

# IZZY, WILLY-NILLY

# LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

CYNTHIA VOIGT

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS

## SYNOPSIS

Isobel Lingard, an upbeat sophomore cheerleader and A-B student, convinces her parents that she can safely attend a Saturday post-game party with Marco Griggers, a conceited, but appealing senior. Izzy has heard snatches of rumors about Marco's drinking, but she is so intent on attending the social event that she pays little attention to the alcohol consumption and pot smoking at John Wintersize's house, where no parents monitor teen behavior. After socializing apart from her date, Izzy returns to remind Marco that she must arrive home by 1 A. M. Tony Marcel offers to drive and Izzy volunteers to call her parents, but Marco insists that he is capable of returning Izzy safely.

On Sunday after the event, Izzy wakes up in the hospital with two broken legs – the left a simple fracture, the right a severe trauma to the lower bones and a break in the upper bone. Dr. Carstairs, her taciturn surgeon, fears that she will lose the right leg because of infection and decaying tissue. Interviews by Officer Thoms fail to produce details of why Marco's VW crashed into an elm on the wrong side of the road. Thoms asks if Izzy was the driver. Izzy, who retorts that she is only fifteen and too young to drive, recalls that Marco was speeding, running stop signs, hugging the center line, and playing the swerving game, but she keeps incriminating evidence to herself.

As Izzy recovers from the surgery which amputates her right leg below the knee, she falls into the habit of communing with an inner voice and weeping alone at night. By day, she is cheerful to nurses, her mother, who tries to do the right thing for her family, her father, a tax accountant, and Dr. Saul Epstein, the ebullient pediatrician who knows Izzy well. She accommodates Mrs. Helen Hughes-Pincke, a counselor who helps to accustom Izzy to her loss, and a black physical therapist, who remains nameless, yet fails to quell the inward revulsion at the shortened leg and the prospect of living the rest of her life a cripple.

Friends visit, bring gifts, and send cards, yet Izzy is aware that they feel awkward in her presence. Lisa looks down at her face to avoid seeing the vacant spot under the cover; Suzy is more interested in protecting Marco from the police than in assisting Izzy with the long recuperation ahead. Izzy advances from toe-wiggling and soft diet to a wheelchair ride to the sun room and tolerates the grueling therapy which precedes a prosthetic device. The fakery continues as she convinces Joel, her older brother, that she is coping well with the amputation and wants to return

home. Not everyone is convinced, however, that Izzy is progressing. Dr. Epstein notices that she is losing weight. Helen questions who will replace Izzy on the cheerleading squad.

A visit from Rosamunde Webber proves more insightful than the brief, insubstantial chats with Lauren, Lisa, and Suzy. After Rosamunde leaves, Mrs. Lingard reports seeing a girl weeping at the elevator. Izzy realizes that Rosamunde is genuinely touched by the injury that has cost a young girl her right leg. During the third week of hospitalization, Izzy plays board games with Rosamunde and eats fruit and fresh piroshkis. In the middle of a phone conversation between Izzy and her brother Jack, Rosamunde interrupts to say that Jack is harming his sister by discussing unpleasant topics. Izzy's parents arrive and appear grateful for the diversion which makes Izzy laugh. Jack calls back and demands to know the identity of the high-handed female who cut short his phone call.

On Wednesday before Izzy is scheduled to go home on Friday, Rosamunde returns with her mother, an opinionated craftsperson who makes batik wall hangings and does needlework. Rosamunde asks about Marco's role in the accident; Izzy replies that she doesn't remember. Rosamunde counters that Izzy is lying and replies that her father, a Newton policeman, may return for more information about the accident.

Before checking out of the hospital, Izzy learns that her therapist's name is Adelia Jones and that Izzy must return regularly for treatment of her leg. The drive to Westwood in Newton brings Izzy into a new environment created by her mother. By shifting bedrooms, Mrs. Lingard places Izzy in a first-floor room with a bath shelf that she can reach and ramps and open door frames suited to a wheelchair. Izzy is outwardly grateful, yet longs for a feeling of home and normalcy.

Adjustment to family is tedious and, at times, painful. Ten-year-old Francie shows off her gymnastic skill and strikes out in envy that Izzy receives most of the attention. Izzy copes with her sister's jealousy and dreads returning to school as soon as she becomes stable on crutches. In private, Izzy continues her nightly sessions of weeping and contemplation of the change that has reduced her to dependency on so many people.

Friends drift back into Izzy's life. Suzy lies about a sweater which Marco gave her and makes transparent excuses for not visiting. Mrs. Lingard realizes that Izzy is a more sincere person than her girlfriends. Rosamunde's attentions bring a closer rapport with Izzy and her family,

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even though Mrs. Lingard thinks Rosamunde's clothing is tasteless, her hairstyle unbecoming, and her social class beneath the Lingards. Rosamunde helps with English and Latin assignments as Izzy prepares to ease back into school by making up work.

After a pleasant drive in the country, Izzy decides to use blank needle work canvas to make a picture of a gold-leafed tree she saw. While Rosamunde visits, Jack arrives and identifies her as the girl who insulted him on the phone. After a game of Trivial Pursuit with twins Jack and Joel, Mrs. Lingard takes Rosamunde home. The family appreciates the difference between Izzy's new friend and the shallow, self-centered girls who used to hang around her. Tony and his girl friend Deborah visit and apologize for not intervening when Marco insisted on taking Izzy home from the party. Izzy tries to relieve them of guilt by labeling the accident a case of bad luck.

Izzy keeps up her brave front and dreads returning to school after Thanksgiving. At night, alone in her room she weeps. After forcing herself to go out in public for a haircut, she studies herself in the full-length mirror in the PT room. Over the Thanksgiving holiday, Mrs. Lingard returns the walker and wheelchair. Izzy begins working on the Nautilus machine at PT and anticipates swimming as her next exercise. Mr. Lingard plans to relinquish the family vacation and install a pool to help Izzy improve her strength. Francie looks forward to inviting friends for a swim.

Following the miserable Thanksgiving, Izzy admits to Rosamunde that the worst part of returning to school is seeing Marco. Izzy admits that the accident occurred because Marco passed out while driving. Three days pass before Izzy can force herself to face school. To Mrs. Lingard's dismay, one morning, Rosamunde forces the issue by dropping by unannounced to ride with Izzy. Schoolmates try to help Izzy feel comfortable: John Wintersize carries her upstairs after lunch to save her the torture of climbing stairs, and Tony invites her to work on the school newspaper. Marco remains out of sight. Izzy is not surprised that Suzy and Lauren stay away from an obvious cripple. Lisa remains friendly; Rosamunde shadows Izzy in case she is needed. Izzy falls on her face one day and finds Rosamunde ready to help. The two face Mr. DePonte, who scolds them for excessive tardiness.

Christmas brings a box of long skirts handmade by Mrs. Lingard and a gold handled walking cane from the twins. A New Year's party at Lisa's house puts Izzy in close contact with her old friends. Mrs. Lingard is eager to know if Izzy is "back to normal." Izzy accepts the fact that normal will never be what it was. She looks forward to newspaper work and to Tony's friendship. On the staff roster, Izzy alters her first name to Isobel. One day, Izzy runs unavoidably into Marco and his new girl, Georgie, the girl who replaced Izzy on the cheerleading squad. Izzy makes light remarks about Marco's reputation as a flirt. He calls Izzy a bitch. Izzy interprets the incident as proof that she is regaining her balance.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Cynthia Voigt, a native of Boston, Massachusetts, was

born February 25, 1942, to businessman Frederick C. Irving and Elise Keeney Irving. She grew up in Connecticut and read children's literature from the bookshelves of her grandmother's house. In her mid-teens, Voigt decided to become a writer and launched her career with poems and short fiction.

In 1963, Voigt, a graduate of the Dana Hall boarding school in Wellesley, Massachusetts, completed a bachelor's degree at Smith College, where she studied creative writing. She did graduate study at St. Michael's College in New Mexico. She worked briefly for the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency in New York, then taught high school English in Maryland from 1965-1988. Since 1981, she has written young adult fiction and continued teaching part time.

Voigt, who married in 1964, had a daughter, Jessica, before getting a divorce in 1972. She married classics teacher Walter Voigt in 1974 and produced a second child, Peter. The family lives in Deer Isle, Maine. The children figure prominently in her work and frequently read her unpublished manuscripts.

### CRITIC'S CORNER

Critics laud Voigt for endowing characters like Izzy with self-reliance, understanding, and resourcefulness. She has earned a significant number of awards for her books. These include a Notable Children's Trade Book in Social Studies, *New York Times* Outstanding Books citation, American Book Award nomination, two ALA Best Young Adult Books citations, Newbery Medal and Newbery Honor Book, two *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Honor Book citations, ALA Notable Book Citation, Parents' Choice Award, Edgar Allan Poe Award, Child Study Association citation, Silver Pencil Award, Deutscher Jugent Literatur Preis, and California Young Readers' Medal. *Dacey's Song*, a segment of her Tillerman saga, is available on sound filmstrip from Guidance Associates and on audiotape from Recorded Books.

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the value of friendship
2. To outline the treatment and therapy that follows an amputation
3. To evaluate the need for friendship, nurturance, comfort, acceptance, and emotional support
4. To justify a moral decision based on principle
5. To define regret
6. To discuss the nature of handicaps and their psychological effect on others
7. To comment on relationships between people of different social levels
8. To contrast methods of cheering up a disabled friend
9. To characterize a dilemma

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To assess Izzy's other self
2. To contrast Suzy and Rosamunde as friends
3. To discuss the author's focus on realism

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4. To order events which affect Izzy's recovery, especially friendship with Rosamunde, return to school, and success on the newspaper staff
5. To describe conflicts in Izzy's home relationships
6. To define professionalism as it applies to Helen, Mr. DePont, Dr. Carstairs, Dr. Epstein, and Adelia
7. To predict Izzy's success at coping with an amputation
8. To explain why Rosamunde demands honesty from Izzy
9. To evaluate Izzy's confrontation with Marco and Georgie

### MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain each. Chapter and page numbers are given so that you can note the context from which the item is taken.

1. 'Take it off, take it off,' I sang, like a vamp song; but I didn't think I actually did, and I know my laughter stayed locked inside my head. (Chapter 1, p. 1)  
*(In the delirium and shock that affect her mind after the accident and perceptions dimmed by painkillers, Isobel imagines herself singing a stripper's line to Dr. Carstairs, the surgeon who set her legs. In response to his fears that he must amputate the right leg, Izzy struggles to tease and joke. Although she is extremely ill and heavily sedated, she is alert enough to realize that her mind functions beyond the scope of their conversation. For the remainder of the novel, Izzy's dialogue with herself – the miniature Izzy in blue tights – affords the reader a concrete clue to the devastation she feels over losing her leg and the determination she exhibits of maintaining a calm exterior, despite the turmoil in her spirit.)*
2. My father looks like someone in an Ingmar Bergman movie. (Chapter 1, p. 3)  
*(Ingmar Bergman (1918- ), a world-famous Swedish cinema director, is admired for his complex, passionate films about intricate psychological entanglements, as seen in Wild Strawberries, Franny and Alexander, The Passion of Anna, and A Little Night Music.)*
3. Multiple fracture of tibia and fibula, a closed fracture of the femur. . . I avulsed the debris tissue, tried to align the bones. (Chapter 1, pp. 4-5)  
*(Dr. Carstairs, a remote, ultra-professional surgeon, lacks the warmth of Saul Epstein, Izzy's pediatrician. Carstairs indicates that her left leg has an uncomplicated break. Her upper body is marred by bumps and bruises. The left leg, however, is severely injured with many breaks in the two bones of the lower leg and a single break in the upper bone. The seriousness of the trauma to bone and muscle tissue requires cleaning of the wound to remove fragments, dead tissue, and foreign material and the alignment of broken ends of bone. [NOTE: The book misspells the name of the larger of the two bones in the lower leg, which is the tibia.]*
4. My mother had put in a couple of little puzzles in boxes, some stationery, and two paperback Agatha Christies – she reads mysteries and is forever telling me that they're more fun than the Harlequins I like, more interesting and more exciting and better written. (Chapter 4, p. 37)  
*(Izzy and her mother have different tastes in pleasure reading. Mrs. Lingard prefers the novels of Dame Agatha Christie (1890-1976), the most famous writer of mysteries in the English language, including the novels Death on the Nile, Murder on the Orient Express, and Ten Little Indians, and the play The Mousetrap, which has run in London for over three decades. Izzy, on the other hand, likes the pop fiction produced by the Harlequin series, a prolific family of romance and gothic fiction which consists of patterned novels written for an undemanding, but loyal audience. Because Harlequin romances are sold in grocery stores and feature sensual cover poses which appeal to fantasies of passion, they are sometimes referred to as 'grocery store fiction' or 'bodice-rippers'.)*
5. You can't put a prosthetic device on tender skin. (Chapter 7, p. 52)  
*(Adelia, Izzy's physical therapist, kneads and toughens the stump of her right leg so that Izzy will one day be able to tolerate the pressure of healed tissue against an artificial limb. Because Dr. Carstairs salvages Izzy's knee, she will be able to walk by flexing and moving her lower leg, which she must press against the top of a prosthetic leg. If she had lost her knee, she would have had to swing out from the hip as her only movable joint.)*
6. You look like Dora . . . In Dickens' David Copperfield. (Chapter 8, p. 95)  
*(Dr. Epstein compares Izzy to Dora Spenlow, the big-eyed, ineffectual first wife of the main character who expires following the death of her firstborn child. Dora is one of Dickens' most insipid characters in that she can learn nothing about keeping house, cooking, hiring servants, or entertaining guests. Despite her shortcomings, David adores and spoils her and allows her to sit next to him in his study and guide his pen while he writes.  
*In Chapter 13, page 165, Rosamunde cites from David Copperfield, 'I don't remember who was there, except Dora. I have not the least idea what we had for dinner, besides Dora. My impression is, that I dined off Dora entirely, and sent away half a dozen plates untouched. I sat next to her. I talked to her. She had the most delightful little voice, the gayest little laugh, the pleasantest and most fascinating little ways, that ever led a lost youth into hopeless slavery. She was rather diminutive altogether.' Her death precedes a long decline in David, who eventually marries Agnes Wickfield, a sturdy, much more competent, supportive, and mature woman.)**
7. Piroshkis, I love them. (Chapter 9, p. 108)  
*(One of Rosamunde's many talents is her ability to form piroshkis, a small pillow-shaped Russian pastry made of meat, cheese, and vegetable filling wrapped*

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*in a pastry shell. Similar ethnic food combinations exist in other cultures, as with Italian calzones, Chinese egg rolls, American fried pies, Mexican burritos, and Cornish pasties.)*

8. I don't think I've ever liked a famous writer before. I mean, other than Judy Blume. (Chapter 13, p. 165)  
*(Izzy indicates her childish taste in literature by preferring Judy Blume, popular author of Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret, Superfudge, Freckle Juice, Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing, Then Again, Maybe I Won't, Deenie, and Tiger Eyes. In contrast, Rosamunde demonstrates mature tastes in classic works, particularly Charles Dickens' David Copperfield and Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. To negate snobbery in her reply, she comments diplomatically, "There's famous and famous.")*
9. About how she wants her family to be, what a good mother does – even why she does all that charity work, kind of like some aristocrat with her *noblesse oblige*. (Chapter 21, p. 249)  
*(While Mrs. Lingard comments on the side to Izzy that Rosamunde is intelligent, but "not an easy person" and wishes that she would "do something with herself, have her hair cut, dress herself," Rosamunde is also sharing private asides with Izzy. In a second-hand compliment, Rosamunde acknowledges that, beneath a toney exterior, Mrs. Lingard has depth, although she conceals altruism and perception under a phony aristocratic facade which demands artificial behavior.)*
10. I crossed out Izzy and wrote in Isobel. (Chapter 22, p. 256)  
*(When Tony recognizes Izzy's contributions to the school newspaper by listing her name on the masthead, she realizes that the nickname does not suit the rich, mature person she has become. To underscore her evolving womanliness and depth, Izzy replaces the nickname with her real name. Tony ponders the change and admits that he rarely uses his own name, Anthony. After a brief exchange concerning his misgivings about Deborah's departure to Stanford, Izzy shares the wisdom that has come to her during her convalescence: "You never know, anyway, what's going to happen so why not just – make the most of the time you have?")*

### 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 by referring to passages from the novel.

#### Questions 1 - 5 Literal Level

1. How does Izzy break both legs?  
*(On a Wednesday in the fall of her sophomore year in high school, Isobel Lingard asks her parents for permission to date Marco Griggers, a senior who has invited her to a Saturday post-game party at the home of John Wintersize. The Lingards do not immediately*

*give their okay, mentioning differences in ages and keeping to themselves major reservations. Izzy knows that Marco's reputation with alcohol is questionable, but she keeps this fact to herself. Mrs. Lingard decides to allow the date, but adds, "I won't let you go out with older boys yet.")*

*Marco picks Izzy up at eight and drives to the home of John Wintersize. The young people gather downstairs for dancing, ping-pong, refreshments, and conversation; some drink and smoke pot. Izzy, who is not enthralled with Marco, separates from him to enjoy other guests. Before 1 A.M., she reminds Marco that she must return home. Tony, who recognizes Marco's inebriated state, offers to drive her home. Izzy suggests calling her parents. Marco takes offense and insists on escorting her.*

*On the couple of miles to the Lingards' house, Marco speeds over dark roads, hugs the center line, and runs stop signs. Izzy reminds herself that the VW appears to be moving faster than it really is. Marco begins deliberately swerving from side to side on a two-lane road. He loses control, crosses to the left, and strikes an elm tree. The next voice Izzy focuses on is that of the surgeon, Dr. Carstairs, who tells her her left leg is in danger and must be amputated.)*

2. What is Izzy's first response to being handicapped?  
*(Immured in a hospital bed with crib sides, Izzy sleeps well and at first feels good in the fuzzy world of sedated repose. She responds fully to her mother and the nurse while concealing the presence of "a miniature Izzy in a leotard, kind of smoky blue, to match my eyes. The little Izzy raised her hands over her head and did a back flip, landing with her arms stretched out and her back arched, like Mary Lou Retton." The small Izzy copes in private with the anxieties of a diminished future.*
3. What people help Izzy cope with the first days in the hospital?  
*(Externally, Izzy maintains a positive attitude, greets all comers to her room, and requests to sit up and eat. Her first request for food is for pizza. She also asks for a television and stereo, makeup, curlers, and phone. She exhibits interest in school, especially her friends' participation in Latin Club. As her mother withdraws to run errands, Izzy indicates that she welcomes visitors.)*

*(At first, Izzy sees her parents and the nurse plus two doctors, the surgeon and her pediatrician, Saul Epstein. Helen Hughes-Pincke, a pregnant nurse, arrives with official air and clipboard and begins asking questions about Izzy's personal life and about her plans for the future, including career, husband, and children. Helen indicates that she observed Izzy during the fuzzy days following surgery and plans to return on a daily basis to help her adjust to her loss.*

*More people come to Izzy's room. Suzy telephones Izzy during a hectic day of phone and TV hookup and visits by the Lingards and Dr. Epstein. Suzy hopes to dissuade Izzy from revealing to the police Marco's role in the accident. Izzy shows no interest in accusing*

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Marco of reckless driving. Suzy and Lisa arrive with gifts. An unnamed physical therapist begins massaging the stump of Izzy's right leg to ready her for a prosthetic leg.)

4. What kind of visit does Rosamunde have with Izzy?  
(Unlike people who try to placate and coddle Izzy, Rosamunde Webber is straightforward and direct with questions and comments about amputation and recovery. Dressed in loose overalls, windbreaker marked with the Police Athletic League insignia, and thick socks, Rosamunde, with hair pulled back in ponytails, asks if Izzy was on drugs the night of the accident. Tactlessly, she comments, "You do, you know. Look terrible."  
Rosamunde's jokes about poor health lead to a pointed suggestion: "Izzy, you can have a negative thought." Rosamunde continues her rambling commentary with remarks about Marco Griggers, "who is one of the world's prime jackasses," and suggestions that Izzy force him to pay her way through college. Rosamunde moves directly to the question of Suzy, Izzy's supposed friend, who concerns herself with shielding Marco.)

5. How does Rosamunde assist Izzy in returning to school?  
(At first Rosamunde is a regular visitor to the Lingard home. She assists Izzy with understanding an assignment on Romeo and Juliet and tutors her in missed Latin assignments. The friendship proves so much more satisfactory and open than visits from old friends that Izzy concentrates on Rosamunde almost to the exclusion of Lauren, Lisa, and Suzy. As Izzy readies herself for the return to high school, she confides to Rosamunde that she dreads seeing Marco, who hasn't communicated with her since the accident.  
Izzy postpones the first day. Rosamunde, to speed the process, visits the Lingards early on a school morning and accompanies Izzy to class. While Izzy juggles books and crutches, Rosamunde hovers in the background and is nearby when Izzy falls on her face. The two girls enter Mr. DePonte's class late. Rosamunde helps cover for their tardiness.)

### Questions 6 - 8 Interpretive Level

6. Why is Rosamunde an unusual friend for Izzy?  
(Rosamunde contrasts significantly with Izzy's old friends. Unlike other Newton teens, Rosamunde does not center her self-esteem in mascara, hair styles, and fad clothing. Not interested in the shallow, boy-centered gossip of Lisa, Lauren, and Suzy, Rosamunde speaks truly the thoughts that come to her mind about honesty and being oneself. She comments authoritatively on English literature and encourages Izzy to seek diversion in needlework and cooking.  
When Mrs. Lingard gets to know Rosamunde, she is ambivalent about the budding friendship. Mrs. Lingard acknowledges that Rosamunde helps Izzy rise out of her doldrums and actually laugh. Rosamunde also brings cheer in the form of fresh fruit, warm

homemade piroshkis, and board games to take Izzy's mind away from her handicap. However, Mrs. Lingard hedges around the obvious difference between her daughter and Rosamunde: Rosamunde's father is a police officer and her mother an artist. The family's lifestyle runs counter to the social-consciousness of the Lingards.)

7. How does Rosamunde assist Izzy with family problems?  
(At the hospital, Rosamunde realizes that someone is disturbing Izzy with an abrasive phone call. Rosamunde wrests the phone away and demands to know who would do so thoughtless a thing to a patient. Later, Izzy explains that the caller is Jack, Izzy's older brother.  
On Izzy's arrival home, problems with Francie disturb the pleasant atmosphere of downstairs bedroom, convenient bath, and ramp to the living room, which Mrs. Lingard has created to help Izzy over the awkwardness of wheelchair, walker, and crutches. Francie immediately interprets concessions to Izzy's handicap as favoritism. Because Francie is jealous and obnoxious, Rosamunde, a veteran of younger brothers and sisters, takes charge of the situation and banishes Francie from the room so Rosamunde and Izzy can concentrate on homework. Izzy admires Rosamunde's mastery of young siblings.)
8. Why are John and Tony important to Izzy's recovery?  
(Izzy encounters a formidable obstacle in the steps which she must climb each school day after lunch. John Wintersize, who hosted the party which preceded Izzy's broken legs and amputation, offers to carry Izzy to the second floor each day to facilitate her eating lunch with the other students. Izzy comments, "I felt like one of those helpless ladies in a movie, swept away by a rescuing knight."

Tony, who recognizes quality in Izzy because she refuses to blame Marco for the accident, feels guilty about not driving her home from John's party. On a visit to the Lingard home with his girlfriend Deborah, Tony suggests that Izzy join the school newspaper staff and find something she would "be good at, writing, or the business end, or editing or what." At first, Izzy accepts the invitation with reservations. Gradually, her friendship with Tony grows as she evaluates her contributions to the staff, which prove that her participation does not constitute charity. When Tony adds her name to the staff list, she crosses out Izzy and writes in "Isobel," the person she has become.)

### Questions 9 and 10 - Critical Level

9. What does this novel say about acceptance of catastrophe?  
(Cynthia Voigt's Izzy, Willy-Nilly gives strong testimony to the resilience of young people. Izzy, who is an ordinary girl, discovers extraordinary capabilities by rising to the challenge of a handicap. She sheds the narcissism that accompanies the stereotypical clothes-

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*mad, boy-crazy cheerleader. By adapting to long skirts, pinned up jeans, and crutches, she learns to accept her strengths, which include making friends with a different type of young person from the shallow teens who used to fill her days.*

*Another important quality that Voigt emphasizes is Izzy's refusal to wallow in self-pity. Although the miniature Izzy weeps by night and ponders the more poignant aspects of her new lifestyle, such as Georgie taking her position on the cheerleading squad, the external Izzy continues to meet people who visit, to make them feel at ease with her handicap, and to compensate for their shortcomings, as demonstrated by her understanding of Suzy's lies and Francie's jealousy and fear. By extending a charitable and accepting personality to all and refraining from accusations and remorse, Izzy reaps love and admiration from friends and family.)*

10. Why does Cynthia Voigt's novel appeal to young readers?

*(Cynthia Voigt has earned awards for speaking honestly and directly to young audiences. Her subject matter in Izzy, Willy-Nilly could apply to anyone, but the treatment of the subject deals specifically with adolescent turmoil. In addition to restructuring her life to accommodate crutches and eventually a prosthetic right leg, Izzy is learning how to cope with her family, how to develop femininity, and how to understand and appreciate the opposite sex. In time, she will apply her skills to college, career selection, and probably a husband and family. In this respect, Izzy's quandaries reflect the daily choices and decisions of all young people. The addition of a handicap makes her special – a teenager who faces both the difficulties of growing up and the uncertainties of physical impairment.)*

### Questions 11-13 Creative Level

11. Compose a conversation with a critic in which you discuss your response to *Izzy, Willy-Nilly*. Be specific about your likes and dislikes in young adult literature and your assessment of Cynthia Voigt's depiction of the trauma of serious injury. List detailed scenes which illustrate why Izzy has difficulty returning to school and former friendships.
12. List moments which indicate that Rosamunde and Izzy share a lasting friendship, such as the shared hotdogs for lunch and the suggested change in Rosamunde's hairstyle. Explain why Lauren, Lisa, and Suzy fail to live up to their former status as best friends.
13. Compose a detailed list of activities for Izzy, including studying, dining out, needlework, social events, swimming, walking, church and club meetings, grooming, and other interests which will keep her active and meeting people.

### ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

#### Math

Collect lines from the novel which disclose passage of time and the relative ages of the characters. For

example, note that Francie is ten years old, the twins have just graduated from high school, and that most of the action takes place in the fall and winter of Isobel's sophomore year in high school.

#### Economics

1. Determine from local sources the costs of emergency treatment, amputation, physical therapy, psychological counseling, and rental of wheelchair, crutches, and walker. Compare this to the usual insurance settlement for an accident like the one which costs Izzy a leg.
2. Calculate Izzy's strong points and list a variety of jobs which she might train for. Suggest special courses which might give her an edge on the job market, especially crafts, computer science, office skills, business, journalism, radio, television, and teaching.

#### Social Studies

1. Write a TV spot encouraging teenagers to be honest with friends and family about bouts of drinking and/or marijuana smoking which might impair their driving. Support your statements with figures concerning the number of teens who drink and drive and the number of accidents in which alcohol plays a significant role.
2. Utilize U.S. Department of Census figures on the number of citizens who lose limbs each year. Categorize the loss by birth defect, accident, or disease, such as diabetes or cancer.

#### Psychology

1. Summarize the need for emotional support after a severe accident. Explain in psychological terms what Helen does for Izzy in the initial talks about guilt and anger. Discuss the psychological problems faced by maimed and disfigured accident victims. Suggest possible solutions to their feelings of rejection, isolation, and uselessness, such as jobs, needlework, letter writing, swimming, music, games, support groups, and friendship.
2. Using Izzy as a model, create an extended definition of *dilemma*. Explain how she creates a personality from the remnants of the old Izzy. Note that the timing of Izzy's dilemma coincides with normal adolescent stirrings of independence and maturity.
3. Explain why Izzy interprets Francie's brattish behavior as a sign of fear and guilt. Suggest ways that Izzy and her parents can circumvent Francie's jealousy of special treatment.

#### Cinema

1. Make a list of dramatic scenes from the novel which would require intense use of lighting, costume, makeup, music, props, and stunts, particularly awakening after the accident, suffering the first physical therapy, attending the New Year's party, falling at school, being carried to the second floor at school, watching Dr. Epstein change the bandage, getting a haircut at a beauty salon, swimming in the pool, and eating in a restaurant with Jack and Joel.
2. Name movies which capture the psychological and

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physical trauma of severe disability, notably *Johnny Got His Gun*, *The Miracle Worker*, *The Bell Jar*, and *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

### Science and Health

1. Explain the significance of necrosis and infection to Izzy's badly broken right leg. How could these situations lead to gangrene?
2. Give an oral report on the work of a physical therapist. Explain why Izzy's leg must be prepared for a prosthetic limb.
3. Discuss the meaning of Izzy's extreme fatigue. Why would dependence on a walker, wheelchair, or crutches tire her? Explain why fatigue can also indicate depression.

### Language and Literature

1. Using examples from the novel, compose notes from Mrs. Lingard to Helen, Adelia, Rosamunde, and Mrs. Webber. Thank each person for her contribution to Izzy's recovery.
2. Make a report on Dora, a character in Charles Dickens' novel *David Copperfield*.
3. Make a list of hospital terminology and apply each to Izzy's three-week stay, especially trauma, catheter, debride, necrosis, upper torso, contusions, bruising, simple fracture, pulleys and wires, crib railings, blood pressure, amputation, mobility, prosthesis, and PT.

### Art and Music

1. Use desktop publishing or other artistic forms to create instructions to hospital visitors, school rules concerning tardies and absences, home tutoring lesson plans for handicapped students, remodeling projects to make life for wheelchair patients easier and less cumbersome, or instructions on how to map out and complete an original needlepoint picture.
2. Select music to delineate the contrast between the real Izzy and the small voice which speaks to Izzy when no one is around.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Relate the following literary terms to *Izzy, Willy-Nilly*: literary foils, denouement, symbol, image, flat and round characters, stereotyping, dialogue, conflict, dilemma, atmosphere, mood, motivation, rising action, climax, falling action, and tone.
2. Lead a discussion of adult responsibilities to children. Determine what Izzy gains from a close association with Dr. Epstein, Dr. Carstairs, Helen, Adelia, Mrs. Webber, and Mr. and Mrs. Lingard. Explain why Mr. DePonte seems so callous.
3. Write a minor character's diary entry on significant days, particularly Lisa the day of the accident, Georgie the day that Izzy returns to school, Tony at the New Year's party, Adelia the Friday that Izzy leaves the hospital, Deborah on the day that Izzy falls, Joel on Christmas morning, and Mrs. Webber at Thanksgiving.
4. Contrast the concerns of normal teenagers with Izzy's new interests and needs. Explain why Izzy can never

be the person she once was. Comment on how she can be more of a friend than she used to be.

5. Compose a theme describing the expectations, limitations, and opportunities for an amputee. Explain why acceptance is essential to self-esteem. Add comments about Izzy's missing shoes, the box of long skirts, the bathroom shelf, the downstairs bedroom, and the examination of her reflection in the PT room mirror.
6. Organize a debate concerning several ways in which Marco can face up to his responsibility for Izzy's sufferings. Comment on his inability to apologize.
7. Draw a layout of your own home and demonstrate alterations which would allow Izzy safe movement with maximum comfort. Include a list of small alterations to bathroom door, cabinet and door handles, hallways, and telephone.

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List in chronological order significant events in Izzy's life, particularly visiting the sun room, swimming, attending a post-game party with a senior, becoming a cheerleader, awakening to find two broken legs, weeping in front of Helen, learning Adelia's name, accepting Rosamunde as a friend, getting a haircut, attending a New Year's party, and allowing John to carry her to the top of the stairs.
2. Make a list of scenes from the novel which express contrasting attitudes toward depression, loyalty, truth, friendship, self-esteem, loss, anger, guilt, responsibility, deception, change, and grief. Next to each, indicate what you think is the author's personal philosophy.
3. Compose brief definitions of generosity and altruism as they apply to Mr. Lingard, Mrs. Lingard, Rosamunde, Mrs. Webber, Suzy, Lisa, Helen, Francie, Tony, Marco, and Adelia.
4. List scenes which depict conflict, particularly Suzy and Lisa's ambivalence about visiting Izzy, Rosamunde's dislike of preppy styles, Francie's demonstration of gymnastic skill, Tony's guilt about Izzy's accident, Mr. DePonte's harsh discipline, and Marco's insistence on driving home from the party. Discuss how each contributes to the action.

### VOIGT'S PUBLISHED WORKS

*Homecoming*, 1981  
*Tell Me If the Lovers Are Losers*, 1982  
*Dacey's Song*, 1982  
*The Callender Papers*, 1983  
*A Solitary Blue*, 1983  
*Building Blocks*, 1984  
*The Runner*, 1985  
*Jackaroo*, 1985  
*Izzy, Willy-Nilly*, 1986  
*Come a Stranger*, 1986  
*Stories About Rosie*, 1986  
*Sons from Afar*, 1987  
*Tree by Leaf*, 1988  
*Seventeen Against the Dealer*, 1989

## IZZY, WILLY-NILLY

*On Fortune's Wheel*, 1990  
*The Tillerman Saga*, 1990  
*The Vandemark Mummy*, 1991  
*Orfe*, 1992  
*David and Jonathan*, 1992

## TEACHING NOTES

### RELATED READING

Judy Blume's *Deenie*  
Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*  
Robert Frost's "Out, Out —"  
William Gibson's *The Miracle Worker*  
Joanne Greenberg's *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*  
Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*  
Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*  
Margaret Rostkowski's *After the Dancing Days*  
William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*  
Karl Shapiro's "The Leg"  
Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*

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*Children's Literature Review*. Vol. 13. Detroit: Gale, 1987.  
*Christian Science Monitor*, 13 May 1983, B2; November 1, 1985, B1.  
*Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 30. Detroit: Gale, 1984.  
*New York Times Book Review*, 12 June 1988, 35.  
*Times Literary Supplement*, 18-24 Sept. 1987, 1028; 6-12 May 1988, 513; 7-13 April 1989, 378.  
Chevalier, Tracy, ed. *Twentieth-Century Children's Writers*. 3rd ed. New York: St. James, 1989.  
Voigt, Cynthia, "Newbery Medal Acceptance," *Horn Book*, August 1983, 410-413.



## IZZY, WILLY-NILLY

### VOCABULARY TEST

Select synonyms from the list that follows for the underlined words below. Place your choices in the blanks. You will have answers left over when you finish.

a.k.a.  
align  
attire  
avulsed  
batik  
catheter  
clapboard

conductive  
contusions  
coordinated  
deride  
diminutive  
femur

fibula  
graph  
jabot  
kiwi  
linzertorte  
mascara

necrosis  
paraphrases  
perspective  
privileges  
reassurance  
salvage

sarcasm  
sluicing  
subjunctive  
swerved  
torso  
vamp

1. Try to save \_\_\_\_\_ some good from this tragic thing.
2. And they were so stupid – I don't care what you say, they were not nice people and they are stupid – and I thought I'd help you put things into order \_\_\_\_\_.
3. My mother ate neatly, a napkin over the skirt of her tweed suit, a light blue tie \_\_\_\_\_ - blouse neatly tied.
4. Her eyes went to the patterned cloth \_\_\_\_\_ and to the vase.
5. She didn't happen to mention my—clothing \_\_\_\_\_, did she?
6. She had a new needlepoint kit, color-matched \_\_\_\_\_ with the one I'd finished.
7. Pretty desperate, if you count not understanding anything I'm supposed to be doing – except the restatements \_\_\_\_\_, I've almost finished the first act, but I can't believe she really wants us to do all that work.
8. She was rather small \_\_\_\_\_ altogether.
9. As I worked, I heard the rain flowing \_\_\_\_\_ down and spattering against the windows.
10. Isobel Lingard, alias \_\_\_\_\_ Fairy Godmother, with a touch of her magic wand, or magic blush brush, and suddenly I'll be – all the things I'm not.

## IZZY, WILLY-NILLY

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Identify the characters described below.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. kneads the healing stump so Izzy will be able to walk with a prosthetic leg.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. speaks in simple medical terminology and worries that Izzy is not eating.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. removes Izzy's pants and right shoes from her closet and hires a carpenter to build a shelf in the bathroom.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. asks Izzy to use her handicap as a reason to petition her father for a VCR.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. conceals the fact that she wears Marco's sweater and makes up excuses for not visiting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. scolds Izzy and Rosamunde for being excessively late to class.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. reminds Izzy that being an amputee is a seven-day-a-week job.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. illustrates a full acceptance of Izzy by forgetting her crutches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. hosts a New Year's party.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. departs from Izzy at John Wintersize's house.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. visits Izzy without the accompaniment of his twin brother, who later telephones.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. explains character motivation in the opening scene of Romeo and Juliet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. considers giving up the family vacation and building a backyard pool.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. has a sterling reputation as a surgeon, but says little to the patient.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. feels rejected by her mother and stepfather at Christmas when she isn't invited to a family gathering.

#### Part II: Quotation identification (20 points)

Beside each quotation place the name of the speaker (a) and the person being addressed (b).

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1a. I was the first one there and – you sure look a lot better today.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1b.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2a. Hey man, you trying to move in on my date?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2b.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3a. It's not like you're through with me . . . We've got weeks of works ahead.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3b.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4a. If it was my fault – I'd die. I'd kill myself.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4b.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5a. I only went out with him once, but it was quite an experience.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5b.



## IZZY, WILLY-NILLY

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline an answer to complete each statement below.

1. (Mrs. Webber, Grandmother Ingram, Mrs. Lingard, Mrs. Wilkes) pulls the ornate lace edging from the bed jacket so it looks more appropriate for a teenager.
2. Izzy is pleased to find (a shelf by the bathtub, an invitation to the New Year's party, John Wintersize, no changes in her bedroom) when she arrives home from the hospital.
3. Mr. DePonte disapproves of (Izzy's being carried upstairs, extreme tardiness, home tutors, Izzy 's dropping Latin club.)
4. The tree that Izzy sees during her ride in the country (increases her sadness, makes her long to drive alone in the country, reminds her of Marco's deliberate swerving, becomes the focus of her needlepoint).
5. Izzy makes a point of (learning to open and close doors, cooking for Rosamunde and the family, beating Jack at Trivial Pursuit, agreeing to go to the mall with the twins).
6. Rosamunde bluntly rebukes Jack for (calling during her visit, ruining Thanksgiving, being too loud at the hospital, making Izzy unhappy).
7. Mrs. Lingard likes Rosamunde's intelligence and loyalty to Izzy, but dislikes her (batik wall hanging, hairstyle, lower class manners, boyfriend).
8. Rosamunde helps Izzy understand (the need for a prosthetic device, the subjunctive, the opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, why Francie is jealous).
9. Izzy is able to accept (Marco's guilt, Suzy's lies about Lauren, low grades in her makeup work, Georgie as replacement cheerleader).
10. The richness in Izzy allows her to (give advice to Tony, ignore Adelia's roughness, understand Dr. Carstairs's professional detachment, forgive her mother's snobbery toward Rosamunde).

#### Part II: Identification (20 points)

Place an X by any statement that is true of Rosamunde.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. brings a shopping cart loaded with games and food to Izzy's hospital room.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. encourages Izzy to be honest about her likes and dislikes and about her anger.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. babysits on the weekends.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. recognizes the resemblance between Izzy and Dora, David Copperfield's wife.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. studies a needlepoint book to learn new stitches to fill a blank canvas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. remains near Izzy at school to help in difficult situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. cooks piroshkis and bakes cookies for Adelia Jones's Christmas box.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. dislikes the unruly way the twins behave when they arrive home for Thanksgiving.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. suggests that Isobel is a more dignified name than Izzy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. is unable to deal with Francie's interference and Mrs. Lingard's snobbery.

## IZZY, WILLY-NILLY

### Part III: Completion (20 points)

Fill in a name or term which completes each of these statements.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ tells Izzy that her right leg is probably too seriously injured to be saved.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is a necessary treatment to toughen the healing stump before the fitting of a prosthetic limb.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ suggests that a pair of jeans be split to fit over the cast.
4. Mrs. Helen \_\_\_\_\_, a pregnant nurse, is Izzy's psychological adviser.
5. Jack and \_\_\_\_\_ do not visit together because their responses to Izzy's injury are not alike.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ feels guilty for not taking Izzy home from the Wintersize house.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ suggests that Mr. Lingard take the swimming pool off his taxes.
8. After \_\_\_\_\_'s first visit to Izzy's room, she weeps at the hospital elevator.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ held Mr. Lingard's hand after Izzy was brought to the hospital.
10. Izzy and Lisa are aware that \_\_\_\_\_ lies to cover her disloyal behavior.

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two to answer in essay form.

1. Explain how work on the school newspaper helps build Izzy's confidence.
2. Discuss why Mrs. Lingard rearranges the house before Izzy returns home.
3. Analyze the book's title.

## IZZY, WILLY-NILLY

### ANSWER KEY

#### VOCABULARY TEST

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. salvage     | 6. coordinated |
| 2. perspective | 7. paraphrases |
| 3. jabot       | 8. diminutive  |
| 4. batik       | 9. sluicing    |
| 5. attire      | 10. a.k.a.     |

#### COMPREHENSION TEST A

##### Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

- |                 |                |                   |
|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Adelia       | 6. Mr. DePonte | 11. Joel          |
| 2. Dr. Epstein  | 7. Helen       | 12. Rosamunde     |
| 3. Mrs. Lingard | 8. Tony        | 13. Mr. Lingard   |
| 4. Francie      | 9. Lisa        | 14. Dr. Carstairs |
| 5. Suzy         | 10. Marco      | 15. Lauren        |

##### Part II: Quotation Identification (20 points)

- |                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 1a. Officer Thoms | 4a. Francie |
| 1b. Izzy          | 4b. Izzy    |
| 2a. Marco         | 5a. Izzy    |
| 2b. Tony          | 5b. Georgie |
| 3a. Adelia        |             |
| 3b. Izzy          |             |

##### Part III: True/False (20 points)

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

##### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST B

##### Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

1. Mrs. Lingard
2. a shelf by the bathtub
3. extreme tardiness
4. becomes the focus of her needlepoint
5. learning to open and close doors
6. making Izzy unhappy
7. hairstyle
8. the opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet*
9. Georgie as replacement cheerleader
10. give advice to Tony

##### Part II: Identification (20 points)

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

##### Part III: Completion (20 points)

- |                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 1. Dr. Carstairs    | 6. Tony        |
| 2. physical therapy | 7. Izzy        |
| 3. Izzy             | 8. Rosamunde   |
| 4. Hughes-Pincke    | 9. Dr. Epstein |
| 5. Joel             | 10. Suzy       |

##### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

**IZZY, WILLY-NILLY**

**TEACHING NOTES**

**IZZY, WILLY-NILLY**



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