| 2. F | 7. A | 12. D |
| 3. H | 8. E | 13. I |
| 4. N | 9. G | 14. L |
| 5. O | 10. K | 15. C |

Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Dicey | 6. draw in her notebook |
| 2. Gram | 7. Mrs. Liza |
| 3. welfare check | 8. Mr. Lingerle |
| 4. Sammy | 9. Sammy |
| 5. sight | 10. Bullet |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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