



# Savvy

By Ingrid Law

## Teacher's Guide

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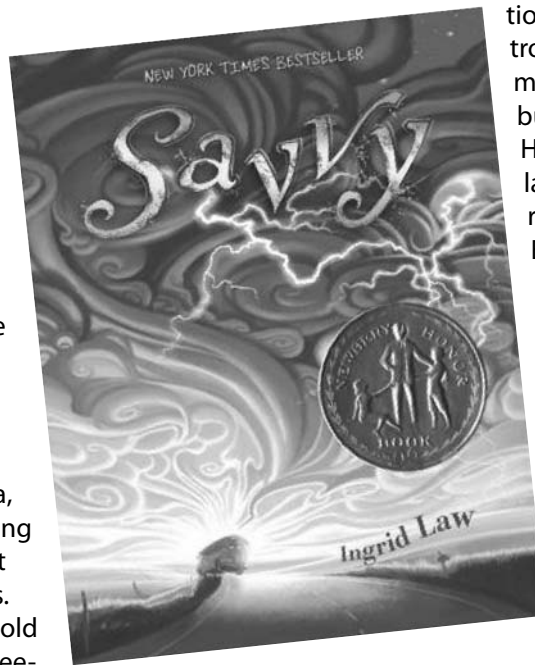
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## Synopsis

### Chapter 1

We are introduced to the Beaumont family by Mississippi "Mibs" Beaumont, who will turn thirteen on Saturday. It is a special birthday in her magical family because it is when everyone gets a "savvy"—a unique magical power. The savvy is always a surprise, and it varies according to the personality of the recipient. Grandpa Bomba can "stretch" land and make new places (he claims to have been responsible for Idaho); Mibs' fourteen-year-old brother, Fish, creates storms, which blow up in response to his feelings; her oldest brother, Rusty, controls electricity; and her mother, Momma, has the gift of perfection—everything she does turns out perfectly, so that even her failures are perfect failures. Mibs also has a gloomy seven-year-old brother, Samson, and a cheerful three-year-old sister, Gypsy. The family lives in the middle of the country, on a swath of land directly between Kansas and Nebraska; the family calls it various "Nebransas" or "Kansaska," and it was created by Grandpa Bomba when the family moved inland after Fish turned thirteen and received his savvy, which included the ability to spontaneously create hurricanes.

Thursday night, most of the family is gathered around the dinner table when Momma gets a call. Poppa—who has a long highway commute—has been in a terrible car accident and is in a coma at a hospital in Salina, Kansas. Though Grandpa Bomba tries to reassure, everyone is terribly worried: Fish sets off a freak storm, and Rusty inadvertently blows out every light bulb in the house. Mibs feels angry with Poppa for ruining her special birthday, then very guilty for having such thoughts.



### Chapter 2

That night, Mibs lies in bed listening as the rain hits the window and the earth rumbles—manifestations of Fish's and Grandpa Bomba's savvies, respectively. Momma and Rusty are going to Salina in the morning. Mibs wishes she could go too, but she must stay home and complete her last day of middle school. After this weekend, she will be homeschooled like Fish and Rusty, because the combination of adolescence and a not-yet-controlled savvy might endanger schoolmates. Mibs and Samson take a school bus on the fifteen-mile trip to school in Hebron, Nebraska. On the bus and later at school, Mibs is ridiculed by the resident mean girls, Ashley Bing and Emma Flint; Mibs fantasizes about a savvy that will allow her to turn the two into frogs. Back at home, she and Samson are dismayed to discover that Miss Rosemary, the busybody preacher's wife from their church in Hebron, has descended on their home to provide a "mother in the house" for them during their family crisis. Warned by Fish, Mibs and Samson try to sneak in the back to avoid Miss Rosemary, only to find her in the kitchen cleaning off dusty mason jars—jars that shouldn't be touched by anyone who isn't family.

### Chapter 3

Mibs and Samson are further dismayed to learn that Miss Rosemary's children, Bobbi and Will, are waiting in the living room, where Will is examining Samson's dead turtle in its aquarium. Bobbi is a typically snotty sixteen-year-old girl who Mibs suspects only came along in hopes of seeing Rusty. Will is fourteen, and seems to genuinely like the Beaumonts—especially Mibs. Fish has never liked him, but Mibs secretly thinks he seems nice despite being "laced up a bit tight." Will attempts to comfort Mibs with assurances that they are praying for her father and that Miss Rosemary has brought a meat loaf. Mibs feels guilty again, because it hadn't yet occurred to her to pray for her father.

**Chapter 4**

At dinner that night, Miss Rosemary drops a bombshell: she is planning a birthday party for Mibs tomorrow at the church. Mibs tries to forestall this disaster by claiming to be friendless (a statement Will protests), but Miss Rosemary will not be thwarted; she will burn up the phone lines in town and “use her connections”—pointing to heaven—to get a large turnout. As the family sits in horrified silence, Mibs remembers Rusty’s thirteenth birthday: after a day of “canning” sounds for their now-deceased Grandma Dollop (whose savvy was to be able to pull radio waves from the air and trap them in mason jars, the same jars Miss Rosemary was dusting earlier), the family witnessed Rusty’s coming into his savvy, when, with a shower of blue sparks, he fell to his knees and produced a blackout that plunged all the houses for miles around into darkness. Back in the present, Mibs falls asleep that night praying fervently that nobody will come to her party.

**Chapter 5**

Mibs wakes at dawn on her birthday morning. She checks herself for signs of her savvy, but feels no different. The soundly sleeping Gypsy pops awake the minute Mibs’ feet hit the floor, and Mibs has to tuck her in and persuade her to go back to sleep. Downstairs, Mibs is in the living room alone, watching the sun rise and eating a bowl of cereal, when she hears a thumping noise: it is the turtle, quite alive and attempting to escape its aquarium. Thinking about the events of the morning so far, Mibs begins to believe her savvy might involve waking things up. Later, on the way to the church in Miss Rosemary’s van, Mibs wears the party dress her Poppa bought for her special birthday. Samson accompanies her, although he would clearly prefer to be home with his newly active turtle. Fish and Grandpa are visibly worried (Gypsy is unconcerned), but Mibs is thinking about her beloved Poppa and forming a plan: somehow, she must get to Salina and wake Poppa up. At the church, the Beaumonts are aghast to see that Miss Rosemary’s “connections” have come through: there is a huge turnout for the party. Samson takes one look at the crowd and goes off somewhere to hide, which is his typical response to crowds. Mibs tries to reassure Fish that she already knows what her savvy is and that it isn’t dangerous, but they are called inside before she can explain.

**Chapter 6**

The church is swarming with people. The two mean girls embarrass Mibs by calling her a rude nickname in front of Will; a gust of angry wind from Fish sends them

scurrying away, however. Will takes Mibs by the hand and takes her through the church, pausing to peek into the church office, where the pastor is dressing down a Bible deliveryman. In the party room, Will gives Mibs a present: a pen and pencil set. They finally arrive at the kitchen, where Bobbi and her teenage friends are preparing refreshments and giggling, hoping the handsome Rocket will appear. Suddenly, Mibs hears a noise in her head. She stumbles, knocking over a tray of sandwiches, and as a cursing Bobbi stoops to pick up the mess, Mibs sees that Bobbi has an angel tattooed on the base of her spine. (Mibs is sure Miss Rosemary would be furious if she knew.) To Mibs’ shock, the angel looks her in the eye and informs her that Bobbi is “really very lonely, you know.” Mibs faints.

**Chapter 7**

Mibs wakes up on the couch in the pastor’s office, where the pastor is browbeating the hapless Bible deliveryman for bringing him pink Bibles; Fish is trying to prevent Miss Rosemary from calling a doctor for Mibs; and Grandpa is dozing in a chair. In her head, Mibs hears the voices of two women arguing shrilly over the Bible deliveryman, whom they consider “slow-witted,” but she can’t see the arguers. Amid the chaos, Mibs spots Will looking in the door for her; he is genuinely concerned. Unnoticed by the others, Will and Mibs make their escape.

**Chapter 8**

Will follows Mibs outside. Mibs is determined to get to Salina, and she brushes off Will’s attempts to dissuade her. In the parking lot, Mibs spots the deliveryman’s vehicle—an old, pink school bus with the words “Heartland Bible Supply” in peeling paint on the side, along with the company’s location: Salina, Kansas. Mibs decides this is divine providence, and starts to get on the bus. Will is determined to go with her as her protector. They encounter Bobbi near the bus as well; she is leaning sullenly, chewing gum. Mibs is surprised to discover that she does look very lonely. Bobbi decides she must accompany the younger pair. Though she appears hostile and indifferent, the voice from Bobbi’s tattoo tells Mibs that the teenager *does* care and is worried about the consequences of their actions. Finally, Fish appears, full of angry worry for Mibs and creating a storm in his wake. The four scoot to the back of the bus and hide, narrowly escaping detection by both the deliveryman and Miss Rosemary. There, they discover Samson, who has spent the afternoon napping under the deliveryman’s cot. As they drive away from the church, Mibs realizes that the others are thinking what

*she's* thinking—that she has involved them in an impulsive, poorly thought-out plan that will get them in a lot of trouble. Then, the bus pulls out on the highway—and turns north instead of south. They realize that they are headed in the wrong direction, away from Salina.

### Chapter 9

The stowaways sit quietly in the back of the bus and ponder what to do. Mibs once again hears the voices of the arguing women, Carlene and Rhonda, this time drifting from the front of the bus; she tries to tell herself that this is an auditory hallucination caused by stress. After a while, a bored Bobbi kicks Fish off the end of the cot as a joke, precipitating an angry storm in which papers are blown all around. However, Samson is able to calm Fish with just a touch of his hand. As Will and Bobbi stare at the Beaumont siblings, the bus stops, and the driver approaches.

### Chapter 10

The deliveryman pushes up his sleeves, and Mibs finally learns the source of the squabbling voices: the man's arms are tattooed with the names of the women in his life—his girlfriend, Carlene, and his mother, Rhonda. Mibs pleads with the man, Lester, to let them ride with him back to Salina, and Carlene and Rhonda accurately predict that Lester will show his lack of “backbone” by caving in to the kids' request.

### Chapter 11

Lester Swan turns out to be an awkward, sweet-natured man who is hungry for company. He presses the children to ride up front with him. They are upset to learn that he has several more stops to make and won't return to Salina until tomorrow at the earliest. At a sales stop in tiny Bee, Nebraska, Mibs spies an abandoned house with a porch swing, prompting memories of her family: her Momma's wisdom about life, her Poppa's joyfulness and promises to one day build the family a swing. Will follows her. He admits that he likes her, and has always known there was something unusual about her and her family, a quality he appreciates. Goaded by this statement, she asks him why he is called “Will Junior” when the preacher's name isn't “Will Senior.” He smiles and tells her she isn't the only one with secrets. He once again hands her his birthday present, which he had retrieved when she discarded it. This time, she opens it, revealing a fancy pen set. Since the wrapping paper has blown away in the wind, Will offers his hand on which to test the pen. She draws a face—a smiling sun. She is horrified when, a moment later, it opens its eyes and clears its throat.

### Chapter 12

Mibs bolts from the house, back toward the bus, pursued by Will with his makeshift tattoo and its chants of “Will's got a secret! ... Want to know the secret?” Fish takes in the scene and decides to punch Will in the eye first and ask questions later. A free-for-all ensues, involving Fish, Will, Bobbi, and a Fish-generated wind storm that breaks windows out of the bus. Finally, Fish heeds Mibs' sobbing pleas to wash the ink from Will's hand; he spits on Will's hand and rubs the ink off, to the relief of Mibs and the disgust of everyone else. As the sun sets, Mibs sinks down in exhaustion, and Rhonda and Carlene resume their carping about Lester.

### Chapter 13

For the first time since the accident, Mibs cries, anguished about Poppa and desperate to be relieved of her ability to hear tattoos talk. In fact, she can't stop crying, until Samson walks over and gently lays his hand on her arm, calming her down. Mibs wonders if Samson is has received his savvy early, or if his calming quality is merely the “ordinary sort of human magic” that comes from caring for others. Bobbi rebuffs Lester's request that she “tend to” the others' minor injuries with the bus first aid kit, so Mibs does it instead. She makes a mistake, responding to Bobbi's wondering (heard through her tattoo) if Mibs is a “freak.” As Mibs administers an ice pack to Will, he assures her that he isn't angry with her and doesn't think she's a freak. He begs her to tell him how she read Bobbi's mind and how Fish controlled the weather. He is eager to know the family's secrets.

### Chapter 14

Mibs ponders what makes her family so special. She remembers early teachings from Grandpa Bomba and her Momma that a savvy is merely an inheritance, a special gift. Many people have savvies without realizing it—such as the ability to grow the best sweet corn or sell anything to anybody. The difference with Mibs' mother's family is that they have a name for their gift, and a fairly predictable time of life when it kicks in. Mibs knows this, but out of loyalty to her family, she tells Will what she has been trained to say—that the Beaumonts are like everybody else. She knows family rules preclude telling any outsider unless they have to know (such as when a couple are contemplating marriage).

Mibs recalls stories of how her father and mother met, when Poppa was on shore leave from the Navy and saw Momma at a street carnival. He proposed to her on the spot, undaunted even when Momma's sister, Aunt Dinah—whose savvy is the ability to make anyone do

what she says—told him to shove off. Poppa is notable for his unshakeable persistence. True to form, he didn't give up on Momma, and was undaunted when he learned of her family's unusual nature. On the day he and Momma told Momma's parents they planned to marry, Grandpa Bomba created six acres of land for the couple to build a house on, and Grandma Dollop "canned" a special love song, which Momma and Poppa keep on the mantle and still listen to sometimes. Mibs' reverie is interrupted when Lester slams on the brakes and strides purposefully off the bus.

**Chapter 15**

The kindly Lester assists a woman whose car is stopped by the side of the road. Miss Lill Kitley is a waitress at a diner in Emerald, and Lester is happy to offer her a lift, to the irritation of Rhonda and Carlene. Lill is friendly and intelligent; she's sympathetic upon hearing about Poppa, even when the kids tell her a story she doesn't quite buy about how they came to be riding with Lester. Nevertheless, she keeps her opinions to herself.

**Chapter 16**

Lill, "a lighthearted lady with no tattoos," is an instant hit, even with Bobbi. Lester likes Lill too, and nearly gets into several accidents because he's watching her instead of the road. Lill is very kind to the kids—"almost like a momma"—and listens as Mibs spills out her stories, serving as a sounding board and offering insight into the source of Bobbi's attitude ("sixteen can feel older and scarier than forty-two"). She also instantly recognizes that Will likes Mibs, and reassures Mibs that she is normal. Mibs thinks Lill might be an angel.

**Chapter 17**

Lill offers to get the hungry children dinner at the Emerald Truck Stop Diner and Lounge if she still has a job when she arrives—although she may not, since she has "a talent for being late." When they arrive, Lester parks the bus in back of the restaurant, near dumpsters and alleys. As they troop around to the entrance, Will and Mibs, in the rear of the procession, spot a ragged homeless man lying motionless behind a dumpster. Mibs tries to wake him up, but is unsuccessful; the man wants to die, and all she hears from him is a lament from his faded eagle tattoo, insisting that he's "seen too much" and just wants to "fade away." In that moment, she realizes with a shock that the turtle's revival and other "signs" were merely coincidences, and that her gift is the ability to hear people's thoughts through ink on skin. Convinced that her savvy is worthless to help Poppa, she feels despairing.

**Chapter 18**

Will drags Mibs away from the homeless man and into the diner, which is packed with bikers and other tattooed people. She is nearly overcome by the racket from everyone's thoughts. Lill takes Mibs back to the "Employees Only" break room/storage area, accompanied by Fish and Will. The tattoo-voices recede to a dull roar. After the others go back up front to get food, Fish confronts Mibs, who demonstrates her savvy to him. Bobbi interrupts them, and overhears Fish as he observes that Mibs can read his mind.

**Chapter 19**

Bobbi's suspicions are confirmed; she excitedly runs back to the dining area to tell Will, much to Fish's chagrin. However, Fish and Mibs soon have bigger worries: an Amber Alert bulletin has flashed on the small black-and-white television in the break room, and they realize that authorities are searching for their group. They are in big trouble.

Just then, Ozzie, the blowhard manager of the diner, bursts in through the emergency door. He angrily pushes them out of the break room, ignoring their protests that they are there legitimately. They all return to the front of the store, where Ozzie makes a big production of firing Lill in the most humiliating way possible, throwing a wad of bills from the register at her as her final pay while the diner's patrons watch. In that moment, Lester develops a backbone, defending Lill while Samson, who has been hiding beneath the register, pops out and bites Ozzie on the leg. A struggle ensues as the older kids prevent Ozzie from attacking Samson with a pie knife. Lill hustles the kids out the back, instructing them to grab their food baskets on the way out; and regretting that Samson will not get the banana cream pie he's been craving. However, she's wrong—Lester, in another show of gumption, strides back into the dining room and returns triumphantly with a fresh pie, which they take with them on the bus.

**Chapter 20**

As the group depart, Mibs leaves the homeless man her burger basket and the purple flower from her special party dress, to show him someone cares; she is beginning to realize that, although her savvy isn't what she expected, she can still use what it tells her to make a difference. Will, Bobbi, Mibs, and Fish hang back in the parking lot while the others board. Mibs is visibly distressed when Bobbi taunts her mentally, and Fish retaliates by whipping up a storm. Now Will and Bobby know

their secrets Mibs realizes. This doesn't bother her as much as she expected it to.

### Chapter 21

As Mibs remembers Momma's teachings on the difficulties of learning to "scumble"—control—a savvy, Fish suddenly demonstrates his scumbling ability for the first time when he uses a controlled burst of wind to divert a flying piece of debris before it can hit the Meeks siblings. Mibs is relieved, Fish is thrilled, Bobbi is dazed, and Will pronounces the display "excellent." Lester attributes the sudden blow-up to their being in "twister country." Later, as they're driving, Lester frets about the possibility of losing his bus, and Lill demands to know what's going on with the kids.

### Chapter 22

The kids tell Lill the whole story while Bobbi's tattoo sings "we're dead, we're dead," over and over. Lill decides they will continue east to Lincoln, get a hotel, and call the parents to assure them the kids will get to Salina in the morning. Mibs ponders this decision. Although she wants to go to Salina, she feels responsible for causing trouble for Lester and Lill, and realizes she'll have to wait. It is clear that Lester and Lill have eyes for each other. The kids promise to call home at the hotel, but Mibs crosses her fingers behind her back; they all realize that they can't really call home yet. With some of her diner pay, Lill rents rooms for everyone at the Lincoln Sleepy Ten in Lincoln, Nebraska.

### Chapter 23

At the Sleepy Ten, the group has two adjacent rooms, one for the boys, one for the girls and Lill; Lester will sleep on the bus. Samson finds a hiding place, as is his wont. Relying on the hotel's thick walls and Bobbi's acting skill, Mibs devises a plan to trick Lill into thinking they've called home. Although she feels guilty for lying, she reasons that if they can "lie low" until they get to Salina, they have a chance of keeping Lester and Lill anonymous, thus preventing them from getting in trouble. After Lill's phone conversation with "Mrs. Meeks" (perfectly impersonated by Bobbi from the next room), Bobbi looks smug, Lill is visibly relieved, and Mibs feels extremely guilty.

### Chapter 24

A relieved Lill asks the kids if they want to accompany her to the nearby Mega Mega Mart to buy supplies, but they all decline, realizing that people are still searching for them. After she leaves, they turn on the television to see the Amber Alert flashing across the screen again.

Will and Bobbi are both worried about being found by their big brother, the Kansas state trooper who is "a little protective." The reporter relays that the father of some of the children is still unconscious and in critical condition after being in a ten-car pileup outside Salina. This news fills Mibs with anguish; she is surprised to hear Bobbi (through her tattoo), assuring her that "it will be all right." Everyone agrees to keep the TV off, and Bobbi unplugs it for good measure.

Lill returns in a festive mood; she has spent all her remaining diner money on things for the kids, including candy, junk food, toys, reading material, toiletries, underwear, and swimsuits so they can swim in the motel pool. Lill sends them to the pool, while she prepares to go to the bus and help Lester tape up his broken windows, carrying with her a new necktie she's purchased for him as a gift.

### Chapter 25

Mibs is uncharacteristically shy in her new swimming suit; she realizes uncomfortably that she's growing up. In the pool, Will sneaks a kiss, which is interrupted by a water funnel sent by Fish. Instead of getting mad, Will splashes Fish back. The girls watch the ensuing friendly water fight while having their first-ever "grown-up" conversation. Mibs explains the connection between thoughts and tattoos; she also realizes she can no longer hear Bobbi, since the angel tattoo was a temporary one that has washed off in the pool.

### Chapter 26

At night, while everyone sleeps, Mibs thinks about her life. She ponders Lill's observation that "you never can tell when a bad thing might make a good thing happen." Before Poppa's accident, the worst thing that had ever happened to Mibs was Grandma Dollop's death; she remembers the funeral. Mibs also begins to realize that while running *toward* Poppa, she has been running *away* from growing up.

The kids sleep until 9 a.m., then eat waffles from the motel's breakfast bar. They head on the bus toward Lester's next stop in Wymore. Lill and Lester are now an item. Mibs thinks about how hard it is to hear one's own voice over the voices of others. She notices that whenever Lill looks at Lester, the voices of Rhonda and Carlene fade.

### Chapter 27

Lill has been coaching Lester on how to act like a businessman and get sales. He makes his stop in Wymore,

looking spiffy in his new necktie and wearing a new confidence. When he returns, he is exultant: he has sold all his Bibles. He and Lill share a passionate kiss; the kids are embarrassed but happy for the adults. The Beaumonts kids are dismayed to learn that there will be one more stop, for Lester to pay a woman for the Bibles. Will sits very close to Mibs, touching knees. With newfound courage, Mibs tells him she likes him but is “not ready to be kissing ... yet.” In response, Will asks for the birthday pen. Mibs thinks he is rejecting her, until she hears a voice in her head telling her “I can wait.” She looks up to see Will has drawn a smiling sun on his palm. Out loud, he tells her not to worry.

**Chapter 28**

The bus heads into Kansas, toward Turtle Creek Lake. Fish is anxious at the approach of water, fearing a repeat of his thirteenth birthday hurricane, but Mibs reassures him that he can keep his savvy scumbled. Lester reveals that he is visiting Carlene, whom he must pay for the Bibles; meanwhile, the voices of Rhonda and Carlene heap abuse on Lester. Mibs has realized she can hear them because Lester has internalized them. Shocked that he is visiting his abuser, Mibs tells Lester that Carlene got rid of his dog (an admission she heard through the tattoo); Mibs asks Lester why he listens to Carlene and Rhonda. Although surprised by Mibs’ knowledge, Lester admits she’s right. Spurred to action, Lester tells Lill that after he settles up with Carlene, he’s Lill’s—if she’ll have him. She accepts. Mibs hears Lester think, “Then I am a happy man”—for the first time, in his own voice.

**Chapter 29**

They arrive at the Turtle Terrace Trailer Park, home of the hideous Carlene, a “big woman in a little woman’s body”—scrawny and bony on the outside, pure dragon on the inside. She is sitting outside in a lawn chair, smoking and reading the newspaper, decked out in a robe, pink lipstick, and pink-painted toenails. Lester wants everyone to stay in the bus while he deals with her, but Samson has to use the restroom, so Bobbi offers to accompany him inside Carlene’s trailer; the other kids, worried for Bobbi and Samson, follow them inside. While Carlene stands outside berating Lester, the kids take turns in the trailer’s bathroom. Samson tries to hide, but Mibs grabs him before he can disappear. Meanwhile, Lester and Carlene have entered the trailer, and Carlene is throwing things at Lester, who she says hasn’t brought her enough money. Lester finally summons the inner strength to stand up to Carlene, much to her surprise; however, she quickly rallies, recognizing

the kids and dialing 911 to get Lester in trouble. Lester and the kids run from the house and drive off. Mibs feels responsible for Lester and Lill’s new troubles. They have already turned onto the highway when Mibs realizes she can’t find Samson.

**Chapter 30**

After a search, they realize Samson must have hidden at Carlene’s. Lester at first refuses to turn around. Desperate, the kids tell Lill the whole truth, including the part about the Amber Alert. She insists that Lester go back to Carlene’s; they must do the right thing, she tells him, despite the personal consequences. Sirens are wailing in the distance as they arrive. Wasting no time, they pour into the trailer. Carlene won’t reveal Samson’s whereabouts, so an angry Fish gives her a blast of wind that sends her into the laundry basket.

**Chapter 31**

With her birthday pen, Mibs draws a face on Carlene’s foot, learning that Samson climbed into a panel that conceals a storage closet and was trapped when Carlene hooked the latch. Mibs then hears Samson’s tattoo-voice repeating, “I’m in the wall.” Mibs frees Samson, who has been drawing on himself in the dark. At that moment, the police break down the trailer door and pandemonium ensues.

**Chapter 32**

Police and rescue workers swarm the house as neighbors gather to enjoy the spectacle. The police take the three adults outside. Meanwhile, inside the trailer, paramedics check the kids, photograph injuries (Will’s black eye and Fish’s scratched face, from their earlier scuffle), and administer blankets and water; social services workers hover nearby. Mibs tries to explain the situation and take responsibility for the whole thing, but no one seems to be really listening, and she worries that Lill and Lester will go to jail. Finally, Kansas state troopers arrive, including Officer Bill Meeks, purportedly Bobbi and Will’s older brother. Mibs watches Bill, giddy with relief at finding Bobbi and Will safe, and realizes that he is Will’s *father*, not his brother; Will is Miss Rosemary’s grandson, and Bobbi is technically his aunt. Instinctively recognizing Bill as a sympathetic adult, Mibs begins to tell her story—then bursts into tears.

**Chapter 33**

As a sobbing Mibs tells her story, Bill sees Will take Mibs’ hand and realizes Will’s reason for going along. Afterward, he admonishes the kids for causing so much trouble and worry, but also assures him that Lill and

Lester aren't going to face charges. Mibs is overjoyed. Bill makes a phone call and learns that Poppa's condition has not improved. Over the protests of the case-worker, Bill arranges to accompany the kids and the Bible bus to the hospital in Salina.

#### Chapter 34

They drive the sixty mile to Salina in silence, while the Beaumont kids anxiously ponder Bill Meeks' statement that Poppa "needs his family around him now." Once in Salina, they observe cleanup crews replacing blown-out street lights, evidence of Rocket's upset. Mibs hopes he's been able to control his savvy around the life-saving equipment in the hospital. At the hospital, Miss Rosemary and Pastor Meeks have arrived with Grandpa Bomba and Gypsy; the Meekses struggle to maintain their composure, vacillating between anger and intense relief. Grandpa, clutching an old mason jar, is crying. Momma admits that her decision to leave Fish, Mibs, and Samson might have been a "perfectly terrible mistake." Her face falls when Samson asks about Poppa. Everyone says goodbye; then Lester, Lill, and the Meeks family depart, leaving the Beaumonts at the hospital.

#### Chapter 35

The quiet ride on the elevator to the critical care unit is full of tension. The doctors have told Momma that Poppa might not wake up at all. Rocket and Momma wonder about Mibs' savvy. Outside Poppa's room, Fish keeps his savvy under control, with only a few raindrops by the nurse's station to show his strain. Rocket insists to Momma that it is safe for him to go in the room now.

#### Chapter 36

A battered, bandaged Poppa is hooked up to tubes and monitors. Mibs' heart falls. Grandpa unscrews the Mason jar's lid to play Momma and Poppa's never-ending love song. Fish reminds Mibs about Poppa's mermaid tattoo, from when he was in the Navy. She realizes she could hear the homeless man at the diner even though he was unconscious. However, when she turns Poppa's arm over and touches the tattoo, she hears only silence. Praying for a miracle, Mibs talks desperately into Poppa's ear. She tells him he *does* have a savvy after all: he never gives up. Suddenly, she hears a faint voice echoing her words. As it gets stronger, she hears Poppa's inner voice saying, "I never give up." Rocket, who doesn't understand what's going on, becomes upset, and Papa's monitors go berserk. As everyone tries to pull Mibs away from Poppa, she keeps talking in his ear, and his inner voice becomes stronger. Finally, to everyone's surprise and joy, Poppa's fingers twitch, and

he opens his eyes. Mibs knows everything will be all right now.

#### Chapter 37

It is Mibs' fourteenth birthday a year later—a beautiful spring day. Momma is inside baking a cake, and Poppa is on the porch swing with Mibs. Poppa's recovery has been slow and he'll never be exactly the same as before the accident, but he's "still Poppa." He talks to Mibs through Miss Mermaid. Rocket, now eighteen, is getting ready to leave home: he will go to live with his aunt and uncle on their ranch in Wyoming, where his electrical savvy won't cause so many problems. Will and Mibs are now an item, as are Bobbi and Rocket; the Meeks kids are coming for the party, and Bobbi is planning to tell Rocket goodbye before he leaves. Although Mibs is still home-schooled, she feels ready to face the world again. Mibs also knows a secret—Momma thinks she's pregnant, information Mibs learned once when Momma wrote on her hand. Mibs wishes her savvy worked in reverse, so she could draw a face on herself and let everyone know how happy she is. She sees peaceful years ahead—at least until Samson turns thirteen!

### Timeline of the Action

<b>4 years ago</b>	On Rocket Beaumont's 13th birthday, his new electrical savvy causes a widespread power outage.
<b>1 year ago</b>	On Fish Beaumont's 13th birthday, his weather savvy causes a hurricane and prompts a move by the Beaumont family to the Great Plains, away from water.
<b>Thursday</b>	Two days before Mibs Beaumont's 13th birthday, Poppa is critically injured in a car accident outside Salina, Kansas; he is in a coma in the hospital there.
<b>Friday</b>	Momma and Rocket leave in the morning for Salina Hope Hospital, leaving Fish, Samson, Mibs, baby Gypsy, and Grandpa Bomba at home. Miss Rosemary Meeks, the pastor's wife, descends on the Beaumont home with her two children, Bobbi and Will Junior.
<b>Saturday morning</b>	Gypsy wakes up the minute Mibs passes, and Samson's "dead" turtle comes out of hibernation when Mibs enters

the room. Mibs begins to believe her savvy might be able to wake Poppa.

**Saturday, after lunch** At her 13th birthday party at the church in Hebron, Nebraska, Mibs discovers she can hear people's thoughts through their tattoos. Will Junior gives Mibs a present: a pen-and-pencil set.

**Saturday afternoon** After a series of party disasters, Mibs stows away on a converted school bus belonging to a traveling Bible salesman based in Salina, Kansas. To her dismay, Will Junior, Bobbi, Fish, and Samson all accompany her.

**Shortly after** The stowaways discover the salesman's route is leading them away from Salina. However, Lester, the salesman, agrees to take them to Salina.

**On the road** Lester picks up Lill, a kind-hearted truck-stop waitress whose car has broken down on the way to work.

**At the Emerald Truck Stop** Mibs realizes she can't revive Poppa after a sad encounter with a homeless man outside the diner. Inside, the kids realize there's an Amber Alert out for them, and Lill is fired by Ozzie.

**Outside the truck stop** Bobbi and Will start to realize what Fish and Mibs' savvies are; Fish unleashes a wind storm, but discovers the ability to "scumble," or control, his savvy.

**At the Lincoln Sleepy Ten** Lill uses her final waitressing pay to rent rooms for the kids and buy them supplies at the Mega Mega Mart. The kids trick Lill into believing they've called Miss Rosemary. Later, in the swimming pool, Will tries to kiss Mibs. The older four kids are becoming friends.

**Sunday In Wymore, Neb.** Lester has a sales triumph, and he and Lill pledge their devotion.

**In Turtle Creek, Kansas** Lester stops to break up with the evil Carlene and to pay her money he owes her. She tries to detain Samson, and

turns the kids in to the police. Will reunites with his real father, a Kansas state trooper.

**Later at Carlene's** After hearing Mibs' story, Will's father, Officer Bill Meeks, gives the Bible bus a police escort so the Beaumont kids can reunite with their parents in Salina.

**At the hospital** The Meeks children go home with their parents/grandparents. Lester and Lill, relieved they won't be charged, leave as well. Fish and Mibs reunite with Momma and the rest of the family.

**In Poppa's room** The family despairs as Poppa remains in a coma; however, Mibs remembers Poppa's "savvy" of never giving up. She insistently reminds him until she hears his voice through his mermaid tattoo. Finally, Poppa wakes up.

**Mibs' 14th birthday** A year later, Poppa is home and "still Poppa," though there is permanent damage from the accident. Mibs is happy, the family is content, and the Meeks children are now good friends. Mibs has learned to use her savvy to communicate with others and help them; and, with Samson's 13th birthday years away, all is peaceful for now in the Beaumont home!

### Author Sketch

Ingrid Law was born in New York, but moved to Colorado with her family when she was six. An artist and writer, she has worked as a shoe salesperson, a bookstore manager, and a job counselor, among other occupations. Although her birthdays were never as spectacular as the Beaumonts', she has said in interviews that, since they fall on May 1, they were always rainy and stormy.

The author, who describes herself as "a bit reclusive," lives with her daughter (to whom *Savvy* was dedicated) in Boulder, Colo.

### Critic's Corner

Although *Savvy* is a fantasy, one of Law's goals in writ-



ing it was to provide a positive tale that kids in the real world could identify with. "When I began writing *Savvy*, I wanted to create an empowering story about extraordinary kids using my own brand of tall tale, Americana magic," she has said in an interview. The Beaumonts, though unusually talented, are typical in their reactions to growing up: "Turning thirteen can be a big deal to any young person. It's the first official 'teen' year, and the transition between our childhood and our teens is a big one, filled with all sorts of changes and issues. These may not manifest as actual storms or electricity, ... but they can feel just as powerful and out of control." In *Savvy* as in life, these problems can be blessings in disguise: "Every challenge we face in life offers us the chance to learn something about ourselves if we pay attention. In the story, the conflicts, the larger-than-life abilities and the adventure are all just ways of exploring what it feels like to grow up."

Critics appreciated Law's unique take on growing up, lavishing it with praise. *School Library Journal* lauded her "feel for characters and language that is matched by few," and *Kirkus Reviews* praised a "marvel-laden debut." *Publisher's Weekly* selected *Savvy* as a Best Book of the Year, and the American Library Association chose *Savvy* as a Newbery Honor book.

## Selected Other Works by Ingrid Law

*Scumble* (2010)

## Bibliography

Official website, <http://ingridlaw.com/>

Mlynowski, Sarah. Review of *Savvy*. *Publisher's Weekly*, April 7, 2008. Retrieved at [http://www.publisher-sweekly.com/article/403435-Children\\_s\\_Book\\_Reviews.php](http://www.publisher-sweekly.com/article/403435-Children_s_Book_Reviews.php)

Official book website for *Savvy*, <http://us.penguin-group.com/static/packages/us/yreaders/savvy/index.html>

Interview with Ingrid Law, "Kidsreads.com" website, July 2008, <http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-law-ingrid.asp>

Interview with Ingrid Law, "Slayground" blog, <<http://slayground.livejournal.com/377551.html>>

## Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Ingrid Law's *Savvy* should include these aspects:

### Themes

- family
- striving
- change
- ridicule
- loss
- outsiders
- love
- friends
- social status
- guilt
- regret
- siblings
- individualism
- compassion
- inclusion
- kindness
- maturing
- hearing one's authentic inner voice
- self-mastery
- personal responsibility

### Motifs

- fear of losing a parent
- loss of family security
- learning to trust others
- the heart as both actual and symbolic
- evolving maturity
- personal discovery
- experiencing and showing kindness
- connecting with peers
- situational humor
- adaptation

## General Objectives

1. To comment on kids' reactions to the changes of adolescence
2. To understand emotional reactions when faced with the possibility of loss of a loved one
3. To find examples of compassion
4. To analyze Law's storytelling style and its function
5. To consider the ways in which bonds of friendship and love develop and offer strength to individuals
6. To recognize the effects of living in isolation from other people or communities
7. To discuss the importance for kids of parents or

parental figures, as well as the effects of their absence

8. To consider how kids can take responsibility for their own lives as they begin growing up
9. To discuss the strengths and faults of community and family
10. To discuss the expression of individual talents and abilities
11. To note the value of nonverbal communication

### Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the novel's title
2. To assess the main characters' personalities
3. To sympathize with the main characters' plight
4. To evaluate relationships among characters
5. To identify examples of advice, vernacular speech, and humor in the book
6. To recognize and explain the universality of human limitations, and how this is expressed in the book

## Literary Terms and Applications

**Coming-of-age novel or *Bildungsroman*:** a work of fiction in which the main character moves into and/or through adolescence and develops at least the beginnings of maturity. In this novel, thirteen-year-old Mibs takes early steps toward maturity as she attempts to discern and control her "savvy," or inherited magical power, while coping with the not-unwelcome attentions of her first potential boyfriend, and striking out on her own in an impulsive quest to find and revive her direly injured father.

**Fantasy:** a fictional work that departs radically from a realistic depiction of the world as we know it. In a fantasy, readers are expected to accept the seemingly impossible (such as the idea that members of a certain family might suddenly gain magical powers on their thirteenth birthday), although the tale presents logical and meaningful characterizations, and, often, true-to-life observations of daily life.

**Foreshadowing:** a series of hints at themes and events yet to develop in the story. An example of this would be the opening of the book with the tale of Fish's thirteenth birthday and the unleashing of his weather savvy, and observations about other people's savvies, foreshadowing Mibs' ability, which is powerful in unexpected ways. Another example would be the hints at a secret about Will Junior (including his name), leading up to the revelation of his true parentage.

**Protagonist:** the main character in a play or novel. Mibs

is the novel's protagonist, with the focus on her transition into adolescence in a family for whom turning thirteen is especially tumultuous, and learning to take responsibility for her actions and relationships, all while coping with the real possibility of losing a beloved parent.

**Universality:** a quality or theme that applies to all people at all times. The experiences of making new friends, facing adult problems and responsibilities, and dealing with the physical and emotional upheavals of adolescence are universal experiences.

## The Importance of Setting

The setting is the middle of the Great Plains, in actual locations in southern Nebraska and northern Kansas, as well as the fictional Kansaska-Nebransas. The sparsely populated, open country in the so-called Bible Belt of the United States, where towns are far apart and people are generally neighborly without being nosy, is the perfect location for the quirky Beaumonts, as well as for the kids' bus adventure. The nature of the terrain (including the distance between towns) and the social reserve of its inhabitants propel the story forward, setting up the need for the road trip, and making the somewhat trusting and unquestioning nature of the key adults much more plausible. The setting, essentially, provides safety and space for Mibs and her friends to have adventures and deal with issues of growing up.

## Cross-Curricular Sources

### Fiction

- Kate DiCamillo, *Because of Winn-Dixie*  
Neil Gaiman, *The Graveyard Book*  
Katharine Hannigan, *Ida B.: ... and Her Plans to Maximize Fun, Avoid Disaster, and (Possibly) Save the World*  
Karen Hesse, *Out of the Dust*  
Sue Monk Kidd, *The Secret Life of Bees*  
Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*  
Susan Patron, *The Higher Power of Lucky*  
Katherine Patterson, *The Great Gilly Hopkins*  
Patricia Reilly Giff, *All the Way Home*  
Phyllis Naylor Reynolds, *The Agony of Alice*  
Louis Sachar, *Holes*  
Ouida Sebestyen, *Out of Nowhere*  
Zilpha Keatly Snyder, *The Runaways*  
Jerry Spinelli, *Maniac Magee*  
Ruth White, *Belle Prater's Boy*

**Nonfiction**

Jan Adkins, *String: Tying It Up, Tying It Down*  
Eric E. Rofes, ed., *The Kids' Book About Death and Dying*  
*By and for Kids*

**CD-ROM**

*Weather Science Explorer* (New Media Schoolhouse)

**Meaning Study**

Below are words, phrases, or sentences that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers are given to find the context in which the item appears.

- Settling directly between Nebraska and Kansas in a little place all our own, just off Highway 81, we were well beyond hollering distance from the nearest neighbor, which was the best place to be for a family like ours. (Chapter 1, page 3)  
*(The Beaumont family now lives on a tract of land in the middle of the Great Plains, created by Grandpa Bomba's savvy and variously called Kansaska or Nebransas. They moved there after Fish's thirteenth birthday, when his savvy, which was triggered by water, was revealed in a giant hurricane that raged along the seacoast where they lived at the time.)*
- Later that night, as I lay awake in the dark bedroom I shared with Gypsy, I listened to my sister's even breathing and to the steady patter of Fish's worried rain. I could hear Momma and Rocket moving around downstairs, sweeping up glass and replacing light bulbs. And though Grandpa had gone to bed as well, every now and then the ground would rumble and the floor would shake as though the earth below us had a bellyache. (Chapter 2, p. 12)  
*(Mibs lies in bed the night they learn that Poppa has been in a terrible accident. The Beaumont savvies are in evidence as responses to the upset: Fish has caused a storm, Rocket has caused the light bulbs to burst in the house, and Grandpa is producing small earthquakes caused by worry. Among the other facts about the Beaumont savvies is this: for those in on the secret, the savvies make it hard to hide feelings.)*
- It was hard for us Beaumont kids to make friends and keep them. It wasn't safe to invite people over with Fish and Rocket still learning to scumble their savvies; we couldn't risk someone finding out, or getting hurt by sparks or storms if my brothers

lost control. Like so many things, a savvy could take years to tame, and Momma and Poppa said the ups and downs of growing up only added to the challenge. (Chapter 2, p. 15)  
*(The Beaumont kids' normal struggles with adolescence are compounded by safety concerns and the need for secrecy. In a way, the savvy is a stand-in for, and amplifier of, the usual struggles to fit in. Also, although the Beaumonts are a close-knit, loving family, their savvies cause them to behave in a way typical of dysfunctional families: they are forced to hide the truth, and they suffer from social isolation.)*

- Will Junior was fourteen like Fish, though Will was taller and, unlike my brother, kept his curly brown hair neat. I'd always been curious about Will. I'd heard him say once that he wanted to grow up to be just like his daddy. And despite the way others at the church shied away from us Beaumonts, Will always seemed to be walking on our heels or watching us when he was supposed to be praying. ... I thought he seemed nice, even if he was laced up a bit tight. (Chapter 3, page 24)  
*(Will Junior is an unusual character, a link between the Beaumonts—especially Mibs—and the outside world. He has a strong romantic interest in Mibs, which she haltingly recognizes and may return when she's ready. Unlike nearly everyone else in Mibs' small community, he is interested in the Beaumonts in a positive way. And, as this interest and his name foreshadow, there is more to Will Junior than meets the eye—he, too, has his secrets.)*
- "We'll have the party at the church, of course," the preacher's wife continued. ... "It's rather short notice, but we can still invite all our church friends, Mibs. ..."  
"I don't have any friends, Miss Rosemary," I said, hoping that the truth might end the conversation. "I'm your friend, Mibs," Will Junior said with earnest. I looked across the table at him and his buttoned-up shirt. Will grinned at me then; smiling, he looked different somehow, more relaxed. None too sure about how I was feeling toward Will Junior just then, I didn't smile back. But I didn't scowl, either. (Chapter 4, p. 29)  
*(In the absence of the Beaumonts' parents, Miss Rosemary, the preacher's wife, has railroaded Mibs and her family into a thirteenth birthday party at the church, despite the Beaumonts' fears and obvious apprehension about this event. Knowing that her savvy will come to her that day, and armed with*

*memories of the savvy-related destruction on her brothers' thirteenth birthdays, Mibs will do nearly anything—even admit to being friendless—to avoid the risk of a party.)*

6. Even with no savvy and no hair on his head, our Poppa was special. He was good and sweet and had wild black eyebrows that twisted like dancing beetle legs, and a faded tattoo from his navy days—a long-haired mermaid twisting around an anchor on his forearm, just above his heavy silver wristwatch. Poppa kept Miss Mermaid hidden under crisp white shirtsleeves when he went to work. ... But when he came home to us at night, Poppa had his sleeves rolled up and Miss Mermaid had her smile on. And we didn't care that Poppa had no savvy, and he didn't care that the rest of us did ... or would. (Chapter 5, p. 40)

*(Mibs introduces her father and his mermaid tattoo, which will figure later in the story. Unlike his wife and children, Poppa has no apparent savvy, but like the rest of the family, he is far from ordinary.)*

7. That was when that little angel turned its head, twisted its tail, and said, "She's really very lonely, you know. ..."

And that was when I fainted. (Chapter 6, p. 53)  
*(Mibs' first brush with her savvy occurs at the ill-fated birthday party at the church, when Bobbi's angel-devil tattoo speaks to Mibs. Of course, this comes as a shock, and it takes Mibs a while to realize the nature and extent of her gift, and to appreciate it.)*

8. "I have to get to Salina, Will." (Chapter 8, p. 62)  
*(Mibs begins her quest with these fateful words to Will Junior. Her conviction that she needs to get to the hospital in Salina, Kansas, to revive her Poppa is what drives the major events of the novel, which turns out to be an extended journey of self-discovery for a number of characters.)*

9. The magazine had a picture of a human heart on the cover, looking like nothing more than a big ball of watermelon threaded through with pale roots; I thought that picture made a person's heart look like a fragile, fragile thing rather than the powerful muscle that I'd learned it to be in school. I looked at Bobbi then, and realized that she might just be the same way—tough and soft at the same time. (Chapter 9, p. 75)

*(This passage introduces a motif of the human heart as both strong and fragile, physical and metaphori-*

*cal—while giving insight into the personality of one of the main characters, Bobbi Meeks. It also introduces a major theme: developing the wisdom to discern the hidden truth about people, and how it relates to their personal gifts, or savvies.)*

10. I remembered seeing a crazy man once when we lived down South, a man who was weaving and wandering along a downtown sidewalk ...; talking and smacking himself on the side of the head. ... Like he had a bug in his ear—or like he was hearing voices. I wondered if that was where I might be headed. It was the stress, I told myself, the stress of all my worry for Poppa, the stress of trying to figure out my new savvy and make it work right. Stress made people's minds do funny, funny things. (Chapter 9, p. 77)

*(As Mibs tries to ignore the voices in her head, she is only half right in her assessment. She is under great stress, for the reasons stated; but the voices are a manifestation of her savvy, not a distraction from it, and they do not indicate that she is going insane.)*

11. I swallowed hard, caught between that rock and that hard place I'd heard mentioned so often, and understanding fully now what a bad spot that truly was. How could I ask a man I didn't even know to risk his livelihood on my account? But, how could I possibly wait another day to get to Poppa? (Chapter 11, pp. 93-94)

*(Lester has just informed the kids that it'll be tomorrow before they can return to Salina; he has to make his planned stops before then or risk losing his job. Mibs is beginning to see the problems inherent in her impulsive decision to get on the bus, and to take adult responsibility for her actions.)*

12. "In most ways, Mibs, we Beaumonts are just like other people," Momma said, letting go of me and adding a bit more flour to my dough as she recited the words I'd heard so many times before. "We get born, and sometime later we die. And in between, we're happy and sad, we feel love and we feel fear, we eat and we sleep and we hurt like everyone else." (Chapter 11, p. 98)  
*(Mibs is remembering what her Momma has told her in the past: apart from their savvies, Beaumonts are like other people, and even their savvies are just a stronger, more specific example of the special talents everyone has to some degree.)*

13. "A secret for a secret for a secret. ... Will has a secret.

Want to know the secret?" (Chapter 12, p. 105)  
*(Mibs is beginning to understand the nature of her savvy, and it terrifies her. On the Bible bus' first stop in Bee, Nebraska, a smiling sun drawn with Mibs' new birthday-present pen on Will Junior's hand is threatening to reveal Will's secret—the mystery of his parentage. However, Mibs runs screaming to her brother Fish, who scrubs off the makeshift tattoo before it can spill the beans.)*

14. Momma said that lots and lots of ordinary folk have a savvy, but most simply don't recognize it for what it is. "Some people know they feel different, Mibs," Momma told me. "But most don't know ... what makes them that way." (Chapter 14, p. 122)  
*(One of the themes of Savvy is that many, if not most, people have unique abilities and talents, and that one of the jobs of life is to recognize those talents and use them.)*
15. I'm not sure exactly what it was about Lill Kately, but I took to her right away. ... Lill was a lighthearted lady with no tattoos. (Chapter 16, p. 137)  
 For a minute I thought maybe Lill might be an angel sent to look after us as we bumped our way along the highway in that big pink Bible bus. ... A real angel ... with really big feet. (Chapter 16, p. 143)  
*(Lill, whom Lester has rescued from the side of the road, acts as a kind of temporary foster mother/guardian angel for the kids. Lill's "savvy"—besides being chronically late—is the ability to encourage people, like the kids and Lester, and make them feel safe. Mibs is able to tell some of her troubles to the sympathetic Lill, and receives some reassuring advice. Lill provides a steadying, motherly influence and down-home wisdom that enable the kids to feel safe and guided.)*
16. "Oh goodie, he speaks," muttered Bobbi. And with Samson still sitting stone-faced and solemn, a grinning giggle spread through the ranks, turning into a gut-busting crackup as the day's tension released like waves hitting shore. ... Despite the mayhem, for the first time, I felt like I might be making friends—and that even included Bobbi. (Chapter 17, p. 147)  
*(Seven-year-old Samson, normally silent, has just surprised everybody on the bus by requesting banana cream pie for dinner. Bobbi's comment triggers a wave of hilarity among the unlikely companions. The camaraderie makes Mibs feel, perhaps for the first time in her life, that she can be part of a cir-*

*cle of real friends—not just an insular family group intent on protecting Beaumont secrets.)*

17. I realized then that it had been coincidence, not my savvy, that had woken Gypsy up that morning, and that Samson's dead pet turtle had played a trick on me. ... For the very first time since I was old enough to know what it meant to have a savvy, ... I wished that I was more like Poppa and had no savvy at all. No savvy to cause me heartache. No savvy to make me hope, and then leave me useless. (Chapter 17, pp 153-154)  
*(At the Emerald Truck Stop, Mibs tries unsuccessfully to revive a homeless drunk who is passed out behind a dumpster. She succeeds only in hearing his despairing thoughts through his faded eagle tattoo. In this moment, she is devastated to realize the true nature of her savvy, and that she was mistaken to think she might have the power to revive Poppa.)*
18. I followed his gaze and inhaled sharply. There, in all the snowy black-and-white importance such a tiny TV could muster, our photographs—Bobbi's, Will's, Fish's, Samson's, and mine—began flashing across the screen with ALERT! MISSING! ALERT! scrolling across the bottom of the screen, along with an eight-hundred number to call if anyone had seen us. (Chapter 19, p. 167)  
*(In the back room of the Emerald Truck Stop, following hard on the heels of Bobbi's realization about Mibs' savvy, Fish and Mibs learn, to their horror, that an Amber Alert has been issued for them, further complicating their situation.)*
19. "Everyone just hold on one minute." Lester's decisive tone stopped us in our tracks. Without even pausing to twitch, he hoisted one finger into the air like a signal to charge, then turned and pushed back through the door to the dining area. For a moment, I thought Lester had blown his last fuse and had run the wrong way by mistake. But a moment later, he was back with a second cream pie held high above his head like a trophy. (Chapter 19, p. 176)  
*(Spurred on by his feelings for Lill, Lester exhibits a new decisiveness, evidence of what he can become once he is freed from the voices of Rhonda and Carlene, and inspired by Lill's affection and Mibs' insight.)*
20. I felt the pinch of sorrow and remorse, and realized that while my savvy had done nothing to help the

soul-sick, broken man, there was something else that I could do for him. Dropping behind the others, I set my burger basket down on the ground near the outstretched hand. Then I removed the purple ribbon flower pinned to the shoulder of my special-occasion dress and set that down beside the burger, feeling sure that Poppa would understand. ... (I)t was the only way I had to show the man that I'd seen him. That I'd listened.

(Chapter 20, p. 178)

*(Although Mibs denigrates her savvy as useless, it is already helping her make a difference in her world. The insight gained from her savvy spurs her to do something material to help the homeless man and show her concern. Mibs realizes that knowing things is meaningless unless knowledge is followed by appropriate action. However, in her despair about Poppa, she temporarily fails to realize that the knowledge her savvy provides is valuable in relieving suffering, too.)*

21. Bobbi and Will no longer had any doubts whatsoever that the Beaumont kids were different. That the Beaumont kids were extraordinarily, freakishly not normal. But all told, when it came right down to it, Bobbi and Will realized that we were also pretty amazing. (Chapter 20, p. 183)

*(Outside the Emerald Truck Stop, Fish whips up a storm aimed at the Meeks kids after Bobbi attempts to pester Mibs into demonstrating her savvy. Now Will and Bobbi know about Fish's savvy, too. Mibs realizes that this is not a terrible thing, after all.)*

22. Fish caught sight of the plummeting sign and spun on his heel. In a wink and a blink he turned aside the hurtling object with a controlled burst of deflecting wind.

Controlled. Fish had controlled his outburst—aimed it even. ... (Chapter 21, p. 187)

*(In response to Mibs' warning cry, Fish deflects a street sign that was to collide with the Meekses. This momentous event is the first time Fish has been able to "scumble," or control, his savvy.)*

23. The last thing I wanted to do was to get Lester and Lill into any hot water just because I'd had the stupid idea that I could find my own way down to Salina. I knew that it was my job to look after the grown-ups now. It was my job to keep them safe and out of trouble, and I supposed if that meant waiting until morning to get to Poppa, that would just have to be the way things were going to be. ...

(Chapter 22, p. 196)

*(Lill has decided that she and Lester will take care of the kids overnight, getting them to Salina the next day while allowing time for Lester to make his last delivery at Wymore and his subsequent visit to Carlene. Mibs feels she must look out for the welfare of the adults, whom she feels responsible for including in her wild scheme.)*

24. "There'll be none of that business with my sister," said Fish.

At first I thought Will was going to get angry, and I readied myself for another brawl. Instead Will flashed me an outlaw's smile, then made a sudden move toward Fish, pushing hard at the water in front of him with the palms of his hands, and splashing a sheet of water up at my brother.

(Chapter 25, p. 220)

*(In the pool at the Lincoln Sleepy Ten, Will has just given Mibs her first kiss, to which Fish has reacted by hitting Will in the head with a water funnel.*

*However, instead getting angry, as they did before, the boys have a lighthearted water fight, a sign that they're becoming friends, as well as further indication of Fish's ability to scumble his savvy.)*

25. Bobbi looked at me and, to my surprise, she smiled.

It was not the snarky smile she normally wore, or the quick flash of a secret smile. ... No, this particular smile was the glad, lingering kind that one friend gives another when they need it most.

(Chapter 25, p. 223)

*(Bobbi has just asked Mibs if she likes Will the way she likes him, to which Mibs has replied, "Maybe." Bobbi wisely advises Mibs to take her time and not jump into a relationship if she doesn't feel ready, advice Mibs finds ironic given Bobbi's apparent desire to move full speed ahead toward growing up. During the course of their journey, Bobbi is progressing from being a hostile and sullen teenager to a positive older friend, and even a potential role-model for Mibs.)*

26. I had run away for Poppa ... hadn't I?

... When I walked out of that church in Hebron, I was running toward Poppa, but maybe—maybe—I was running away from something else. Running away from my unexpected, unwished-for savvy. Running away from the fact that I was growing up and life was changing as quick and sure and electrifying and terrifying as Rocket's sparks or Fish's hurricane or even a very first kiss.

(Chapter 26, p. 233)

*(Mibs starts to have some insight into her motives for running away. She is growing up, and part of her wants to run away from that fact.)*

## Comprehension Study

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

1. What is a savvy, and how is it acquired? In what way is it unique to the Beaumonts? What are the savvies of the main characters?  
*(A "savvy" is a special, unusual, inherited ability that manifests itself on the recipient's thirteenth birthday. Although it is characterized as a "Beaumont" phenomenon, savvies are actually inherited through the family of Mibs' mother, who of course is only a Beaumont by marriage. Also, although the author avoids the word "magic," savvies are what would ordinarily be termed magical abilities—supernatural gifts such as controlling weather or reading thoughts. Beaumont savvies include doing everything perfectly (Mibs' mother), being able to "can" radio waves (Grandma Dollop), moving the earth and creating land (Grandpa Bomba), producing electricity (Rocket), controlling water and creating water-related storms (Fish), and reading minds through ink on skin (Mibs). Savvies are usually powerful and hard to control, or "scumble," at first, so most people with savvies are home schooled after they turn thirteen, to avoid accidents.)*
2. Will Junior says he wants to grow up to be just like his father. Why does this mean something different from what it first appears to? How does it relate to his secret?  
*(Will Junior, like Bobbi, is apparently the child of the Rev. Roger Meeks, the local pastor, and his wife, Miss Rosemary. However, late in the book, when the authorities finally catch up with the runaway children, it is revealed that Will is actually the son of (Capt.) William Meeks, a Kansas state trooper who is Pastor and Mrs. Meeks' oldest child. Technically, this makes Will Junior Bobbi's nephew, not her brother. Will is also potentially like his father in terms of his romantic attachments—Mibs recognizes that the older Will must have been very young when Will Junior was born, and the father temporarily looks "done in" when he sees Will Junior's hand on Mibs.)*
3. Many of the characters in Savvy have unusual names. Are there any that seem to have an unusual significance or relationship to the story? Explain.  
*(Answers will vary. Some names include "Kitely," which seems to fit a character—Lill—who keeps everyone looking up, as a kite would; Lester Swan, whose personal transformation is reminiscent of the change in the classic children's tale, "The Ugly Duckling," in which the title character discovers that he is actually a beautiful swan; and "Fish," which seems to relate to that character's water savvy, as well as inviting readers to mentally add "out of water" to his name in recognition of his difficulties fitting in. Other names include "Mibs," a nickname for Mississippi, presumably where the family lived before being forced by Fish's savvy to move inland, and indicative of how out of place she feels now; "Samson," the name of a Biblical hero, which seems to fit that character's silent strength; and "Meeks," an apt name for a pastor's family—after all, the Bible famously says, in Matt. 5:5, that "the meek (humble) ... shall inherit the earth.")*
4. What is Momma talking about when she instructs the children on how to "scumble" a savvy? Can what she says apply to those who don't have savvies?  
*("Scumbling," in the book's parlance, means controlling and directing a savvy. Momma tells the kids that scumbling is "like spreading a thin layer of paint over yourself"—enough is needed to "cover" the savvy and keep it under control, but not so much that it obscures the savvy and robs its possessor of joy in his gifts. "Scumbling" can be an analogy for channeling abilities and controlling impulses while staying true to oneself—critical skills for anyone to acquire in the process of growing up.)*
5. When Mibs stows away on the Bible bus, she thinks her purpose is to save Poppa; however, she comes to realize that this is not her only purpose. What other reasons does Mibs have for leaving home and heading to Salina?  
*(Mibs has told herself that she is running to Poppa, and this is true; she truly believes, at the outset of her trip, that she can help Poppa regain consciousness and heal, and she longs desperately to be with him, as do her siblings. However, Mibs begins to realize that she has been running away as well—from growing up, from her savvy and the responsibility it represents, and from all the changes associated with adolescence, such as Will's romantic interest in her.)*

6. What does Mibs tell Lester about the voices of Carlene and Rhonda? What effect does this information have on Lester? How does Mibs apply what she says to her own life?

*(Mibs finally reacts to Carlene and Rhonda's abuse of Lester by impulsively telling him he shouldn't listen to their voices. Surprisingly, Lester is relatively unfazed by this evidence of her supernatural knowledge, and accepts what she tells him as truth. The confrontation causes Lester to make a life-changing decision to break with Carlene or good and form a relationship with Lill. As a result, the voices of Carlene and Rhonda are silenced, and Lester's voice can be heard through the tattoo for the first time. Partially as a result of this incident, Mibs comes realize the importance of being true to oneself and acting on one's conviction—"hear one's own voice.")*

7. How does Mibs grow in understanding of herself and her savvy during the course of the book? How does her view of her savvy's value change?

*(Mibs' savvy serves as a catalyst for self-discovery. This is partially through observation: the savvy gives her insight into others' inner lives and struggles, from which she gains important life lessons that she applies to herself, such as the understanding that Lester must learn to tune out others' critical voices and listen to the voice of his heart. Through the savvy, she also faces issues she has been avoiding—such as growing up and dealing with Will's interest in her—and realizes both her role and responsibility in shaping her life and wielding her talents.*

*In terms of appreciating her savvy, she goes from a false view of what it might be (when she believes it is an ability to revive the lifeless), to disappointment when she realizes its apparent limits (as in the incident with the homeless man), to a realization of its value to give insight and help catalyze change in others. In the end, her savvy does, in a sense, help her to revive Poppa, since she is able to use her newfound insights to encourage him in the use of his own unique savvy—the quality of never giving up.)*

8. What elements in *Savvy* are fantasy? What elements appear to be realistic?

*(Obvious fantasy and tall-tale elements include the entire theme of savvies—their existence and manifestation—and all the misadventures that arise from them (although there is still a connection to the real world in that savvies can be seen as amplifications of, and stand-ins for, more ordinary gifts). Lester and*

*Lill's happy ending, where they face no consequences for transporting strange kids across state lines, seems a bit of a stretch as well. On the other hand, the observations of human behavior—from the small-town cliques to the hectoring of Carlene to the relationships among the various characters—seem quite believable, in turn making the fantasy elements seem like part of a seamless whole. Also realistic is Poppa's recovery; as in real life, it is lengthy and incomplete, and it leaves scars—but he is nevertheless still "Poppa," and life goes on around him.)*

9. What new life, or renewal, comes at the end of the book?

*(Mibs' parents are expecting another baby, and Mibs' family has reorganized around its new circumstances, including relying on Mibs' gift for information and help communicating with Poppa. At fourteen and fifteen, respectively, Mibs and Fish have come into their own—they now have friends, and are able to scumble their savvies and cope with the changes of growing up.)*

## Across the Curriculum

### Geography

1. Draw a map tracing the children's odyssey across the Plains. Indicate where key episodes in the story occurred.

### Social Studies

1. One of Fish's weather outburst is written off by Lester with the words "twister country"; indeed, one of the reasons "Nebransas" is an ideal location for Fish is that it offers good cover for his difficulties in controlling his storms. Research weather patterns in the Plains states and give a report to the class. What kinds of weather occur there, and when? Why is the weather in the middle of the United States so unpredictable?
2. Do research on rehabilitation after brain injuries. What process of rehabilitation and physical therapy did Poppa likely go through after waking up from a coma? Report your findings to the class.

### Language

1. *Savvy* is full of unique and humorous figures of speech, such as similes (comparisons using "like" or "as"), metaphors (direct comparisons), and hyperbole (humorous exaggeration). Look up these terms and the dictionary examples, then go



through the book and compile a list of each type of figure of speech, noting your favorites in each category. Report your findings to the class.

2. One of the examples of “real magic” in *Savvy* is the use of playful (and sometimes tongue-twisting) language. Examples of interesting language include onomatopoeia (words that sound like they mean), rhyming, and alliteration (the repetition of beginning sounds). Look up these terms, then make a list of such language found in the book. The second half of the book contains the most instances of such language—especially pp. 242-243. Report on your list to the class.

### History

1. Research the history of Nebraska and Kansas, including some of the towns listed in the book. When were these areas settled? Who settled them? What kind of culture dominates in these areas today? Report on your findings to the class.

## Alternate Assessment

1. Based on the story, make a simple family tree for Mibs Beaumont.
2. Weather is part of the book’s setting. Give examples of how the weather at different points in the book represents the characters’ feelings—particularly the feelings of Fish, whose savvy is creating weather events.
3. Writers use “sensory details” to help the reader see, hear, smell, taste, and feel what is being described. Give examples of the author’s use of such sensory details.
4. Make a shoebox diorama depicting the interior of Lester’s Bible bus, based on descriptions you’ve read in the novel.
5. Choose three events in the story, and explain in two or three paragraphs how they are pivotal.
6. On page 229, Mibs uses a simile to describe the way Lill’s words kept running through her mind. Illustrate that simile.
7. Create a cartoon showing Mibs running away from two things (p. 233).

## Vocabulary Test

Match each vocabulary word or term from *Savvy* in the left-hand column with its definition in the column on the right. Place the letter of your answer in the space provided.

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Hobbledehoy      | a. Gleeful chuckle                            |
| _____ 2. Pell-mell        | b. Embarrassment; humiliation                 |
| _____ 3. Earnest          | c. Confused, upset; frustrated                |
| _____ 4. Contorted        | d. Gawky adolescent boy                       |
| _____ 5. Sanctuary        | e. Compensation; reparation                   |
| _____ 6. Mollycoddle      | f. Very humiliated; shamed                    |
| _____ 7. Chortle          | g. Extreme nervousness; jitters               |
| _____ 8. Jimjams          | h. Ghost or other source of dread             |
| _____ 9. Brouhaha         | i. Petty argument                             |
| _____ 10. Oblivious       | j. Recklessly, hurriedly; headlong            |
| _____ 11. Chagrin         | k. Something that causes fear or worry        |
| _____ 12. Flimflam        | l. Irritated, annoyed                         |
| _____ 13. Specter         | m. Unconscious; unaware                       |
| _____ 14. Discombobulated | n. Serious; sincere                           |
| _____ 15. Catawampus      | o. Like an intense light                      |
| _____ 16. Bugaboo         | p. Deception; swindle                         |
| _____ 17. Squabble        | q. Scornfully; curtly                         |
| _____ 18. Mortified       | r. Violently twisted; distorted               |
| _____ 19. Amends          | s. Engraved or outlined, especially with acid |
| _____ 20. Dismissively    | t. Knickknacks; gewgaws                       |
| _____ 21. Catastrophe     | u. Place of refuge                            |
| _____ 22. Tchotchkes      | v. Askew; diagonally                          |
| _____ 23. Vexed           | w. Widespread disaster; misfortune            |
| _____ 24. Strobe-like     | x. Pamper or indulge                          |
| _____ 25. Etched          | y. Excitement; hullabaloo                     |

## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Matching (20 points)

Complete the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blanks provided.

- |       |                                    |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| _____ | 1. Made storms                     |
| _____ | 2. Had no savvy                    |
| _____ | 3. Was the trooper's son           |
| _____ | 4. Could create land               |
| _____ | 5. His tattoos fought              |
| _____ | 6. Harnessed electricity           |
| _____ | 7. Had a little voice and big feet |
| _____ | 8. Did things perfectly            |
| _____ | 9. "Canned" radio waves            |
| _____ | 10. Was secretly lonely            |

- |                  |                |                   |                |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| a. Grandpa Bomba | b. Lill Kately | c. Momma          | d. Lester Swan |
| e. Rocket        | f. Will Junior | g. Grandma Dollop | h. Poppa       |
| i. Bobbi Meeks   | j. Fish        |                   |                |

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

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

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| _____ | 1. Mibs was finally able to wake up the homeless man              |
| _____ | 2. Rhonda was very critical of Lester                             |
| _____ | 3. Mibs felt unready for a romantic relationship with Will Junior |
| _____ | 4. Pastor Meeks was Will Junior's father                          |
| _____ | 5. Lill seemed like a guardian angel                              |
| _____ | 6. Bobbi had a crush on Rocket                                    |
| _____ | 7. The kids learned about the Amber Alert from the radio          |
| _____ | 8. The Beaumont kids were home schooled from the age of 14        |
| _____ | 9. If Poppa had a savvy, it would be that he never gave up        |
| _____ | 10. Carlene did her best to be a supportive partner               |

### Part III: Quote Identification (30 points)

For the following quotes, identify the speaker and explain the meaning and importance of the quote.

1. "You never can tell when a bad thing might make a good thing happen." (Chapter 26, pp. 228-229)

2. I had run away for Poppa ... hadn't I? (Chapter 26, p. 233)

3. I knew that it was my job to look after the grown-ups now. It was my job to keep them safe and out of trouble, and I supposed if that meant waiting until morning to get to Poppa, that would just have to be the way things were going to be, even if it felt almost too much to bear. (Chapter 22, p. 196)

4. "We'll have the party at the church, of course." (Chapter 4, p. 29)

5. "Oh goodie, he speaks." (Chapter 17, p. 147)

6. "Just let me fade away. ... I've seen too much ... too much!" (Chapter 17, p. 152)

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

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. In a key passage in *Savvy*, Momma explains that even non-Beaumonts are born with special talents or abilities that are something like savvies. An example of this would be the "ordinary sort of human magic" (p. 113) exhibited by Samson when he comforts others through touch; another would be Poppa's quality of never giving up. Examine three characters in the book who are not Beaumonts, and discuss what their savvies might be.
2. One of the important things Mibs learns through her savvy is how to distinguish which internal voices are worth listening to and which must be resisted. Discuss how the voices of Carlene and Rhonda, and Lester's reactions to them, drive this fact home for Mibs. How does Mibs use her savvy to help Lester overcome his poisonous internal voices?
3. Will Junior's obvious interest in her makes Mibs feel "too young and too old at the same time" (p. 223). Why does the attention make Mibs feel uncomfortable? Why do you think Will's father looks "done in" when he sees Will holding Mibs' hand? In general, do you believe young people are forced to grow up too fast nowadays? What aspects of modern society (e.g., media, school, friends, etc.) influence the speed at which kids mature?

## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Use a word from the list below to complete each sentence.

1. Momma said scumbling a savvy was like spreading \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Will Junior wants to be just like \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A talking \_\_\_\_\_ is Mibs' first true encounter with her savvy.
4. Fish tries to \_\_\_\_\_ his sister from Will's attention.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ has a crush on Rocket.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ indicate that Grandpa Bomba is upset.
7. Poppa is \_\_\_\_\_ and has a mermaid tattoo.
8. Mibs will be \_\_\_\_\_ after her savvy kicks in.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ is Lester's mother.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ has a kind heart and big feet.

- |                 |           |                |                 |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| a. His father   | b. Bobbi  | c. earthquakes | d. homeschooled |
| e. bald         | f. Rhonda | g. paint       | h. Lill         |
| i. angel tattoo | j. shield |                |                 |

### Part II: Identification (20 points)

Identify the following characters, putting the letter of the correct answer in the blank provided.

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| _____ | 1. Causes street lamp bulbs to break               |
| _____ | 2. Even her mistakes are "perfect"                 |
| _____ | 3. May be getting his savvy early                  |
| _____ | 4. Really likes Mibs                               |
| _____ | 5. May be an angel in disguise                     |
| _____ | 6. Wants to fix everything                         |
| _____ | 7. Has a gift for acting                           |
| _____ | 8. Finally shakes the voices of Rhonda and Carlene |
| _____ | 9. Is mean to Lill                                 |
| _____ | 10. Was in the Navy                                |

- |                |                  |           |                |
|----------------|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| a. Will Junior | b. Bobbi         | c. Rocket | d. Lester Swan |
| e. Samson      | f. Miss Rosemary | g. Ozzie  | h. Momma       |
| i. Poppa       | k. Lill Kitely   |           |                |

### Part III: Matching (20 points)

Complete the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blanks provided.

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| _____ | 1. Where they saw the homeless man             |
| _____ | 2. Gift that reveals Mibs' secret to her       |
| _____ | 3. Town where Poppa is taken                   |
| _____ | 4. Location of church and school               |
| _____ | 5. Name for location of Beaumont house         |
| _____ | 6. Wakes up on Mibs' birthday                  |
| _____ | 7. Reason for Pastor Meeks' anger              |
| _____ | 8. Where kids discovered the Amber Alert       |
| _____ | 9. Lester's explanation for Fish's storms      |
| _____ | 10. What the kids get from Carlene's to Salina |

- |                    |               |                  |                             |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Salina          | b. Nebransas  | c. pink Bibles   | d. Emerald Truck Stop Diner |
| e. Pen set         | f. break room | g. police escort | h. turtle                   |
| i. Tornado country | j. Hebron     |                  |                             |

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

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Discuss how Mibs' outlook changes through the course of the book. What conflicts does she face at the outset? How do her experiences on the road change her perspective? How has she changed by her fourteenth birthday, one year later?
2. In interviews, author Ingrid Law has referred to her desire to use themes of magic and tall tales without having to use the term "magic" to describe her characters' abilities. Discuss the elements of tall tales and fantasy in *Savvy*, and how Law weaves these elements into a book about growing up.
3. Although Mibs was initially mistaken about the nature of her savvy, she nevertheless seems to play an instrumental role in helping Poppa wake up. What do you think actually makes him come out of his coma at last? Is it through the help of a Beaumont savvy? "Ordinary human magic"? Neither? Both? Explain.

## Answer Key

### VOCABULARY TEST

- |       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 1. D  | 14. C |
| 2. J  | 15. V |
| 3. N  | 16. K |
| 4. R  | 17. I |
| 5. U  | 18. F |
| 6. X  | 19. E |
| 7. A  | 20. Q |
| 8. G  | 21. W |
| 9. Y  | 22. T |
| 10. M | 23. L |
| 11. B | 24. O |
| 12. P | 25. S |
| 13. H |       |

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

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

1. J
2. H
3. F
4. A
5. D
6. E
7. B
8. C
9. G
10. I

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

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

#### Part III: Quote Identification (30 points)

1. Lill Kately says this before falling asleep in the room she shares with Mibs and Bobbi at the Lincoln Sleepy Ten. Lill is mainly referring to recent events in her own life: her car's breakdown led to meeting Lester (the apparent love of her life), losing her job at the diner (which turned out to be a liberation from the evil Ozzie), Ozzie's comeuppance, and hope for a more prosperous future as a newly confident Lester dreams of starting his own busi-

ness.

2. Mibs is realizing that her motives for embarking on the road trip were not as simple as she originally thought. She was, in fact, running away from growing up, and the changes imminent in her life, as well.
3. Mibs is taking responsibility for her actions in precipitating the cross-country adventure and involving Lester and Lill, who, although they are technically grown-ups, definitely appear to be in need of protecting. She realizes they could get into terrible trouble if they are accused of abducting the children.
4. Miss Rosemary Meeks, Pastor Meeks' wife and mother to Will Junior and Bobbi, is planning the ill-fated birthday party that inadvertently launches the cross-country odyssey. Miss Rosemary, a person who has to take charge and "fix" everything, ignores everyone's warnings that this isn't a good idea.
5. Bobbi's sarcastic-humorous comment in response to Samson's request for banana cream pie sparks a fit of laughter among the bus's occupants. It is the beginning of a sense of camaraderie, and even friendship, among the stowaways.
6. This is the voice of the homeless man outside the Emerald Diner, as heard by Mibs through the man's faded eagle tattoo. Mibs is sad and frustrated because the man refuses to let her wake him up. It is during this incident that she begins to realize some of the limits to her savvy, as well as the role of other people's choices. Although she ultimately comes to appreciate her savvy and understand its value, at this moment she is devastated, believing that there is now nothing she can do to help her Poppa.

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

(Answers will vary.)

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. G | 6. C  |
| 2. A | 7. E  |
| 3. I | 8. D  |
| 4. J | 9. F  |
| 5. B | 10. H |

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

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. F  |
| 2. H | 7. B  |
| 3. E | 8. D  |
| 4. A | 9. G  |
| 5. K | 10. I |

**Part III: Matching (20 points)**

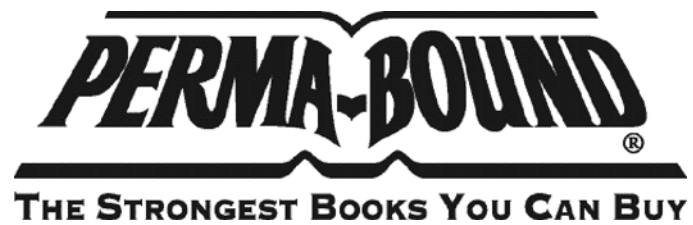
- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. H  |
| 2. E | 7. C  |
| 3. A | 8. F  |
| 4. J | 9. I  |
| 5. B | 10. G |

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

(Answers will vary.)







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