The Pigman Study Guide

The Pigman by Paul Zindel

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BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Paul Zindel's first novel, *The Pigman*, published in New York in 1968 by Harper & Row, is a story of two dispossessed young people who find a surrogate parent in Angelo Pignati, an Italian man who has never had children and whose wife is dead. He shares his humor and joy in life with them, and in his presence, they are allowed to be carefree and childlike in a way that they can't be with their own families.

The novel is considered by many critics to be the "first truly [young adult] book," according to Teri Lesesne in an interview with Zindel in *Teacher Librarian*. When Zindel wrote the book, he realized that few books depicted teenagers dealing with real problems in the modern world. He also talked to many teenagers who said they hated to read or had been branded as troublemakers, and he targeted his story to them. Zindel's honesty and humor "broke new ground, and prepared the soil" for many excellent young adult books to come, according to Lesesne.

In an interview with *Scholastic* students, Zindel said that he was inspired to write the book while he was house-sitting in a fifty-room "castle" on Staten Island. A teenage boy trespassed on the grounds, and when Zindel went out to yell at him, he found out that the boy was actually a very interesting person. The character of John Conlan in *The Pigman* was modeled on this young man. The character of Lorraine was modeled on a student in one of the chemistry classes Zindel taught. He told the interviewer, "I thought, what a wonderful adventure it would be to team those two life models for me into a story in which they met an eccentric, old mentor figure."

Author Biography

Paul Zindel was born on May 15, 1936, in Staten Island, New York, and grew up on Staten Island with his mother and sister. His father, a police officer, abandoned the family when Zindel was very young, and Zindel rarely saw him. His mother struggled to make ends meet, and because of their poverty, the family moved often. Zindel felt like a misfit because he had no father and because the family moved so much, but later realized that this feeling of being different from others had fueled his imagination. He wrote his first play in high school, and enjoyed the praise he got from other students for his morbid sense of humor.

He attended Wagner College on Staten Island, where he studied chemistry, but also took a creative writing course with famed playwright Edward Albee, who encouraged Zindel to write more plays. He wrote his second original play during his last year of college.

After college, Zindel worked briefly as a technical writer for Allied Chemical, but he hated the job. After six months, he quit and became a highschool chemistry and physics teacher. While teaching, he continued to write plays; his first staged play was *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-inthe- Moon Marigolds*, loosely based on his own life. The play won several awards, including Best American Play and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama; it was produced on Broadway; and it was made into a film and a television drama.

Charlotte Zolotow, an editor for the publisher Harper & Row, was impressed by the play and asked Zindel if he had any novels in mind. She encouraged him to write *The Pigman*, his first novel, which was published in 1968. The novel was selected as one of the Notable Children's Books of 1940-1970 by the American Library Association and was named one of their Best of the Best Books for Young Adults in 1975. It was also one of the Child Study Association of America's Children's Books of the Year in 1968, and was given the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Text in 1969. The book was inspired by two teenagers Zindel met, a young man who had many of the adventures that later appeared in the book, and a young woman who was very much like Lorraine, one of the two main characters. The Pigman, an eccentric old Italian man, was based on an Italian grandfather who was a mentor to Zindel when he was young.

In 1969, Zindel quit teaching and became a full-time writer. In a profile published on the *Scholastic* Web site, he said, "I felt I could do more for teenagers by writing for them." He read several young adult books and felt that they had nothing to do with what teenagers were really like, and he resolved to write honestly from the teenagers' point of view. Since then, he has written many acclaimed books for young adults, including *My Darling, My Hamburger*, *I Never Loved Your Mind*, *Pardon Me, You're Stepping on My Eyeball!* , *The Undertaker's Gone Bananas*, *Confessions of a Teenage Baboon*, *Raptor*, *Loch*, *The Doom Stone*, *Reef of Death*, and most recently, *Rats*.

In 1973, Zindel married Bonnie Hildebrand. They have two children, David and Elizabeth.

In the *Scholastic* profile, Zindel wrote, "I like storytelling. We all have an active thing that we do that gives us self-esteem, that makes us proud; it's necessary. I have to tell stories because that's the way the wiring went in."

Plot Summary

Harmless Pranks Accelerate

John, one of two protagonists who act as narrator, explains that he hates school, in fact hates "everything," and tells about his past escapades, in which he set off firecrackers in the school bathroom and organized his whole class to roll damaged apples across the classroom floor when the substitute teacher had her back turned. Intelligent, charming, and bored, he's not a bad kid, but is pentup and restless, with parents who don't understand him and don't want to try.

Lorraine, the other protagonist and narrator of the book, is similarly alienated from her family, which consists only of her mother. Her father, who left when her mother was pregnant with her, is now dead, and her mother works as a private nurse to try and make ends meet. Like John, Lorraine is very intelligent; she wants to be a writer. A keen observer of people, she is compassionate and sensitive. She and her mother moved into John's neighborhood at the beginning of freshman year, and Lorraine and John, perhaps drawn by their mutual restlessness and alienation, have since become good friends.

Lorraine and John, with two other friends, play more pranks outside of school. They devise a game in which the challenge is to call strangers on the phone and keep them on the line for as long as possible by telling outlandish stories. Picking numbers at random from the phone book, Lorraine eventually calls Angelo Pignati, an old man who lives in their neighborhood. He's only too happy to talk to them, and when Lorraine tells him they're calling from a charity and asking for money, he unwittingly offers to give them ten dollars.

Lorraine thinks the joke has gone too far and wants to end the phone call, but John gets on the line and makes arrangements to pick up the money from Mr. Pignati at his house. John tells her Mr. Pignati is probably lonely and will welcome their company.

They Meet Mr. Pignati

Mr. Pignati is thrilled to see them. His house, though messy, smells warm and inviting, and he offers them wine and food, and invites them to come to the zoo with him. He explains that his wife, who usually goes with him, is out of town. He shows them his collection of porcelain pigs, plays a game with them, and gives them the ten dollars.

The next day, they go to the zoo with him and visit his "best friend," Bobo, a vicious baboon. Mr. Pignati seems oblivious to the baboon's nasty personality, and he talks lovingly to the animal and feeds him peanuts and other treats.

Lorraine and John continue visiting Mr. Pignati, lying to their families about where they are going. He tells them to make themselves at home and, while exploring his house,

they find funeral documents that show that Mr. Pignati's wife, Conchetta, is actually dead, not on vacation. Her clothes are still in her closet, and Mr. Pignati misses her so much that he can't stand to admit she's really gone.

They Experience Joy in Life

Mr. Pignati takes them on a shopping spree for gourmet delicacies, which his wife loved, and buys roller skates for all three of them. Carefree, they eat the food, drink wine, and listen to his jokes. All of this is a sharp contrast to their own homes, which are depressing and humorless. In John's house, everything is so neat and clean that no one can relax, and his father is always lecturing him about responsibility and trying to force him to be someone he's not, urging him to get a job on Wall Street.

In Lorraine's house, her mother hassles her about hanging out with boys, asks her to stay home from school to clean the house, won't let her use the phone, makes derogatory comments about her appearance, and occasionally hits her. John and Lorraine end up going over to Mr. Pignati's house every day after school for wine and conversation, and become the children Mr. Pignati never had. Eventually they confess that they were never affiliated with any charity, and that they like him more than anyone else and want to be honest with him. In response, he tells them what they already know, that his wife is actually dead, not on vacation.

John begins roller-skating in Mr. Pignati's house, and soon Mr. Pignati and Lorraine join in, but the exercise is too much for Mr. Pignati, who has a heart attack. They call an ambulance and, at the hospital, pose as his children so they can get in to visit him. He tells them to make themselves at home at his place while he's in the hospital, and they do, but they begin overstepping boundaries: Lorraine dresses up in some of Conchetta's clothes, John wears some of Mr. Pignati's, and they pretend to be adults. The fancy evening clothes awaken their awareness of each other as sexual beings, and they tease each other and kiss, but this change in their relationship makes both of them uncomfortable, so they stop and put their own clothes back on. However, they can't take back what they've begun to feel for each other.

A Betrayal and Its Consequences

John decides that while Mr. Pignati is gone, it can't hurt to have a few friends over for a quiet party. Neither of them can have friends over at home, so it's tempting. The quiet party grows into a huge, rowdy, loud, and drunken revel, with about forty teenagers. Norton Kelly, a delinquent, steals an electrical apparatus from the house, and other kids, including Lorraine, get dressed in Conchetta's clothes. John goes after Norton for stealing, and in revenge, Norton smashes Mr. Pignati's precious collection of pigs, which belonged to his wife.

In the midst of this chaos, Mr. Pignati comes home and finds his house in a shambles and the people he loved and trusted, John and Lorraine, at the center of the chaos. They feel horrible, apologize, and try to make amends by asking him to go to the zoo

with them to see Bobo. However, when they get there, the cage is empty, and a bored attendant tells them Bobo is dead.

The accumulated shocks and losses prove to be too much for Mr. Pignati, and he suffers a second heart attack and dies immediately. The two young people are left with the realization that his death may be their fault, and with an awareness of the sadness of his life and death, and life and human mortality in general. They realize that time is passing, that someday they, too, will die, that they may spend their later years alone and lonely, and they better grow up and get moving. As John says at the end of the book, "Our life would be what we made of it□nothing more, nothing less."

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

John Conlan and Lorraine Jensen begin recanting the tale of *The Pigman* by signing an "oath" wherein they declare that they will record the facts surrounding their acquaintance with Mr. Angelo Pignati. John and Lorraine are sophomores at Franklin High School in New York when they meet Mr. Pignati, and they share a few months of their lives in this book, explaining their relationships with each other and this special adult friend of theirs. John writes the first chapter, and explains that he and Lorraine are writing this book on a typewriter in the school library, under the watchful eye of the librarian, Miss Reillen. John explains that they call Miss Reillen "the Cricket" because of the sound her nylons make when they rub together under her too-tight skirts. *The Pigman* is full of details like this, explaining the origination of nicknames, and other lore common to the two writers and their friends. John explains that if Miss Reillen didn't work in the library, which is supposed to be quiet, no one would probably notice this cricket-like noise.

John also gives some background about his own reputation as a bit of a troublemaker. He was known as "the bathroom bomber" and the organizer of such pranks as rolling rotten apples on the floor when a substitute teacher would turn her back. He explains that these pranks were when he was a freshman, and he says he has given up this "kid stuff" now that he is a sophomore.

John also tells us in the first chapter that Lorraine has laid down a ground rule for him about swearing. In their oath, they promise to tell the truth, and they call their work a "memorial epic," so Lorraine has decided that swearing isn't really appropriate. She allows that if John does need to swear, he can type @#$% and if it is a particularly bad curse word, he can indicate that with @#$%. John decides that this is an acceptable solution, since readers will be able to use their own imagination in interpreting his curses. Those minor details out of the way, John allows Lorraine to continue their story with Chapter 2.

Chapter 1 Analysis

A bit of foreshadowing is laid out in "The Oath" which serves as a foreword to this story. Although they do not explain their reasons for writing this book, John and Lorraine promise to record the facts surrounding their experiences with Mr. Pignati. In that they refer to the project as a "memorial epic," it is assumed that something bad will come to Mr. Pignati. In the first chapter, we are also given the first glimpse at John's relationship with authority figures. As a troublemaker his freshman year, John lead harmless pranks against substitute teachers. He also shows us his penchant for nicknaming several of the adults in his life.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Lorraine begins the second chapter of their story with more explanation about why they are undertaking this project. She says:

"It's just that some very strange things have happened to us during the last few months, and we feel we should write them down while they're fresh in our minds. It's got to be written now before John and I mature and repress the whole thing."

Lorraine tells us a bit about John, and his quirky behavior. She says that he gets away with stuff because he is so handsome. He also drinks and smokes a lot for a teenager. Lorraine is concerned about this, and thinks that some of John's problems are because of his family. Lorraine reads about psychology and attempts to psychoanalyze John, and everyone else around her. She also hints at her own family problems.

Lorraine agrees with John's assessment of Miss Reillen's too tight skirts, but defends her by saying that she's not trying to be sexy; she probably just outgrew her clothes. Lorraine shows compassion for the librarian, and for another teacher who is caring for a sick mother. Lorraine had to drop off some papers at Miss Stewart's home one day, and her sick mother was in a bed right in the middle of the living room. Lorraine feels sorry for the teacher, and imagines that she will become an Old Maid because who would want to marry someone who keeps her sick mother's bed in the living room?

Lorraine explains the big difference between her and John is that she has compassion. She thinks that John's hostility is an act; that he pretends to not have a care in the world. However, she cites the fact that she is his best friend as some proof that he deeper than he appears to be, because she admits that she is not the prettiest girl around. Lorraine's self-deprecation stems from a mother who is constantly putting her down.

Lorraine explains how she and John met when she moved into his neighborhood at the beginning of their freshman year. They rode the bus together, but no one talked to her the first few weeks. Then, one day, the bus was crowded and John had to sit next to her. He was sitting next to her and just began laughing out loud. Lorraine figured he was laughing at her and was trying to ignore him. Then she got mad and confronted him. Eventually, they both started laughing, and kept laughing until everyone else thought they were both crazy.

Chapter 2 Analysis

It is pretty obvious that Lorraine has read a great deal about psychology. She hints at the problems John has with his family, and blames his self-destructive behavior on those issues. She tries to get inside the minds of her teachers, empathizing with their

personal struggles. She even realizes the effect that her mother's constant put-downs have on her own self-esteem. She talks about paranoia when recanting the story of John laughing on the bus, and her thinking that he was laughing at her. She may have low self-esteem, but we also see that she has some spunk. The two viewpoints of John and Lorraine tend to indicate that the story will end up being told in a balanced, and somewhat objective manner. As we get inside Lorraine's head a bit, we begin to see hints about their friendship, as well as their relationships with other characters.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

John gives us a preliminary look at his past relationships with adults. He talks about Miss King, one of his teachers, who tries to be "hip." John sees right through her use of expressions that attempt to make her appear younger and more up-to-date with the students. He says one of the things he liked best about Mr. Pignati was that he didn't try to act like he wasn't behind the times. He called John and Lorraine "delightful" and John seems to really respect that candor, and that Pignati didn't try to be something he wasn't.

John talks about wanting to be an actor and says that Lorraine is going to be a famous writer. In discussing their differences, he says, "Lorraine remembers the big words, and I remember the action." He admits that he does distort the truth a bit, but decries Lorraine's mother for really distorting facts when she describes Lorraine's appearance. John says Lorraine is really only lacking in confidence and self-esteem.

Though not as elaborate as the childish pranks he previously described, John talks about little games that they play with Dennis Kobin and Norton Kelly. They get bored with the typical phone gags, and make up a game called the telephone marathon. The goal of the game is to randomly pick a number out of the phone book, and when the person answers, keep them talking on the phone for as long as possible. John describes a record-setting call that Dennis made where he kept a lady on the phone for over two hours, asking her advice about a hideous skin disease that he contracted when a rat bit him on the nose.

It seems the story of Mr. Pignati began because Lorraine picked his name from the phone book for this phone marathon game. John blames her for picking Pignati's name, but quickly states that the man would have died anyhow, although they may have speeded up the process. He hastily insists, though, that they did not murder him.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Told from the point of view of two high school sophomores, *The Pigman* reminds us that teenagers and adults don't always communicate well. John and Lorraine are smart young people, who recognize the differences between the generations. In addition, they speak in this epic with candor about those differences. John points out the first memorable trait about Mr. Pignati – that he did not try to talk down to them or act like he was a teenager himself. We are reminded that kids see through fakery and game playing, and, as in the case of Miss King, the students rarely respect the adult who merely tries to act cool and "with it."

The story also touches a bit on fate or synchronicity. Lorraine picks Mr. Pignati's name randomly out of the phone book for their telephone marathon game. The events that

follow would not have happened if she had picked anyone else's name. John tells us that Mr. Pignati would have died anyhow. His death, however, is related to the story due to the chance or fortune that caused the name to be picked. In a way, they feel responsible for his death, but in a way, they also know that it was inevitable.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Lorraine tells us that picking Mr. Pignati's name was not entirely random. She admits that she peeked a little and chose the name because he lived on Howard Avenue, which was only a few blocks from her home. She figured that she could pretend to be calling from some neighborhood charity. She tells Mr. Pignati that she is soliciting small donations for a local fund. When she can't contain herself and laughs during the conversation, Mr. Pignati asks her to tell him the joke. He talks about his wife and says that she always enjoys his jokes. He says that his wife is in California, and then he shares her favorite joke with Lorraine. Lorraine can tell that this is a lonely old man, so she kindly listens to his jokes.

During the phone conversation, John is egging Lorraine on and making her laugh. She talks about John's family and his need to create attention for himself by telling lies. John wants to be an actor, and Lorraine suggests that he is so bored with his own life that he makes things up so his life measures up to his active imagination. She talks about a book report that John did after only reading one page of a book. He did the entire report on that one page. He got a higher score than she did, and she had read the whole book. John also lies to his family, but Lorraine notes that his parents lie, too. John's father brags about ripping off the insurance company, and his mother fibs to get extra Green Stamps. Lorraine shares her hope that she doesn't grow up to be *that* kind of adult.

Mr. Pignati reminds Lorraine that she had said she was calling about a donation to a charity. He offers to send her ten dollars. John gets a look in his eye that tells Lorraine he is up to no good. She says, "You just have to know how John does things, and you'll know one thing will always happen. He'll end up complicating everything."

Chapter 4 Analysis

Again, Lorraine applies her own form of psychoanalysis in determining that John's lying is related to his parents' behaviors. She is jealous that he can get away with things, like writing a book report after only reading a single page of the book. Not only does he get away with it, he gets a better grade than she does. These little glimpses throughout the story give us a good background on the kind of relationship John and Lorraine have. They are friends, and friends stick together, even when they are jealous or disapproving.

We also see Lorraine's caring and compassionate side again, when she listens to Mr. Pignati's jokes and knows that conversation is a real treat for this lonely old man. She feels guilty when Mr. Pignati wants to make a donation to their fake charity, and she is certain that John will only make the situation worse. As the book is a recollection of previous events, the storytellers already know what is going to happen next. Lorraine

often clues the reader in by foreshadowing, such as the assertion that John will end up complicating this situation.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

John doesn't tell Norton and Dennis that Mr. Pignati actually wanted to donate ten dollars to Lorraine's fake charity. He lies to keep them from trying to get in on the action, and probably wanting to get more than ten bucks. He says that he didn't want them to take advantage of this old man, which he was sure Norton and Dennis would do. Lorraine tells him the next day that she doesn't want to go and collect the money from the old man, but when John's mother won't give him any money for beer, he tries to talk Lorraine into getting the money from Mr. Pignati.

John can't get the money from his mother, because his father is angry at another prank he pulled. John is told that he is nothing like his older brother, Kenneth, who never caused any problems. Kenneth is eleven years older and now has a wife and a respectable job on Wall Street. John's parents wish he would be more like Kenneth. John blames his latest prank on the ghost of his Aunt Ahra, who died in their house. He then goes to meet Lorraine.

John tries to convince Lorraine that they should go meet Mr. Pignati. Lorraine doesn't want to carry on the hoax or deceive the nice old man any more. John plays on Lorraine's empathy and tries to persuade her that it is their duty to visit this lonely old man, that he could be subconsciously thinking of killing himself, and that they owe it to him to visit. She finally changes her mind when John paints a picture of the old man taking a shower and leaving the windows open to die of pneumonia.

When they arrive at Mr. Pignati's home, they see that it is old and run down. They can't understand how this poor man would want to donate to their made-up charity, and they feel sorry for him. John describes the man who answers the door:

"He was in his late fifties and was pretty big, and he had a bit of a beer stomach. But the part that slaughtered me was this great big smile on his face. He looked so glad to see us I thought his eyes were going to twinkle out of his head. He would've made one @#$ % of a Santa Claus if you had put a white beard on him and stuck him on a street corner in December with a little whiskey on his breath."

The old man is pleased to see them, and doesn't even question that these "charity workers" are children. They are invited in to the messy house and Mr. Pignati offers them a glass of wine. He tells them that he just returned from the zoo, a favorite place to visit with his wife, who he explains has been visiting a sister in California for about a month.

He changes the subject and teaches them a memorization game. He then explains to them how he can memorize any ten objects. They finish their wine and are trying to leave, when Mr. Pignati asks them if they would like to go to the zoo with him the next

day. He then reminds them that they came to pick up a check for their charity work. Lorraine hesitates about taking money from this nice old man, but John reminds her that they should go along with their story and take the check so Mr. Pignati doesn't get suspicious.

Check in hand, and ready to go out the door, the two are drawn back into the house when Mr. Pignati says that he forgot to show them his pigs. He leads them to a room with a black curtain over the doorway, and inside it is filled with pigs. There are pigs made of glass, clay and marble. There are big pigs and little pigs, cute pigs and ugly pigs. They cover every surface in the room. Mr. Pignati explains that his wife collects pigs because when they were dating he gave her a pig to remind her of him. Pig, as in Pignati, he explains, and John and Lorraine take to calling him The Pigman.

Chapter 5 Analysis

To add realism and believability to this story, the author occasionally inserts handwritten elements. This is a unique feature that is seen earlier in the book. We see the actual signatures of John and Lorraine when they sign "The Oath" and the graffiti that John writes on a desk at school. We also see drawings of the objects that Mr. Pignati memorizes in the game that he plays with them. They are not merely illustrations, they give the reader the sense that these are the actually drawings referred to in the text. This is an unusual, but quite effective, way to further bring a realistic feel to the book.

Again, we see Lorraine's psychoanalytical view of the world, and we see how John uses that to his advantage. He is a master at making up stories and getting what he wants. He often is able to convince Lorraine to do things against her better judgment. We, once again, witness the effects of peer pressure, a common problem facing teenagers and young adults.

We have had a glimpse at the relationships that John and Lorraine have with other adults in their lives. We know how they interact with their parents and teachers. The thing that makes Mr. Pignati unique to them is that he doesn't treat them like children. He is not surprised when these two show up to collect for the charity. He invites them in and offers them wine. He is genuinely happy to see them and talk to them. This has a big effect on the two kids. He is treating them like adults. Conversely, they have never met an adult who acts quite like Mr. Pignati. He loves to tell jokes, play games and go to the zoo. He doesn't act like an old man, or do the things they expect an adult to do. This creates a deep bond between him and the two kids right from the start.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Right after leaving Mr. Pignati's, John and Lorraine go to a store to cash the check and buy beer. Lorraine doesn't think John should cash the check, but he convinces her that if they don't cash it, then the old man will be suspicious and may call the police on them. John then starts talking about going to the zoo with the old man. He feels that they ought to do something with Mr. Pignati in return for taking his money. Lorraine is not convinced.

When Lorraine gets home, her mother is there waiting. Her mother is a private nurse that works with terminally ill patients. Her father left about fifteen years ago, and died about six years ago, so it is just Lorraine and her mother.

Lorraine's mother interrogates her about where she has been, and warns her about hanging around with boys. She thinks men and boys have only one thing on their mind. She then talks about her latest patient, who just passed away. She offers Lorraine some soup, which she took from her patient's pantry. Lorraine is bothered that her mother does this sort of thing a lot. Her mother doesn't think of it as stealing, her justification is that the clients don't pay her enough, so she evens it out by taking things that they won't miss. Her mother also has a deal with a local undertaker, who slips her an extra ten dollars when she sends business his way.

Lorraine's mother thinks she should skip school to help her clean house the next day, but Lorraine claims to have a test in Latin. Lorraine ponders what her mother would say if she knew that Lorraine dreams of being a writer. Later that night she calls John and asks if he still wants to go to the zoo the next day. They skip school, which is easy, since one of the girls in the Dean's office has a crush on John. John calls Mr. Pignati and they arrange to meet him at the zoo.

Lorraine feels sorry for the old man, who is so happy and excited to be at the zoo with them. She recollects a series of bad omens that should have convinced her to leave the zoo right away. She cites the peanut seller's bad attitude, a peacock attack and a strange kid in the nocturnal room of the Mammal Building as omens. John and Mr. Pignati really enjoy the nocturnal room, and Lorraine occupies herself with a quiz about snakes.

Afterwards, Mr. Pignati takes them to the monkey house to meet Bobo, who he calls "his best friend." Bobo is an ugly, vicious baboon with a bad attitude. Mr. Pignati talks to him and feeds him peanuts, smiling all the while. It is obvious that Mr. Pignati is really enjoying his visit with Bobo, so John and Lorraine decide to leave them alone for a while. They take a little train ride around the zoo for about twenty minutes and when they return, Mr. Pignati is still feeding peanuts to Bobo.

John begins mimicking the monkeys and gorillas and chimpanzees, and Lorraine joins in. Lorraine figures the Mr. Pignati is going to be upset with their childishness, but he surprises her by joining right in the game. The three of them continue taunting the apes with cries of "Uggauggaboo" until they have all of the primates in frenzy.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Once again, we get an insight into the relationships these teenagers have with adults in their lives. Not only does Lorraine's mother make her feel unattractive, but she also expresses her own disappointments in life by her attitudes towards Lorraine. Her mother, whose own relationship with Lorraine's father did not work out, tells Lorraine that men only want one thing. She warns her daughter not to trust boys and doesn't want her hanging around with them.

We also see that Lorraine's mother preaches a "do as I say, not as I do" mantra. She justifies her own dishonesty and stealing from her patients and doesn't see that she is doing anything wrong. She thinks that since she is underpaid, that it is all right to take things from her patients. She also thinks that it is acceptable for her to take payoffs from the funeral homes in return for referrals.

Lorraine is a smart girl and sees that what her mother is doing is wrong. She is a strong young lady and tries to convince her mother that skipping school to stay home and clean is not a good choice. Her mother's attitude is that subjects like Latin are a waste of time and Lorraine knows that her mother would object to her dream of being a writer. While Lorraine won't skip school to help her mother out, she does cut class to go on an adventure with John and Mr. Pignati.

The difference between Mr. Pignati and the other adults in the story is again shown when he joins the kids making monkey sounds at the zoo. They have never met an adult who is so willing to be playful and silly. Another endearing feature of Mr. Pignati is his love for Bobo, the ill-tempered baboon. Mr. Pignati just doesn't see this animal as mean or ugly. He refers to Bobo as his best friend, and his eyes light up as he feeds peanuts to the baboon for long stretches of time. This is truly a kind old man and we get a sense that he doesn't judge by appearances or have preconceived notions or stereotypes. He is accepting of John and Lorraine, just as he is accepting of his friendship with the baboon. John and Lorraine have probably never experienced this level of friendship and trust from an adult, especially one that is a stranger.

Lorraine also talks about bad omens on their visit to the zoo. We don't know what these omens mean, and she resists the urge to leave because of them, but we get a sense that she is foreshadowing something bad that will come of their visit to the zoo or their friendship with Mr. Pignati. She has done this previously, and the reader is left to anticipate what bad thing will happen to them or to the Pigman.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

John dismisses Lorraine's talk of bad omens. He had fun at the zoo and Mr. Pignati bought them lots of peanuts and candy and ice cream. He describes Mr. Pignati as harmless, although perhaps a little crazy. They even decide to visit Mr. Pignati the next day after school.

On their way to Mr. Pignati's house, they run into Norton and Dennis, who want to go to the cemetery and drink beer with them. John describes a special tomb where they hang out at the cemetery and talks about how lovely cemeteries are, unless you're dead, that is. He ruminates on death, decay and ghosts.

They go home for dinner before leaving to visit Mr. Pignati later that night. At dinner, John's parents, who he has nicknamed "Bore" and "Hyper," talk about getting John a part-time job where his father works. He has a seat on the Coffee Exchange and John's brother, Kenneth, is working there, too. John sees how stressful his father's job is and tells his parents that he is thinking about becoming an actor. John talks about how much strain there is on the guys that work at the Exchange, and how they all drop dead of heart attacks from the stress.

When they get over to Mr. Pignati's house, he is happy to see them and again offers them some wine. John can't remember his parents ever being happy to see him like this. Mr. Pignati proudly shows them around his house and tells them to make themselves at home. He makes them a dish or scungilli, which is something like snails in tomato sauce.

Lorraine excuses herself to use the bathroom and returns with an old photograph of Mr. Pignati's wife. They see him begin to tear up a bit before he changes the subject and tells them to look around the house while he gets more wine. While looking around, John finds a closet full of Mrs. Pignati's clothes, and in one drawer, he finds a booklet called "What Every Family Should Know." He looks a bit further, and is surprised to see all of Mrs. Pignati's jewelry, her Social Security card and paperwork for arranging her funeral.

Chapter 7 Analysis

We begin to see John exploring issues of life and death. While they drink at the cemetery, he thinks about bodies dying and decaying. He wonders about ghosts and an afterlife, and we see that John knows his father's job will probably cause him to die soon. John doesn't want the same kind of stressful life for himself. He wants to use his imagination and be an actor. He doesn't want to follow in the footsteps of his father and his brother and have a job on Wall Street that has so much pressure and so many ups and downs.

Mr. Pignati is different from the other adults that John and Lorraine know. The lonely old man is truly happy to see the two teenagers again and welcomes them into his house. He tells them to make themselves at home, and he truly means this. He allows them to look around and touch anything they want. When Lorraine finds the picture of his wife, we see sadness in Mr. Pignati's eyes. John and Lorraine suspect that she has not just gone to visit a sister in California. They think she may have left Mr. Pignati for good. Of course, when John finds the funeral home paperwork, he knows that Mrs. Pignati is dead, and that she is never coming home. John also looks at the pamphlet about funeral planning and wonders why real life problems, like death, are never dealt with in high school.

John gives a lot of thought to death. From the cemetery to the heart attacks common to stressed-out traders at the Exchange, he knows that death is very real and inevitable. His own wishes are for a life is fulfilling, before the inevitable happens. He cannot see how his brother can so easily follow in their father's footsteps to a job that causes men to have heart attacks at a young age. He sees the sadness in Mr. Pignati's eyes when the subject of his wife comes up, and he finds the funeral bill, he understands that sadness and Mr. Pignati's refusal to accept his wife's death.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

John tells Lorraine that Mrs. Pignati is dead. He says he found her funeral bill in the bedroom. Lorraine recalls that she had a feeling that Conchetta wasn't coming back, just by the look in Mr. Pignati's eyes when he talked about her. Lorraine is now saddened by Mr. Pignati's jokes, and reminded of a landlady who wouldn't admit that her husband had died and was never coming back. She ponders cases where couples die within a few days or weeks of each other and thinks that perhaps love is the strongest thing in the world.

John finds a charge card upstairs and Mr. Pignati explains how the department store charge works. Mr. Pignati explains that he got the card because his wife loves shopping for fancy food at Beekman's department store. Lorraine thinks about the many things that they must have enjoyed together as a couple.

Later, Lorraine's mother is discussing her latest patient. She says that this one only has a couple of months to live, but that he has sex on the brain and keeps trying to grab her. As Lorraine's mother leaves for work, Lorraine feels sorry for her and how hard she works as a nurse. Lorraine justifies her mother's picking on her because her own life has been so difficult. Though she often cries herself to sleep, she finds that now she just has to think of the Pigman's smiling face when she's feeling sad. She wishes her mother would be more like Mr. Pignati.

The next Saturday, John and Lorraine meet Mr. Pignati at the Staten Island ferry. Lorraine describes the drunks and bums they encounter and the tales that they tell. They take the ferry to Manhattan with Mr. Pignati and go to Beekman's Department Store. Lorraine says that she couldn't let John go alone because he would lose control and take advantage of Mr. Pignati's generosity.

Again, Lorraine sees omens. This time, there is a crazy women talking to herself saying that God told her death is coming. Lorraine ponders how talking to God makes people think you're crazy, when in the old days people would have called you a prophet.

Once inside Beekman's, Mr. Pignati loads his shopping cart with all sorts of fancy food and asks the kids what they would like to try. John picks out chocolate covered ants, just to be weird. Lorraine doesn't want Mr. Pignati spending all of his money, but he insists. On the way to the toy department, they pass through the women's underwear section. A saleslady asks Mr. Pignati if he'd like anything for his daughter, which makes Lorraine immediately reply that she isn't his daughter. When she sees the look on his face, she quickly tells the saleslady that she is his niece. The saleslady tries to sell them some nylon stockings, and Mr. Pignati insists on buying three pairs. Lorraine thinks of her mother and asks for the nylons in her mother's size. She wonders how she'll explain this windfall to her mother without getting in trouble.

When they get to the toy department, Lorraine expresses her annoyance with toys that are made of cheap plastic. She is disappointed that ships in bottles come in plastic now, and that the bottom of the bottle unscrews. She also talks about how many different weapons are mimicked in the toy department: "And there was the arsenal of course: guns, pistols, shotguns, slingshots, knives, and swords. It's no wonder kids grow up to be killers with all that rehearsal. There was enough artillery in Beekman's toy department to wipe out Red China and the Mau-Mau tribe of Africa, and I personally think some of the toy manufacturers could use a good course in preventive psychiatry."

In the pet shop, John teases the piranhas and Mr. Pignati talks to the monkeys. He is reminded of Bobo, his baboon friend at the zoo. John suggests that they feed the monkeys and an annoying store employee chastises them for this. Mr. Pignati decides to buy them roller skates, and Lorraine objects to his spending so much money on them. She finally agrees, because it is something absolutely silly, something that she would never be allowed to do at home. John and Lorraine wear their roller skates through the store and on to the escalator, laughing along with Mr. Pignati and having a wonderful time.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Again, the subject of death comes up. John and Lorraine now know that Mrs. Pignati is dead, but her husband still speaks of her as if she were alive. They understand how truly lonely he must be and they are kind when they agree to spend time with him. They see how much joy he gets out of sharing experiences with them. Lorraine, of course, doesn't want to take advantage of Mr. Pignati's generosity, but she does see the joy that it brings him, and she also enjoys being silly and childlike for a while with John and Mr. Pignati at the department store.

This book was written in 1968, with the war in Vietnam going on and anti-war protests all over America. Lorraine's discussion of all of the toy guns and weapons in Beekman's toy department doesn't mention the war, but does question the proliferation of violence in her society. Historically, the sixties was also the "Me Generation," and we see Lorraine and John questioning authority and believing that there is more to life than a good, but boring, job where you wear a suit to work every day. Lorraine wants to be a writer and John's ambition is to be an actor. Neither of them believes that their parents' generation would understand these creative occupations, or validate them as career choices. The book doesn't talk about the sixties, and the use of slang and colloquialisms is minimal, so the story stands the test of time. It probably could not have been written in the forties, but the story is timeless enough that it could have been written last week.

Paul Zindel, the author of *The Pigman*, was one of the first writers to actually write realistic stories for young adults. Before this book was published, stories tended to be set in a more idealistic world. Zindel's characters are open and straightforward about their relationships with their parents, teachers and even their other friends. They are not perfect, and John regularly smokes, drinks beer, and curses. A lot of their actions are explained by the way their parents have treated them. This was a new way of telling of

the teenage experience and really broke new ground for other young adult books that followed.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

John talks about Norton, a tough guy in their neighborhood, and a member of the group that they played the telephone marathon game with. He explains that Norton's mother allowed him to play with dolls, and that he became a neighborhood bully because of it. Norton is well known for shoplifting, and gained notoriety when he got caught stealing a bag of marshmallows. John is suspicious when Norton lures him to the cemetery for a beer and begins asking questions about Mr. Pignati. He asks if the old man has anything worth stealing.

John also talks about how his father, Bore, started John drinking beer. His dad would get a kick out of seeing John go around the house when he was about ten years old, emptying all of the beer glasses. Later, his father was diagnosed with sclerosis of the liver and had to quit drinking. After that, John felt like everything he did at home was wrong. He was constantly being told to be quiet, quit disturbing his mother, quit disturbing his father, and on and on. This is why John likes Mr. Pignati so much. The Pigman tells him to make himself at home and help himself to anything he likes. The Pigman always smiles when he says this, so John knows that he means it. John knows that he will be very upset if Norton tries to do anything to the old man.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Again, we see how different the relationship with Mr. Pignati is from the other adults in John's life. The old man is happy to let John be himself, unlike John's parents, whom he can no longer please. When Norton asks about Mr. Pignati, John becomes very protective of the old man and their relationship. John knows how much he values the Pigman's friendship and he knows that if Norton does anything to hurt Mr. Pignati, John will have to avenge this. In a way, the child-adult roles are reversed, because now John wants to be the old man's protector, and keep him safe from Norton.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Going to Mr. Pignati's is a regular habit for John and Lorraine now. Lorraine's mother continues to warn her about men, though Lorraine understands how much her mother was hurt when her father ran off with another woman. Lorraine has a picture of her parents when they were young and happy. This is how she likes to remember them. Her mother questions her again about the stockings she brought her. Lorraine explains that her mother will ask her the same questions over and over, just to make sure that Lorraine keeps telling the same story.

One snowy night, at Mr. Pignati's, they notice that he seems a little down. He tells them that when he visited Bobo at the zoo that day, the baboon would eat. Mr. Pignati is looking old and sick, and John and Lorraine decide that they must be honest with their friend. They confess that they were never working for a charity, that they are just high school kids. They wonder what his reaction will be to finding out that they had lied.

Mr. Pignati gets a sad look in his eyes and begins talking about his wife. He talks about how much he loved her and how they were each other's life. He finally tells them that Conchetta is dead.

To break the silence, Lorraine offers John some more candy. When he asks what kind it is, she tells him that he has been eating the chocolate covered ants from Beekman's. John runs to the bathroom, and the tension is broken when Mr. Pignati begins to laugh. John comes back into the room wearing his roller skates. Mr. Pignati wants to entertain them with another game, so he gives them paper and pencils and tells a story. At the end of the story, he asks the two to write down the characters that were responsible for the ending of the story. It is a complicated story, and the order in which you think the characters are responsible equates to the things that you find most important in your life.

In this psychological game, the order that John liked things was magic, sex, money, fun and love. Lorraine found the order of importance in her life to be magic, love, fun, sex and then money. After this game, John begins skating around the house. Soon Lorraine, and then Mr. Pignati, put on their roller skates and join him. They begin playing tag. Eventually, John decides to make the game more difficult, so he clomps up the stairs in his skates. Mr. Pignati follows, and as he is climbing the stairs, he stops and begins to double over. He grabs for his chest and falls.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Although they both regularly lie to their parents, John and Lorraine decide that they need to confess their dishonesty to Mr. Pignati. They value his friendship too much to risk lying to him, so they tell him about the charity worker hoax that led to their meeting.

In return, Mr. Pignati finally tells them the truth about his wife. Once they have confessed their lies, the friendly games resume. When they are having fun with Mr. Pignati, they forget that he is an old man, because he enjoys being silly and playing games as much as they do.

Lorraine's foreshadowing of death is mentioned again when she looks at the sadness in Mr. Pignati's eyes since Bobo would not eat his treats. Lorraine notices that Mr. Pignati looks ill, too. This is forgotten when they get into the fervor of playing tag on roller skates in the house. They have never known an adult like the Pigman, so they forget he is old until he collapses while running the stairs.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

John calls the police, and an ambulance takes Mr. Pignati to the hospital. John and Lorraine tell the police that they are Mr. Pignati's children so that they will be able to visit him in the hospital. Lorraine chides John for forgetting that Mr. Pignati was an old man and running up the stairs in skates. They yell at each other and then they comfort each other by saying that the old man isn't going to die.

The next day, they skip school and visit Mr. Pignati in the hospital. He is very happy to see them. They bring him his house keys and he tells them to keep them in case they want to use his house to watch television. Mr. Pignati also asks them to stop by the zoo and see Bobo.

John and Lorraine go back to Mr. Pignati's house and Lorraine decides to cook them some dinner. John wanders into the bedroom and tries on some of the old man's clothes. Ever the actor, John paints on a mustache and pretends to be a distinguished businessman. When Lorraine sees this, she wants to play the game, also. Therefore, she goes upstairs and changes into one of Conchetta's dresses, with makeup, high heels and a feather in her hair.

John tells her that she looks beautiful. They get into the spirit of the game, until John asks for a kiss. She tells him to stop, but he grabs her in his arms and kisses her, "It was the first time we had ever kissed. When I moved my lips away from hers, we just looked at each other, and somehow we were not acting anymore." They decide to go downstairs and eat dinner. They drink a toast to the Pigman.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Although it was a childish game that caused Mr. Pignati's collapse, John quickly regains his composure and calls for an ambulance. Thinking ahead, they tell the police that they are Mr. Pignati's children. When they visit the hospital, Mr. Pignati tells them that he trusts them to make themselves comfortable in his home while he is gone. The trust that this adult places in the two teenagers is so different from the distrust they constantly get from their parents. Alone in the old man's house, they play act a normal adult situation. Of course, their closeness is explored when they dress as adults and are alone in an adult world. This leads to their first kiss, although the feelings they have for each other have never been much of a secret.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

While Mr. Pignati is in the hospital recovering, John and Lorraine continue to "play house." Lorraine admits that she has been in love with John for a few months. We see John starting to comb his hair and wear aftershave, so the feeling is probably mutual. The week passes and by Friday, they are acting like an old married couple. They are getting on each other's nerves and Lorraine chides John for not taking out the trash. He gives in and they begin to clean up the house since Mr. Pignati will be coming home from the hospital the next day.

After they clean up, John starts checking out how much beer and wine is in the house. Lorraine asks him what he's doing and he explains that he wants to have a few friends over for a party that night. Lorraine thinks he's crazy, but once again, John convinces her. He tells her that the Pigman would want them to have a social life and enjoy having a few friends over for a quiet little drink.

Chapter 12 Analysis

For once we don't see Lorraine's "omens" warning of bad things to happen. We are, however, left to assume that this idea of John's is not a very good one. They, as teenagers, don't always understand the consequences of their actions. They just see that Mr. Pignati is happy when they are allowed to have fun, and so they justify the party as something that would make the old man happy. Of course, their own parents would never allow them to have friends over for any kind of a party, so John and Lorraine are taking advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

John really thinks that Mr. Pignati would want them to have this party. He admits that the old man would probably like to be present, though, because he wouldn't want to miss out on any of the fun. Several of their friends show up, since this is a special occasion, as John and Lorraine are never allowed to have parties at their own homes. John tells Dennis not to invite Norton because John doesn't trust him and doesn't want him in Mr. Pignati's house.

The party is quite successful and lots of kids show up. They have a band, and plenty of alcohol, and Lorraine passes around the chocolate covered ants. The party is in full swing when Norton arrives. He is upset that he wasn't invited. Lorraine is upset when John lets another girl use her roller skates, so she goes upstairs with Helen Kazinski and they put on some of Conchetta's dresses. Helen is kind of fat, and Lorraine worries that the dress might get ripped. John realizes that Norton isn't around, so he goes to look for him and finds him trying to steal some of Mr. Pignati's electrical equipment. John chases him downstairs, and Lorraine tells him that she sees a taxi pulling up outside. Mr. Pignati is coming up the front steps, and Norton is in the pig room, smashing the precious collection. The party quickly breaks up. The house is a wreck. John looks up as Mr. Pignati walks in the door. The old man looks at him, without his usual smile, and John passes out.

Chapter 13 Analysis

With no adults and no rules, the party quickly gets out of hand. The alcohol and the noise help fuel the chaos. When Norton shows up uninvited to try to steal some of Mr. Pignati's valuables, things are bad, but they continue to get worse. Again, we see the two teenagers who just wanted to have a little party and enjoy their last night in Mr. Pignati's house, and we see how they did not think of the consequences of their actions.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

The party breaks up and the police put John and Lorraine into a squad car to take them home. John is passed out in the back seat, still wearing his roller skates. Lorraine asks if Mr. Pignati is all right. She last saw him looking at Conchetta's dress that Helen Kazinski had ripped. The police officer tells her that the old man is crying, but they are lucky that he is not going to press charges. The cops want to know what kind of parents would let their kids have a party and destroy an old man's house. Lorraine pleads with the cops that her mother will beat her if she finds out. The cops take her to the door, still wearing Mrs. Pignati's ruffled dress. All that Lorraine's mother can ask is where her daughter's clothes are.

When they get inside, Lorraine's mother slaps her and then breaks down crying. Lorraine doesn't want to apologize, but feels empathy for the hard times that her mother has endured. Eventually she joins her mother in the kitchen and explains everything about their friendship with Mr. Pignati. She feels like her mother is actually beginning to understand her a little.

As Lorraine tries to sleep, she remembers the horrible condition they left Mr. Pignati's house in after the party. She wants him to know that they didn't deliberately rip the dresses or break the pigs. She wants him to understand that their actions weren't malicious; they were merely being kids. They were merely playing, and they didn't realize that there could be consequences for their actions.

The next day John tells her that his parents think he needs to visit a psychiatrist. They worry about Mr. Pignati and eventually call to apologize. He refuses their offer to come over and help him clean up the house, so they ask if he would like to meet them at the zoo. It has been a long time since he has seen Bobo, so he finally agrees. The kids go to the zoo, unsure whether Mr. Pignati will show up or not. John buys some peanuts for Bobo, and eventually, a taxi pulls up and drops off Mr. Pignati.

They all take the zoo train to the monkey house to visit Bobo. When they get there, Mr. Pignati calls out for his baboon friend. A zoo attendant tells them that Bobo died last week, of pneumonia. The attendant doesn't feel bad because he says that the baboon had one of the nastiest dispositions around. The events of the past 24 hours are just too much for Mr. Pignati, and at the news of his friend's death he collapses and dies.

Chapter 14 Analysis

After the disastrous ending to their party, John and Lorraine realize the enormity of the situation and the consequences of letting the situation get out of hand. Lorraine even shares with her mother the truth about their friendship with Mr. Pignati. John and Lorraine feel terrible for upsetting and disappointing the old man. They were simply

being kids, because they thought it would be okay. They were playing, because Mr. Pignati had taught them that it was okay to play and to be kids. After the fact, they realize that they have hurt their friend and taken advantage of his generous nature.

They try to apologize and suggest that they go to the zoo together because they know that seeing Bobo will make Mr. Pignati happier. The bad omens that Lorraine sensed about the zoo and about death turn into their worst nightmare as they watch their friend die of a broken heart upon hearing of Bobo's death.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

As John kneels beside Mr. Pignati while waiting for an ambulance, he thinks about all that has happened since they met the Pigman. Lorraine had accused him of not caring about the old man after the party, but John does care. It's just painful for him to admit.

"What did she want from me – to tell the truth all the time? To run around saying it did matter to me that I live in a world where you can grow old, be alone and have to get down on your hands and knees and beg for friends? A place where people just sort of forget about you because you get a little old and your mind's a bit senile or silly? Did she think that didn't bother me underneath? That I didn't know if we hadn't come along the Pigman would've just lived like a vegetable until he died alone in that dump of a house?"

John continues to think about life and death. He remembers Lorraine saying of his smoking, "You must want to die." He thinks that perhaps he would rather be dead than live the lives of most of the adults he knew. When the ambulance comes, John says good-bye to Mr. Pignati and goes to find Lorraine. Her reaction is to scream, "We murdered him." To this John wants to say, "He had no business fooling around with kids…he had no right going backward. When you grow up, you're not supposed to go back. Trespassing – that's what he'd done." He takes Lorraine's hand, and they look at each other. They both understood that they had trespassed, too.

Chapter 15 Analysis

After Mr. Pignati's death, John and Lorraine understand more about themselves and their relationships with the adults in their life. They understand why their relationship with Mr. Pignati was so special. He was so different from the other adults that they knew. Even John cared deeply for the lonely old man. They come to terms with the man's death and comprehend why their actions may have complicated things. They now recognize that even small things can have grave consequences. The theme of death is prevalent throughout their story. The foreshadowing from the beginning of the book indicates that Mr. Pignati will die. The good that comes to them from his death, though, is a deeper understanding of life.

From the Oath at the beginning of the story, we know that John and Lorraine are committed to writing a "memorial epic" about the Pigman. They vow to record only the facts. They do an admirable job of this, as each one tells alternating chapters. They not only write about the facts, but also explore the feelings that are inside of them. Some of these feelings are so deep inside, that they don't even share them with each other. Meeting Mr. Pignati and getting to know him exposes these two young people to a very different way of looking at life. Their parents and teachers don't have time for them, or

lie to them, or are annoyed by them. Mr. Pignati accepts them at face value, just as he accepts Bobo, the bad-tempered baboon. The Pigman is the kindest, most generous adult they have ever known. He wants them to have fun, to experience life, to be childish. He joins them in this quest for fun.

Before they met, Mr. Pignati was lonely and broken hearted over the death of his wife. He pretends that she is just visiting a sister in California. He doesn't even admit to himself that she is dead. Once he gets to know John and Lorraine, he feels he can trust them with this most painful secret. They understand. John and Lorraine brought a lot of joy into the last few months of Mr. Pignati's life. Mr. Pignati opened their eyes to a new way of looking at life.

Mr. Pignati allowed their dreams to flourish. They learned to trust an adult and to be honest with themselves and those around them. They learned that it was okay to be silly sometimes. However, they learned that silliness and irresponsibility could go too far, and when this happens, the consequences may be too high. Their tribute to Mr. Pignati expresses the love they developed for this lonely old man. They will always remember his kindness, his generosity and his smile. They won't forget the lessons he taught them and the fun that they had together. They understand life better and they understand death.

John and Lorraine realize that it isn't always acceptable in our society for an adult to act like a child. John says that once you reach adulthood, you're not supposed to go backward. He thinks this contributed to Mr. Pignati's death. Lorraine's foreshadowing earlier in the book really sums up the reason that the old man died, though. He died of a broken heart. In his case, his heart was first broken when his wife passed away. It was broken again when John and Lorraine were disrespectful and allowed his memories to be destroyed when their party got out of hand. The final straw was when Bobo, his best friend, died. He loved the mean old baboon unconditionally, no matter what others thought about the animal. Bobo was the last thing that made Mr. Pignati happy, and when Bobo died, Mr. Pignati could no longer find a reason to keep living.

Characters

The Bore

See Mr. Conlan

John Conlan

John Conlan is a fifteen-year-old high-school sophomore who lives in Staten Island, New York, and is best friends with Lorraine Jensen, another student. He is good-looking, charming, and highly intelligent, but is bored with school and with life in general, and his humorless, joyless family life doesn't help. His father, known as "The Bore" to John, is a broker on the coffee exchange. The Bore is interested only in money and stocks, and urges John to get a similar job on the exchange as soon as he's able. John says, "I've been over to the Exchange and seen all the screaming and barking the Bore has to do just to earn a few bucks, and if he thought I was going to have any part of that madhouse, he had another thing coming."

John is also dismayed by his father's stressful lifestyle, and comments, "He's almost sixty years old, and I know he's not going to be around much longer. All the guys on the Exchange drop dead of heart attacks." John's father is oblivious to his son's lack of interest in finance, or to his creative talent, and responds with "Don't be a jackass" when John tells him he wants to be an actor. John's mother is an anxious, obsessively clean woman whose perfectionism fills up her whole life. Both of his parents constantly extol the virtues of his older brother, Kenneth, who is eleven years older than John and who works on the Exchange, just like John's father. John's life at home is hedged in by rules: his mother tells him what to eat and drink and cautions him not to make a mess and not to disturb his father, and his father urges him to become a responsible citizen, to get off the phone, cut his hair, and not disturb his mother, among many other things.

In response to their colorless style of living, John makes his own life more colorful. He exaggerates, lies, and invents dramatic pranks to amuse himself and others. He sets off firecrackers in the boys' bathroom, organizes his whole class to roll rotten apples across the classroom floor whenever there's a substitute teacher and, when his father puts a lock on the family phone to prevent John from using it, John fills the lock with glue so that the Bore can't use it either. Then John figures out a way to dial it anyway, so he's the only one who can use it. With Lorraine Jensen and some other friends, he begins a campaign of telephone games, culminating in one game in which the teenagers tell outlandish lies and try to keep a stranger talking for as long as possible.

In addition, John drinks and smokes more than any other boy Lorraine has ever known. His drinking is a habit started by his father, who used to give John beer when he was a boy and then praise him and laugh at him. He knows drinking and smoking are bad for

him, but persists because his life is so oppressive that he feels there's no point in living a long life anyway.

Underneath his colorful exterior, John is sensitive and compassionate. Lorraine suspects that this is why he became her friend, because he had compassion for her loneliness. They are allies because both of them are lonely and alienated from their families.

Mr. Conlan

John Conlan's father, whom John calls "the Bore," works on the Coffee Exchange on Wall Street, and his life is totally subsumed in his job. His son says, "If he sells more than two hundred lots in a day, he's in a good mood. Anything less than that, and there's trouble." He is bothered by his son's apparent flightiness and his creative and disobedient streak, and notices only his superficial qualities, such as his long hair and his constant wisecracking humor. He doesn't see his son as he is□creative, intelligent, and talented□but wants to force him into a mold and remake him as a carbon copy of himself. He tells John, "At your age I was working hard, not floundering around in a fool's dream world."

Mr. Conlan was a compulsive drinker for most of John's childhood, and encouraged John to drink, too. When John was a toddler and young boy, his father would give him sips of beer at parties, and everyone present would laugh as he downed them. "A chip off the old block," Mr. Conlan said proudly, making it seem like drinking was a sign of manhood. Mr. Conlan was eventually diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver and had to quit drinking, but by that time his son was used to alcohol and kept drinking. Of course, ironically, Mr. Conlan still doesn't think of him as a man.

Mrs. Conlan

John Conlan's mother, whom John calls "hyper" and "the old lady," is terrified of conflict, dust, dirt, and disorder of any kind, and spends her time dashing around cleaning, polishing silverware, monitoring her husband's and John's moods, and trying to smooth over the clashes between them. Her perfectionism makes it impossible for her to really listen to or converse with her son or her husband; the family's house, which she keeps as neat as a museum, is impossible to relax in because everything is either covered with plastic or is offlimits.

Hyper

See Mrs. Conlan

Lorraine Jensen

Lorraine Jensen is a fifteen-year-old highschool sophomore who lives in the same Staten Island neighborhood as John Conlan, her best friend. She is intelligent and thoughtful, is interested in psychology, and wants to be a writer. She moved into John's neighborhood at the beginning of freshman year, and the first few weeks were torture for her. She was depressed and isolated because she didn't know anyone, and she was shy and insecure about her looks. She met John on the bus, when he sat next to her one day and started laughing. At first she was offended, thinking he was laughing at her, but then she began laughing, too, and from that day on, they were friends.

Lorraine calls herself "paranoid," because she's worried that others don't think much of her, but this is clearly a response to the way her mother has always treated her. Her mother has always told her how ugly and clumsy she is, and at the same time, repeatedly warns her about the evil intentions of men and boys and tells her never to be alone with them. Perhaps because of her sensitivity, she is very compassionate toward others, particularly people she perceives as underdogs. Her compassion is unusual among teenagers; for example, she writes movingly of a poor teacher who keeps her elderly and ill mother in the living room of her apartment, and about Mr. Pignati, whose wife has died.

Mrs. Jensen

Lorraine's mother, a private-duty nurse, has raised Lorraine by herself. Lorraine's father left when she was pregnant with Lorraine, after cheating on her. He has since died, and the burden of single parenthood has fallen heavily on Mrs. Jensen. Since then, she has been fixated on how terrible her husband was, and how terrible men are, in general. This bitterness has soured her life, as well as her relationship with her daughter.

She's constantly making negative comments about Lorraine's hair, clothes, weight, and behavior, and Lorraine says, "If I made a list of every comment she's made about me, you'd think I was a monstrosity." Mrs. Jensen is very pretty when she lets her hair down and relaxes, but this seldom happens; she carries a weight of sadness and depression with her, and has a cynical attitude toward the terminally ill patients she takes care of. Because she believes she's not being paid enough, she steals things from them to even up the score: light bulbs, cleaning supplies, food. She has no shame about this, and no shame about the fact that when a patient dies, she refers their family to a funeral home that pays her ten dollars whenever she sends them some business. Money, or the lack of it, is constantly on her mind, and overtakes all other values. Instead of encouraging Lorraine to stay in school and get good grades so she can do well in the future, she asks her to stay home and clean the kitchen□with cleanser stolen from a dying patient. "I think you could take a year off from that school and not miss anything," she says, and Lorraine knows that if she told her mother she wants to be a writer, she'd never hear the end of it.

Norton Kelly

Norton Kelly is a student in Lorraine's and John's class, and John describes him as "a social outcast." He was once caught stealing a bag of marshmallows from a supermarket, and ever since then he's been taunted as "The Marshmallow Kid." He has a mean streak, and when he finds out that John and Lorraine have access to Mr. Pignati's apartment, he asks if Pignati has anything worth stealing. His mean streak started in childhood, when he got caught playing with dolls and all the other kids harassed him about it; after that, he went berserk and "turned tough guy all the way," according to John. From then on, he spent his time picking fights, throwing stones, beating up people, and calling all the other boys sissies. Since then, Norton has become a thief, shoplifting and stealing whenever he can. John says, "Then he got even worse, until now his eyes even drift out of focus when you're talking to him. He's the kind of guy who could grow up to be a killer." At a party in The Pigman's house, Norton steals an oscilloscope and breaks the old man's precious pig figurines, which were one of the few reminders of The Pigman's dead wife Mr. Pignati had left.

The Old Lady

See Mrs. Conlan

The Pigman

See Angelo Pignati

Angelo Pignati

Angelo Pignati, called "The Pigman" by Lorraine and John, is an Italian man in his late fifties. Trusting and good-natured, he offers to give them ten dollars when they call him up and pretend to be with a charity. The first impression they have of him is that he has a "jolly voice," and when Lorraine, who's making the call, starts laughing out of nervousness, he asks what the joke is, so he can laugh at it, too, and then tells her a joke. He tells her his wife, who's in California visiting his sister, loves his jokes, and then he talks on and on, telling joke after joke. Lorraine realizes that he's "terribly nice . . . but also lonely."

He is both, and he's also poor; his house is rundown and messy, but when they go over to his house, he meets them with a huge smile. Unlike their families, he's filled with a sense of enjoyment of life despite his problems. He plays games with them, invites them to go to the zoo with him, and shows them his wife's collection of pig figurines, which she began when she married him and changed her name to Pignati.

Mr. Pignati's wife is actually dead, and he has few friends, but he goes to the zoo frequently to visit and feed his "best friend," Bobo, a vicious baboon. The zookeeper

dislikes Bobo because he's mean-tempered, but Mr. Pignati is so pure of heart that he can see no evil in anyone or anything, and believes Bobo is filled with all the love and kindness he himself feels.

Unlike the joyless families of John and Lorraine, Mr. Pignati knows how to have fun. Instead of filling their conversation with rules, he offers them wine and other delicacies, takes them on a shopping spree for luxury foods, buys them (and himself) roller skates, and the three of them roller skate throughout his house and have impromptu parties whenever the teenagers visit. With him, they can be children in a way that they never could with their parents.

Conchetta Pignati

Conchetta is Angelo's wife, and at the time of the story, she has been dead for several months. She is present in the story, however, through his memories of good times with her and through the pleasant habits he has continued: cherishing his collection of pigs, shopping for gourmet foods, and visiting the zoo. She was a sweet woman who always laughed at his jokes, and her possessions are still in his house.

Themes

Relationships with Parents

Both John and Lorraine have poor relationships with their parents, who regard them as disturbing burdens. Lorraine's father is dead, and her mother makes ends meet by working as a privateduty nurse. Mrs. Jensen's ethics and values are questionable: she steals from her patients, gets kickbacks from the undertakers she refers patients' families to, and urges Lorraine to stay home from school so she can clean the apartment. Lorraine feels sorry for her mother, but it's evident that these issues make her deeply uncomfortable. In addition, Mrs. Jensen projects her fears about men into Lorraine's life, hassling her about any contact she might have with boys, how dangerous boys are, and how men only have one thing in mind. These comments are not conducive to helping Lorraine develop a healthy understanding of adult relationships, so she must rely on her own instincts and on her friendship with John and Mr. Pignati to learn about what men are really like.

John's parents regard him as a disturbance that must be controlled, molded, and shaped into a carbon copy of his father, who leads an emotionally restricted and stressful life as a trader on the Coffee Exchange. They view John's energy, desire for fun, and dramatic talent as liabilities rather than gifts. Their household, like Mrs. Jensen's, is cold and not nurturing; he is constantly compared to his brother, who according to his parents is an ideal son. This coldness and comparison to an ideal he does not want to emulate foster a sense of alienation and rebellion in John, and this alienation and rebellion in turn prevent him from focusing his energy on anything productive.

Consequences

John and Lorraine, like many teenagers, have little sense of the consequences of their actions, and they learn that their acts have consequences only when it's too late to change anything. At first, they tell themselves that they're just having fun just going over to Mr. Pignati's, just having a little party, just having a good time. The party, of course, gets way out of hand, and the shock eventually leads to Mr. Pignati's death. They both realize that they were involved to some degree in his death, but differ in the amount of responsibility they're willing to take. John doesn't take full responsibility, but Lorraine does, as she says, "We murdered him."

Near the end of the book, however, John says after Mr. Pignati's death, "We had trespassed too been where we didn't belong, and we were being punished for it. Mr. Pignati had paid with his life. But when he died something in us had died as well." This is not an explicit claiming of responsibility on John's part, but the reader senses that he isn't going to be throwing any more wild parties. As he says, "There was no one else to

blame anymore. . . . And there was no place to hide." He has realized that his actions will have consequences, sometimes dire, and he will have to answer for them.

Life and Death

The book is filled with images and questions about life and death. Lorraine's father is dead, and her mother comes home daily with gripes and callous words about her dying patients; for example, of one old man, she says, "I wish this one would hurry up and die." She compares different funeral homes, considering which one will offer her a bigger kickback if she refers clients to them. Her callous attitude toward death is balanced by Lorraine's extreme sensitivity to suffering and death. This sensitivity leads her to feel sympathy for Mr. Pignati, who still suffers from the loss of his wife.

In Mr. Pignati's house, John and Lorraine find documents from Conchetta Pignati's funeral and read them with mingled sadness, horror, and fascination. Zindel reproduces some of these documents verbatim in the book, perhaps because most young people would be as interested in this glimpse of the adult world as Lorraine and John are.

Before Mr. Pignati's death, John has been unaffected by death, although several of his relatives have died. He didn't feel close to them, so the body in the casket looked "just like a doll." He says, "It gave me a feeling like being in Beekman's toy department to tell the truth□everything elaborately displayed." Because he was emotionally unconnected to the deceased, he is remote from the situation, viewing it in a superficial, childish manner. However, he is aware that he does this to avoid dealing with his fear of death: "Anything to get away from what was really happening." All this changes, of course, when Mr. Pignati dies and John is personally touched by the loss. He can't hide anymore, can't disconnect like he has in the past.

In addition, John, who feels dispossessed and alienated by his family, has picked up a number of self-destructive habits, such as smoking and drinking, and at one point Lorraine tells him, "You must want to die." He doesn't really have an answer for this, and near the end of the book he says, "Maybe I would rather be dead than to turn into the kind of grown-up people I knew." However, he realizes that this is not the answer either, and says with a new resolve, "Our life would be what we made of it□nothing more, nothing less."

Style

Point of View

Zindel's *The Pigman* is told from the point of view of its two main protagonists, who claim they are typing the story in the school library as the librarian, who thinks they're working on a book report, looks on. Chapters written by Lorraine alternate with chapters written by John; both tell the story in the breezy but honest and irreverent style of adolescents, focusing on action more than on internal feelings, motivation, or consequences, although these do sometimes appear in the narrative.

By using two narrators with slightly different points of view to relate the story, Zindel gives the reader a more complete picture of the narrative. In many cases, John or Lorraine will go back and comment on something the other one has written, giving their own version of the events.

Extracts from "Real Life"

An interesting feature of the book is the occasional insertion of handwritten elements, such as John and Lorraine's signatures on an "Oath" to tell the truth about the incidents described in the book; some graffiti John writes on a desk; and some pencil- and-paper games Mr. Pignati plays with them. The book also has a page from a booklet on funeral planning, a bill for a funeral, and a piece torn out from an advice column. These elements add realism and immediacy to the story, making it even more believable.

Foreshadowing

In keeping with teenagers' tendency toward drama, Lorraine frequently notes "omens" that, in hindsight, she believes should have warned her that something terrible was going to happen. This foreshadowing is not subtle; for example, she describes her visit to the zoo with John and Mr. Pignati, where a woman selling peanuts is rude to her. "That was the first omen," she writes. "I should have left right on the spot." The second omen occurs when a peacock, seeing that she has a bag of peanuts in her hand, chases her, and a third one occurs in the Mammal Building, where she sees a child who is watching the people who've come to watch the vampire bats. "He made me feel as though I was a bat in a cage and he was on the outside looking at me. It all made me very nervous," she writes. In another omen, when she and John go downtown with Mr. Pignati, she sees a mentally ill woman who keeps repeating "Death is coming. God told me death is coming." In another scene, Lorraine dreams that she finds a long black coffin in Mr. Pignati's house. Although these "omens" might seem like ordinary occurrences to many readers, or in some cases, logical consequences of her fears about Mr. Pignati's survival after his heart attack, Lorraine's willingness to read a more global and deeper meaning into them is typical of the teenage point of view, and also

warns readers that some as yet-unidentified disaster will occur in the course of the book.

Dialogue

Zindel's style is heavily dependent on dialogue, perhaps because of his background as a playwright. The dialogue is skillfully written and extremely natural; Zindel has a true ear for the way teenagers, and adults, talk to each other. In addition, because the book is "written" by John and Lorraine in alternating chapters, even the narrative or descriptive parts of the book have a unique teenage flavor. The book begins:

> Now, I don't like school, which you might say is one of the factors that got us involved with this old guy we nicknamed the Pigman. Actually, I hate school, but then again most of the time I hate everything.

Artfully, Zindel kept the book from becoming dated by using language that sounds like slang, but has a minimum of slang terms, which can quickly become stale for readers. In chapter 3, John explains this principle, which Zindel seems to have adopted: "I really hate it when a teacher has to show she isn't behind the times by using some expression which sounds so up-to-date you know for sure she's behind the times." Instead of using slang current at the time the book was written, Zindel has his teenage characters use language that suggests slang, with words such as "dimwit," "nutty," and "crazy," and phrases such as "five-finger discount," "putrid brand of beer," and "these two amoebae" (referring to two delinquent boys). John calls his mom "The Hyper" or "The Old Lady" and he calls his dad "The Bore."

Instead of using curse words, he tells the reader that he will use the symbol "@#$%" for "a mild curse□like the kind you hear in the movies"□and "3@#$%" for a "revolting curse," "the raunchiest curse you can think of." This use of symbols has two benefits for Zindel and the reader: readers can insert whatever curses they are familiar with, thus keeping the book current, and because Zindel doesn't spell out the offending words, adult readers will have no objection to his use of them in a young adult novel.

Historical Context

The Pigman was written in the late 1960s, a time when American society was in an uproar. Protests against the Vietnam War, the growth of the Civil Rights and feminist movements, and a vigorous celebration of teenagers and young adults as the new, free generation were set against those who wanted to preserve the status quo and traditional values. Zindel's book was groundbreaking in its truthful depiction of teenagers who were not respectful to their teachers, whose parents had failed them, and who engaged in actions adults would disapprove of□such as minor vandalism, drinking alcohol, and smoking. Before the publication of *The Pigman*, few books for young adults were so open and truthful; instead, books tended to portray an ideal world in which adults wished teens would live.

Although Lorraine and John love their parents, they are open in their criticism of how their parents have failed them, a common complaint of the younger generation during the 1960s and early 1970s. "Never trust anyone over 35" was a commonly heard phrase among rebellious youths, who believed there was more to life than wearing a suit and making a living. As John tells his father, "I just don't want to wear a suit every day and carry an attaché case and ride a subway. I want to be *me*. Not a phony in the crowd." This celebration of creativity and individualism, which when taken to an extreme led the '60s generation to be labeled "The Me Generation," is typical of young people of that time. John's father, uncomprehending and scornful, insists that John's ambition to be an actor is "a fool's dream world," a comment typical of the older generation of that time. Interestingly, John's brother Kenneth, who is eleven years older, has remained on the older generation's side of the divide: he has accepted his father's values and works on Wall Street.

Another feature typical of the younger generation of that time is a pervasive distrust of anyone in authority, such as teachers, police officers, and parents. Both John and Lorraine have vast areas of their lives their parents know nothing about. Although Lorraine is less scornful of her mother than John is of his parents, she realizes that her mother is too wounded to help her or to understand what she's involved in, and she lies to her mother about what she's up to. John is more bitterly disappointed by his parents, and shows it by blatant disobedience and backtalk. When the police show up after Mr. Pignati's heart attack, John calls them "snotty" and "dumb," and both he and Lorraine lie to the police about being Mr. Pignati's children. He also says, after they leave, "They were probably anxious to get along on the rounds of the local bars and collect their graft for the week." Lorraine, who is not as cynical, is angered by this comment and tells John she hopes he needs the police someday but can't find an officer to help him.

It's interesting that Zindel chose not to mention any of the political and social events, such as widespread protests, riots, and rallies, as well as the Vietnam War, which were taking place at the time that he wrote the book. Perhaps he did this in order to avoid making the book seem dated; more likely, he chose to do this because it's true to life. Many teenagers are unaware of political and social events, or only peripherally affected.

For many teens, life at school, interactions with parents, and activities with friends take center stage in their lives.

Critical Overview

The Pigman is widely acknowledged as a turning point in young adult literature. According to Jack Davis Forman in *Presenting Paul Zindel*, Zindel's "commitment to write realistically about the concerns of teenagers" set his books apart from "the previous genre of teen fiction calcified in the gender and age stereotypes of the 1950s." Forman quoted Kenneth Donelson and Alleen Nilssen, whose survey, *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, noted that *The Pigman* "established a new type of adolescent fiction in which teenagers dealing with interpersonal or societal problems were depicted with candor and seriousness."

As Forman noted, previous books had portrayed teenagers as adults wished they were, or thought they should be, and were "pedestrian, predictable, and formulaic." Zindel was one of the first writers to show teenagers from a teenage point of view, unfiltered by adult notions of right, wrong, or what their behavior should be. According to Forman, a reviewer in *Horn Book* called *The Pigman* "a now book," and commented that few books were "as cruelly truthful about the human condition." Forman also noted that a *New York Times* reviewer wrote that the book had "the right combination of the preposterous and the sensible," but commented that Zindel's overt explanation of the book's "moral" was patronizing to readers. Forman also quoted *Publishers Weekly* reviewer Lavinia Russ, who remarked on her excitement at discovering such a skilled new writer by saying she felt "like the watcher of the skies when a new planet swam into its ken."

In *English Journal*, Loretta Clarke praised the book, except for the ending; like the *New York Times* reviewer, she felt that the last three lines were weak:

Baboons.
Baboons.
They build their own cages, we could almost hear the
Pigman whisper, as he took his children with him.

"These three lines intrude upon the story," Clarke wrote, but commented that otherwise, Zindel "has reflected through his adolescent writers an adolescent view of life."

In *Teacher Librarian*, Teri Lesesne wrote that the book was "one of those touchstone books that set apart novels for adolescents," that it "set the standard for writers to follow," and that it "is considered by many to be the first truly YA [young adult] book."

The book was listed as one of the Child Study Association of America's Children's Books of the Year for 1968, and won the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award in 1969. It was also listed as one of the American Library Association's Best Young Adult Books in 1975.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2

Critical Essay #1

Winters is a freelance writer and has written for a wide variety of educational publishers. In this essay, she considers themes of aging and death in Paul Zindel's The Pigman*.*

Throughout *The Pigman*, all of the characters reveal their attitudes toward aging and, particularly, death. Death is frequently mentioned throughout the story, and one of the main themes of the book is how awareness of death and its finality eventually leads John and Lorraine to mature and take responsibility for their lives. This is not a lesson they could have learned from their families, or at school. As the book shows, most of the adults they encounter are not supportive, are unhelpful, and are too caught up in their own problems to help the teenagers sort out the answers to the deep questions they carry in their hearts. It takes the Pigman's life, and his death, to make them realize that they need to change their attitudes and their behavior toward both life and death.

Lorraine's mother, Mrs. Jensen, who ironically works as a private nurse for elderly and terminally ill people, has a callous attitude towards death. She steals things from her patients, calls them names like "old fossil," and is unmoved by their death, as shown by one of her conversations with Lorraine. Lorraine, who is far more sensitive, asks about the patient, "Did he die?" Her mother replies, "Of course he died. I told his daughter two days ago he wasn't going to last the week. Put some coffee water on." When referring to another patient, Lorraine's mother remarks, "I wish this one would go ahead and croak because her husband is getting a little too friendly lately." She's so consumed by her own past problems with her husband that she has no thought for the suffering of the sick woman she's taking care of.

Similarly, Mrs. Jensen is so wrapped up in her need for money that even a patient's death becomes a financial opportunity to look forward to. She gloats over the fact that the undertaker gives her ten dollars for every customer she refers to him, and she notes that she may switch to referring patients' families to another funeral home "when the next one croaks," because she's heard that they will give twenty dollars for the same favor.

John's father developed liver disease from excessive drinking, and although he quit drinking, his diagnosis evidently didn't make him reflect very deeply about his life. He lives a circumscribed, joyless, almost mechanical life; his mood is determined by how many lots he sells in a day, and he considers anything other than work to be "a waste of time." His job is extremely stressful, so stressful that John can't imagine doing it: "I've been over to the Exchange and seen all the screaming and barking he has to do just to earn a few bucks," he writes. Mr. Conlan is aware that eventually, all this "screaming and barking" and accumulated stress of his job will probably kill him, and he uses the threat of his own death as leverage to try and get John to agree to take over his business: "The business will be half yours, and you know it. I can't take the strain much longer." Mr. Conlan also reminds John, "Your mother isn't going to be around forever either, you know. When she's dead, you're going to wish to God you'd been nicer to her." This use of death as a tool to try and control his son's behavior is ineffective;

although John is secretly disturbed by the fact that his parents will die someday, he's angered by his father's manipulation and negative attitude toward John's true dreams.

Mrs. Conlan never mentions death, just as she never mentions anything "unpleasant." Her days are spent in a whirl of anxious cleaning, smoothing things over, hovering between her husband and son. Whenever anything unpleasant arises, she either leaves the room, begins cleaning, or offers falsely cheery distractions, such as asking "Do you both want whipped cream and nuts on your strawberry whirl?" during an argument between John and his father.

Lorraine is more sensitive than either her mother or John about sickness, aging, and death. She tries to get John to stop smoking, she's bothered by her mother's crass attitudes towards the patients, and she is sympathetic to the situation of a teacher at her school whose aging and ill mother lives in the teacher's living room. "Who would want to marry a woman that keeps her sick mother in a bed right in the living room?" she wonders, thinking about how it must feel to be that teacher. As the story progresses, she notes morbid "omens" that, in hindsight, seem to indicate that something bad was going to happen, but also comments that she didn't see their meaning at the time they occurred. Unlike John, she accepts full responsibility for Mr. Pignati's death.

When Lorraine hears that Mr. Pignati's wife is dead, she realizes for the first time what a loss it must have been for him. All the things they shared□interests, activities, eating meals together, conversation□are gone. Of all the characters in the book, she's the only one who has any comprehension of the depth of his loss.

Despite the fact that Mr. Pignati can't even admit that his wife is dead, he is actually the only person in the book who is really confronting the depth of sadness and grief that death elicits in those left behind. He tries as hard as he can to believe that she's really only visiting his sister in California, not gone forever, because the pain of her loss is so great. Through his friendship with John and Lorraine, however, he comes to feel safe enough to begin dealing with his loss, and invites them to celebrate her personality and enjoyment in life by shopping for delicacies and visiting the zoo, things she loved. This enjoyment of life is the gift that he gives John and Lorraine□a gift they never received from their own families.

When Bobo the baboon dies, the zoo attendant who has looked after him has the same attitude toward his death that Mrs. Jensen has toward her patients. He says, "Can't say I feel particularly sorry about it because that baboon had the nastiest disposition around here." He is oblivious to the fact that Mr. Pignati loved the baboon and that his death is a devastating loss, just as Mrs. Jensen is oblivious to the fact that her patients' families may love them and grieve them deeply.

John, Lorraine, and some of the other kids from school like to hang out at the local cemetery, which they see mainly as a quiet place where they can drink and smoke in peace, since adults rarely go there. They reflect briefly on the people who are buried there, but it's in a distant, almost amused way□they use the presence of the dead as a sort of prop to scare each other, but they never think that someday, they, too, will be

buried there. John lies on the grass and imagines that a buried corpse will stick its hands up through the earth and grab him, but then reflects that he would actually love to see a ghost, because he has no faith that there's any sort of life after this one, which is dreary enough. He writes, "I'm looking for anything to prove that when I drop dead there's a chance I'll be doing something a little more exciting than decaying." He envisions death as quick and immediate, not preceded by the years or months of suffering and loneliness experienced by Mrs. Jensen's patients, or, later in the book, by Mr. Pignati. And he doesn't reflect on what death really means—that life is fundamentally short, eventually it will end, and that ultimately, only he is responsible for what he does with his life.

John is aware that his father was once ill with liver disease and that he will probably die at a relatively young age because of the stress of his job, but he still half-jokes about it, not considering how the loss may affect him: "All the guys at the Exchange drop dead of heart attacks. They gather around this circle and bellow out bids all day long . . . " He is cynical about his parents' death and is unmoved when his father mentions that his mother will die someday, because death is not yet real to him. He responds, "Oh Dad, can't you see all I want to do is be individualistic?" Because John has never experienced the loss of a truly loved one through death, his father's words are just an empty threat, a game parents play to manipulate their kids and make their kids feel guilty, and this game makes John feel frustrated and angry.

John has seen dead people before, when he attended funerals of distant relatives. Because he is so alienated from his family, the deaths didn't mean much to him, and he was unmoved at the funerals, where even seeing the dead people didn't bother him. He viewed them as if they were large stuffed dolls, and said, "So many things to look at. Anything to get away from what was really happening." In saying this, he has found one source of his unhappiness: alienation, detachment, disconnection, which is fostered by the emotional disconnection of his family.

When John finds a pamphlet on funeral planning while snooping around Mr. Pignati's house, death starts becoming more real, and this proximity gives him "the creeps." For the first time, he reflects on how the various adults in his life, and his teachers at school, are really not preparing him, or any of the other kids, for life. They may learn about literature, for example, but, he notes, "I don't think there's a single kid in that whole joint who would know what to do if somebody dropped dead." These words, of course, turn out to be prophetic, because not long after, Mr. Pignati has his first heart attack, and he and Lorraine are stunned. John does know what to do—he calls the police—but emotionally, both John and Lorraine are stunned, frightened, and angry, and for the rest of the book, they're desperately trying to make sense of their pain, or escape from it.

When they visit Mr. Pignati in the hospital, his roommate is a very old, very ill man, and John remarks flippantly, "He looked like he wasn't long for this world . . . a guy [who looked like he was 193 years old] with some kind of oxygen-tent thing nearby that looked like a malaria net." The patient, like the corpses moldering underground in the cemetery, is not seen as a real person, but as a sort of horror-movie prop, something to make the story more dramatic, and his suffering is not even considered.

However, secretly, John is affected by seeing Mr. Pignati so sick. He is frightened by how weak Mr. Pignati has become, and comments, "The smell of hospitals always makes me think of death."

When Mr. Pignati dies from a second heart attack, which is brought on by the news of Bobo the baboon's death, John finally realizes that it does matter to him that "I live in a world where you can grow old and be alone and have to get down on your hands and knees and beg for friends," and that he's now sharply aware that if he and Lorraine hadn't come along, "the Pigman would've just lived like a vegetable until he died alone in that dump of a house." He asks, "Didn't [Lorraine] know how sick to my stomach it made me feel to know it's possible to end your life with only a baboon to talk to?"

He realizes that everyone he knows—he, Lorraine, his parents, and Lorraine's mother—are all spending their lives concentrating on the wrong things: money, career, bad relationships in the past. No one in the book, except Mr. Pignati, is truly "awake" in daily life, living fully, living now.

By the end of the book, John knows that death does have a deep effect on the survivors, and that although he wants to pursue his own dream, his fun, and his individuality, as he tells his father, he knows now that he can't just pursue his own interests without considering their effects on others. Rollerskating with Mr. Pignati was just a game, but it had disastrous consequences when Mr. Pignati had his heart attack. Holding a party seemed like harmless fun, but it too got out of hand, and in the end, led to Mr. Pignati's second heart attack at the zoo—after the culminating event, the baboon Bobo's death. In the last analysis, John realizes that an awareness of death sharpens one's sense of responsibility and meaning. As he puts it in one of the last sentences of the book, "Our life would be what we made of it—nothing more, nothing less."

Source: Kelly Winters, Critical Essay on *The Pigman*, in *Novels for Students*, The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #2

In the following interview, Zindel discusses his works and his status as a writer for young adults.

Though there is some disagreement as to the exact date that young adult literature emerged as a separate and distinct genre from that for children and adults, scholars agree that a handful of novels led the way, broke new ground, and prepared the soil for what was to grow into a blooming genre. *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel is one of those touchstone books that set apart novels for adolescents. It did more than that, however. Zindel's remarkable novel set the standard for writers to follow. Mr. Zindel (or, as I address him, Paulissimus) recently found time to share his thoughts and feelings about writing for the YA audience.

*[TL:] Your first novel for young adults,*The Pigman, *broke such new ground. It is considered by many in the field to be the first truly YA book. What is your reaction to all of this?*

[PZ:] I'm glad someone noticed. When Charlotte Zolotow, then an editor and author at Harper- Collins, asked if I had any stories for teenagers in me, I went into classrooms and interviewed kids. I found out that in a group of a hundred boys, only two or three had read a single book. That book was always *Catcher in the Rye*. Sometimes one of the boys had read a second book. That was always *Lord of the Flies*. I asked the boys why they read those books and they told me it was because their girlfriends made them read it. I realized fairly quickly that there weren't many books around that showed teenage protagonists in a modern reality concerned with realistic problems□so I gave it a shot.

Did you think you were writing for a younger audience?

I knew I was writing for high school students. My first audiences were juniors and seniors, and as the years went by, the audiences got younger and younger. Most kids who read the book today are in the seventh or eighth grades.

Had you any suspicions that this book would be considered a "classic" in the field more than 25 years after publication?

I had made a wise choice long ago not to use slang or curses, because those are things that really date a book. I was also fortunate that my writing and speaking voice uses hyperbole and bathos naturally □something that had to do with the strong defenses I had to mount to survive growing up. I was lucky that these elements give the illusion of slang and oxymorons, without my being trapped by the changing language of youth.

Many of your books seem to explore the life and times of the misfit, the adolescent who does not seem to fit in. Is that a fair characterization?

Yes. I write about misfits, because I was a misfit growing up. I had no father at a time when that was considered freakish. I couldn't catch a baseball. I acted out and got involved in crazy, though relatively harmless, capers. I didn't know who I was or who I could be or what my career should be. I desperately wanted friends and to be liked, but my family moved around so much 1 never had the chance to keep very many friends. Most of my friends were misfits, too. I think being a misfit is a terrific requisite for becoming an author□ becoming creative. When you're not doing so hot in the real world, you invent fictional worlds in which you can have a really spectacular and estimable life.

I know that asking an author to name a favorite book is like asking them to name a favorite child. However, of which book are you the most proud and why?

Pride is not a quality I allow myself to feel. It takes time. Awards take time. Patting oneself on the back takes time. I'm too busy writing about oddballs and rats and cruel cheerleaders and phantasmagoric teachers to sit around evaluating or dreaming of reviews or looking back. Were I to do that, I would probably have to say that stories I think I could continue to live with, either in sequel or movie or other forms, would be *The Pigman and I*, *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* (a play), *The Doom Stone*, and several of the horror books. Oh, yes, I just remembered, I think the best book I've ever written may becoming out next year (2000). At the moment it's called *The Gadget* and it's my first historical novel□ about the son of a physicist who lives at Los Alamos at the time when the first atomic bomb was being made. I think all the books that I'm really going to be proud of are still coming down the pike. With the benefit of history, I think I'm going to write some hot stuff.

You maintain a successful career writing for teens and for adults. Is it difficult to move between these two audiences?

Yes. I'm in a teen phase now. I talk, live and eat teens. I'm about 15 years old and I do very childish things and worry about extraordinary problems. I get jilted, go to movies, eat pizza and ice cream, hang out with my kids and lots of young people, and I don't notice that I'm three times their age. I am such a kid inside I can't imagine realizing that I'm almost old enough to die. I'm certain that death, when it comes, will take me by enormous surprise. I'll probably be getting ready to go on a roller coaster or attend a prom.

*Your recent books (*Loch, Reef of Death, Raptor, The Doom Stone) *focus on teens facing incredible danger in the form of prehistoric life forms. How did the transition from misfit to monster occur?*

I got tired of teenagers having problems. I felt the problems had all been written about for too long, and that kids were fed up with that posture. It also became somewhat disingenuous for adults to be writing about teenage problems when it's clear how mad and bizarre and foolish and dangerous and stupefying adult life has become. I wrote a one act play called "Every 17 Minutes the Crowd Goes Crazy." It's about the ultimate abandonment of parental interest by a mother and father who flee their five children to

spend the rest of their selfish, frightened lives going to trotter race tracks and Native American Casinos. I wish it were a joke.

You seem to have a firm grip on what scares readers. What frightens you?

What frightens me is the thought that I might have a painful, massive heart attack, be shot in a home invasion, or have a rare and barbed tiny Amazon catfish swim into my urethra. I'm also frightened of my children being injured or shot at in a mini-market, being struck by lightning or a meteor, and being devoured feet first by, in order of horror, a crocodile, a great white shark, or a tiger in the swamps of Bengal, and dying of rabies.

I know you travel quite a bit. Are you inspired to write after you have visited a certain location? Or does the idea come first and mandate a trip to the locale?

Yes! I came back from Indonesia and wrote a book about giant bats in the jungle canopy. I got to hold a giant fruit bat that opened its five-foot wing span. I came back from India and wanted to write about rats taking over Staten Island by coming up through the toilets in chic middle-class housing. My stories come from my life. Ideas emerge from where I am living, where I am visiting□and most powerfully, from people I meet. I love people. I love kids. The right kid or the right adult will set my mind spinning into an adventure that mesmerizes me for years. Next year I'm planning on growing up and I'm going to write about love and divorce. There are so many things I should have been told about love, and now that I know all the secrets, I want to share them. I think I could write some startling stuff about the urge to merge.

What do you hear from readers?

My readers are fabulous and send me great fan mail and stuffed bears and prehistoric alligator teeth. I'm starting to give out my email address all over the place now because that's the easiest way for me to have a maddening career but keep in touch with the great kids and librarians and teachers. My e-mail is PaulZindel@AOL.com. I want to hear from the kids of the world, and this year I'm going to have a web site that will make my competition drool from its graphics and hilarity and emotional depth and truth and all kinds of things.

If you had to select a scene or chapter from one of your works to be placed in an anthology for the year 2000 literature books, which would that be and why?

It would be a scene from my play "Marigolds"□a scene where the mother is yapping at her daughter about the half life of the seeds the daughter has planted, and the mother's own half life as a human being. I would pick that scene because I think it is a dram of the true elixir. The writing soars because the literary metaphor of atomic radiation and the heartbreaking universal emotion of the mother melds with an extraordinary balance of irony and humor□and proof in spades that I have vision and talent, originality and compassion. It puts my best foot forward. I know it.

Source: Teri Lesesne, "Humor, Bathos, and Fear: An Interview with Paul Zindel," in *Teacher Librarian*, Vol. 27, No. 2, December 1999, pp. 60-62.

Topics for Further Study

In the book, Mr. Pignati has a major effect on John and Lorraine. Write about an older person who affected your life in a way you'll never forget, and how they influenced you.

John does not believe that he and Lorraine are totally responsible for Mr. Pignati's death, but Lorraine does. In your opinion, who is right, and why? If John and Lorraine were put on trial for killing him, what would the verdict be? Why?

Mr. Pignati has lived a very lonely life since his wife died; he has no real friends until John and Lorraine come into his life by accident. Do some research to find out how most elderly people live. Is Mr. Pignati's isolation unusual, or typical? How does the American treatment of elderly people differ from the way they are treated in other cultures?

John and Lorraine's parents don't talk to their children, and they often act as though the children are a disturbing burden. Do you think this is typical, or are most parents effective? Write a short essay about what it takes to be a good parent.

John smokes and drinks, even though his father became ill from alcohol and he knows both habits are bad for his health. Why would he do these things if he knows they may eventually kill him?

Compare and Contrast

1960s: Teen smoking, drinking, and drug use become prevalent in the 1960s, when knowledge of the ill effects of drugs is still not widespread, and when a widespread sense of experimentation and rebellion is part of popular culture.

Today: Teen smoking and drinking have increased since the 1960s, and every day, about 3,000 young people begin smoking. Nearly 1,000 of that number (1 in 3) will eventually die as a result of smoking-related disease. Use of cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs is more common among teens who do not feel emotionally connected to their parents.

1960s: Not everyone can afford a telephone, and instead of using touch-tones, phones use a rotary dial system. Phone numbers have two letters and five numbers, like "Sa7-7295," the number for the hospital Mr. Pignati is in. The two letters are an abbreviation of the name of the "exchange," usually a neighborhood. Faxes, personal computers, and the Internet are unknown.

Today: Phone companies have dropped the letter- and-number system in favor of all-numeric phone numbers, and the old rotary phones are considered obsolete; many telephone services cannot be accessed unless the caller has a touchtone phone. The number of people needing phone numbers has continued to increase, so that every year, phone companies must create new area codes. In addition, cellular phones, fax machines, pagers, and the Internet allow people to be constantly connected to each other, even if they are on the other side of the world.

1960s: In the 1960s, AIDS is unknown, and people don't worry about many of the consequences of sexual activity. Rates of teen pregnancy, divorce, and single-parent families are higher than those of earlier decades, and people regard these issues as shameful.

Today: AIDS has forced many people to reassess their sexual activity and to take precautions against this and other diseases. However, divorce rates continue to increase, and teen pregnancies and single-parent families are now common. Attitudes toward divorce, teen pregnancy, and single parenting have changed, so that many people now regard these issues as painful, but without the sense of shame and blame that was still prevalent in the 1960s.

1960s-1970s: The Vietnam War rages throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, sparking widespread anti-war protests in the United States. Throughout the war, in which 3 million Americans serve, 58,000 Americans die, 1,000 are declared missing, and 150,000 are wounded.

Today: The United States has been involved in several smaller wars since the 1960s, most notably the Gulf War in the Middle East, but none have incited such widespread commentary and rebellion as the Vietnam War has. However, the hijacking of three

planes on September 11, 2001, and the attacks on the World Trade Center Towers in New York and on the Pentagon in Washington D.C. are the largest terrorist attacks to date.

What Do I Read Next?

The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds, published in 1964, was Zindel's first play, and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1971. The play stars Tillie, a brilliant girl who lives with her epileptic sister and her overbearing mother; through her success in science, Tillie is able to break free from her stifling family.

I Never Loved Your Mind (1970), Zindel's third novel, stars high school dropout Dewey Daniels and his true love, fellow dropout Yvette Goethals.

In Zindel's *My Darling, My Hamburger* (1969), a high school girl discovers she is pregnant, but her abusive parents are no help, so she decides to visit an illegal abortionist.

Zindel's *Pardon Me, You're Stepping on My Eyeball!* (1976) tells the story of two misfits who head out for adventure.

In Zindel's *The Pigman's Legacy* (1980), a sequel to *The Pigman*, John and Lorraine visit the Pigman's empty house and find an old man who's hiding from the tax authorities. They see him as their chance to make up for how they treated the Pigman, and launch into new adventures.

S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* tells the story of a high school "greaser," or delinquent, who hates the rich, popular kids until his friend murders one of them, and he must come to terms with his beliefs about people and life.

Further Study

National Council of Teachers of English, *Speaking for Ourselves: Autobiographical Sketches by Notable Authors of Books for Young Adults*, National Council of Teachers of English, 1990.

This compendium of autobiographies features Zindel and many other writers for young adults, who discuss their lives and works.

Raymond, Gerard, "The Effects of Staten Island on a Pulitzer Prize-Winning Playwright," in *Theater Week*, Vol. 2, No. 37, April 24, 1989, p. 16-21.

The article discusses Zindel's difficult upbringing and its ramifications for his writing.

Rees, David, *The Marble in the Water: Essays on Contemporary Writers of Fiction for Children and Young Adults*, Horn Book, Inc., 1980.

This collection of essays provides critical insight on the works of contemporary novelists who write for children and young adults.

Zindel, Paul, *The Pigman and Me*, HarperCollins, 1992.

Zindel's autobiography discusses his painful childhood, his career as a writer, and the inspiration for his work.

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Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
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Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Novels for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535