

There's A Boy In The Girls' Bathroom

by Louis Sachar
Classroom Favorites



Teacher's Guide by Kathy Sammis

A Perma-Bound Production

SYNOPSIS

Bradley Chalkers sits alone in the last seat, last row of his fifth-grade classroom. No one sits next to him or in front of him because he is so obnoxious and unpleasant; even his teacher, Mrs. Ebbel, has given up on expecting anything from him, and his parents know he has severe behavioral problems but can't break through his self-defeating armor. Bradley compensates for his friendless existence with his collection of little animal statuettes, who "talk" to him at home in his room, assuring him that he's smart and likable. Then a new boy, Jeff Fishkin, is given the desk next to Bradley and acts friendly. This is confusing—Bradley's usual manner is to hate people before they can hate him, but Jeff stays friendly even when Bradley acts obnoxious, and soon Bradley finds he actually has a friend.

Meanwhile, Bradley's mother agrees that her son should start meeting with the school's new counselor, Carla Davis, whose approach is very friendly and down-to-earth and emphasizes getting kids to think through their problems and find the solutions within themselves. Despite Bradley's best belligerent and lying behavior, Carla insists that she likes him and finds him intelligent and interesting, and she always thanks him for coming to see her and share his thoughts with her. She also counsels Jeff on adjusting to the new school, and Jeff tells Bradley that he likes Carla, although Bradley insists that he hates her.

One day, Jeff mistakenly stumbles into the girls' bathroom, and the girl he encounters there, red-headed Colleen, develops a crush on him. When Bradley picks a fight with Colleen and her friends, he ends up with a black eye courtesy of Melinda. The girls promise each other not to tell anyone else what happened, so the next day at school a group of boys admiringly credit Jeff with hitting Bradley and invite Jeff to play basketball with them. As Jeff tells Carla, he now has eight friends and doesn't need to be friends with Bradley any more.

As Bradley's sessions with Carla continue, her confidence in his strengths begins to convince him that he could take the risk of trying to get good grades and doing his homework. Maybe he could even earn one of the gold stars from Mrs. Ebbel for which he secretly yearns. Carla also helps Bradley understand that he has to start liking himself, not thinking of himself as a monster, before other people stop seeing him and treating him as a monster.

Now Jeff gets a black eye from Melinda and blames Bradley for it. Trying to avoid Jeff's friends and their plans for

revenge, Bradley hides in the girls' bathroom, is chased out, and finds refuge with Carla. That evening, Bradley—apparently for the first time ever—does his math homework, and his parents and sister gladly help. But he's too nervous to hand in the homework in class the next day; he rips it up instead. When he borrows a book from Carla to read for the book report that's due, he begins to see the book—rather than his own altered behavior—as his lucky charm: He acts friendly toward Jeff and is invited to join the basketball group, and Colleen asks him to come to her birthday party.

Bradley's transformation is suddenly threatened. A group called the Concerned Parents Organization, opposed to school counseling and Carla's nonjudgmental approach, forces Carla out of her job. When she tells Bradley, he declares he hates her. She tries to convince him that it was he who magically changed his life, not her, so he won't change back even though she is gone. By the time Bradley realizes he really doesn't hate Carla, it's too late to see her again, but he sends her an apologetic letter that proves his transformation is secure—he got a hundred percent on an arithmetic test, and he is giving Carla a precious gift, his favorite little animal, Ronnie the Rabbit, whom he doesn't need so much any more now that he has real friends. And Bradley's attendance at Colleen's birthday party is a complete success.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Louis Sachar (pronounced *Sack-er*) was born in 1954 in East Meadow, New York, and moved with his family at age nine to Tustin, California, orange-growing country. He began to love reading during high school, then majored in economics at the University of California at Berkeley while also taking creative writing courses. A job earning college credits as a teacher's aide gave Sachar the material for his first novel, a collection of short stories about different kids in an elementary school. The book was accepted for publication just as Sachar began studies at the University of California law school. He became an attorney in 1981 but also continued writing children's books, ultimately choosing his writing career over his law career. Sachar married a teacher, Carla Askew, in 1985; they have a daughter, Sherre, and live in Austin, Texas.

CRITICS' CORNER

Sachar finished *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom* in 1982 but didn't find a publisher for it until 1985, because it

was originally written with alternating points of view, switching between Jeff and Bradley, and publishers wanted Sachar to rewrite it from Bradley's viewpoint alone. Sachar told *Something About the Author* in 1991 that the book had become his most popular. It won many state, school, and library association awards. The *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* found the depiction of Bradley's difficulties "touching" and praised the book as funny, "not in the flip way implied by the title, but in the slightly sad sense that touches all true comedy." *Publishers Weekly* concluded, "Feelings and emotions are strongly evoked in this touching and serious story of a disturbed child that is infused with humor and insight." *School Library Journal* commented approvingly, "Sachar ably captures both middle-grade angst and joy....The story is unusual, witty, and satisfying....Bradley's need for acceptance even as he holds back from classmates who might mock or hurt him is genuine, and his eventual success will gratify readers."

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To consider the causes of and cures for antisocial behavior
2. To discuss the nature and worth of friendship and the qualities of a good friend
3. To examine the ways in which counseling and a competent, sympathetic counselor can help a person overcome problems
4. To gain a better understanding of the use of point of view in a novel
5. To learn more about the history and role of counselors in schools

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To relate the title of the novel to specific incidents in the book and to the book as a whole
2. To identify the causes of Bradley's obnoxious behavior, the vicious circle he has trapped himself in, and the ways in which he overcomes this
3. To analyze the relationship between Bradley and Carla and how she guides him to stop being his own worst enemy
4. To examine the ups and downs of Jeff and Bradley's friendship
5. To consider the role Bradley's toy animals play in his life
6. To identify instances of differing points of view in the novel
7. To note how the author makes Bradley a sympathetic character in spite of his obnoxious behavior
8. To think about your own strong points, and issues you might want to discuss with a counselor

MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain each as it relates to the book. Use the page numbers given in parentheses to reread the term in context if you wish.

1. ...he had taken the fourth grade twice. Now he was in the fifth grade for the first, but probably not the last, time. (p. 6)
(We learn right away that Bradley is doing very poorly in school. He had to repeat the fourth grade, so he's older than all the other kids in his fifth-grade class, and the way things are going, it's a good bet that Bradley will have to repeat the fifth grade, too. Bradley is in serious trouble, and it's only Chapter 2.)
2. "The school has just hired a new counselor."
(School counselors are employed to help students with all sorts of personal problems, ranging from behavioral problems like Bradley's, to family problems like divorce or alcoholism or abuse, to minor concerns like Colleen's worries about inviting boys to her birthday or her embarrassment at having been in the boys' bathroom. Bradley is clearly in need of some guidance, since his teacher has given up on dealing with him effectively and his parents also seem to be out of the loop.)
3. California was above Wisconsin. Florida stuck out of Texas. He taped Tennessee to Washington. (p. 31)
(This is another indication of Bradley's indifference to schoolwork. He cuts out the states on the map of the U.S. and deliberately tapes them in wildly inappropriate places.)
4. "Ooh, you're going to have a black eye." (p. 60)
(A black eye is basically a bruise around the eye, usually caused by a blow that ruptures tiny blood vessels underneath the skin, which causes discoloring and tissue swelling around the eye. Because the skin is transparent and there are many blood vessels around the eye, even a minor blow in that area can cause a very dark bruise. Bradley is going to have a black eye from the punch Melinda landed on his face.)
5. Bradley didn't go trick-or-treating that evening, though Ronnie and Bartholomew did.
(Bradley has no friends to go out trick-or-treating with on Halloween night. We can tell he'd like to go, because he pretends that Ronnie the Rabbit and Bartholomew the Bear, two of his toy animals, go out asking for candy—they are doing this in Bradley's place, and Bradley makes sure that the other animals give Ronnie and Bartholomew the loads of candy he wishes he could have gotten.)
6. Zen (p. 138)
(Zen is a Japanese sect of Buddhism that seeks enlightenment, or realization of the inner self, by direct intuition through meditation. Carla mentions a supposed Zen rule of always saying hello back when a person says hello to you. Her mention of Zen, a religious belief, gets her into trouble with some parents.)

7. Bradley's father, bad leg and all, taught Bradley how to dribble. (p. 140)
(Dribbling is a way to move a basketball down a court, with a series of short bounces. An important mark of Bradley's change is that he now has friends to play basketball with and that his father has become his helper rather than a mere authority figure, as he appeared to be at the beginning of the novel.)
8. "You think you're Cinderella." (p. 147)
(Bradley is getting scared about going to the birthday party. Carla says he's worried that the party will turn out like Cinderella's ball, when at midnight everything that had been magically transformed in Cinderella's world suddenly turned back to its original form. Bradley is afraid that all of the transformations in his world will suddenly go back to the way they were, too—that everyone will stop liking him and he won't have friends any more.)
9. a somersault race (p. 185)
(This is a race in which the participants roll forward head over feet to the finish line. Bradley is worried that he can't do somersaults, but in another happy experience, he finds that no one on his team can, either, and the race is hilarious rather than an embarrassment.)
10. ...a replica of the human heart...the blood vessels, the aorta, the capillaries...the heart valves (p. 193)
(Bradley gives Colleen a model of the human heart as his birthday present to her. It shows the blood vessels, the great trunk artery called the aorta, the tiny blood vessels called capillaries, and the valves inside the heart that regulate the flow of blood between the heart's chambers.)

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 in the book.

Literal Level

1. Which students does Carla Davis counsel, and on what issues?
(She counsels Bradley on his behavior problems stemming from his poor self-image and the vicious circle of I'll-hate-you-first that he's gotten himself stuck in. She counsels Jeff on adjusting to the new school and being friends with Bradley and later when things seem very weird to Jeff after he makes friends with Bradley again and wants to tell Carla he's sorry for walking out on her earlier. Carla also counsels Colleen on that girl's dilemma about inviting boys to her birthday party and about going into the boys' bathroom.)
2. Describe the incidents in the novel involving someone of the wrong gender being in the boys'/girls' bathroom.
(First, Jeff gets lost on one of his first days at Red Hill School; he turns into a door he thinks is the door to the counselor's office and is mortified to discover he has just walked into the girls' bathroom! Then Bradley, desperate to get away from the threatening gang of Jeff's friends, ducks into the girls' bathroom to hide and is horrified when a girl comes in. Next, Colleen goes into the

boys' bathroom; she says it's by accident, but it's really because she wants to talk to Jeff. All three immediately go to Carla and tell her about the awful thing that's just happened to them. Finally, when Bradley gets angry after Carla tells him she is being transferred to another school, Carla follows him into the boys' bathroom to talk some more.)

3. Describe the ups and downs of Bradley's and Jeff's friendship.
(Jeff, the new kid at school, offers to be Bradley's friend because he can see that Bradley probably needs a friend. Bradley acts obnoxious but is secretly thrilled to have a friend. But when the other boys take Jeff in as their friend because they think Jeff has given Bradley a black eye [it was actually Melinda who did that], Jeff rejects his friendship with Bradley. Later, as Jeff's friends are goading Bradley and Jeff into a one-on-one fistfight, Bradley turns the situation around by saying hello to Jeff and holding out his hand. Now Bradley and Jeff are best friends again, and the other boys accept Bradley into their basketball-playing group.)

Interpretive Level

4. Describe the vicious cycle Bradley has gotten himself trapped in. How has Bradley become his own worst enemy?
(Bradley has adopted an "I'll hate you before you hate me" stance. As long as he hates the other kids, it does not matter what they think of him. Similarly, if he doesn't do his homework or try to get good grades, he won't fail in any attempts to do well in his schoolwork. But this means Bradley has locked himself into not trying, so he can't possibly get one of the gold stars he secretly yearns for. And, as Carla points out, Bradley has acted like a "monster" for so long, people think of him as a monster and treat him like one, so now he thinks of himself as a monster and keeps on acting like one, which makes people keep on treating him like one—and so on, a vicious circle.)
5. What role do Bradley's toy animals play in his life?
(Bradley's toy animals give him the friendship he otherwise lacks, and they affirm all his good characteristics that are otherwise buried and so not acknowledged by anyone else. They call him smart, and friendly; they comfort him when he's upset and reassure him that's he's a wonderful person. Also, Bradley plays out his rejections by others with the animals, setting them into similar circumstances and having things turn out well for them instead of badly.)
6. How does Carla Davis get Bradley to change himself and get out of the situation he's trapped himself in?
(She starts by treating Bradley as a charming, delightful, smart, and capable person, accepting his fantastic tales at face value and telling him at the end of each session that she appreciates his coming to see her and sharing so much with her. In the face of Carla's determined acceptance of him as a good and worthwhile person, Bradley gradually begins to see himself that way too. The breakthrough is their "monster" talk, when Bradley asks how a person who is seen and treated by others as a monster can stop being a monster. He realizes he has

to stop thinking of himself as a nasty, badly behaving person and become a Good Bradley so other people will start treating him nicely.)

Critical Level

7. How does the title of the novel relate to what the novel is about?
(Answers will vary somewhat. It relates in the sense that it underlines the humor that lightens up what is really a touching story about a disturbed child. It also relates to the mistakes Bradley and Jeff make in adjusting to school life and their peers and the acute embarrassment both feel at being found in such a situation, which drives both of them immediately to go to see Carla, the counselor.)
8. What are Bradley's strong points that Carla Davis is so sure he possesses?
(Bradley is smart, and imaginative, and is a nice, normally vulnerable person with the potential for doing fine schoolwork and being a good friend to someone, if only he can get unlocked from the obnoxious behavior he has trapped himself in.)
9. At the beginning of the novel, Bradley is a pretty obnoxious person. How does the author make us care about him?
(The author lets us into Bradley's thoughts so we can see that although Bradley acts terribly obnoxious, that's just a defense mechanism to avoid being hurt by people being mean to him first. Bradley's thoughts let us understand that he really yearns for a friend and gold stars, so we immediately start rooting for him to overcome his behavior problems and become accepted and happy.)
10. The author originally wrote the novel by switching back and forth from Bradley's and Jeff's points of view. He rewrote it to be from just Bradley's point of view, but sometimes we still get Jeff's point of view on what's happening. Give examples of this from the novel.
(Examples will vary—for instance, Jeff's feelings when he gets lost on the way to Carla's office the first time, and when he encounters Colleen in the boys' bathroom.)

Creative Level

11. Write some diary entries for Carla Davis or for Colleen.
(Answers will vary.)
12. Suggest other titles for the novel and explain why you think they are appropriate.
(Answers will vary.)

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Science

1. Bradley and Carla discuss "monsters from outer space." Report on the actual possibilities of life on other planets.
2. Make a model of the human heart like the one Bradley gives Colleen as a birthday present. (Also **Art**.)
3. Explain why your stomach feels knotted up when you're angry or upset.

Social Studies

1. Schools haven't always had counselors. Read about the history of how counseling came to be part of the services offered by schools. Is there any controversy about this, like the problems Carla runs into in the novel?
2. Find out and report on birthday celebrations in other cultures.
3. Study U.S. geography, as Bradley's class does. On an unlabeled map of the United States, label each state with its correct name. Do a jigsaw puzzle of the United States, and time yourself. Write a list from memory of all the U.S. states you can name.

Language Arts

1. Think of a title for each chapter of the book, alone or as part of a small group. Share your titles with classmates, and vote on class favorites.
2. In a small group, discuss other novels you have read about kids like Bradley who are social outcasts and try to overcome the problem.

Mathematics

1. Create the chart Colleen's mother makes at the birthday party to keep track of how many points everybody gets, and fill it in so the order of finish is the same as it is in the novel on page 190.
2. Figure out the answer to the peanut problem in the novel Bradley is reading: If you can eat three peanuts in five seconds, how long would it take for you to eat fifty thousand peanuts?
3. Solve Bradley's homework problem—What is three fourths of two thirds?—and explain the steps.

Art

1. Create portraits, sketches, caricatures, and so on of the novel's characters.
2. Illustrate Bradley's animal collection, or make a real display of it.
3. Draw Bradley's twisted smile, when he stretches his mouth so wide, it's hard to tell whether it's a smile or a frown.
4. Create an artwork of the outer space creature Bradley describes to Carla on page 89 of the novel.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Find out what counseling services are available to students at your school.
2. Make a list of things you like about yourself.
3. Do you know of a teacher who was forced out of his or her job because of pressure from parents? What happened, and why?
4. If you were to go to talk with Carla Davis, what topics would you want to talk about? Make a private list.
5. Bring a collection of yours in to class for display.
6. With classmates, make a list of the most fun games to play at birthday parties. You could make this into an illustrated class booklet, complete with directions, that

students and parents could borrow for ideas when planning birthday parties.

7. In a small group, discuss the meaning of friendship, what qualities are important in a friend, and why friendship is important for people.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. Make a list of the characters in the novel. Give a brief physical and character description of each, tell what the character's relationship to Bradley is, and explain what part this person plays in the novel's events.
2. Imagine the novel is going to be made into a stage play. Describe the settings for the play and tell what occurs in each one.
3. Summarize the events of the novel from Jeff's point of view.

OTHER BOOKS BY LOUIS SACHAR

Sideways Stories from Wayside School (1978)
Johnny's in the Basement (1981)
Someday Angeline (1983)
There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom (1987)
Sixth Grade Secrets (1987)
Wayside School Is Falling Down (1989)
Sideways Arithmetic from Wayside School (1989)
The Boy Who Lost His Face (1989)
Dogs Don't Tell Jokes (1991)
Monkey Soup (1992)
Marvin Redpost: Kidnapped at Birth? (1992)
Marvin Redpost: Is He a Girl? (1993)
Marvin Redpost: Why Pick on Me? (1993)
Wayside School Gets a Little Stranger (1994)
More Sideways Arithmetic from Wayside School (1994)
Marvin Redpost: Alone in His Teacher's House (1994)

RELATED READING

Anything for a Friend. Ellen Conford.
Class Clown. Joanna Hurwitz.
The Class Pest. Emily Moore.
Dear Mr. Henshaw. Beverly Cleary.
Diary of a Frantic Kid Sister. Hila Colman.
Eleanor, Elizabeth. Libby Gleeson.
The Kid in the Red Jacket. Barbara Park.
Project Wheels. Jacqueline T. Banks.
Randall's Wall. Carol Fenner.
The Strange Case of the Reluctant Partners. Mark Geller.
The Stone-Faced Boy. Paula Fox.
Tales of a Fourth-Grade Nothing and Superfudge.
Judy Blume.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, April 1987,
p. 155.
Kirkus Reviews, February 1, 1987, p. 224.
Publishers Weekly, January 16, 1987, p. 74.
School Library Journal, April 1987, p. 103.
Something About the Author, Vol. 63. Detroit: Gale, 1991.

VOCABULARY TEST

Match each underlined word with its meaning listed below. Write the letter of the meaning in the space next to the sentence number.

- _____ 1. Bradley held up his test for everyone to see and smiled that same distorted smile.
- _____ 2. Claudia snickered when Bradley explained about playing with his animals.
- _____ 3. Bradley's mother was flabbergasted. "I—I don't even *know* when they feed the lions!"
- _____ 4. "I don't tolerate lying," Bradley's father said.
- _____ 5. "Not all criminals go to jail!" Bradley asserted. "What about the man who shot you?"
- _____ 6. "If he doesn't show improvement soon, more drastic measures will have to be taken."
- _____ 7. "My poor baby," said Bradley's mother as she wrapped her massive arms around him.
- _____ 8. Ronnie the Rabbit was romping across the bed, singing.
- _____ 9. Bradley shuddered whenever he remembered the time he actually had almost done his *homework*.
- _____ 10. "No, she doesn't like you," Claudia scoffed. "That's just her job!"
- _____ 11. Lori shrieked with anticipation.
- _____ 12. Bradley had to concentrate very hard to keep from crying.
- _____ 13. Bradley rounded a corner, then stopped and made a quick and desperate decision.
- _____ 14. Bradley looked at his mismatched socks. "I thought I changed them," he said, befuddled.
- _____ 15. Bradley's mother looked at him inquisitively.
- _____ 16. "I appreciate your coming to see me."
- _____ 17. "I think you're a little overwhelmed by all that has happened to you."
- _____ 18. He pulled out a tissue. "I've never been to a birthday party," Bradley blubbered.
- _____ 19. "He's not normal," Claudia agreed. "He's bizarre."
- _____ 20. It was a replica of the human heart.

a. extreme

f. questioningly

k. declared

p. model

b. warped

g. astonished

l. weird

q. overcome

c. sneered

h. reckless

m. allow

r. focus

d. confused

i. hopping

n. sobbed

s. huge

e. shook

j. giggled

o. value

t. screamed

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number. You will use each character's name only once.

- | | | | | |
|------------|------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| a. Bradley | c. Colleen | e. Claudia | g. Ronnie | i. Mrs. Chalkers |
| b. Jeff | d. Lori | f. Carla Davis | h. Bartholomew | j. Mr. Chalkers |

- _____ 1. Although she always made fun of Bradley's animals, she had really felt bad when she stepped on the rabbit.
- _____ 2. She was a large woman with fat arms, wearing a sleeveless green dress.
- _____ 3. He was the oldest and the toughest-looking kid in Mrs. Ebbel's class. He was a year older than the other kids.
- _____ 4. She was a little red rabbit with tiny blue eyes glued on her face.
- _____ 5. A girl with red hair and a freckled face.
- _____ 6. She wore blue jeans and a red T-shirt. She had light brown hair, almost blond, and clear blue eyes.
- _____ 7. Just moved here from Washington, D.C., and had visited the White House.
- _____ 8. She had the biggest mouth in the whole school. She was always laughing, too.
- _____ 9. He worked in the police department. He had been shot in the leg four years ago while chasing a robber.
- _____ 10. He was a brown-and-white ceramic bear that stood on his hind legs.

Part II: True/False (20 points)

In the spaces provided, write **T** if the statement is completely true, or **F** if any part of the statement is false.

- _____ 1. Bradley isn't allowed to take books out of the school library.
- _____ 2. Bradley's parents are physically abusive to him.
- _____ 3. Bradley has a dog named Chicken.
- _____ 4. When Jeff offers to be friends, Bradley says he'll spit on Jeff.
- _____ 5. Bradley gets almost all A's in Mrs. Ebbel's class.
- _____ 6. Bradley rips up his book report.
- _____ 7. Bradley and Carla discuss monsters from outer space.
- _____ 8. Both Jeff and Bradley end up at different times in the girls' bathroom.
- _____ 9. Jeff and Bradley beat up the girls.
- _____ 10. Colleen has a crush on Jeff.

Part III: Fill-In (30 points)

Write one or two words in each blank to make each statement true.

1. Bradley loves reading a book Carla gives him titled *My Parents Didn't Steal an* _____.
2. Carla always tells Bradley, "I _____ your coming to see me."
3. Carla loses her job when she runs into objections from the _____ Organization.
4. Bradley's mother meets with Bradley's teacher on _____ Day.
5. Jeff's friends give Bradley the nickname of _____ Chalkers.
6. _____ gives Jeff a black eye.
7. Mrs. Wilcott is the school's _____.
8. As his parting gift from the heart, Bradley sends Carla _____.
9. Carla tells Jeff and Colleen about _____ monks.
10. Jeff makes friends with a group of boys who play _____.
11. Colleen invites Bradley and Jeff to her _____.
12. Bradley, Jeff, and the others go to the _____ School.
13. Carla says that she doesn't believe in _____.
14. Until he starts working with Carla, Bradley never does his _____.
15. Carla says she tries to teach kids _____ to think.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose any **three** to answer. Write a paragraph for each.

1. How has Bradley become his own worst enemy?
2. Describe Bradley's relationship with his parents.
3. Whom does Carla counsel, and why?
4. How do Bradley's classmates' opinions of Bradley change during the course of the novel? Why?

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each quotation. In the list below, find the character who speaks the words. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the quotation number.

- | | | | | |
|------------|------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| a. Bradley | c. Colleen | e. Claudia | g. Bartholomew | i. Mrs. Chalkers |
| b. Jeff | d. Melinda | f. Carla Davis | h. Mrs. Ebbel | j. Mr. Chalkers |

- _____ 1. "I don't mind sitting next to you."
- _____ 2. "I'm sorry, but there are no other empty desks. Nobody likes sitting...there."
- _____ 3. "Don't lie to your mother and don't lie to me!"
- _____ 4. "You'll think of something, Bradley. You always do. You're the smartest kid in the world."
- _____ 5. "We can say hello if we want. It's a free country."
- _____ 6. "Mrs. Ebbel is a liar! Don't believe anything she tells you."
- _____ 7. "Deep down, he really is a good boy."
- _____ 8. "He's in *love* with her. I heard him say it to his animals."
- _____ 9. "Do you want to come to my birthday party next Sunday?"
- _____ 10. "I enjoyed your visit very much. Thank you for sharing so much with me."

Part II: True/False (20 points)

In the spaces provided, write **T** if the statement is completely true, or **F** if any part of the statement is false.

- _____ 1. The other kids call Jeff by the names Fishface and Fishnose.
- _____ 2. Bradley is an excellent basketball player.
- _____ 3. Carla is an older, grandmotherly woman.
- _____ 4. Bradley's only friends at school are girls.
- _____ 5. Before meeting him, Carla says she thinks Bradley sounds charming and delightful.
- _____ 6. Bradley's mother can't go to the parent-teacher conference because she promised to take Bradley to the zoo.
- _____ 7. Colleen's parents say she cannot go on meeting with Carla.
- _____ 8. Bradley doesn't know how to act at a birthday party.
- _____ 9. Whatever else, Bradley always gets his homework done.
- _____ 10. Bradley borrows a book from Jeff so he can write his book report.

Part III: Short Answer (30 points)

Write a one- or two-word answer for each of the following questions.

1. Of what does Bradley have a collection? _____
2. What is Bradley not allowed to take home from school? _____
3. What does Carla unexpectedly give Bradley one day? _____
4. What is the name of the novel's author? _____
5. What does Bradley give as a present at the birthday party? _____
6. What is the name of one of Jeff's new basketball-playing friends? _____
7. What is Carla's job at the school? _____
8. Who is Claudia? _____
9. What kind of animal is Bartholomew? _____
10. What is Bradley's nickname for Lori? _____
11. What does Bradley secretly hope Mrs. Ebbel will award him? _____
12. Who gives Bradley a black eye? _____
13. What is Bradley's father's job? _____
14. What is Colleen's dog's name? _____
15. In what grade are Bradley and Jeff? _____

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose any **three** to answer. Write a paragraph for each.

1. Why does Carla leave her counseling job at Bradley's school?
2. Describe Bradley's relationship with Carla.
3. How does Bradley change in the course of the novel?
4. Describe Jeff's adjustment to his new school and classmates.

ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY TEST

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. a | 11. t | 16. o |
| 2. j | 7. s | 12. r | 17. q |
| 3. g | 8. i | 13. h | 18. n |
| 4. m | 9. e | 14. d | 19. l |
| 5. k | 10. c | 15. f | 20. p |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. e | 6. f |
| 2. i | 7. b |
| 3. a | 8. d |
| 4. g | 9. j |
| 5. c | 10. h |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

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

Part III: Fill-In (30 points)

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Elephant | 9. Zen |
| 2. appreciate | 10. basketball |
| 3. Concerned Parents | 11. birthday party |
| 4. Parents' Conference | 12. Red Hill |
| 5. Chicken | 13. accidents |
| 6. Melinda | 14. homework |
| 7. librarian | 15. how |
| 8. Ronnie (the Rabbit) | |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary somewhat. Samples follow.

- By adopting an "I'll hate them first" attitude, Bradley acts mean to everybody before anybody has a chance to be mean to him first. He's been this way so long, everybody sees him and treats him as a monster, so he feels like a monster and therefore continues to behave like a monster. Even though he yearns for acceptance, the way he behaves guarantees that Bradley will remain friendless.
- Even Bradley's parents can't deal with Bradley's behavior. In the beginning of the novel, Bradley's father seems authoritarian and unsympathetic, but as soon as Bradley goes to his father for help, Mr. Chalkers turns out to be a supportive and helpful father. Bradley's mother sees that her son is good deep down but is unable to deal effectively with his obnoxious behavior; she is supportive of him, though, and sympathetic.
- Carla counsels Bradley in an attempt to turn around his obnoxious behavior and poor self-image. She counsels Jeff on adjusting to the new school and making new friends, and she talks with Colleen about the issue of inviting boys to the birthday party and the embarrassment of going into the boys' room.
- At first, Bradley's classmates reject him because of his obnoxious behavior; he behaves like a monster and so they treat him like one. As Bradley gradually changes and tries to be nice to the other kids, they gradually begin to accept him.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. a |
| 2. h | 7. i |
| 3. j | 8. e |
| 4. g | 9. c |
| 5. d | 10. f |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

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

Part III: Short Answer (30 points)

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. animals | 9. bear |
| 2. library books | 10. Loudmouth |
| 3. kiss (or book) | 11. gold star |
| 4. Louis Sachar | 12. Melinda |
| 5. model heart | 13. policeman |
| 6. Robbie, Russell, Brian, Curtis, Doug, or Andy | 14. Chicken |
| 7. counselor | 15. fifth |
| 8. Bradley's sister | |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary somewhat. Samples follow.

- A group of parents calling themselves the Concerned Parents Organization objects to counseling at school in general and Carla's type of nonjudgmental counseling in particular, and also to her mention of Zen to Jeff and Colleen. When the CPO calls a meeting, only parents with objections to Carla appear, and their pressure leads to Carla's transfer to another school as a kindergarten teacher.
- At first, Bradley is scared of going to a counselor and insists he dislikes, even hates, Carla—but he seems to enjoy talking with someone who treats him sympathetically, listens to whatever he has to say, and insists he is smart and delightful. After a while, Bradley and Carla really do become friends, because of Carla's unwavering confidence in Bradley.
- At first, Bradley is extremely obnoxious to everyone, devoted to hating others before they have a chance to hate him first. Gradually, as Carla helps him have confidence in his own self-worth, Bradley stops acting like a "monster" so that other people will no longer see him and treat him as a monster.
- Jeff makes friends with Bradley first, even though Bradley is a rather difficult friend to have. Then Jeff attracts the attention of Colleen and her friends, which leads to a fight between Bradley and Melinda. This in turn attracts a group of boys to Jeff because they think he gave Bradley the black eye. Now Jeff has eight boy friends to play basketball with, but he has rejected Bradley. Finally, he and Bradley become friends again, peace is made with the girls, and Jeff is fully part of the school scene.



Vandalia Road • Jacksonville, Illinois 62650
Toll free 1-800-637-6581 • Fax 1-800-551-1169
PERMA-BOUND CANADA • Box 517, Station A • Willowdale, Ontario M2N 5T1
Toll free 1-800-461-1999 • Fax 1-705-876-9703