

# View from Saturday

by E. L. Konigsburg

## Classroom Favorites

Teacher's Guide by Kathy Sammis

A Perma-Bound Production

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### SYNOPSIS

This intricately plotted and very witty novel uses alternating points of view and frequent flashbacks to narrate the interconnected personal journeys of four sixth graders and their paraprofessional teacher as they move toward and achieve a win in the New York State Academic Bowl contest for their Epiphany Middle School.

**Chap. 1:** When asked how she had chosen the four members of the sixth-grade team that very surprisingly made it to the state finals of the Academic Bowl to compete against eighth graders, Mrs. Olinski gave varying answers. The truth was, she did not know how she'd chosen them until after the bowl was over. On Bowl Day, Noah Gershom buzzes in to answer the first question, about calligraphy.

**Noah Writes a B & B Letter:** This chapter is the first of four in which each member of the Academic Bowl team, who call themselves The Souls, narrates a flashback that reveals personal characteristics, family connections and problems, background that will enable him or her to answer easily one of the Academic Bowl questions, and a growing interconnectedness among the previously unconnected Souls. Noah's narration is a hilarious description of his involvement in a senior citizen wedding while visiting his Grandpa Nate and Grandma Sadie in Florida at Century Village ("like a theme park for old people," Noah says). Everyone at this retirement community pitches in for the wedding of Margaret Draper and Izzy Diamondstein. Tillie Nachman writes the invitations using calligraphy, which Noah greatly admires; in return for Noah's help with the invitations, Tillie teaches him this art of beautiful writing. Izzy's best man is supposed to be his son, Allen, whom the literal-minded Noah describes as "Fact: the most nervous human being I have ever seen in my life." Allen's wife has left him and moved up north to Epiphany, where she now works for Noah's father, a dentist. In a ridiculous mishap, Allen sprains his ankle, so Noah fills in for him as best man for Izzy. Margaret's maid of honor is her daughter Mrs. Potter, who has flown down from her home in Epiphany. Back home, Noah—on orders from his mother—writes a thank-you ("bread and butter") letter to his grandparents for hosting his visit.

**Chap. 2:** At the beginning of the new year, Nadia Diamondstein hardly spoke, but she and Mrs. Olinski—another watcher and waiter, cautious about being friendly—found a bond in their shared love of autumn. On Bowl Day, Nadia buzzes in to answer the second question, about the Sargasso Sea.

**Nadia Tells of Turtle Love:** Last summer, after her parents' divorce, Nadia moved from her home state of Florida to Epiphany in upstate New York with her mother, who had grown up there. Nadia returned to Florida to spend August with her father. The visit is uncomfortable. Nadia's father Allen is, as Noah noted, dreadfully nervous and "hovers" over Nadia, not really knowing what to do with her. Also, Nadia is not comfortable with her Grandpa Izzy's new bride, the *zaftig* (and non-Jewish) Margaret, although Grandpa Izzy is clearly crazy about his Margy. Margaret seems uninterested in Nadia and asks her no questions about Epiphany, which Nadia finds odd, since that is where Margaret lived before retiring to Florida. Margaret also has very little to say about her grandson Ethan Potter, who is Nadia's age and has just arrived for an extended visit. Ethan, like Margaret, is very uncommunicative. Margaret and Izzy walk the beach every day on sea turtle patrol, which inspired Nadia to do her fifth-grade science report on Florida turtles. Now, however, Nadia's nose is severely out of joint about her family changes, and Nadia only reluctantly goes along on the walks. She withdraws from all participation when she learns that Margaret arranged for her mother's job with Dr. Gershom, who was the Draper family dentist, the job that moved Nadia from her familiar Florida all the way to upstate New York. Nadia is particularly incensed when her father gets deeply involved in the turtle walks; he showed little interest in her science report on turtles. A crisis arises when a group of hatchlings is driven back toward shore during a storm; Nadia's father finally gives Nadia his full attention as she explains why they have to rescue the young turtles so they can be transported out to the Sargasso Sea and thus survive. Nadia acknowledges that, like sea turtles, she will have to commute between north and south, and both she and her father acknowledge that, like the hatchlings, they will sometimes need a lift between life's switches.

**Chap. 3:** Mrs. Draper was the principal of the Epiphany elementary school where Mrs. Olinski began teaching, and the two women became good friends after Margaret retired and Eva Marie left teaching after her automobile accident. On Bowl Day, Ethan Potter rings in to answer question three about places in New York State associated with famous women.

**Ethan Explains the B and B Inn:** Ethan is from a very old Clarion County family, full of farmers, educators, and strong women. Silent Ethan suffers from a sense that he'll never measure up in anyone's eyes—especially those of his parents and the Epiphany teachers—in comparison with the sterling accomplishments of his older brother Luke. On the first day of the new school year, Ethan's school bus makes a surprise stop at the

Sillington place, a huge old derelict farmhouse whose surrounding farmland has been transformed into a suburban housing development. Waiting for the bus are the house's new inhabitants, a man wearing a white turban and a brown-skinned boy dressed English-style. The boy politely seats himself next to Ethan and introduces himself in a British accent as Julian Singh; his father, a chef, is transforming Sillington House into a bed-and-breakfast inn. Ethan evades Julian's attempts to be friendly.

In sixth-grade homeroom, Mrs. Olinski, seated in her wheelchair, introduces herself and writes the word paraplegic on the board. Hamilton Knapp asks her to write higher on the board, which she clearly cannot do; when the class returns to homeroom after lunch, someone has written cripple on the board instead. The kids on the bus, especially Ham Knapp and his friend Michael Froelich, make life miserable for Julian, whom Ethan continues to ignore. Then Julian gives Ethan a series of puzzle-notes that decipher into an invitation to a tea party at Sillington House on Saturday at 4 o'clock ("tea time is always 4:00 p.m."). When Ethan arrives for the party, he finds that Nadia and Noah are also guests. Ethan feels oddly relaxed at Sillington House and finds himself talking easily, opening up as never before. Julian shows his skill at magic tricks, which he learned from a magician during his years living on cruise ships with his parents. Noah begins to teach the group the skill of calligraphy. The group begins to bond as they continue with weekly Saturday afternoon tea parties, calling themselves The Souls. However, at school, the group members keep their Saturday friendship a secret.

**Chap. 4:** Mrs. Olinski felt nervous and unsure on her first day back at school teaching in ten years. When she found cripple substituted for paraplegic on the blackboard, she realized that sixth-graders had changed a lot in those absent years. At tea, The Souls determine to support Mrs. Olinski, to give her a lift, to keep others at school from getting her off balance. On Bowl Day, Julian buzzes in to give two examples of acronyms: *posh* and *tip*.

**Julian Narrates When Ginger Played Annie's Sandy:** Mentioning aspects of American culture he encounters for the first time, Julian relates how Ethan convinced Nadia to have her "genius" dog Ginger try out for the part of Sandy in Epiphany High School's production of *Annie*. Ginger gets the part; Michael Froelich's Arnold is understudy. On the way to a special matinee pre-opening performance of *Annie* for Epiphany's younger students, Julian overhears Ham Knapp's plan to sabotage Ginger's stage debut with drug-laced treats. Julian sneaks backstage, prepared to substitute good treats for the bad ones, but learns that Mike's Arnold is going to take the stage for this one performance. Should he let Arnold eat the drugged treats and misperform badly? Julian decides no, but does return the drugged treats to Ham in from of Ham's mother, the veterinarian from whom Ham filched the drugs. Meanwhile, Ham and his friend Jared Lord craftily engineer disruptive applause during the performance, hiding their role.

**Chap. 5:** Mrs. Olinski's fellow teachers challenged her for making unilateral choices for her Academic Bowl team, but she went with her gut feelings. She had thought of choosing Ham Knapp, but then she deduced that he orchestrated the mean-spirited disruption at *Annie*, and rejected him for her team. After the Arnold-as-Sandy performance, Mrs. Olinski joined Nadia, Noah, Ethan, and Julian at Sillington House for tea with her old friend Margaret Draper and Margy's new husband Izzy

Diamondstein. The slow, calming tea ceremony brought comfort and calm to Mrs. Olinski, and when she saw how bonded and courteous the four children were as they shared their tea, she chose Julian as the fourth member of the team.

**Chap. 6:** On Bowl Day, the advisory panel confers and accepts *posh* as an acronym but not *tip*; Julian objects. Working toward the state finals, The Souls trounced the other sixth grades and roundly dispatched the seventh-grade champions. Excitement built at Epiphany, and the vanquished sixth and seventh graders cheered on Mrs. Olinski's team as they beat the eighth-grade champions. Meanwhile, Mrs. Olinski quelled Ham's and Jared's classroom disruptions permanently.

**Chap. 7:** On Bowl Day, Julian explains to the New York State commissioner of education, the quiz master, that *tip* is an acronym for To Insure Promptness, a sign used by old-time English pub owners. "With all due respect, sir, you are wrong," Julian continues to object. The Souls practiced hard with Mrs. Olinski for the contest against the Knightsbridge eighth-graders for the district championship. When The Souls won, Epiphany's sixth-graders formed a phalanx and lifted Mrs. Olinski, wheelchair and all, onto their shoulders and carried her out to the parking lot in triumph—"a lift between switches," Julian said.

**Chap. 8:** The Souls drilled eagerly for the regionals, but they refused to drill on Saturday afternoon at tea time. So Mrs. Olinski again went to Sillington House for tea and again found comfort and a rare lack of self-consciousness about being watched while she and the four Souls ate and drank. Mr. Singh implied that the energy generated by the combination of Nadia, Noah, Julian, and Ethan as a group was the deciding factor in Mrs. Olinski's choice of her team members.

**Chap. 9:** On Bowl Day, the panel of experts finally confirms that *tip* is indeed an acronym, so Julian's answer is correct. After the regional win, the residents of Century Village commissioned a special T-shirt that was sold in Epiphany and raised enough money to bus residents to Albany for the state championship.

**Chap. 10:** On Bowl Day, the lead ping-pongs back and forth between Epiphany and rival Maxwell Middle School. Then Julian rings in to answer that we would meet Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass*—Maxwell had incorrectly answered *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which had contained the first clue in Julian's puzzle-invitations to the first tea party. Julian also correctly identifies the real name and occupation of the book's author, which wins the state Academic Bowl championship for Epiphany. The Souls come down from the stage to stand by Mrs. Olinski in her wheelchair, so the commissioner of education has to come down too, to present the trophy.

**Chap. 11:** On the return drive from Albany, Mr. Singh points out to Mrs. Olinski that she and each of The Souls have returned from their personal journeys, a journey for each in which each found kindness and acceptance—Mrs. Olinski from her sixth-graders during the trip to the Academic Bowl triumph and in the personal peace she found at Sillington House with the four Souls; Noah at Century Village; Nadia in joining with her family members to return the turtles to the Sargasso Sea; Ethan on the school bus; Julian in coming to Epiphany and moving beyond the malice of some to the bonds with his fellow Souls. As Mr. Singh says to Mrs. Olinski, "Noah, Nadia, and Ethan found kindness in others and learned how to look for it in themselves," and Julian rediscovered kindness among these three friends. Later, Mrs. Olinski compares herself mentally with Humpty

Dumpty, who “had a great fall,” and she realizes that all the king’s horses and all the king’s men could not have done for her what the kindness of four sixth-grade souls has done to put her back together again.

**Chap. 12:** Mrs. Olinski returns to Sillington House for tea, where she and The Souls agree that they chose her and she chose them for the team.

#### TIME LINE

- 10 years ago** Mrs. Olinski is paralyzed in an accident; leaves teaching. Margaret Draper retires.
- early summer** Nadia’s parents divorce; Nadia and mother move to Epiphany in upstate New York.
- soon after** Noah, visiting grandparents in Florida, is best man at wedding of Izzy Diamondstein and Margaret Draper.
- August** Nadia stays with father in Florida; Ethan visits grandmother Margaret; Ethan and Nadia meet, participate in turtle walks with grandparents. Mr. Singh and Julian purchase Sillington House in Epiphany and move in.
- September** School year starts; Nadia and Julian are new Epiphany students; Mrs. Olinski returns to teaching; Julian and Ethan meet on school bus.
- October 14** First tea party at Sillington House with Julian, Nadia, Noah, and Ethan.
- next Saturday** Weekly tea parties are established; the group becomes The Souls.
- late Oct.** Mrs. Olinski decides to appoint her Academic Bowl team, chooses Noah.
- December** **Friday before winter recess** Matinee performance of *Annie*; Julian discovers the drugged-dog-treat plan; Mrs. Olinski attends tea at Sillington House, chooses Julian as fourth Bowl team member.
- spring** Academic Bowl contests begin; The Souls win the Epiphany Middle School sixth-grade championship.
- c. 1 week later** The Souls beat the Epiphany seventh graders.
- c. 1 week later** The Souls beat Epiphany’s eighth-grade champions.
- c. 1 week later** The Souls win the district championship.
- May** **Friday** The Souls win the regional championship.  
**last Saturday** The Souls win the state middle school Academic Bowl championship.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Elaine Lobl Konigsburg is an accomplished, inventive, and witty writer of children’s literature. She was born in New York City in 1930 and grew up in small mill towns in Pennsylvania with her parents and two sisters. As a child, Konigsburg loved both reading and drawing. She was the first in her family to attend college, Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie-Mellon University) in Pittsburgh, where she majored in chemistry. In 1952, she graduated with honors and married David Konigsburg. While her husband worked toward an advanced degree in industrial psychology, Elaine pursued graduate studies in chemistry. Her penchant for creating lab accidents and a move to Jacksonville, Florida, because of David’s new job combined to lead Elaine away from graduate studies and into work as a science

teacher in an all-girls school, where she found herself more interested in the adolescent problems of her young students than in the academics she was teaching. Konigsburg left teaching in 1955 with the birth of her first child and remained a full-time mother through the infancies of two subsequent children while also developing her talent for painting.

In 1962, the family moved to the suburbs of New York and, with all three children attending school, Konigsburg began writing, focusing on the struggles of middle-class, often suburban children like her own to find their own identities and a social niche that fits them. Konigsburg had amazing success as a first-time author: Her first two books were readily accepted for publication and both appeared in 1967, and in 1968 Konigsburg became the first (and, so far, only) author with two titles on one year’s Newbery list—*From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* won the Newbery Medal, and *Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth* was a Newbery Honor book that year. Konigsburg received the Newbery phone call just as the family was moving into their new home back in Florida, where the senior Konigsburgs have remained and Elaine has continued to create her lasting contributions to children’s literature, many of them self-illustrated.

#### CRITICS’ CORNER

Critics consider Konigsburg a superior creator of impressive books for young readers, and they admire her bold inventiveness, even when it results in “interesting messes,” in the words of one critic. As *Twentieth-Century Children’s Writers* sums up, “Konigsburg is fitfully brilliant. When she is good, she is extraordinarily so; when she is a wee bit off form, she is still better than most. The name Konigsburg on the title page will ensure that it will be well worth reading.” This is definitely so for *The View from Saturday*, which garnered Konigsburg her second Newbery Medal, for 1997. *View* is vintage Konigsburg: a serious theme—the search of prepubescent youths for identity, for a secure sense of who they are and where they fit in—presented with humor, depth, and vitality and supported by believable yet one-of-a-kind characters. *School Library Journal* concluded, “Brilliant writing melds with crystalline characterizations in this sparkling story that is a jewel in the author’s crown of outstanding work.” *Publishers Weekly* declared that the author “orchestrates a stunning quartet of harmoniously blended voices. Wrought with deep compassion and a keen sense of balance, her imaginative novel affirms the existence of small miracles in everyday life.” Or, as *The New York Times Book Review* concluded, “If Ginger is a genius, what do you call E. L. Konigsburg?”

#### OTHER WORKS BY E. L. KONIGSBURG

##### For Young Readers

- About the B’nai Bagels* (1969)  
*Altogether, One at a Time* (short stories) (1971)  
*Amy Elizabeth Explores Bloomingdale’s* (1992)  
*The Dragon in the Ghetto Capers* (1974)  
*Father’s Arcane Daughter* (1976)  
*From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (1967)  
*(George)* (1970)  
*Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth* (1967)  
*Journey to an 800 Number* (1982)  
*A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver* (1973)  
*The Second Mrs. Giaconda* (1975)

*Silent to the Bone* (2000)  
*T-Backs, T-Shirts, Coat, and Suit* (1993)  
*Throwing Shadows* (short stories) (1979)  
*Up from Jericho Tel* (1986)

#### Picture Books

*Samuel Todd's Book of Great Colors* (1990)  
*Samuel Todd's Book of Great Inventions* (1991)

#### For Adults

*The Mask Beneath the Face: Reading About and With, Writing About and For Children* (1990)  
*TalkTalk: A Children's Book Author Speaks to Grown-Ups* (1995)

#### Sound Recording

*The View from Saturday* (Listening Library, 1997)

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#### Internet Sites

"About E. L. Konigsburg" <[www.ala.org/alsc/konigs.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/konigs.html)>  
"E. L. Konigsburg" (Authors & Illustrators Index) <[www.randomhouse.com/teachersbdd/koni.html](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachersbdd/koni.html)>  
"Meet E. L. Konigsburg, Award Winning Children's Book Author!" <[php.iupui.edu/~awinslow/](http://iupui.edu/~awinslow/)>

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss the preadolescent/teenage search for identity and a sure sense of self
2. To consider the ways in which friendships form and become mutually supportive
3. To analyze the ways in which family changes such as divorce and remarriage can cause strains in relationships among family members
4. To evaluate the value of civility, courtesy, and inclusiveness in people's interactions with one another
5. To consider the difficulties of adapting to the routines of life with a physical handicap, whether newly acquired or life-long
6. To discuss ways in which teachers and students can be mutually supportive
7. To identify effective ways of dealing with bullies and other mean-spirited people

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To solidify a clear understanding of the family connections among Noah, Nadia, and Ethan
2. To recognize why each Soul is able to answer her or his chosen Academic Bowl question easily
3. To analyze the ways in which Nadia, Noah, Julian, Ethan, and Mrs. Olinski all solidify their sense of identity and come to terms with personal problems in the course of the novel
4. To understand why the four Souls are drawn together and bond and the ways in which they help each other as well as Mrs. Olinski
5. To gain a full understanding of why Mrs. Olinski chooses the four members of her Academic Bowl team.
6. To identify the parallels between the lives of sea turtles and of Nadia
7. To explain the meaning of the novel's title
8. To recognize the underlying significance of Epiphany as the town's name
9. To trace the progress of events in the novel over time by rearranging events revealed through the novel's many flashbacks into a straight time-line chronology

### LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

To enhance students' appreciation and understanding of the novel, present them with these terms.

**allusion:** a usually brief, often casual reference to some other person, event, or thing. In this novel, Nadia's mention of the Mad Hatter's Tea Party and the comparison of Mrs. Olinski's

grin with that of the Cheshire Cat are allusions to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which gave the first clue in Julian's puzzle-invitation to the first tea party. Konigsburg casually inserts various other allusions as well—to Bible stories (David and Goliath), Mother Goose (Jack Sprat and his wife), classical painters and art (Raphael, caryatids, frieze), and mythology (Hecate).

**extended metaphor:** a metaphor is a comparison between two things that on the surface are not alike, without using *like* or *as* to make the comparison. An extended metaphor carries a comparison between one thing and another throughout a novel or story. In this novel, for example, Nadia finds links between her life and that of the sea turtles—the sea turtles' swim from North to South Atlantic parallels the travels Nadia will now be making regularly between New York and Florida; and the help that Nadia and her family give to the sea turtle hatchlings as they shift to a new phase of their life is a "lift between [life] switches" that Nadia and her father also need because of the changes brought about by the divorce of Nadia's parents. This idea of a "lift between switches" surfaces again when The Souls decide they will help Mrs. Olinski in her life switch of returning to teaching as a paraplegic.

**flashback:** a scene inserted into a film, play, or work of fiction showing events that happened earlier, also known as **analepsis**. The flashback device allows an author to fill in background information about characters and events, explaining things that happened before the time when the work opens. In this novel, the author uses extensive flashbacks from recurring scenes at the Academic Bowl finals to reveal the characters' backgrounds, personalities, and interconnections and to trace their process of coming together as a successful Academic Bowl team.

**foreshadowing:** hints or suggestions about something that will occur later in a novel. Within her novel's extensive flashbacks are contrasting instances of foreshadowing, as in the first chapter when the narration mentions the yet-to-come moment when Mrs. Olinski finally understands why she chose the members of her Academic Bowl team, a key concept of the novel. Foreshadowing also adds humor to Noah's narration, as he hints at Allen's coming mishap and the problem caused by Tillie's cat and the ink.

**point of view:** the perspective from which a story is told. This novel uses multiple points of view. Noah, Nadia, Ethan, and Julian each directly relate one chapter of the book, each child in his or her own voice, using **first-person narration**. The numbered chapters of the book are related in **third-person narration** that is most often told from Mrs. Olinski's point of view.

### SETTINGS

The main setting of this novel is the college town of Epiphany in upstate New York. Ethan lives on his family's farm here. The nearby Sillington farm has been transformed into a suburban subdivision. Julian and his father move into the old Sillington farmhouse, a rambling affair that has been added on to many times over the years; Mr. Singh transforms the place into Sillington House, a gracious bed-and-breakfast inn. The weekly teas that Julian begins with Nadia, Noah, and Ethan at Sillington House are the catalyst that transforms the group into The Souls and helps each child settle into his or her own comfortable identity. These four sixth-graders attend Epiphany Middle School, where their homeroom teacher, Mrs. Olinski, struggles to be-

come comfortable returning to teaching as a paraplegic in a wheelchair ten years after her accident caused her to resign from her teaching post. Tea at Sillington House helps Mrs. Olinski achieve calm and a sense of peace. The show *Annie* is staged at Epiphany High School's auditorium, where Julian reaches a moral decision about dealing with bullies and Mrs. Olinski discerns Ham Knapp's true nature and decides *not* to choose him for her Academic Bowl team. The climax of The Souls' Academic Bowl quest takes place in an auditorium in the state capital of Albany.

An important secondary setting of the novel is Florida, where the events in Noah's and Nadia's narrations take place. Noah becomes deeply involved in the wedding of Izzy Diamondstein and Margaret Draper at Century Village, the retirement community where Noah's grandparents live ("like a theme park for old people," in Noah's words). After the wedding, Izzy and Margaret move to an oceanside condominium, where they are living when Ethan comes to visit his grandmother Margaret. Nadia makes her first summer-vacation visit to her noncustodial father in this same Florida community, where she and her father both struggle to adapt to their new post-divorce relationship, and where Nadia also struggles to accept her grandfather Izzy's new wife and marriage. Both struggles are helped along by the melded family's daily walks on the beach checking on sea turtle nests.

### CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

#### Fiction

Judy Blume, *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* and *It's Not the End of the World*

Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*

Betsy Byars, *The Pinballs*

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Vera and Bill Cleaver, *Ellen Grae*

Ilene Cooper, *Queen of the Sixth Grade*

Paula Danziger, *The Pistachio Prescription*

Paul Fleischman, *Rear-View Mirror*

Paula Fox, *The Moonlight Man*

Suzanne Freeman, *The Cuckoo's Child*

Bel Kaufman, *Up the Down Staircase*

Norma Fox Mazer, *After the Rain*

Farley Mowat, *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be*

Wendy Orr, *Peeling the Onion*

Julie Anne Peters, *Revenge of the Snob Squad*

Pamela Powell, *The Turtle Watchers*

Cynthia Rylant, *Every Living Thing*

Dyan Sheldon, *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen*

Jan Slepian, *The Alfred Summer* and *The Night of the Bozos*

Zilpha Keatley Snyder, *The Egypt Game*

Jerry Spinelli, *Crash*

Barbara Steiner, *Dolby and the Woof-Off*

Cynthia Voigt, *Izzy, Willy-Nilly*

Hilma Wolitzer, *Wish You Were Here*

Paul Zindel, *The Pigman*

#### Nonfiction

George Ancona, *Turtle Watch*

Monique Avakian and Carter Smith III, *A Historical Album of New York*

Roger Caras, *A Celebration of Dogs*

Juliet Clutton-Brock, *Dog (Eyewitness Books)*

Kate Cohen-Posey, *How to Handle Bullies, Teasers and Other Meanies*

Richard A. Gardner, *A Boys and Girls Book About Divorce*  
 Jill Krementz, *How It Feels When Parents Divorce*  
 National Geographic Society, *The Company We Keep: America's Endangered Species*  
 Virginia Schomp, *New York (Celebrate the States series)*  
 Karen Sirvaitis, *Florida*  
 R. Conrad Stein, *New York (America the Beautiful Series)*  
 Lynn M. Stone, *Florida (America the Beautiful Series)*  
 Janice VanCleave, *Janice VanCleave's Oceans for Every Kid: Easy Activities That Make Learning Science Fun*  
 Dr. Ruth Westheimer and Pierre A. Lehu, *Dr. Ruth Talks About Grandparents: Advice for Kids on Making the Most of a Special Relationship*  
 Charles A. Wills, *A Historical Album of Florida*  
 Corey B. Ziter, *When Turtles Come to Town*

**Computer Software (CD-ROM)**  
*Amphibians and Reptiles (Junior Nature Guides Series)* (ICE Integrated Communication and Entertainment)  
*Animal Planet* (Discovery Multimedia)  
*Encyclopedia of U.S. Endangered Species* (Zane Publishing)  
*Field Trip to the Sea Deluxe (Field Trip series)* (Sunburst)  
*The Magic School Bus Explores the Ocean* (Microsoft)

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 "Annie: The 20th Anniversary" <[www.annie20th.com/content.htm](http://www.annie20th.com/content.htm)>  
 "Calligraphy for Everyone! with Jim Bennett" <[www.studioarts.net/calligraphy](http://www.studioarts.net/calligraphy)>  
 "Long John Silver's Reference Website: Annie" <[www.anniethemusical.com/](http://www.anniethemusical.com/)>  
 "My Cup of Tea Links" <[www.geocities.com/%7elibrary/tealinks.htm](http://www.geocities.com/%7elibrary/tealinks.htm)>  
 "Paralinks: The Electronic Magazine" <[www.paralinks.net/](http://www.paralinks.net/)>  
 "Random Acts of Kindness Foundation" <[www.actsofkindness.org/](http://www.actsofkindness.org/)>  
 "Sea Turtles" <[www.seaworld.org/Sea...Turtle/seaturtle.html](http://www.seaworld.org/Sea...Turtle/seaturtle.html)>  
 "Turtle Trax—A Page Devoted to Marine Turtles" <[www.turtles.org/](http://www.turtles.org/)>

#### Video/DVD

*Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (many versions available)  
*Ancient Sea Turtles Stranded in a Modern World* (Sea Turtle Restoration Project of Earth Island Institute/Bullfrog Films)  
*Annie* (Facets Multimedia/Columbia Tristar Home Video)  
*Annie: A Royal Adventure* (Great American Musicals Collection) (Library Video Co.)  
*Bully No More: Stopping the Abuse* (Aims Multimedia)  
*Good Conversation! A Talk with E. L. Konigsburg* (Tim Podell Productions)  
*Magic for Beginners*, Vols. 1 & 2 (Brian Richards Entertainment)  
*Reptiles and Amphibians* (National Geographic)  
*Talking About Sea Turtles* (New Dimension Video)

### THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central themes and situations in *The View from Saturday* should include these aspects.

#### Themes

- search for identity and social niche
- friendship vs. isolation

- civility and inclusiveness
- coping with life changes: divorce, remarriage, physical handicap
- dealing with bullies
- teacher-student relationships
- participation in Academic Bowl contest

#### Motifs

- sea turtles
- autumn
- haloes
- child-dog relationships
- grandparents-grandchildren
- magic tricks
- tea time
- stage performances
- calligraphy
- New York/Florida
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*
- Humpty Dumpty
- taking risks
- senior-citizen marriage

### 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. Epiphany (Chap. 1, p. 2)

*(Epiphany is the town in upstate New York where Nadia and Julian have recently come to live, and where Noah and Ethan also live; these four sixth-graders comprise the Academic Bowl team for Epiphany Middle School. The author has chosen this name for the town and school because of its meaning. An epiphany is a sudden perception of the essential nature or meaning of something; this meaning can be applied, for instance, to Mrs. Olinski's late recognition of why she chose these four students as members of her home-room's Bowl team, and of how they chose her.)*

#### 2. Whatever it says on the calendar, Florida has de facto summer. (Nadia Tells of Turtle Love, p. 25)

*(De facto is a Latin term that means in reality, actually. Nadia is saying that the weather in Florida is always summerlike, even if the calendar says its a presumably winterlike December or autumn-like October. Nadia has had to move to New York from Florida because her mother, a native of New York State, misses autumn weather.)*

#### 3. I am the product of a mixed marriage. (Nadia Tells of Turtle Love, p. 26)

*(A mixed marriage is a marriage between two people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds. In Nadia's case, her mother is Protestant, or WASP, and her father is Jewish.)*

#### 4. Sixth graders had stopped asking "Now what?" and had started asking "So what?" (Chap. 3, p. 59)

*(This is a change noted by both principal and former teacher Margaret Draper and teacher Eva Marie Olinski. In their view, sixth graders used to be eager students and learners, open to new ideas and enthusiastic about classroom activities. In recent years, however, Mrs. Draper and Mrs. Olinski find that sixth graders often act like moody, disrespectful adolescents who are more likely to sneer "So*

what?" to new concepts and teachers' attempts to impart knowledge than they are to respond enthusiastically in the "Now what?" mode.)

5. The man was wearing a long navy blue apron and a white turban. A turban. (Ethan Explains the B & B, p. 65)  
(Both these items give us information about Mr. Singh's background. He wears the apron because he is a chef and is experimenting with recipes he'll serve for breakfasts when Sillington House opens as a bread-and-breakfast inn. The turban—a headdress consisting of a long cloth wound around the head—is worn by men, especially Muslims, in the Middle East and southern Asia. Mr. Singh's turban is an indication of his Indian ancestry and upbringing.)

6. Fringes of Nadia's hair framed her face in a halo. (Ethan Explains the B & B Inn, p. 69)  
(A halo is a circle of light appearing to surround something or someone; it can represent an aura of glory, veneration, or sentiment surrounding an idealized person or thing. Ethan's attraction to Nadia is both triggered by and signaled by his perception of a halo shimmering around her beautiful red hair. Ethan again sees a halo on Julian's book bag, where Julian had tried to erase the hateful phrase Ham Knapp wrote on the bag.)

7. extraordinaire / simonetta/ Chanteuse (Ethan Explains the B & B Inn, p. 84)  
(These words appear on a framed poster advertising an appearance of Julian's mother, the "extraordinary chanteuse" Simonetta. When Julian explains to Ethan that a chanteuse sings, Ethan replies that he saw a wonderful chanteuse in the musical *The Phantom of the Opera*. Julian smiles at this remark [but tactfully does not say anything] because it is not accurate. A chanteuse is a female nightclub singer, not an actress who performs in stage musicals.)

8. a special matinee performance of *Annie* (Julian Narrates When Ginger Played *Annie's Sandy*, p. 107)  
(A matinee performance of a stage show is an afternoon performance of that show. In this case, the high school students are putting on an afternoon performance of their show *Annie* for Epiphany's elementary and middle school students, as both a special treat for the younger students and an enhanced dress rehearsal for themselves. It is at this performance that Mrs. Olinski deduces Hamilton Knapp's essential meanness of character and thus eliminates him from consideration as a member of her class's Academic Bowl team.)

9. The sixth graders converged and formed a phalanx that lifted [Mrs. Olinski]—wheelchair and all—onto their shoulders and carried her out of the building. (Chap. 7, p. 138)  
(A phalanx was a body of heavily armed infantry in ancient Greece formed into close deep ranks and files; more generally, a phalanx is a massed arrangement of people. The use of the term phalanx here stresses the image of Mrs. Olinski being born aloft in triumph by the victorious troops she has led to victory, like an ancient Greek general being carried in triumph by his soldiers after battle.)

10. Michael Froelich...draped a noose over the antenna of Mrs. Olinski's van. (Chap. 7, p. 138)  
(This is a symbol of the victory of Mrs. Olinski's team over Knightsbridge to win the district Academic Bowl champi-

onship, as well as a signal that Michael Froelich is now one of the "good guys" who is on Mrs. Olinski's side. Prior to the district contest, the principal of Knightsbridge paid a visit to Mrs. Olinski and announced, "I told our coach that she could expect to be hung if she lets your sixth grade grunges beat us out." The noose on Mrs. Olinski's car as well as the noose pins worn by Epiphany's sixth-grade sentinels are Epiphany's return sneer to Knightsbridge.)

### 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.

#### Questions 1-4 (Literal Level)

1. What are the family connections among Noah, Nadia, and Ethan?

(Nadia's paternal grandfather, Izzy Diamondstein, has recently married Ethan's maternal grandmother, Margaret Draper, and by an outlandish set of circumstances, Noah acted as Izzy's best man at the wedding in place of Izzy's son Allen, Nadia's father. Ethan's mother, Mrs. Potter, was her grandmother Margaret's maid of honor at the wedding. The Potters and Mrs. Draper [until Margaret moved to Florida] are all patients of the dentist Dr. Gershom, Noah's father. Nadia's mother has relocated from Florida to Epiphany after taking a job as Dr. Gershom's dental hygienist, a job that Margaret arranged the interview for. Ethan's mother, who helps run the family farm, can barely stand to hear the name of Noah's mother, a real estate agent who has sold many homes in *The Farm*, a subdivision that has been carved out of what used to be the Sillington farm.)

2. What experiences in personal background make each Soul able to answer her or his chosen Academic Bowl question easily?

(Noah knows about calligraphy because Tillie Nachman has taught him the skill of calligraphy in return for him helping her to write out the calligraphic invitations to Izzy and Margaret's wedding at Century Village. Nadia knows all about the seaweed-abundant Sargasso Sea because of her involvement in sea turtle walks with her grandfather [and Margaret] and her subsequent fifth-grade report on Florida's sea turtles. Ethan Potter is thoroughly familiar with places in New York State associated with famous American women because his own family is a very old New York one, and several of his female ancestors were associated with the places and women that are part of this Bowl question. Julian comes up with two quite British acronyms based on his experiences of living on a cruise ship for years and his British educational background.)

3. How do Nadia, Noah, Ethan, and Julian become The Souls?  
(At the beginning of the sixth-grade school year, these four are not friends. Nadia is just beginning to adjust to the move from Florida to upstate New York, and she starts off the school year not knowing anyone but Ethan, from their time together in Florida. Ethan is quiet and uncommunicative, a definite loner. Julian is also a newcomer to Epiphany, treated meanly by some of the other kids at school for looking, dressing, and speaking differently. Then Julian gives Nadia, Noah, and Ethan a series of puzzle-clues that turn out to be

an invitation to come to his home, Sillington House, for tea at four o'clock on a Saturday afternoon. The four kids discover mutual interests and by the time they have their second tea, they know they have formed a bond. They mark this felicitous development by giving themselves a name, *The Souls*, which makes them a sort of official secret club.)

4. What reasonable but not fully accurate explanations does Mrs. Olinski give when asked how she selected the members of her Academic Bowl team? How did other teachers select their teams?

(Most often, Mrs. Olinski says the four members of her team have skills that balance one another. Other times, she says she knew these team members would practice hard. Also, they work well together. They understand the rules. They're quick. These are reasonable answers designed to satisfy questions from other teachers and from administrators who keep asking Mrs. Olinski how she chose her team members. Once, Mrs. Olinski tells the district superintendent that she chose the team members based on diversity—tongue-in-cheek, on diverse hair color; less tongue-in-cheek but not at all accurately, on Jew, half-Jew, WASP, and Indian lines. Other teachers chose their team members through mini contests; some of these teachers accuse Mrs. Olinski of being dictatorial in her method of choice.)

#### Questions 5-8 (Interpretive Level)

5. What were Mrs. Olinski's real reasons for selecting Noah, Ethan, Nadia, and Julian for her Academic Bowl team?

(All of the "reasonable" answers Mrs. Olinski gives are true and qualify each of the four students to be on the team, but it is not the whole reason why she chose the team members. She chose ultimately based on a gut feeling, a recognition that Nadia, Noah, Ethan, and Julian have truly become a team whose members will support one another, listen to one another, and cooperate unselfishly—and also take risks when called for, as with Julian's unusual acronym answer and his willingness to challenge the rejection of his answer.)

6. How do each of *The Souls* find their individual identities and come to terms with personal problems in the course of the novel?

(Noah finds camaraderie and gains an understanding of the individuality of the older retired people at Century Village, and he realizes from association with his fellow Souls that knowing facts about things does not mean knowing all about everything. Nadia comes to terms with her parents' divorce and her grandfather's remarriage and integrates herself into life in her new community in upstate New York, so different from her previous Florida life. Through his association with *The Souls*, uncommunicative Ethan feels parts of him that had lain inside him, curled up like the turtle hatchlings, unfolding and emerging at last. For the first time, he can tell jokes, ask questions, respond easily; he has become a social person. Julian begins to make the transition from cruise-ship boy and English boarding-school boy to Indian-American schoolboy, able to move beyond the malice of some into the friendship of others.)

7. What challenges does Mrs. Olinski face in returning to her schoolteaching job? How do *The Souls* help her through this transition?

(Mrs. Olinski finds that sixth-graders have changed during her ten years away from the classroom. Some engage in malice now, rather than mischief. On her first day at school, she is challenged in a snide way by Hamilton Knapp, who says what she has written on the blackboard is not up high enough for him to read. This challenge flusters Mrs. Olinski, who is already nervous about the challenge of returning to teaching, and teaching from a wheelchair. Knapp continues to challenge her authority by writing *cripple* on the board, causing disruption at the performance of Annie, and belching in class. *The Souls* help by responding enthusiastically and sympathetically to Mrs. Olinski as coach of the Academic Bowl team and by encouraging the other sixth-graders to treat the coach as a conquering hero after Bowl contest victories. As the academic year progresses, Mrs. Olinski regains her confidence as a teacher and quells the efforts of Knapp and his pals to disrupt her class and her control. The kindness of *The Souls* has beaten out the meanness of Hamilton Knapp and his sort.)

8. How does her involvement with the sea turtles help Nadia come to terms with her parents' divorce and the resulting changes in her life?

(Nadia is unhappy that her mother has moved to upstate New York, because this means Nadia has had to leave her native Florida for an unfamiliar place. Nadia wonders if her mother's urge to return to her native place is biological, like the sea turtles' urge to return to the beach where they were born to lay their eggs twenty-five years after hatching out. Nadia considers that Margaret made it possible for Nadia's mother to make the move north by setting up the successful job interview with Dr. Gershom in Epiphany; resentfully, Nadia compares Margaret's moving turtles from one nest to another with Margaret moving her grandfather—and maybe her father—to the beach and enabling her mother's move to New York. Then, when the storm washes the hatchlings back toward shore, Nadia recognizes the parallels: The storm in the private lives of herself and her father had also picked them up and set them down in another, strange place. Both are stranded, like the young turtles, and both need help resettling, as the young turtles do. As Dad says, the hatchlings need a lift, from the beach to Marineland and then back to the Sargasso Sea, a "lift between switches" in life—and Nadia and her dad will also, at times, need help between their life switches, especially Nadia's visits back and forth from New York to Florida. The need to visit back and forth from north to south, Nadia also remarks, is like the sea turtles' mature lives, when they swim back and forth from North to South Atlantic. Making these parallels helps Nadia to see her situation as something not wholly unfamiliar, a routine that living beings can adjust to.)

#### Questions 9-11 (Critical Level)

9. What is the meaning of the novel's title?

(In the course of the Saturday afternoon teas at Sillington House, each of *The Souls* develops an altered and improved way of viewing himself/herself, others, and/or his/her personal situation. They cement their bond of friendship on these Saturdays, which enables Ethan to open up and Nadia and Julian to find their places in their new, unfamiliar upstate New York home. Ms. Olinski, too, finds a new view



during her Saturday afternoon teas, developing a sense of calm and acceptance she has not known before.)

- Why does Julian and not Nadia narrate the story about Nadia's dog Ginger acting as Annie's Sandy?  
(In the course of this event, Julian makes an important moral decision—not to exact revenge on the bullies Ham Knapp and Mike Froelich by feeding Mike's dog Arnold the drugged treats. Only Julian knows about the drugging plot, which is actually aimed at Ginger. Nadia is ignorant of what is afoot, so she could not narrate this segment, even though it centers superficially around her beloved dog Ginger. And if Nadia narrated, we would not know about Julian's moral decision.)
- What examples of flashback do you find in this novel?  
(The novel uses a complicated structure of flashback, which can get somewhat confusing. Most of the numbered chapters contain at least one scene at the final Bowl Day championship round, which is the event that all earlier events described in the novel are flashbacks from. In addition to Bowl Day scene(s), the numbered chapters contain various flashbacks about Mrs. Olinski returning to teaching, the choosing of the team, and getting to the final round. The four chapters narrated by one each of the four Souls flash back variously to events the previous summer [for Noah and Nadia], to Julian's arrival at school and the formation of The Souls that autumn [for Ethan], and the holiday events just before the Academic Bowl teams are finalized [for Julian]. Chapter 10 concludes with the Academic Bowl win, and Chapters 11 and 12 move on from there to conclude the novel.)

#### Questions 12-15 (Creative Level)

- Write a series of letters from Ethan to his parents describing Ethan's Florida visit with his grandmother Margaret and new step-grandfather Izzy.
- Create and, with classmates, act out a four o'clock tea at Sillington House that includes the four Souls, Mrs. Olinski, Mr. Singh, and, optionally, other guests.
- Describe the turtle walks or the auditions for *Annie* from Ginger's point of view.
- Pretend you are Julian and write a series of journal entries detailing your difficulties and successes in fitting in to life in Epiphany.

#### ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

##### Art

- The novel comments that Raphael would have chosen Nadia as a model for his cherubs. Create a class display of Raphael's artworks, emphasizing ones that might have used Nadia as a model.
- Create a drawing of one or more of The Souls, or a representation of how each of The Souls would appear in a stage performance of *The View from Saturday*.
- The novel mentions several traditional artistic elements: the sixth graders "stood like caryatids" and "Mrs. Olinski's words floated like a frieze around the room." Explain and illustrate what one or both of these refers to.
- Create an illustration or model of Sillington House, or photograph some houses around your town/city that resemble (in your opinion) Sillington House.

##### History and Social Studies

- Explain the allusion on page 143 of the novel that describes

the calligraphy ink as being "as black as Hecate's soul."

- Research and report on one of the following topics related to New York State and women's history that were a feature of the novel's Academic Bowl: Seneca Falls/Elizabeth Cady Stanton; Homer/Amelia Jenks Bloomer; Rochester/Susan B. Anthony; Auburn/Harriet Tubman.
- Explain the connection of Napoleon Bonaparte with the phrase "to meet one's Waterloo."
- Julian tells Ethan, "Father is [an American] by naturalization. I was born on the high seas. That makes me an American." Create a chart that details the various requirements and qualifications for U.S. citizenship.
- Research and report on the life and accomplishments of one of the Native American leaders that were a feature of the novel's Academic Bowl: Sequoyah, Tecumseh, Osceola, Geronimo.

##### Language Arts

- Read the chapter of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* that describes the Mad Hatter's tea party. What similarities and differences do you find between the Mad Hatter's tea party and The Souls' tea parties?
- At the end of the novel, Mrs. Olinski goes to bed with a grin "like the Cheshire Cat's." Who or what is the Cheshire Cat, and where can you find its original description?
- Noah looks up the meaning of *ironic*. Describe an ironic situation you have experienced.
- Find the story of the encounter between David and Goliath in the Bible, and then write a one-act play based on this story.
- Explain the parallel between the rhyme about Jack Sprat and his wife and Izzy Diamondstein and his wife Margy.
- As a member of a small classroom group, develop a list of acronyms that have become part of the English language. Then compare lists with other classroom groups to draw up a master list.
- E. L. Konigsburg has said about reading when she was young, "I remember always looking for myself in books and never finding either me or my town." What book(s) have you read in which you did find yourself, your family, and/or your town?

##### Mathematics and Geography

- Trace the lifetime travels of a sea turtle from the time of its hatching out on a Florida beach to its return to the beach to lay eggs, including its years of maturing in the Sargasso Sea, living in the Azores as a bottom feeder, and swimming north and south up and down the Atlantic Ocean. Then calculate how many miles a sea turtle usually travels in a given year and throughout its life.
- Map typical travel routes between New York State and Florida. Calculate air mileage and figure out when and how Nadia would become eligible for Frequent Flier bonuses with various airlines, and what monetary advantage Frequent Flier status would bring Nadia.

##### Science

- Create a poster, an illustrated field guide, or a multimedia presentation on the species of sea turtles that hatch out on Florida's beaches.
- The sea turtle hatchlings are driven back to shore by a northeaster. Investigate and explain what the causes and effects of

this type of storm are.

- Using a visual format, explain how tranquilizers and/or laxatives act on the human (or canine) body.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Discuss with classmates the "chicken-or-egg" problem, i.e., "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" Then relate your discussion points to the question of which came first, Nadia and Noah and Julian and Ethan as a team or Nadia and Noah and Julian and Ethan as The Souls?
- Describe for classmates, with visual aids, elements of a traditional wedding in your family's cultural or religious tradition.
- Draw up a job description and list of educational and professional training and licensing requirements for the profession of dentist, dental hygienist, or veterinarian.
- Create an Academic Bowl game for your school with appropriate questions and procedures. Or, find out if your locality/region/state holds Academic Bowl championships that you and your classmates could participate in.
- Serve an English-type tea at 4 p.m. for friends and/or family.
- Investigate the status of an endangered or threatened species in your locality/state. How can you and fellow students get involved in preserving this species?
- Tell what parts of this novel you found most humorous, and how this humor adds to your enjoyment of the novel.
- Nadia makes her first plane trip as an "unaccompanied minor" to Florida for her August visit with her father. Find out what requirements you would have to meet to travel as an "unaccompanied minor" on various airlines.
- Attend a stage performance of the musical *Annie*. Consider putting on a performance of this show at your school.
- Find some bed-and-breakfast inns in your locality and arrange to visit one or some of them to find out about the routines of running a B&B inn.

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

- Retell, in summary, the *View from Saturday* story chronologically, noting which chapter of the novel each event is described in.
- Identify from what point of view each titled chapter and each section of the numbered chapters is told from.
- In the form of a diagram, flow chart, or family tree-style outline, show the interconnections between the novel's various characters.
- E. L. Konigsburg has said that a children's novel should have these essential elements: "A plotline for those readers who need a rope to get from chapter to chapter. Characters to keep the chapters colorful and lively. And a theme for those readers who like to get more than is visible to the naked eye." Explain how these essential elements are present in *The View from Saturday*.

## 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.

- |              |                    |                            |                 |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| a. coolly    | f. sticking out    | k. lingered around         | p. assume again |
| b. polite    | g. small platform  | l. defeat decisively       | q. disturbance  |
| c. not alike | h. intent to hurt  | m. walked leisurely        | r. glowingly    |
| d. skillful  | i. false motive    | n. with good will          | s. quarreling   |
| e. homes     | j. polite behavior | o. of low/moderate quality | t. excellent    |

- \_\_\_ 1. The audience was reminded that this Bowl was for brains, not brawn, and decorum was the order of the day.
- \_\_\_ 2. The commissioner of education of the state of New York smiled benevolently over the audience as he reached for his reading glasses.
- \_\_\_ 3. Fact: Many of the domiciles in Century Village do not have family rooms with desks.
- \_\_\_ 4. Both Dr. Rohmer and Mrs. Olinski paid strict attention to the commissioner, the man at the podium.
- \_\_\_ 5. Nadia was the redhead of Mrs. Olinski's diverse group.
- \_\_\_ 6. Mrs. Olinski knew that Nadia Diamondstein was not only incandescently beautiful but was also a star.
- \_\_\_ 7. For the first day and a half after I arrived, Dad hovered over me like the Goodyear blimp over the Orange Bowl.
- \_\_\_ 8. Ethan, who never said much, had a lot to say about the camera angles and background music and described the star's performance as subtle.
- \_\_\_ 9. Mrs. Margaret Draper had always been a superb teacher and principal.
- \_\_\_ 10. I placed my backpack on the seat next to me, and as nonchalantly as I could, placed my leg over that.
- \_\_\_ 11. Before I could resume my seat-occupied sprawl, the new kid was standing in the aisle next to my seat.
- \_\_\_ 12. Even though Julian seemed to have his eyes focused straight ahead he always managed to stop just short of the protruding feet in the bus aisle.
- \_\_\_ 13. The bickering between Nadia and Noah no longer made me uncomfortable.
- \_\_\_ 14. Had Mrs. Olinski seen me slip backstage? Or did she think that I started that ruckus in the auditorium?
- \_\_\_ 15. This was not mischief. There is a playful quality to mischief. This was malice.
- \_\_\_ 16. Mrs. Olinski thought, when people come to tea, they are courteous. She thought, I believe in courtesy.
- \_\_\_ 17. Mrs. Sharkey had taught the current seventh grade just last year, and in her opinion, when they were very, very good, they were mediocre.
- \_\_\_ 18. No one had expected Mrs. Olinski's team to trounce the other two sixth grades, but they did.
- \_\_\_ 19. Jared took his time and ambled down his row toward the front of the room.
- \_\_\_ 20. The day before the contest for the district championship, Mr. Connor LeDue, the principal of Knightsbridge Middle School, found some pretext to visit Mrs. Olinski.

## 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. Use each name only once.

- |                       |                    |                       |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Nadia Diamondstein | e. Mr. Singh       | h. Mrs. Olinski       |
| b. Julian Singh       | f. Hamilton Knapp  | i. Izzy Diamondstein  |
| c. Noah Gershom       | g. Margaret Draper | j. Allen Diamondstein |
| d. Ethan Potter       |                    |                       |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Sixth-grade teacher who has just returned to work after ten years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Boy from New York who visits his Grandpa Nate and Grandma Sadie in Florida.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Skilled chef who usually wears a blue apron and a white turban.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Red-headed author of a fine report on Florida's sea turtles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Mean-spirited sixth-grade bully.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Senior citizen who is the husband of Margy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Silent boy whose farm family has lived in New York for many generations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Brown-skinned boy who speaks with a British accent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Retired New York elementary school teacher and principal who works to save sea turtles in Florida.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Nervous, hovering father who is recently divorced.

### Part II: Fill-In (20 points)

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

1. Nadia, Justin, Noah, and Ethan give themselves the group name of The \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Nadia relocates with her mother from Florida to \_\_\_\_\_ State.
3. The art of beautiful handwriting is called \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Noah acts as Izzy Diamondstein's \_\_\_\_\_ at Izzy and Margaret's wedding.
5. Nadia's mother has a job working for Noah's father as a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Nadia, Noah, Ethan, and Julian are all in the \_\_\_\_\_ grade at their middle school.
7. Julian tells the Bowl contest moderator that he is of East \_\_\_\_\_ ancestry.
8. On the first day of school, Mrs. Olinski writes the word \_\_\_\_\_ on the board, explaining that it means paralyzed from the waist down.
9. When asked to give two examples of \_\_\_\_\_, Julian responds with "posh" and "tip."
10. Nadia, Noah, Ethan, and Julian compete in the \_\_\_\_\_ Bowl contest as a team.

### Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Underline the choice that correctly completes each of these sentences.

1. Izzy Diamondstein, Margaret Draper, and Noah's grandparents all live in a retirement community called (Century, Pleasant, Sun, Happy) Village.
2. Nadia's dog has a starring role in the stage play (*Lady and the Tramp*, *Oliver!*, *Annie*, *Benji*).
3. Mrs. Olinski became paralyzed as the result of a(n) (diving accident, nearly fatal disease, gunshot wound, automobile accident).
4. Ethan first meets Julian (in their homeroom class, on the school bus, at the theater performance, in Florida).
5. Julian uses the book (*Through the Looking Glass*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, *Treasure Island*) as a clue in his tea-party invitations.
6. Hamilton Knapp plans to disrupt Ginger's stage performance with (loud shouts and clapping, a false fire alarm, drugged doggie treats, a cat).
7. Nadia explains to her father that they must return the turtle hatchlings to the (Sargasso Sea, turtles' beach nest, North Atlantic Ocean, turtles' mother).
8. Margaret Draper is the grandmother of (Julian, Noah, Nadia, Ethan).
9. Nadia visits her father for a month at his apartment home in (Florida, New York, Connecticut, California).
10. During Nadia's and Ethan's summer visits, Izzy and Margaret go on daily (harbor cruises, turtle walks, visits to Disney World, brunch outings).
11. Noah's father is the family (doctor, veterinarian, dentist, lawyer) for Ethan's whole family.
12. Ham Knapp, Michael Froelich, and other boys make life miserable for (Nadia, Noah, Ethan, Julian), the new kid at school.
13. At Izzy and Margaret's wedding, Noah wears a (tuxedo, turban, tuxedo-painted tee shirt, sport coat and tie).
14. Julian and his parents used to live (on a cruise ship, in India, at an oceanside resort, in Texas).
15. Ginger plays the part of (Tramp, Sandy, Arnold, Lassie) on stage.

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. What is Ethan's main character trait before he becomes part of The Souls? How does his being part of The Souls change Ethan in a positive way?
2. Explain why any two of The Souls are able easily to answer the Bowl questions about calligraphy, the North Atlantic Ocean, New York state history/geography, and/or acronyms.
3. How does her involvement with The Souls and the Bowl competition positively affect Mrs. Olinski?

## COMPREHENSION TEST B

### Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each quotation. In the list below, find the character who spoke the words. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the quotation number. Use each name only once.

- |                       |                    |                       |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Nadia Diamondstein | e. Mr. Singh       | h. Mrs. Olinski       |
| b. Julian Singh       | f. Hamilton Knapp  | i. Izzy Diamondstein  |
| c. Noah Gershom       | g. Margaret Draper | j. Allen Diamondstein |
| d. Ethan Potter       |                    |                       |

- \_\_\_\_ 1. "Did I choose you, or did you choose me?"
- \_\_\_\_ 2. "Fact: I was best man at their wedding."
- \_\_\_\_ 3. "Each of The Souls has had a journey, and so have you, Mrs. Olinski."
- \_\_\_\_ 4. "Ginger is a genius."
- \_\_\_\_ 5. "Why do you want to go there to see Mr. Walter Disney's Version of the World when you can see Mother Nature's real thing?"
- \_\_\_\_ 6. "With all due respect, sir, you are wrong."
- \_\_\_\_ 7. "We never carry them to the water. They must walk across their native sand."
- \_\_\_\_ 8. "I can't see what you've written. Could you write a little higher on the blackboard, please?"
- \_\_\_\_ 9. "And there will be times when you or I will need a lift between switches, Nadia."
- \_\_\_\_ 10. "In a pig sty an ass is a ham."

### Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

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

1. On which day do Julian, Nadia, Noah, and Ethan get together for the weekly tea parties?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. In what New York State town do Julian, Nadia, Noah, and Ethan live? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In what U.S. state do Nadia's grandfather, Ethan's grandmother, and Noah's grandparents all live?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What threatened creatures do Izzy, Margaret, Nadia, and Ethan save on the beach? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What place does Noah describe as "like a theme park for old people"? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What family event causes Nadia and her mother to move to New York State? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What white head covering does Julian's father always wear? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What word does someone write on the board in Mrs. Olinski's homeroom to replace the word paraplegic?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What is Noah's father's profession? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the name of Nadia's dog? \_\_\_\_\_

### Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Underline the choice that correctly completes each of these sentences.

1. The Souls compete against (Epiphany, Albany, Maxwell, Harris) Middle School for the Bowl championship.
2. Julian's father operates a bed-and-breakfast inn called (The Farmhouse, Sillington House, Century Inn, The Tea House).
3. Mike Froelich's dog (Sandy, Arnold, Ginger, Alice) is the understudy for the canine role in the stage play *Annie*.
4. Noah uses his grandparents' gift of a (mountain bike, backpack, skateboard, red wagon) to carry things around while preparing for the wedding.
5. Ethan plans on a career (in theater design, of farming, as a dentist, as an actor).
6. Humpty Dumpty is a character in the book (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Annie*, *Through the Looking Glass*, *Mother Goose Tales*).
7. Julian is skilled at (doing magic tricks, snake charming, opera singing, gourmet cooking).
8. Mrs. Olinski rejects Hamilton Knapp as a member of the Bowl team because he is (stupid, timid, gifted, mean).
9. Nadia's mother works for (Mr. Singh, Ethan's mother, Mrs. Knapp, Noah's father).
10. While he is visiting his grandparents, Noah learns the art of (origami, calligraphy, sculpture, ventriloquism.).
11. Nadia has beautiful (red, platinum blonde, ink-black, brunette) hair.
12. Mrs. Olinski learns to relax, with herself and other people, during (the Bowl contests, homeroom classes, tea time, the stage play).
13. Nadia tells Ethan she is half (Indian, Jewish, Catholic, Hispanic) and half Protestant.
14. Margaret Draper Diamondstein is a good friend of (Noah's mother, Nadia's mother, Ethan's grandmother, Mrs. Olinski).
15. According to Julian, tea time is always at (1 p.m., noon, 4 p.m., 10 a.m.).

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. What problems does Nadia have with her family during her summer visit in Florida? How does she resolve these problems?
2. In what ways does Noah participate in the wedding plans and ceremony of Izzy and Margaret?
3. What are the interrelations among Nadia, Noah, and Ethan and various members of their families?

## ANSWER KEY

### VOCABULARY TEST

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

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Matching (20 points)

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

#### Part II: Fill-In (20 points)

- |                     |               |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Souls            | 6. sixth      |
| 2. New York         | 7. Indian     |
| 3. calligraphy      | 8. paraplegic |
| 4. best man         | 9. acronyms   |
| 5. dental hygienist | 10. Academic  |

#### Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- |                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Century                      | 9. Florida                   |
| 2. <i>Annie</i>                 | 10. turtle walks             |
| 3. automobile accident          | 11. dentist                  |
| 4. on the school bus            | 12. Julian                   |
| 5. <i>Alice's Adventures...</i> | 13. tuxedo-painted tee shirt |
| 6. drugged doggie treats        | 14. on a cruise ship         |
| 7. Sargasso Sea                 | 15. Sandy                    |
| 8. Ethan                        |                              |

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

Answers will vary.

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Matching (20 points)

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

#### Part II: Short Answer (20 points)

- |                    |            |
|--------------------|------------|
| 1. Saturday        | 6. divorce |
| 2. Epiphany        | 7. turban  |
| 3. Florida         | 8. cripple |
| 4. sea turtles     | 9. dentist |
| 5. Century Village | 10. Ginger |

#### Part III: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- |                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Maxwell                          | 9. Noah's father |
| 2. Sillington House                 | 10. calligraphy  |
| 3. Arnold                           | 11. red          |
| 4. red wagon                        | 12. tea time     |
| 5. in theater design                | 13. Jewish       |
| 6. <i>Through the Looking Glass</i> | 14. Mrs. Olinski |
| 7. doing magic tricks               | 15. 4 p.m.       |
| 8. mean                             |                  |

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

Answers will vary.



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