

# **The View from Saturday Study Guide**

## **The View from Saturday by E. L. Konigsburg**

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## Overview

The View From Saturday portrays academic competition in the same exciting light as sports novels do football and baseball contests. The story is about a teacher and four sixth graders, underdogs all, who overcome challenges in their personal lives, school lives, and social lives to succeed in areas where they are only expected to be losers. Their triumphs are told in their own words, as well as in the words of third-person narrators, and the characters come alive in the telling as interesting and passionate human beings.

From gathering baby turtles on the beach to coping with a thieving monkey on a ship, The View from Saturday covers a wide range of experiences, all told in a brightly engaging way that conveys respect for young adult readers as intelligent individuals who want to be educated as they are taken on journeys that show how the human heart and spirit can surmount obstacles of prejudice and peer resentment.

## About the Author

Elaine Lobl Konigsburg was born in New York City on February 10, 1930, to Beulah Klein Lobl and Adolph Lobl, a businessman. She attended Carnegie Institute of Technology, now Carnegie-Mellon University, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in 1952. She then studied chemistry in graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh until 1954, when she married psychologist David Konigsburg.

The couple moved to Jacksonville, Florida; here Konigsburg taught science for two years before focusing her energies on rearing her three children.

As they grew more responsible with age, Konisburg applied what she had learned raising them to the writing of fiction for children. Although never a practicing chemist, Konigsburg feels that the mental discipline scientific study and research taught her has been instrumental in her success as a writer. This mental rigor has allowed her to set aside distractions and concentrate on writing each morning.

She made a notable impression on literary critics and became of instant interest to adult readers with her first two novels for young adults. *Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth* was named a 1968 Newbery Honor Book, and *From the MixedUp Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (1967; see separate entry, Vol. 1) was the 1968 Newbery Award winner.

Since then she has written and illustrated many books, most of them aimed at readers in late elementary grades or in junior high school, with the plots of her novels usually being inspired by her children. Konigsburg won the Newbery Award in 1997, twenty-nine years after her first medal, for *The View from Saturday*.



# Plot Summary

This novel tells the story of a sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Eva Marie Olinski, and her winning Academic Bowl team in Epiphany, New York. The team is made up of four students: Noah Gershom, Nadia Diamondstein, Ethan Potter, and Julian Singh. The students meet and become friends before being chosen for Mrs. Olinski's team through a series of Saturday afternoon teas hosted by Julian. The students come together after each one of them has gone on a journey, in which he or she comes to recognize and value kindness.

Mrs. Olinski is paralyzed from the waist down and in a wheelchair. She was injured in a car accident, which killed her husband many years ago. When Mrs. Olinski first started teaching, she worked in a school whose principal was Mrs. Margaret Draper. Mrs. Draper and Mrs. Olinski became friends, and their friendship has continued, even after the accident, Mrs. Draper's retirement and remarriage, and Mrs. Olinski's eventual return to teaching.

Mrs. Olinski returns to teaching with much less confidence after her accident. She is easily shaken by the pranks and cruelties of certain members of her class, including Hamilton Knapp, Michael Froelich, and Jared Lord. Mrs. Olinski has been changed by her accident, but sixth graders have also changed from interested children to challenging adolescents.

Each of the four children on Mrs. Olinski's team goes on a journey. Noah Gershom visits his grandparents, Nate and Sadie Gershom, at Century Village, their retirement community in Florida. Noah is a smart and knowledgeable boy. He uses the word "fact" regularly, as in, "Fact: Many of the domiciles in Century Village do not have family rooms with desks." As this example shows, Noah is not necessarily a deep thinker. He is content with the facts and does not think about the living situation of retirees that would preclude the necessity of a family room. Noah is given to nitpicking and argument. He is not a disagreeable boy, just one who loves a good argument and being right.

During his visit to Century Village, Noah becomes involved in the preparations for the wedding of two of the residents: Izzy Diamondstein and Margaret Draper. Completely unselfconscious about being the only child in a community full of retirees, Noah throws himself headlong into the process, helping wherever he can and learning whatever anyone will teach him. The residents of Century Village show overwhelming generosity to the soon-to-be-married couple, and nearly every detail of the wedding is arranged and executed by a resident as a gift to Izzy and Margaret.

Noah helps whenever and however he can and he becomes particularly involved with two of the residents. Mrs. Tillie Nachman offers to teach him calligraphy. When an accident leaves the groom's son, Allen Diamondstein, unable to fulfill his duties as best man, Noah offers to substitute. Another resident, Mrs. Bella Dubinsky, paints a T-shirt with Noah to look like a tuxedo. At the wedding, Noah must think of gifts to give several



invitees whose invitations he inadvertently damaged. Noah selflessly gives away gifts that have been given to him during the course of his stay, including a wagon, a calligraphy pen and bottle of ink, Post-it notes, and the painted T-shirt.

Nadia Diamondstein is the daughter of Allen Diamondstein and the granddaughter of Izzy Diamondstein. Nadia's journey is a visit to her father sometime afterward. Nadia's parents are recently divorced, and Nadia's visit is part of the child custody arrangement. Nadia is terribly angry about the whole situation: divorce, visiting her father, her grandfather's remarriage, and the move to a new home in Epiphany. Nadia brings her dog, Ginger, on her trip to her father's new apartment and seethes with resentment for most of the visit.

Nadia's grandfather's new wife, Margaret Draper, is deeply involved in the protection of loggerhead turtle babies on the beaches near their home. Izzy has also become interested, and on a previous visit, Nadia also got interested and ended up writing a report on the turtles' life cycle for school. This visit, Nadia is disgusted with turtles, especially when her father begins to become interested. Yet when a storm threatens to kill a large number of babies by blowing them from the ocean up onto the beaches, Nadia is able to put aside her anger and resentment and help save them. She sees a parallel in the lives and needs of the turtles and her own life. Nadia, too, has been living through a storm, and she and her father "need a lift" to get through hard times, just like the baby turtles. Nadia is able to put aside her hurt feelings and the meanness those feelings inspire, and she shows kindness and generosity not only to the turtles but also to her family.

Ethan Potter is the grandson of Margaret Draper (who becomes Margaret Diamondstein). His journey is the bus ride to Epiphany Middle School. Over the last two years, Ethan, a shy and quiet boy, has developed a technique for ensuring that he sits alone on the bus. The first day of sixth grade, however, his plan goes awry when a new student, Julian Singh, sits with him. Ethan can see that Julian is an unusual student and destined to be picked on and bullied for his differences. Concerned for his own status and the peace and quiet that he enjoys, Ethan deliberately avoids becoming friendly with Julian.

Ethan's prediction is correct. Julian is indeed bullied and teased. When the bullying escalates, Ethan intervenes, helping to prevent Julian from becoming physically hurt by the bullies (Hamilton Knapp and Michael Froelich). Julian repays Ethan's kindness with a secretly given invitation to a tea party. The invitation is a puzzle, which Ethan must solve. Ethan's interest is piqued, and he attends the tea party on Saturday at 4:00. Julian has also invited Noah and Nadia, and the four students begin a friendship and a regular habit of teatime on Saturdays.

Julian Singh has grown up on cruise ships and attended boarding school in England. His mother is dead, and his father (a chef) has decided that he wants to settle down and own a bed and breakfast. Mr. Singh buys an old farmhouse called Sillington House in Epiphany. Julian is marked as different by his dark skin and hair, his clothes, his accent, and his manners. Julian shows strength and resourcefulness in the face of the bullying,



but he is nevertheless hurt by the mistreatment. Julian has learned considerable sleight-of-hand from a magician named Gopal, and he uses his magic to delight and please his new friends. He begins the tea parties, but it is the energy and kindness of all four students that makes them a success.

After several Saturday teas, the four students are good friends, and Nadia suggests that they name their group The Souls. Julian suggests that The Souls have a project that they will work on collectively. Mrs. Olinski, Julian tells them, needs help. She is unsure of herself and being bullied by the same students that bully Julian. The Souls ask Noah what they should do, and Noah tells them. The reader does not know at first what Noah's suggestion is.

Mrs. Olinski is not putting together an Academic Bowl team the same way that her fellow teachers are. She does not put on a class competition to determine the winners. She decides to simply appoint her team. She chooses Noah, Nadia, and Ethan, but cannot determine her fourth choice for a while.

Epiphany High School is putting on a production of *Annie*, and Nadia takes Ginger to try out for the role of Annie's dog Sandy. Ginger gets the part and Michael Froelich's dog Arnold is cast as Ginger's understudy. Julian finds that he is able to trust Michael more as the play goes on, but he is still wary of Hamilton Knapp. On the day of a matinee performance for the middle and elementary school students, Hamilton and Michael plan to drug Ginger with tranquilizers and laxatives. But the drama coach allows Michael's dog Arnold to star in that day's performance instead of Ginger, and Julian decides to go ahead with his plan to remove the drugged treats from backstage. Julian cannot help himself and lets Michael know that he (Julian) knew about the drugged treats and prevented Michael's dog from being hurt or embarrassed by the malicious trick.

At the same performance, Hamilton Knapp begins disruptive chanting during and after the play, and Mrs. Olinski sees enough of his efforts and satisfaction with the trouble he has caused to decide that Hamilton is capable of real malice. Mrs. Olinski has been mentally putting together her Academic Bowl team, and has considered Hamilton. Seeing his cruelty at the play convinces Mrs. Olinski that Hamilton is unsuitable. She chooses Julian for the fourth team member, and Noah's plan for helping Mrs. Olinski is finally in the works.

After the performance of *Annie*, Mrs. Olinski and The Souls end up at Sillington House, where Margaret and Izzy Diamondstein are staying for the weekend. Mrs. Olinski is thrilled to see her old friend, but then carried away by intense jealousy and pain as she sees her students reuniting with their grandparents. Mr. Singh guides her in for tea, and the calm and civilized atmosphere of teatime gives Mrs. Olinski a chance to relax and let her feelings of pain go away. Mrs. Olinski then sees the four students whom she has chosen for her team treating each other with respect and kindness and genuine friendship around their own tea table. She begins to get a glimmer of the truth about The Souls and their kind plans on her behalf.





Throughout the novel, the reader follows The Souls's progress through the competitions that lead them to the Academic Bowl finals. Mrs. Olinski's team handily beats first the other sixth-grade classes, then the seventh grade, and then the eighth grade. The Souls sweep the district championships, then the regional championships. Throughout the competitions, Mrs. Olinski gains confidence and a greater ability to "stand on her own two feet," figuratively speaking. At the finals, The Souls work together flawlessly, each student deferring to the expertise of the others as the questions demand. Julian gives an answer that is not given credit by the panel of judges, and he pushes the issue even to the point of being penalized. When the judges determine that Julian's answer is indeed correct, the points are restored, and The Souls continue their drive to victory. After winning, The Souls honor their teacher and coach, Mrs. Olinski, by walking off the stage and standing on the main floor level, because she cannot climb the stairs to get to the stage.

Driving home from the finals, Mr. Singh asks Mrs. Olinski about her reasons for choosing The Souls for her team. Mr. Singh tells her that she did not choose for reasons, because reason did not play into the decision. She chose because she recognized in each of the students their own recognition of kindness. Mrs. Olinski did not so much choose, as allow herself to be chosen.



# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

The story begins by introducing the reader to Mrs. Eva Olinski, who is the coach for a sixth grade Academic Bowl team from Epiphany, New York. The four members of this team call themselves The Souls, and the team is extraordinary because, as sixth graders, they have made it to the finals by beating teams of seventh and eighth graders.

Bowl Day is the final championship, beginning with eight regional champions in the morning and ending with The Souls from Epiphany and an eighth grade team from Maxwell. Mrs. Olinski shivers in the minutes before the final round of questions, either because of the air-conditioning or because of the anxiety of waiting. The commissioner of education of the state of New York begins the round by asking the teams to define "calligraphy" and to tell from what language the word is derived. When she hears the question, Mrs. Olinski relaxes. One of her team members, Noah Gershom, has been the first chosen to answer the question.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

The introduction of Mrs. Eva Marie Olinski also includes an introduction to two of the major themes of the book. The first is that Mrs. Olinski cannot define her reasons for picking the students that she did for her team. Although she is capable of giving good answers when asked, Mrs. Olinski does not really know why she picked the team that she is coaching.

The second theme introduced in this chapter is the "chicken and egg" question. The book repeatedly examines which of two fundamentally entwined things came first. In this chapter, The Souls claim to have come up with their team name long before becoming an Academic Bowl team. Mrs. Olinski tells them that they became a team as soon as they became The Souls. Which came first? The answer is not as important as the result. The Souls are a team and that is what is most important.

This chapter also begins to build suspense about Bowl Day. Will The Souls win the final championship? The "present" in the book is Bowl Day, and the story unfolds in the scenes that led up to this day. Each chapter will take the reader a little farther through Bowl Day, heightening the suspense until a winner is declared.



# Noah Writes a B & B Letter

## Noah Writes a B & B Letter Summary

Noah Gershom, the student who is about to answer the question about calligraphy at the end of Chapter 1, tells about a wedding he attended while staying with his grandparents in Florida. The chapter begins when Noah's mother asks him if he has written his B&B letter to his grandparents. Noah hasn't because, he explains to his mother, he does not know what a B&B letter is. Noah's mother explains that it is a thank-you note for allowing him to stay with them. Noah argues that he should not have to write such a letter for a variety of reasons, but his mother declines to argue and insists that he write.

Noah prepares to write his B&B letter by taking out notepaper, a calligraphy pen, a pencil, and Post-it notes to jot down ideas. He begins writing on the Post-it notes the things that he will thank his grandparents for: a red wagon, a tuxedo T-shirt, a calligraphy pen and bottle of ink, and Post-it notes. None of the things on his list actually made it home with Noah, but they are the gifts that need to be covered in his letter.

Noah's grandparents live in Florida, in a retirement community called Century Village. Two of the residents, Margaret Draper and Izzy Diamondstein, decided to get married, and it seems that every other resident has a talent to share as a gift for the bride and groom-to-be. Noah's grandparents are providing the cake and music; Mr. Cantor is donating orchids for the corsages; Tillie Nachman will write the invitations; an army of widows will cook the food. Noah gets involved with many of the people and processes of preparing for the wedding. Tillie Nachman teaches him calligraphy, and Noah helps address envelopes. When a master grocery list is made, all the residents donate their hoarded coupons and divide up the costs. Noah helps deliver the ingredients to each of the households that will be cooking.

While preparing for the wedding, Noah meets the groom's grown son Allen Diamondstein, who is to be the best man. Allen has recently gotten divorced and comments that it is ironic that he was just divorced and his father is getting married. Noah doesn't understand Allen's use of the word "ironic." It seems to Noah only natural that someone as anxious and nervous as Allen would be getting divorced and that two people as much in love as Izzy and Margaret would be getting married.

The day of the wedding, Noah is delivering the wedding cake in the little red wagon that his grandparents have just given him when Allen slips on some ice and knocks over the wedding cake, hurting his foot when he falls. The top tier of the cake is ruined, and Allen must go to the hospital for his foot. Noah offers to be best man in Allen's place, and Izzy accepts. Noah needs a tuxedo to be best man and gets help from another resident of Century Village, Bella Dubinsky. Bella used to be an artist, and she and Noah paint a T-shirt to look like a tuxedo. Noah performs his duties as best man without further incident.



While Noah and Tillie were addressing the wedding invitations, Tillie's cat walked through some spilled ink and five of the invitations were sent out with an inked cat paw print. Noah included a Post-it note telling each recipient of the cat paw invitations to bring the invitation for a free present at the wedding. When the time has come to give out the presents to the "winners," Noah has thought of four things to give away: the tuxedo painted T-shirt, his calligraphy pen and ink bottle, the package of Post-it notes, and the red wagon that his grandparents gave him. Pressed to think of a fifth gift, Noah declares that the fifth present is the best of all: to give up one's gift.

The winners of the presents respond with good grace, all offering to give up their gifts. Finally, each gift is claimed except the red wagon, and that is left for Allen Diamondstein. Allen rejects the wagon, saying he doesn't need it and can't use it, so his father, the groom, gives a short speech of thanks to everyone and gives the wagon to the entire community "as a gift from the best man." Noah believes that Izzy means him, not Allen. The chapter ends back in Noah's room as he carefully prepares his new calligraphy pen (bought to replace the one he gave away) to write his B&B letter to his grandparents.

## **Noah Writes a B & B Letter Analysis**

The chapter introduces the character of Noah Gershom, one of the sixth graders in Mrs. Olinski's Academic Bowl team. Although Noah argues and nitpicks with his mother about writing the letter, his memories show him to be both generous and aware of the generosity of others. Noah has a mental and verbal "tic" for using the word "fact." Noah thinks of things in terms of facts and names the facts as he thinks and speaks.

The story of Noah's visit to Century Village and the wedding of Izzy and Margaret is a story of love and boundless kindness. Every person in the retirement community contributes to the wedding. Nearly every adult who comes in contact with Noah shares something of himself or herself with Noah, who responds with genuine interest. Noah reciprocates this generosity by giving away every physical gift he has received while visiting his grandparents. The only person who behaves with anything less than perfect kindness is the groom's son, Allen, whom Noah describes as the most nervous person in the world. Allen is recently divorced and injured the day of his father's wedding, so the reader may make him some allowances for his less-than-perfect behavior.



## Chapter 2

### Chapter 2 Summary

Mrs. Olinski is continuing to watch her Academic Bowl team compete in the finals. On her left is sitting Dr. Roy Rohmer, her District Superintendent. They are watching the commissioner, the man who is reading the questions for the Bowl teams to answer. Dr. Rohmer is particularly taken with the vision of the commissioner and is staring openly at the well-dressed, well-polished man. Mrs. Olinski remembers when Dr. Rohmer paid her a visit after The Souls had won the Academic Bowl competition at Epiphany Middle School. Dr. Rohmer tells Mrs. Olinski he has just attended a workshop for educators (which he pronounces "ed-you-kay-toars") on multi-culturalism. He then asks Mrs. Olinski how she chose her winning Bowl team.

Mrs. Olinski, who is amused by teachers or administrators who call themselves educators, replies that she chose her team in the interest of multi-culturalism: one brunette, one redhead, one blonde, and one with hair "as black as print on paper." Her humor is lost on Dr. Rohmer. So Mrs. Olinski elaborates that her team is comprised by a Jew, a half-Jew, a WASP, and an Indian. Dr. Rohmer becomes exasperated and asks Mrs. Olinski how she would like being called a cripple. Mrs. Olinski decides that Dr. Rohmer is never going to understand her reasons for choosing the team she has, nor will he ever understand that even cripples can have a sense of humor.

The redhead in Mrs. Olinski's team is Nadia Diamondstein. She is beautiful and was the most reserved of Mrs. Olinski's students at the beginning of the school year. But, one day Nadia told Mrs. Olinski that she loves fall, a sentiment with which Mrs. Olinski heartily agrees. Since that day, Nadia has been open and friendly to Mrs. Olinski. The reader is brought back to Bowl Day with a question about an area in the North Atlantic known for its abundance of seaweed. Nadia rings in first.

### Chapter 2 Analysis

Several important clues about the novel's characters are given out in this chapter. The four students on Mrs. Olinski's team are described by hair color and religious or ethnic background. While this information doesn't tell much of the importance about the students, it tells the reader a good deal about Mrs. Olinski. The first thing one learns about her is that she has a sense of humor and a certain disdain for people who lack a sense of humor. The second thing one learns is that Mrs. Olinski is handicapped (one could even say "crippled") in some way. Mrs. Olinski expresses impatience with Dr. Rohmer's assumption that she would automatically be offended by the word cripple and with his assumption that all "cripples" are a rigidly defined and homogenous group. This chapter also introduces the second Bowl team member Nadia Diamondstein, whose last name should ring a bell with readers from the previous chapter.



# Nadia Tells of Turtle Love

## Nadia Tells of Turtle Love Summary

Nadia Diamondstein is the daughter of Allen Diamondstein and the granddaughter of Izzy Diamondstein. Her grandfather was the groom in the chapter titled, *Noah Writes a B&B Letter*. Nadia's father was supposed to have been the best man at his father's wedding, but he hurt his foot, and Noah acted as best man instead.

Nadia's father and mother divorced just before her grandfather's marriage. Nadia moved with her mother to upstate New York and spends part of her vacations with her father in Florida. Nadia's father is Jewish and her mother is Protestant. Nadia has a dog named Ginger that comes along on her trips to visit her father.

Nadia spends the first August after her parents' divorce with her father in Florida. She tells the reader that her father has always been nervous, but that he was particularly anxious that August. In fact, Allen Diamondstein hovered over his daughter every minute they were together. While visiting, Nadia meets her grandfather's new wife Margaret. Nadia thinks Margaret dresses atrociously, in too-bright colors and pantsuits. Nadia thinks her grandfather's doting behavior toward his new wife is a little embarrassing. She comments that Margaret is not at all curious about Nadia herself.

Nadia's visit with her father is dissatisfying. She and her father seem disconnected. She tries to get together with old friends, but that does not work either. Nadia spends her days by the pool at her father's new "swinging singles" apartment complex. Her grandfather invites Nadia to spend the day with him and Margaret and her grandson Ethan. Nadia's father is relieved, and Nadia accepts the invitation on the condition that she can bring Ginger.

When Nadia and Ginger are dropped off at her grandfather's retirement community apartment, Nadia finds a note written in Margaret's handwriting saying that everyone has gone for a walk. Nadia and Ginger wait, and when Izzy, Margaret, and Ethan return, they are all very excited because they will all be digging out a turtle nest that night.

Turtle nests, Nadia reports, are what brought her grandfather and Margaret together. Margaret is permitted by the Department of Environmental Protection to move loggerhead turtle nests that have been laid in dangerous places. Margaret introduced Izzy to protecting and moving turtle nests. Last year, Nadia learned all about loggerheads and their lives and threatened species status, and wrote a report about them for school.

Izzy invites Nadia to stay and help dig out the turtle nest that evening, and Nadia agrees reluctantly. She does not share the enthusiasm that is obvious in her three companions. Nadia's aloofness lasts throughout the day, making conversation with Ethan (who is her age and striving to be polite) difficult and stilted.



That evening, Nadia and her father, Izzy, Margaret, and Ethan go to dig out the turtle nest that Margaret moved earlier in the summer. They are checking to see how many babies hatched and appear to have made it safely to the ocean, and to help any babies who are alive and still struggling. Nadia's father becomes interested enough in the process to agree to come back early the next morning to do another "turtle walk." Nadia is as annoyed with his interest as she is with everything else.

One evening of Nadia's visit, her father takes the family to see *The Phantom of the Opera* live touring show. After some difficulty, Allen is able to get a ticket for Ethan, who seems very interested in going. Nadia has nothing to say about the show, but Ethan is obviously thrilled by the experience. Out for ice cream after the show, Nadia's father asks Margaret if he can begin the process of becoming permitted to help her with moving turtle nests. Nadia feels that Margaret is now stealing her father as well as her grandfather and thinks of Ginger as her only friend.

At the pool at Century Village, Nadia notices that Ethan has something on his key chain that looks a lot like a human molar. When she asks where he got it, Ethan says that Nadia's mother gave it to him. Nadia is surprised and appalled; she had no idea that Ethan knew her mother (who is a dental hygienist), and the evidence of connections between people without her knowledge makes Nadia furious. Nadia further discovers that Ethan's grandmother Margaret actually arranged for Nadia's mother to get an interview that led to her current job in New York. Nadia angrily asks Ethan what else he knows about her, and Ethan tells her he actually knows very little. Ethan asks Nadia whether she knows anything about him. Nadia says she does not. Ethan asks Nadia if she knows anything about his brother Lucas. Nadia says she does not. This answer pleases Ethan in some way that Nadia does not understand.

Nadia decides that she will no longer go out on the turtle walks. She feels that Margaret, by arranging an interview in New York for her mother, made her parent's divorce possible. Nadia is angry with everyone, particularly her father, and wants to go back to New York. The first morning of her boycott, Nadia's father comes in to wake her for the turtle walk, and Nadia begins an argument with the purpose of making her father "as miserable as possible."

Nadia spends the day nursing her anger and refusing to answer the phone, listening to the messages from her grandfather, Margaret, and her father, and erasing them. When Nadia's father comes home, he tells Nadia he has taken the next day off from work, and he suggests they go to Disney World. Nadia asks what she will do with Ginger, mostly to avoid agreeing with her father. Nadia's father asks if Nadia would like to ask Ethan or one of her old friends to go along. Nadia sees this as her father's inability to deal with her without turtles.

That evening a storm hits the coast. Nadia's Grandpa Izzy calls in a panic. The baby turtles will be swept back up on shore by the winds. Izzy, Margaret, and Ethan will be harvesting the hatchlings early the next morning, and her grandfather pleads with Nadia to come and help. Nadia is still unwilling to be agreeable, and her father backs her up, saying that the turtles will be fine without them. Nadia, who has greater knowledge



about the lifecycle of turtles, realizes that her father is wrong. She tells her grandfather that she needs to talk to her father and will call him back.

Nadia explains to her father even those turtle babies that make it back to the ocean without being eaten by birds will be lost. When loggerhead babies are born, their entire instinct is to head for the light - the light of the horizon between sea and sky. Once they are in the ocean, they swim. The babies swim and swim until they reach the Sargasso Sea, the area of the Atlantic Ocean filled with floating mats of seaweed. When they reach the Sargasso Sea, the immature turtles will then turn their entire focus on eating and growing larger. The storm, Nadia explains, will blow many of these immature turtles onto land. Even if they make it back to the water, they will not be able to make it back to the Sargasso Sea, because their instinct "switch" has been turned from swimming to eating. They will not find food, they will not be able to "switch back" to swimming mode, and the turtles will die.

Nadia and her father consider her words. Nadia thinks that maybe she, too, has been picked up by a storm and placed in an unfamiliar place. Nadia explains to her father that her grandfather and Margaret will be gathering the baby turtles into buckets to be taken by boat back out to the Sargasso Sea. The baby turtles, Nadia's father says, "need a lift." Nadia and her father get dressed and head out in the rain to drive to her grandfather's house. In the car, Nadia's father asks what happens to the baby turtles after they stay in the Sargasso Sea for five to ten years. Nadia says that they go the Azores for a few years and then grow up. When they are about 25, they mate and the females return to the same beaches where they were born to lay eggs.

Nadia's father says she left something out. What happens, he asks, during the years between 10 and 25? Nadia laughs and says that the turtles "commute." They migrate yearly up and down the Atlantic, swimming north in the summer and south in the winter. Nadia says that she will be doing the opposite, coming south to Florida in the summer and going north to New York in the winter. Her father says that there will be times when she or he may need a lift because of storms, and Nadia agrees.

## **Nadia Tells of Turtle Love Analysis**

Like many in her situation, Nadia is angry about her parents' divorce. Visiting her father feels wrong and awkward, and Nadia responds to this by being argumentative and uncooperative. Nadia's father is also feeling anxious, and he responds by "hovering." The situation is exacerbated by another change in the family. Nadia's grandfather (her father's father) has just remarried. Izzy and Margaret are obviously in love and more focused on their own lives than on the discomforts that Nadia and her father are feeling.

Nadia is a precise child. She dislikes calling Margaret by her given name because it feels disrespectful. Even though she is angry and feeling rebellious, she is generally coldly polite and reserved, more likely to brood and simmer than to act out in destructive ways. Nadia feels pushed aside and left out, and she responds by pushing everyone away.





When the storm threatens the turtles, Nadia knows exactly what will happen to the babies because of a report she researched and wrote the previous year. She cannot continue to nurse her anger and resentment when she might act to save so many lives. Nadia and her father find similarities between their current situation and the life cycle of the turtles. They are in the midst of a storm, a tempest of anger and resentment, and they "need a lift" to get back to normal. Although Nadia and her father will be helping to give the turtles a lift, it is also true that the turtles are giving them a lift. This is another instance in the novel of the "chicken and egg" question. Who is doing more to help whom, the turtles or Nadia?



# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

Mrs. Olinski's first teaching job was at a school where the principal had high standards and the students met those expectations. The principal's name was Margaret Draper, whose name the reader should recognize as the bride who married Izzy Diamondstein. By the time Mrs. Draper retired, things had changed, especially with sixth graders. Instead of saying "Now what?" sixth graders are asking "So what?"

Mrs. Olinski left teaching for a while because of a car accident; at the same time Mrs. Draper retired. The two women stayed in touch, even after Mrs. Draper moved to Florida, so Mrs. Olinski knows that Ethan Potter is Mrs. Draper's grandson when he enters her sixth grade homeroom. But she chooses Ethan for her Academic Bowl team because he is smart, independent and still asking, "Now what?"

At the Bowl finals, the commissioner asks a question about places in New York and the famous women who are associated with those places. Ethan rings in, and Mrs. Olinski knows that he will know the answer.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

In this chapter the reader learns a little more about Mrs. Olinski and about the relationships that tie all the characters together. Mrs. Olinski worked with Margaret Draper, who is Ethan Potter's grandmother and now Nadia Diamondstein's grandfather's wife (and was the bride at whose wedding Noah Gershom was best man). Ethan is the third member of the sixth grade Academic Bowl team that Mrs. Olinski is coaching. The reader also learns that Mrs. Olinski was in an auto accident, another clue about her handicap.



# Ethan Explains the B&B Inn

## Ethan Explains the B&B Inn Summary

Ethan Potter rides the bus to Epiphany Middle School. He is always the first one on and the last one off. He chooses the last seat farthest from the driver and puts his backpack on the seat beside him to deter anyone else from sharing a seat with him. Ethan's family has been in Clarion County even longer than Epiphany has been a town. He tells the reader that there have been farmers and teachers in his family for as long as there have been tractors and blackboards, and there have always been strong women on his mother's side.

Ethan looked forward to sixth grade because his homeroom teacher, Mrs. Olinski, was new to the school. She would not have known Ethan's older brother, Lucas. Ethan describes Lucas as the perfect older brother: smart and athletic. Ethan feels that he has been a disappointment to every teacher he has had because he never measures up to Lucas's success.

As the bus winds its way to school, Ethan thinks about the town, the route he knows so well, and the changes that have come to Epiphany. His family is made up of farmers, and his mother detests the new subdivision called The Farm. Ethan believes he knows the bus route so well that he knows exactly which stop is the last. But this day, the bus takes a new turn and picks up one last passenger.

The bus goes to the old Sillington House, in front of which stand a man wearing a white turban and a kid in shorts and knee socks. Ethan is dumbfounded. Not only is he surprised that someone is living in Sillington House, but he is amazed at the sight of a kid his age breaking the cardinal rules of school: no shorts on the first day, no knee socks, and no book bags. The boy boards the bus and walks to Ethan's seat. When he sits down, he introduces himself as Julian Singh. Ethan responds as coldly as possible, because he knows that if he shows even the smallest kindness, Julian could latch on to him for the rest of the year.

Ethan tries to ignore Julian, but eventually his curiosity gets the better of him. He asks about Sillington House, and Julian tells Ethan that his father bought the house to turn it into a B&B, a bed and breakfast inn. Julian's father is a chef, Julian tells Ethan, and worked on a cruise ship before buying Sillington House. Ethan tells himself to stop asking questions before he ends up with a weird friend for life. Sure enough, Julian is waiting for him at the bottom of the bus steps. They discover that they are both in Mrs. Olinski's homeroom, to Julian's pleasure and Ethan's dismay.

In Mrs. Olinski's homeroom, she is waiting for her students in a wheelchair. She writes, "Mrs. Olinski, paraplegic" on the blackboard. She explains that paraplegic means that she is paralyzed from the waist down. Ethan notices that she is nervous and her hands are shaking. Because she is seated, Mrs. Olinski can only reach halfway up the



blackboard, and one of her students, Hamilton Knapp, says he can't see the board and could she write it any higher. Mrs. Olinski says she can't at the moment.

Nadia Diamondstein is also in Mrs. Olinski's homeroom, and Ethan remembers her from Florida that summer. He also recognizes Noah Gershom, who was best man at Nadia's grandfather's wedding, and whose father is the dentist for whom Nadia's mother is working as a dental hygienist.

At lunchtime, Ethan sits on one side of Noah and Nadia sits on the other. Ethan notices Julian sitting by himself. When Julian gets up and leaves the lunchroom, Ethan sees Mrs. Olinski go quietly after him. Ethan guesses that Mrs. Olinski must want to tell Julian the rules about staying in the lunchroom until the bell, but she doesn't want to embarrass him by yelling. When the bell rings, Ethan and the other students enter the classroom and see that someone has erased "paraplegic" on the board and replaced it with the word "cripple." Julian is standing at the board with an eraser in his hand, as if caught by Mrs. Olinski. For a moment, Ethan wonders if Julian wrote "cripple," but when he sees Hamilton Knapp exchanging a smile with Michael Froelich, he knows that Julian did not do it.

Julian quickly becomes the butt of the sixth grade, fair game for teasing and bullying. Students try to trip him on the bus, which he avoids by saying, "Beg your pardon. Do you mind?" until the legs are removed. Then the imitation of his accent begins. Ethan tries to walk a line between being decent and not attaching himself to a student who is so obviously an outcast. Then he sees Michael Froelich and Ham Knapp planning to do something worse. Ethan hooks his arm through Julian's and begins to escort him from the bus to the school doors. He protects Julian but can't prevent Ham from grabbing Julian's book bag and writing, "I am a ass" on it in permanent marker. Ethan admires the way that Julian keeps control of himself during the incident.

The next day, Julian gets on the bus with "I am a passenger on Spaceship Earth" written on his book bag. Ethan's admiration grows as he sees the spot where Julian tried to erase the words before coming up with a message with which to hide the insult.

As the weather cools, so does the bullying. Ethan works hard selling pumpkins at the farmer's market with his mother to earn money for his secret dream. Since seeing *The Phantom of the Opera*, Ethan wants to go to New York City and work in theatre as a set or costume designer. One Saturday, Julian and his father come to the market, and when Julian hands Ethan money for the pumpkins his father has selected, Ethan notices a Post-it note inside the bill. The note says, "*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Chapter VII Title." Ethan is too busy to figure out what it means until he gets home. He looks up Chapter VII in *Alice*, and sees that the title is "A Mad Tea Party." Ethan recognizes that he has been given an invitation, but the idea is so strange that he resolves not to discuss it with anyone, including Julian. Ethan knows he will find out the details if and when Julian wants to tell him.

Julian plays the same game Ethan does, pretending that nothing is going on between them. But Ethan finds a second Post-it note on the inside of his backpack strap that



says, "Tea Time is always 4:00pm. World Atlas Map 4: D-16." When Ethan checks the atlas, the map shows Clarion County, and someone has inserted a page with a drawing of Sillington House and the address, 9424 Gramercy Road. Ethan removes the picture and address and notices Nadia among the stacks. She was removing a book in the D's, "*D for Dodgson*, Lewis Carroll's real name," Ethan thinks. He suspects that Nadia may have also received an invitation from Julian.

Ethan finds the final clue in his pocket that evening, a small calendar page with the date October 14 circled. For the first time in his life, Ethan is looking forward to a party. He decides he should bring a gift, and struggles to think of an appropriate idea. Finally, Ethan decides to get Julian a puzzle, since Julian has given such an interesting puzzle to him. Ethan asks his mother to take him to the mall so that he can buy a gift. She agrees, but says she will wait in the car for him because she knows that is the best way to make Ethan hurry.

Ethan goes to the puzzle store and selects several puzzles he likes, each of which is sold out. Running out of time, he finally buys a heart-shaped puzzle that he knows is completely wrong, and not the sort of gift one boy would give to another. Ethan accidentally lets the information slip to his mother that he is going to a tea party, and she is predictably amused.

Ethan dresses and walks to Sillington House with care. He meets Julian and Nadia on the front porch and is introduced to Julian's father. Nadia has given Julian a puppy, a daughter of Ginger that she has named Alice, in honor of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Noah arrives, and he and Nadia begin bickering about the appropriateness of giving a pet to someone without permission. Upon entering the house, Ethan notices a poster showing a woman in a green satin gown. Julian tells Ethan it is a picture of his mother, who was a chanteuse, or singer; she is dead. Julian's mother used to perform on cruise ships, and Julian grew up on ships with his parents. Ethan asks if he is an alien, and Julian says, no, his mother was an American and his father a naturalized citizen, so he is American as, not apple pie, but pizza pie. He "did not originate here, but [he] is here to stay."

Julian, Ethan, Nadia, and Noah sit down to tea. They drink the scalding hot tea and eat tiny sandwiches with the crusts cut off. Ethan, who is the least talkative, begins the conversation with a joke he made up. After tea, Julian opens his gifts. Noah gives Julian a calligraphy pen and ink bottle. Noah offers to teach Julian, and Nadia and Ethan also ask for lessons. Julian opens Ethan's puzzle and is delighted. By now, Ethan knows that his gift was the right one, despite his earlier misgivings. The four children work on the puzzle, each doing one quarter and then pushing the four large pieces together. One piece is missing. Julian pretends to see it in Nadia's hair and appears to pull the piece out. When he drops it on the table, it has become four after-tea mints. Julian then asks Ethan to retrieve the piece from the box, where it is located. Everyone is impressed with Julian's skill as a magician.

When the party breaks up, Julian invites everyone to come again on the next Saturday. As Ethan leaves, he considers the whole afternoon. He decides that he gained



something at tea that day. He also believes that he lost something. At school that week, everyone behaves as before, with no outward sign of their developing friendship.

The next Saturday, the four children help Mr. Singh strip wallpaper off the Sillington House walls. Noah makes a contest to see who can peel the longest strip. Nadia wins, and Noah promises to think of a prize before their meeting is over. Over tea, Nadia proposes that their group have a name. Noah says that her prize for the longest piece is getting to name the group. Nadia proposes The Souls. Ethan agrees instantly. Noah, of course, must argue a bit, but ultimately he is convinced that "less is more," and the name is a good one. Julian agrees, and the four friends shake on it. In each hand after the shake is a shiny new penny with the current year on it, the year The Souls was born.

Another Saturday, Ethan asks each member of the group to tell what day of their lives they would live over again if they could. Nadia tells of the morning that she helped to save the turtles. Noah tells of the day he was best man at Izzy and Margaret's wedding. Julian tells of the day that his teacher in magic, the ship magician Gopal told Julian that he had chops. Julian explains that "chops is to magic what doing scales is to a chanteuse. Without it you cannot be a magician, with it alone you cannot be an artist." When it is Ethan's turn he is not embarrassed to say, and The Souls were not embarrassed to hear, that he would relive the first tea party. And, Ethan says, he has gotten to do just that every Saturday since.

## Ethan Explains the B&B Inn Analysis

In this chapter, we learn about Ethan Potter, the fourth member of Mrs. Olinski's Bowl team, and about the birth of The Souls, the name that Nadia gave the group of four friends even before they became an Academic Bowl team.

Ethan is, as we have learned in previous chapters, fairly quiet and shy. This chapter reinforces the reader's picture of Ethan. He has learned how to prevent sharing a seat with anyone on the bus. Ethan is also conscious of how precarious a shy boy's place can be in the social jungle of middle school. He works to prevent a friendship from forming with Julian, not because Ethan is a cruel or unfriendly boy, but because he is wary of chumming up with someone who is so obviously an outcast. Ethan's status feels too precarious to risk being grouped with Julian.

Julian is bullied almost from the first moment he arrives at Epiphany Middle School. Two of the biggest bullies are Ham Knapp and Michael Froelich, who are also members of Mrs. Olinski's homeroom. In the previous chapter, the reader saw Hamilton Knapp bullying Mrs. Olinski. When the bullying escalates, Ethan chooses to intervene and publicly help Julian rather than be a witness to Ham and Michael's unkindness.

The Saturday tea parties change the four students from the first day, bringing Ethan out of his shell, curbing Noah's tendency to argue, Nadia becoming happy and relaxed, and giving Julian a safe place to be his best self, as the generous and magical host instead of the picked-on misfit.

In the first chapter of the book, Mrs. Olinski says that The Souls became a team the minute they became The Souls. This chapter proves her point. The sum of the four students is far greater than their individual parts.



# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

In this chapter, we see the first day of Mrs. Olinski's homeroom from her perspective. She is very nervous, even more so than Ethan suspects in the previous chapter. It is also clear that Mrs. Olinski is less sure than Ethan that Hamilton Knapp is bullying her. Mrs. Olinski gives Ham the benefit of the doubt, thinking that perhaps her writing on the blackboard really is too low to be seen from the back seats. When she returns to the classroom to find the word "cripple" on the board, she thinks that it is not just the sixth grade that has changed while she has been gone. Sixth graders have changed, too.

At the Academic Bowl finals, the commissioner admonishes the crowd for applause after Ethan's correct answer. Mrs. Olinski remembers another day when inappropriate applause helped her to pick the final member of her Academic Bowl team.

At the Saturday teatime after the four students became The Souls, Julian announces that they need a project. He shows them a small monkey statue that can be balanced on any one of its four limbs. Julian says that their project should be to help Mrs. Olinski get balanced, to "stand on her own two feet." Nadia says they should "give her a lift." The students turn to Noah to tell them how to do this, and Noah has the answer. At the Academic Bowl finals, the commissioner reads a question asking for two acronyms that have become words in English. Julian gives the answer, "posh" and "tip."

## Chapter 4 Analysis

The Souls are correct in their assessment of Mrs. Olinski's need for support, as her anxiety and dismay on the first day of school shows. The reader does not yet know what The Souls plan to do for her. Julian's answer at the Bowl finals will be examined in later chapters.





# Julian Narrates When Ginger Played Annie's Sandy

## Julian Narrates When Ginger Played Annie's Sandy Summary

As the title suggests, this chapter is narrated from Julian's point of view. Ethan suggests that Nadia have Ginger try out for Annie's dog Sandy in the high school performance of *Annie*. Nadia is at first hesitant, but then (after a good argument with Noah) decides that Ginger, being a genius, would be perfect for the part. Julian is mystified by the whole conversation but waits until things become clear instead of seeking clarification immediately. Julian helps all The Souls and Ginger learn a basic trick of animal training that he picked up on board the ships where he grew up: how to palm a treat and give it to the dog unobtrusively.

At the tryouts, Ginger is chosen to be Annie's Sandy and Michael Froelich's dog Arnold is chosen as Ginger's understudy. Ethan is so pleased that he claps and yells "Bravo!" to the drama coach. The drama coach does not recognize Ethan at first, but when she does, she asks after his brother, Lucas. Julian thinks that she did not recognize Ethan because it was not Ethan, the silent, younger, and lesser brother to Lucas who shouted, "Bravo." It was Ethan, member of The Souls. Julian worries during the rehearsals about Michael Froelich's eventual reaction to having his dog chosen merely as understudy.

All the members of Epiphany Middle School are invited to a special matinee performance of *Annie* at the high school on the same Friday that Izzy and Margaret Diamondstein are coming for a visit. As the school bus moves towards the high school, Julian overhears a conversation between Hamilton Knapp and Michael Froelich about tranquilizers and laxatives being given to Ginger so that Michael's dog Arnold can be the star. Julian slips backstage at the school to remove the tainted treats. But then he sees Arnold wet and ready for the role of Sandy and Ginger obviously not going on stage. Julian asks Nadia for an explanation, and Nadia explains that the drama coach decided to let Arnold star in this one performance. Julian knows the tainted treats will be given to Arnold, not Ginger, and he has to decide whether to leave the treats to be given to Arnold as a means of teaching Michael and Hamilton a lesson. Julian makes his decision, but the reader does not yet know what it is.

Arnold-as-Sandy is the hit of the play, but Hamilton Knapp and another friend take the enthusiasm to a disruptive level, starting chants of "San-dy!" and "Arf! Arf!" both during and after the play. The drama coach reprimands the entire school for its disrespectful behaviour before dismissing them to their buses.

As they leave the high school, Mrs. Olinski asks Julian if he would like to ride with her in her van to Sillington House. She is planning to go see her old friend, Margaret Diamondstein, who is staying at Julian's father's B&B. Ethan reminds Mrs. Olinski that



Margaret Diamondstein is his grandmother and asks if he can ride, too. Nadia asks to come as well, on the grounds that Mr. Diamondstein is her grandfather. Mrs. Olinski agrees. Noah also asks to come. Mrs. Olinski asks why. Noah says that he should come because he was the best man at Mr. and Mrs. Diamondstein's wedding, and because he has always wanted to ride in a handicapped van. Mrs. Olinski agrees to take The Souls (though she does not know them by that name yet) to Sillington House.

Before leaving with Mrs. Olinski, Julian decides that he will let Hamilton Knapp know that he prevented Arnold from eating the drugged doggie treats (the reader now learns that this was Julian's decision). Julian goes to Ham's car and taps on the window. He pretends to find dog treats in Ham's ears and drops the rest of the treats in Ham's lap.

## **Julian Narrates When Ginger Played Annie's Sandy Analysis**

Julian shows again that he is a good person when he prevents Arnold from eating the drugged doggie treats. It would have been easy to let Arnold suffer just to see Michael and Ham's trick backfire. Julian cannot resist having the last word, however. He ignores Gopal's training to never show the "trick" behind a trick and lets Hamilton know that he saved Arnold from the drugged treats.

Mrs. Olinski calls The Souls "you four souls" purely by coincidence. The decision to take The Souls back to Sillington House will be instrumental in her final choice for her Academic Bowl team.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

In this chapter the reader learns how Mrs. Olinski chose her Academic Bowl team. Unlike other teachers in the school, she did not hold contests, nor did she listen to the criticism of other teachers, nor did she agree to her principal's suggestion that she must choose high honors students. Mrs. Olinski did not have reasons for the students whom she chose; it happened suddenly and came from a source other than reason.

Mrs. Olinski chose Noah after reading his essay on the First Amendment, and Nadia and Ethan seemed logical choices soon after. For a while, Mrs. Olinski thought of choosing Hamilton Knapp. Despite his bad behavior toward her, Mrs. Olinski valued his quick thinking and obvious team-building abilities. At the performance of *Annie*, however, Mrs. Olinski knows that someone in her class had started the disruptive and malicious chanting. When the lights come up, she scans faces and knows that it was Hamilton; she knows she cannot ask such a student to be on her Academic Bowl team.

Arriving at Sillington House, after the performance, Mrs. Olinski hugs her old and dear friend, Margaret Diamondstein. Then Ethan distracts his grandmother, followed quickly by Nadia. Nadia's grandfather emerges from the B&B, sweeping her into a hug. Mrs. Olinski watches the children with their grandparents and is swept into a storm of jealousy and rage. She feels as if she might scream with pain, when she feels herself being gently wheeled toward the front porch of Sillington House. Mr. Singh takes Mrs. Olinski in for tea. The ceremony and hot tea are calming, and as the others join her, Mrs. Olinski feels the effects of civilized behavior making her able to first listen to, and then truly enjoy the conversation of Izzy and Margaret.

Mrs. Olinski observes her four students at another table. They listen to each other with interest, don't interrupt each other, and are obviously enjoying one another's company. When The Souls look back at her from their table, Mrs. Olinski suddenly knows that Julian Singh is the fourth member of her team, and that she very much wants to return to Sillington House someday for the calming and civilizing effects of tea time.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

Mrs. Olinski reacts very strongly to Hamilton Knapp's bad behavior. She sees malice in his disruption of the play. Her own feelings of jealousy and pain are strong enough to make her feel that she herself will behave badly and with malice. Mrs. Olinski's feelings of jealousy are inspired by seeing her old friend Margaret greeting her grandson, Ethan. Mrs. Olinski's pain grows when she sees Nadia and her grandfather Izzy. Some of her jealousy may be at seeing her friend and her students so absorbed in someone other than herself. The reader should remember, however, that Mrs. Olinski lost her husband in the same car accident in which she lost her ability to walk. Whatever the extent of her

injuries, she is at least circumstantially incapable of having children and grandchildren of her own, and that must be at least part of her pain.

Julian's father, Mr. Singh, shows himself to be something of a magician like his son. Mr. Singh's talent seems to be for true hospitality, and the magical effects of a teatime that gives participants a chance to relax and behave with courtesy and graciousness. Mrs. Olinksi feels the effect of this "magic" in herself and sees the effect on her students.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

At the Bowl finals, the commissioner questions Julian's acronyms-turned-words "posh" and "tip." Julian explains, but the panel only finds a reference to support "posh." The commissioner rules to allow "posh" but not "tip." Julian respectfully recommends that the panel find another source.

The Souls's trip to the Academic Bowl finals begins with beating the other two sixth grade teams. Mrs. Olinski's fellow teachers begin to discuss the slight possibility that her team might even beat the seventh graders. The Souls do, winning with a score of almost double that of the seventh graders.

As the possibility arises that the sixth grade might beat the eighth-grade team, both younger grades band together to cheer on Mrs. Olinski's team. The day of the competition, Mrs. Olinski and her team are cheered by students returning to their classroom after lunch. Back in the quiet of the classroom, Hamilton Knapp produces a long and loud burp, followed by an insincere, "Sorry." Ham's crony, Jared Lord, does the same. Mrs. Olinski invites both students to the front of the room to teach everyone how to belch on command. Both boys are embarrassed and incapable of articulating how they do it. Mrs. Olinski reminds them that she is capable of teaching, and that is why she is at the front of the classroom. Since they are not able to teach, they should sit quietly in their seats and learn with no more interruptions. Cowed, both boys return to their seats. Suddenly Nadia sticks her left leg into the aisle. Noah sticks out his right leg. Ethan raises his right arm, and Julian raises his left. Then, just as suddenly, the limbs disappear. The Souls beat the eighth grade team and will prepare to go to the district championship against Knightsbridge Middle School.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

As The Souls begin their climb to the finals, Mrs. Olinski begins to get her balance in her classroom. When The Souls each stick one limb out in the aisles, they are silently applauding Mrs. Olinski by referring to the ivory monkey, which can balance on any one limb at a time. The reference is obvious only to them, because Mrs. Olinski does not yet know that she, along with winning the Academic Bowl, is The Souls's current project. Julian is showing considerable courage, knowledge, and self-assurance as he insists that the Bowl panel recognize his answer as correct.



# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

Julian's team members support his contention that his answer of "posh" is correct and his decision to challenge the commissioner and the panel over their decision to not allow his answer. Even as the commissioner tries to end the argument, Julian does not let go, risking disqualification because of his certainty that he, not the panel, is correct.

As Mrs. Olinski continues to drill her team for the district championships, and she is again impressed with the way they work together and respond instantly to her suggestions and admonishments. When the principal of Knightsbridge Middle School tells Mrs. Olinski that he has warned his coach that she will be hung if she lets Mrs. Olinski's sixth graders beat his team, Mrs. Olinski corrects his grammar ("hanged," not "hung") and tells him to buy some rope.

Dr. Roy Clayton Rohmer (whom the reader met in an earlier chapter lecturing Mrs. Olinski about multi-culturalism) is worried about his deputy superintendent in charge of instruction, Mr. Homer Fairbain. Last year at the district championship, Mr. Fairbain embarrassed himself and the district with a mispronunciation and lack of general knowledge. Mr. Rohmer is worried that Mr. Fairbain will do something similar this year and cause Mr. Rohmer to lose his chance to renew his contract as superintendent.

Mr. Fairbain does indeed embarrass himself at the district championship. He mispronounces the name Geronimo, then, when Julian corrects him, Mr. Fairbain comments on Julian's ethnicity and asks what tribe he comes from. Everyone in the room except Mr. Fairbain recognizes the inappropriateness (and complete lack of geographic knowledge) that Mr. Fairbain's question shows. Julian simply answers the question to bring his team ahead.

The Souls win the championship answering a question about "meeting one's Waterloo." Noah gives the answer, and the audience erupts in cheers, except for the Epiphany sixth graders. Led by Michael Froelich, the entire sixth grade pins a small piece of rope on each of their shirts in the place where a medal would be. Then the sixth graders escort Mrs. Olinski to the parking lot, even carrying her and her wheelchair on their shoulders. In the parking lot, Michael Froelich hangs a noose around the antennae of Mrs. Olinski's van. The Souls recognize what this victory has done for Mrs. Olinski's balance, and no victory was ever sweeter.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

The district championships have created camaraderie out of challenge. Michael Froelich, who once placed himself in opposition to Mrs. Olinski, becomes one of her champions. He uses his instinct for a well-placed blow against the principal of Knightsbridge, turning the principal's meanness and spite back against him. Mrs. Olinski

knows the sweetness of her victory, but only The Souls know how much went in to that victory.



# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

Mrs. Olinski asks The Souls to come to school on a Saturday to drill and practice for the regional championships. Julian tells her they cannot. When Mrs. Olinski asks why, Noah tells her that on Saturdays, they have tea. Mrs. Olinski remembers the tea at Sillington House and decides that she will join her team for tea on Saturday.

On Saturday at Sillington House, Mr. Singh tells Mrs. Olinski that they are glad that she came, because Sillington House is its own place. Mrs. Olinski soon sees what he means. She has a quiet, relaxed, and happy tea with her team and thoroughly enjoys herself. When the children leave to clean up, Mr. Singh sits down to talk with Mrs. Olinski. He tells her that The Souls were getting worried back before the winter break that she would make a wrong choice. Mr. Singh explains that Mrs. Olinski came very close to choosing another person, the wrong person for her team. Mrs. Olinski is surprised and confused. She had not told anyone about her choices until she made her final decisions, and no one should have known that she even considered choosing Hamilton Knapp for her team. Mrs. Olinski is also confused by the name The Souls. She understands that Mr. Singh is referring to her team, but she has never heard the name before.

Mr. Singh explains to Mrs. Olinski that the reason that she has never understood why she chose the four students she chose is that she did not actually do the choosing. There were energies involved that she could not see, energies that led her to make the right choices instead of a choice that would have been terribly wrong. Mrs. Olinski is uneasy and confused by Mr. Singh's explanation.

The Souls come back from cleaning, ready to practice. Mr. Singh gives Mrs. Olinski a stack of cards with questions written in calligraphy. She asks who wrote them, and Noah tells her that they have all contributed. Mr. Singh says that he has contributed questions about languages and weights and measures. Noah tells Mrs. Olinski that the team needs help with certain holes in their knowledge. Julian says the holes are the categories of music and the bible. Noah argues that there will be no questions about the Bible in a New York public school Academic Bowl competition. Mrs. Olinski, still reeling from her conversation with Mr. Singh and the ideas he put into her mind, is only half-listening, but as she begins to attend more carefully, she agrees that the bible is a good place to start. When Mrs. Olinski is driving home that evening, she smiles to herself and thinks that the regional championships are "in the bag."

## Chapter 8 Analysis

This chapter continues to expand an idea that has been mentioned several times in the book already: that Mrs. Olinski did not actually choose the team, but that the team





chose her. As the reader has seen, The Souls became a team before they became an Academic Bowl team, and they specifically chose Mrs. Olinski as their project. Mr. Singh suggests that Mrs. Olinski was responding to the energy and will of The Souls when she chose her team, and that energy kept her from making a huge mistake in putting Hamilton Knapp on the team. The energy The Souls create at their Saturday tea afternoons does nothing but good for Mrs. Olinski and The Souls themselves.



# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

The commissioner of education cites Julian for protesting his ruling and docks two points from Epiphany's team. The commissioner gives their opponents from Maxwell a chance to answer the question. While Maxwell struggles, a member of the panel gives a note to the commissioner. The panel has checked another source and determined that Julian's answer of "tip" is indeed an acronym that has become a word in English. The commissioner restores Epiphany's points, including the two taken for protesting a ruling.

Between the regional and state championships, Dr. Rohmer arranges for a press conference about the surprising team of sixth graders and invites Mrs. Olinski, The Souls, and his deputy superintendent, Mr. Fairbain. Mr. Fairbain again manages to embarrass himself, this time by implying that the taxpayers of New York would be financing the trip to Albany. Dr. Rohmer, with visions of his contract going unsigned, must break the news that while the taxpayers would pay for the team, their coach, their principal, and, of course, himself, to go to Albany, taxpayers would of course not be paying for the entire town of Epiphany to go to the state finals.

The grandparents of Century Village save the day. Bella Dubinsky (who painted a T-shirt to look like a tuxedo for Noah in the second chapter) draws a T-shirt with a noose on the front. Noah's grandmother has the design silk-screened and the proceeds from the sales of the T-shirts pay the gas for six buses to Albany. The drivers donate their services, and Mrs. Olinski drives her van with Mr. Singh and Julian as passengers.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

Another example of the overwhelming kindness that is a theme of this book occurs when residents of a retirement community in Florida help to finance the opportunity for a town in New York to go cheer on a small group of sixth graders in an Academic Bowl competition. Mrs. Olinski's driving arrangement with Mr. Singh and Julian will give her the opportunity in later chapters to learn more about The Souls.



# Chapter 10

## Chapter 10 Summary

With the points for "tip" restored, Epiphany is in the lead at the finals. Maxwell pulls ahead, then Epiphany, then Maxwell, and so on. In the van on the way to the finals, Mr. Singh compliments Mrs. Olinski on her driving, commenting that he is not a very good driver himself, after so many years at sea. Mrs. Olinski says that since her accident it is usually harder for her to be a passenger than a driver. Mr. Singh agrees, saying that that is often true; it requires more courage to be taken than to be in charge. Mrs. Olinski comments that Julian measures a journey by quarter inches, meaning that he is focused on the present and not impatient for what comes next. Mr. Singh says that is a skill he learned on the ship.

The commissioner of education enjoys the mounting tension of the finals, drawing out each question with time and care. He asks Maxwell's team in what book Humpty Dumpty is first introduced. Maxwell answers *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. That is incorrect, and the commissioner gives the question to Epiphany. The Souls relax and let Julian give the correct answer: *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll. It is match point, and when Julian correctly gives the author's real name and occupation, Epiphany wins the finals.

The Souls, their coach, and the entire audience cheer. The Souls leave the stage to stand by Mrs. Olinski, who cannot go up the stairs to the stage, and eventually the commissioner of education must go down the stairs, too, to give them their trophy.

## Chapter 10 Analysis

This is a chapter of resolution; it is a victorious finale to the Academic Bowl competition. It also includes the conversation between Mr. Singh and Mrs. Olinski about the courage it takes to be a passenger, to let someone else do the driving. Since Mrs. Olinski has been "driven" throughout the book by forces she does not recognize, this is a point she will eventually recognize as applying to herself.



# Chapter 11

## Chapter 11 Summary

In the van on the way home from the finals, Mrs. Olinski feels a curious sense of loss. She speaks of it to Mr. Singh, who explains that she is missing that sense of preparation and excitement with which she has been living for months. Mr. Singh advises Mrs. Olinski to enjoy this port of call just as much as she has enjoyed the journey.

Mrs. Olinski asks Mr. Singh if he knows why she chose The Souls. Mr. Singh explains that each of The Souls had a journey, each found something on their journey, and each came through the journey changed. Noah was changed at Century Village, Nadia was changed at the Sargasso Sea, Ethan was changed on a bus ride, and Julian was changed in the transition from life at sea to life at a public middle school. Each person saw kindness, each recognized it for what it was, and each chose it for her or himself.

Mrs. Olinski thinks back to the day she chose Julian for her team. She remembers that it was the meanness of Hamilton Knapp that she turned away from, and thinks that it was the recognition of kindness in Julian that she had chosen.

At home, Mrs. Olinski takes down her copy of *Through the Looking Glass* to read the lines about Humpty Dumpty. She knows that The Souls have helped to put her back together again.

## Chapter 11 Analysis

Mrs. Olinski receives an answer to her question. Mr. Singh shows her that it is by seeing kindness, and sometimes by seeing cruelty, that we are able to recognize kindness and choose it for ourselves. The energy or quality that has been "driving" Mrs. Olinski throughout the book is the kindness of four sixth graders who call themselves The Souls.



# Chapter 12

## Chapter 12 Summary

Mrs. Olinski goes to Sillington House for tea. At the table with The Souls, she asks, "Did I chose you, or did you chose me?" The Souls answer, "Yes!"

## Chapter 12 Analysis

Almost an epilogue, this chapter sums up the "chicken and egg" theme of the book. Mrs. Olinski's question is not irrelevant, but unanswerable with anything other than "yes." The point is not who chose whom. The point is that positive energy, that final "Yes!"



# Characters

## Mrs. Olinski

Mrs. Eva Marie Olinski is a sixth-grade teacher at Epiphany Middle School and the coach for the Academic Bowl team that wins the New York State finals. Mrs. Olinski is returning to teaching after a long hiatus. She was in a car accident, which paralyzed her from the waist down and killed her husband. Mrs. Olinski is returning to teaching unsure of herself; she is handicapped not only in body but also in spirit. In the time she has been gone, sixth graders have changed from children to near-adolescents, less interested in learning and less afraid to challenge and act out towards authority. Several students, including Hamilton Knapp, Michael Froelich, and Jared Lord, are particularly adept at getting Mrs. Olinski "off balance."

Mrs. Olinski chooses her Academic Bowl team differently than the other teachers at Epiphany. She does not have classroom competitions to pick winners, and she does not automatically pick honors students, because (as she explains to her principal) by sixth grade, honors students have learned to hate being wrong and hate taking risks. Winners, Mrs. Olinski argues, must be willing to do both. She opts to watch her class and pick her team by fiat. Her first choice is Noah Gershom, who is obviously smart and knowledgeable. Her second and third choices are Nadia Diamondstein and Ethan Potter. Mrs. Olinski waffles over her fourth choice, thinking that perhaps Hamilton Knapp may make a good team member. Ham is naughty, but smart and an obvious team player and leader. But Mrs. Olinski sees Hamilton behaving with real malice at a school play, and she reacts strongly against his mean side and chooses Julian Singh instead.

Throughout the book, Mrs. Olinski struggles to define why she chose the students she picked. Only at the end of the book does Mr. Singh, Julian's father, help her to see that she was reacting to the kindness that she recognized in each of the four students. Mrs. Olinski's relationship with her team develops through the novel, and she grows into a more confident, relaxed, and happy person as a result of that relationship. Winning the finals is an important victory, but the most important victory is the championship of kindness over fear, cruelty, and jealousy.

## Noah Gershom

Noah is one of the members of Mrs. Olinski's Academic Bowl team. Noah is very bright and knowledgeable, but not necessarily a socially adept or deep thinking person. He is argumentative and nit-picky, but not because he wants to defeat an opponent or ridicule someone else's ideas. Noah is simply detail-oriented and enjoys a good argument. He finds his match in debating with Nadia Diamondstein.

Noah's visit to his grandparent's retirement community is almost exclusively an education in kindness and generosity. He sees selflessness everywhere he looks, and



shows himself to be an apt pupil when he selflessly gives away the gifts he has received on his visit: a wagon, a calligraphy pen and ink bottle, Post-it notes, and a T-shirt painted to look like a tuxedo. The one person Noah meets on his trip who is not endlessly kind is Allen Diamondstein, the groom's son. Allen is recently divorced and self-absorbed. When Noah gives his gifts away at the wedding, Allen refuses to receive the gift of the wagon. Izzy Diamondstein, the groom and Allen's father, deftly turns Allen's refusal into an act of generosity by donating the wagon to the entire community as "a gift from the best man." Noah, who was best man in the wedding after Allen hurt his foot and could not stand up with his father, thinks that Izzy is really referring to him (Noah).

At Julian's first tea party, Noah brings Julian a present of a calligraphy pen and bottle of ink. When everyone expresses interest, Noah offers to teach calligraphy to all three of his new friends. Beautifully written signs, cards, and notes pop up throughout the rest of the novel as The Souls find this appropriate way of expressing themselves in writing.

## **Nadia Diamondstein**

Nadia is a beautiful, red-headed girl and a member of Mrs. Olinski's Academic Bowl team. She has a dog, named Ginger, whom she considers to be a genius. Nadia's father, Allen Diamondstein, has recently gotten divorced from her mother. Nadia is terribly angry with her parents, and her anger sloshes over onto everyone else, including her grandfather, Izzy Diamondstein, his new wife, Margaret (formerly Margaret Draper), and Margaret's grandson Ethan Potter. Nadia is smart and precise, and when she is angry she uses her smarts and precision to inflict pain.

After a disastrous custody visit to her father's new apartment in Florida, Nadia is brought out of her selfishness and pain by the needs of baby loggerhead turtles that are displaced by a storm. Nadia knows from previous summers all about the life cycle of the turtles, and she is aware of the consequences of not helping the babies. The baby turtles' needs bring her out of her own internal pain and allow her more customary kindness to overcome her anger. Nadia sees a parallel between her situation and the turtles'; both have been through a storm, and both need "a lift" to get back on track.

## **Ethan Potter**

Ethan is a lifelong resident of Epiphany, New York. In fact, his family has lived, farmed and taught school in the area for longer than Epiphany has been a town. Ethan is the third member of Mrs. Olinski's Academic Bowl team. His grandmother is Margaret Draper, who becomes Margaret Diamondstein when she marries Izzy Diamondstein, Nadia's grandfather.

Ethan is a quiet boy who feels shadowed by his older brother, Lucas. Lucas is smart and successful in every way, and Ethan feels that he is a disappointment to every teacher he has ever had because he does not measure up to Lucas. Ethan is pleased



that his sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Olinski, is new because she will not have known his brother.

Ethan meets Nadia in Florida during her custody visit with her father. He is visiting with his grandmother and Nadia's grandfather. Ethan meets Julian Singh on the school bus. Julian is so obviously an outsider and not capable (as Ethan is) of fading into the background, and Ethan immediately decides to keep his distance from Julian. Ethan is not intentionally cruel, but he is wary of attaching himself to someone who is so obviously out of place. When Michael Froelich and Hamilton Knapp threaten physical harm to Julian, however, Ethan acts to help him. Julian repays Ethan with a secret invitation to a tea party.

## **Julian Singh**

Julian is new to Epiphany, having grown up on cruise ships where his parents lived and worked and he has been educated at boarding schools in England. Julian's appearance, dress, accent, and good manners mark him as a hopeless outsider at Epiphany Middle School, and Julian endures a good deal of malice and bullying. Julian is blessed with great inner resources, and he faces his trials with courage and self-control. Mrs. Olinski chooses him as her fourth Academic Bowl team member.

Julian is also a gifted magician. He trained with a magician named Gopal who worked on one of the same ships as Julian's father, Mr. Singh, who is a chef. Gopal once paid Julian the compliment of saying that Julian had "chops," the skill, talent, and indefinable extra qualities that make a truly great magician. Julian uses his sleight-of-hand skills to unobtrusively invite the other three children to tea one Saturday and to keep them amused and delighted thereafter.

## **Margaret Draper (Margaret Diamondstein)**

Mrs. Draper is the grandmother of Ethan Potter, the good friend of Mrs. Olinski, and the new wife of Izzy Diamondstein. A former teacher and principal, Margaret is a no-nonsense type of character, interested in children but not exclusively focused on their every need or whim. After retirement, Margaret moved to Century Village and discovered a love for loggerhead turtles. She is a licensed turtle nest mover, and she enjoys the thrill of helping these threatened animals survive.

## **Izzy Diamondstein**

Izzy is Nadia's grandfather, Allen Diamondstein's father, and the groom at the wedding Noah Gershom attends while visiting his own grandparents. Izzy is fond of Nadia, fond of his new wife, and patient with his anxious and unhappy son. Izzy is infected by Margaret's enthusiasm for saving turtles and assists her in moving nests and tracking the hatches. Izzy implores Nadia to help rescue the baby turtles that are displaced after the storm.





## Allen Diamondstein

Allen is Nadia's father, recently divorced, and anxious and unhappy as a result. Nadia accuses him of "hovering" during her first child custody visit. Allen is equally nervous and unhappy at his father's wedding. Noah inadvertently contributes to Allen's falling on his father's wedding day and hurting his foot, making him unable to stand up as Izzy's best man.

Allen is a fairly unsympathetic character, disliked by Noah and one of the causes of Nadia's anger and misery. But, like Nadia, the reader comes to see Allen's likable side over the course of Nadia's tale. Allen is in a sad circumstance and not dealing well with the turmoil, he loves his daughter and is able to make the best of things with her.

## Hamilton Knapp

One of the "bad boys" in Mrs. Olinski's class, Hamilton causes Mrs. Olinski pain and embarrassment on her first day back at teaching by asking her to write higher on the blackboard. Confined to her wheelchair, Mrs. Olinski cannot. Hamilton also torments Julian, stealing his book bag and writing, "I am a ass" on the outside. Hamilton is the leader of the malicious and disruptive chanting at the performance of *Annie* at the high school, and he also tries to give Nadia's dog Ginger some drugged treats so that Arnold, his friend Michael's dog, will be in the play.

## Michael Froelich

A friend of Hamilton Knapp, Michael joins in the torments of Mrs. Olinski and Julian. The reader sees Michael somewhat improved by his experience in the *Annie* play. Michael is still aware of Hamilton's attempt to drug Ginger, however, and his dog Arnold would have eaten the drugged treats if Julian had not acted to intervene. Michael prompts the sixth grade to wear tiny nooses of rope pinned to their shirts after Epiphany beats a team whose principal jokingly threatened to hang his coach if his team didn't beat Epiphany.

## Mr. Singh

Mr. Singh is Julian's father, a widower, and the new owner of Sillington House. A former cruise ship chef, Mr. Singh is converting the old farmhouse into a Bed and Breakfast. Mr. Singh is the closest witness to the birth of The Souls. Since the Saturday tea times take place in his B&B, he sees the four students become friends and understands that it is their recognition of kindness that brings them together. Mr. Singh is the oracle who gives Mrs. Olinski most of the clues about The Souls and why she came to choose them for her team.



## **Dr. Roy Clayton Rohmer**

The District Superintendent of Clarion County, Dr. Rohmer is a pompous and humorless man who is watching as his chance for having his contract renewed goes down the drain as his deputy, Mr. Fairbain, repeatedly makes an ass of himself in public.

## **Mr. Homer Fairbain**

An object of ridicule and a little pity, Mr. Fairbain acts as comic relief with his incredibly inappropriate and stupid blunders.



## Objects/Places

### Epiphany, New York

This is the small, upstate town where Mrs. Olinski and The Souls live. The word "epiphany" can mean a moment of sudden illumination or understanding.

### Century Village

The retirement community in Florida where Noah visits his grandparents, Century Village is also the home to Izzy and Margaret Draper.

### Sillington House

Mr. Singh buys this former farmhouse to turn it into a bed & breakfast inn. This is the quiet and civilized setting where The Souls have tea each Saturday.

### The Calligraphy Pen and Bottle of Ink

Noah is given a calligraphy pen and ink by Tillie Nachman, the resident of Century Village who taught him to write in calligraphy. Noah gives his present away at the wedding in an act of selflessness. Noah replaces the pen and ink for himself, and gives a gift of another pen and ink to Julian at the first tea party. All four of The Souls learn calligraphy and use it whenever possible.

### Post-it Notes

Noah buys Post-it notes to include a special message inside the five wedding invitations that are damaged with cat paw prints. Julian also uses Post-it notes to provide clues to the puzzle-invitation he extends to Ethan.

### The Red Wagon

Noah's grandparents give him the wagon as a present during his visit. Noah uses the wagon to deliver many things during the wedding preparations, and he gives the wagon away during the wedding. Allen Diamondstein refuses to take Noah's gift of the wagon, and Izzy extends the gift to the entire community to help the retirees haul things as needed.



## Julian's Book Bag

One of the marks of Julian's strangeness, the book bag is taken by Michael Froelich and Hamilton Knapp. Hamilton writes "I am a ass" on the bag in permanent marker. Julian revises the sentence to read, "I am a passenger on Spaceship Earth."

## Saturday Teatime

Teatime becomes a symbol of all that is civilized and good in the story. Tea is how The Souls come together. It is where, besides at the Bowl competitions, they are at their best. Teatime is also a healing place, where Mrs. Olinski is able to regain her composure and recognize kindness after an episode of intense jealousy and pain.

## The Ivory Monkey

Gopal gave Julian this small trick statuette. It can stand on any one of its limbs at a time. It becomes a symbol for The Souls's project: helping Mrs. Olinski regain her balance and learn to "stand on her own two feet."

## A Noose of Rope

The principal of another middle school that will be competing with Mrs. Olinski's sixth graders tells her that he has threatened to hang his coach if she lets Epiphany's team win. Mrs. Olinski tells him to start buying rope. Michael Froelich prompts the sixth grade to wear tiny nooses on their shirts after Epiphany wins. Bella Dubinsky, from Century Village, designs T-shirts emblazoned with only a noose to sell to raise money for the trip to the state finals.

# Setting

The narrative of *The View from Saturday* moves rapidly among several different settings, each in its own way providing clues to the inner lives of the characters. Nadia's stay with her father in Florida, for example, involves a project to save endangered sea turtles that are most vulnerable to human interference and predators on the beaches where they originally hatched and where they return to lay their eggs. Nadia, a reluctant participant in the turtle project, nonetheless sees parallels between her experiences and the life cycle of the turtles, including absent parents, a long journey to adulthood, and the possibility of losing one's way without help. Her experiences in Florida are then tied to *The Souls* and Mrs. Olinski, with Mrs. Olinski eventually realizing that she and her students have all been on journeys, each to find meaning in his or her life.

The handling of physical settings as analogues to the lives of the characters is very sophisticated, done so seamlessly that even with characters such as Nadia pointing out the analogies, the reader must give some thought to each important location in order to fully grasp its meaning in the lives of the characters. Sillington House, for instance, is at the heart of the formation of *The Souls* group, yet its significance must be divined from how the characters of *The View from Saturday* use it. It is first being converted to a bed and breakfast inn, a place where travelers may stay and feel at home.

The owners of the property have spent their lives traveling on cruise ships, and it is their son Julian's first stable home. Julian, new to America but here to stay, needs to find a place for himself in his new society. He does this in part by inviting a few classmates home for tea, each of whom has a journey to complete. Julian's father, near the end of the novel, points out how each journey has taken place. Sillington House thus becomes a home away from home, just as the Sargasso Sea is the home away from their beaches for the sea turtles. That Mrs. Olinski is the last of the five main characters to come to Sillington House shows that she is the last to complete her spiritual journey, having come to the end of her quest only when her students win the state academic championship.

Another important place is Epiphany Middle School; its name suggests its importance, an epiphany being a spiritual event in which the true essence about something is revealed.

Epiphany Middle School seems an unlikely place at first for spiritual revelations, as its principal cares nothing for academic achievement, instead urging his teachers to be politically correct. The sixth graders themselves are outsiders because the sixth grade level has only recently been moved from an elementary school to a school that previously had only seventh and eighth graders. This is a symbolic as well as a physical dispossession; the sixth graders are homeless outsiders even in their homeroom. For Mrs. Olinski, returning to teaching after an accident that killed her husband and paralyzed her legs, the environment at Epiphany Middle School is downright hostile, with a few of her students harassing her with petty cruelties, and her boss denigrating

her choice of students in the academic competition because they are not of politically correct ethnic groups.

It is through the work of *The Souls* that Mrs. Olinski begins to find her home, and it is through their journey to the state championship that she finds her epiphany. The Souls help Mrs. Olinski maintain her balance in the classroom, defusing attempts to destabilize and demoralize her to the point of losing control of class. Mrs. Olinsky begins her journey to epiphany when she chooses the outcast Souls to represent her class in the academic competition. She gets caught up with her four students in the planning and excitement as they advance from one level to the next in their quest to be state champions. When they win and complete their journey to deliverance, she feels that something is missing. Julian's father suggests that she enjoy the moment of victory: "Now you must put down anchor, look around, enjoy this port of call. Your stay will be brief. You must do it, Mrs. Olinski." Her epiphany comes when she finally does set down anchor at Sillington House, her port of call; she realizes that she and her students have been on a spiritual journey which has brought them to a home at last.



# Social Sensitivity

Konigsburg does not seem to shy away from controversy, but her novels tend to be much more concerned with the inner lives of young people than with social issues. Even so, *The View from Saturday* may make some readers uncomfortable with its disdainful treatment of the idea of diversity, the academic buzzword of the moment.

Although the educational concept of diversity is a secondary issue in the novel, it is a recurring motif. Konigsburg points out that the theory of diversity in practice excludes Jews (perhaps even discriminates against them), other unfashionable ethnic groups such as East Indians, and would appear to exclude handicapped people such as Mrs. Olinski. The main characters of *The View from Saturday* even seem to be drawn together partly because they are each unfashionable in some way that cannot be helped, even though their roles as people on journeys is the most important factor.

Furthermore, the purveyors of diversity seem to advocate it more for their own personal advancement than for the benefit of anyone else.

This needling of a sacred cow serves as part of the background of the lives of the main characters and is mild.

None of Konigsburg's criticisms are false, and they inspire thought on the subject of social diversity. If there is a weakness in the presentation of the academic concept of diversity, it is that this idea is so shallow that like other fads it may pass from fashion and leave future young readers unsure of what Konigsburg is talking about.

The novel's depiction of social outsiders and of changes in the behavior of sixth graders is perhaps of broader interest. Mrs. Olinski is crudely alerted to the change her first day teaching, with sixth graders no longer asking what is to be learned next but instead asking why bother. Her effort to tell her students about her physical handicap by writing "paraplegic" on the blackboard is rewarded with the replacing of "paraplegic" with "cripple" during a class break. She also finds herself in a school with few academic standards and a principal who cares little for academic excellence.

On the other hand, some students find within themselves the capacity to help Mrs. Olinski, an outsider who could be emotionally brutalized by the cruelty with which she must contend.

This is a hopeful aspect of the novel—a reminder that twelve-year-olds have minds of their own and the capacity to choose to help others. The Souls become the arms and legs of the perpetually balanced toy monkey, always trying to help her maintain her balance in the face of indifference or outright hostility. In the process, they discover that helping others binds them together as friends and enables them to take active roles in their own education. When presented with cruelty, the young people take action rather than remain passive, and their lives are enriched because of their efforts.

## Literary Qualities

Anyone reading *The View from Saturday* is likely to notice the novel's unusual structure. It has six separate voices telling the story. One voice is third-person omniscient, a voice that has the God-like power to read people's minds and tell anything about the events transpiring. Another voice is third-person limited, a voice that focuses on Mrs. Olinski and limits itself to her perceptions and thoughts.

The other four voices are first person, each the voice of one of The Souls.

Such experimentation with narrative voices can be fun, a roller coaster ride through the thoughts and feelings of characters. It also requires thought on the part of readers, especially when the voices overlap and give more than one version of an event such as the "cripple" incident. It invites readers to seek out the truth for themselves in the various narratives, while promoting awareness of the importance of diverse views on complex issues.

*The View from Saturday* is divided into sections that hop from one voice to another. This does not become confusing because the voices are distinctive enough not to be mistaken for each other. The sixth graders have a tendency to sound alike—perhaps because of Konigsburg's effort to give their narratives clear diction that is easy to understand—but this is well compensated for by the distinctiveness of each Souls' personality and view of the world. This personal distinction of character also has the effect of making each of the character's ideas important, and it implies the strongly appealing notion that young minds can be worthy of respect.



# Themes

## Kindness and Cruelty

Each of the four children who make up The Souls and Mrs. Olinski's Academic Bowl team has made a journey. Each student has been a witness to kindness and learned to recognize and value it. Noah witnesses the kindness and generosity of the residents of Century Village in honor of Izzy and Margaret's wedding. Nadia sees her grandfather, Margaret, and Ethan acting out of kindness to help save the lives of baby turtles, and she is inspired to do the same. Julian has known great kindness on the ships where he has grown up, and he is the recipient of Ethan's kind help when the bullying at school becomes physical. Ethan sees kindness both in Florida with the turtles and in himself when he helps Julian.

Cruelty and meanness are also recognized by The Souls. Noah sees Allen Diamondstein behaving selfishly at Izzy and Margaret's wedding. Nadia behaves badly out of anger and frustration, hurting her father and almost failing to help the baby loggerhead turtles. Ethan is the recipient of inadvertent cruelty when he is constantly compared unfavorably to his older brother Lucas, and he sees the bullying that Julian endures. Julian learns about cruelty firsthand, as he is teased and bullied for being different.

Mrs. Olinski has her own brushes with cruelty and kindness. She, too, is bullied by students and experiences overwhelming feelings of jealousy and pain when she sees her students with their grandparents. Mrs. Olinski is saved from her own cruelties by Mr. Singh, who brings her into Sillington House for tea, giving her time to relax and return to her civilized and mannered self. She is the recipient of The Souls's kindness; they make helping Mrs. Olinski regain her "balance" a project, and winning the Academic Bowl championships is a part of that project.

## The Chicken and Egg Question

Throughout the book, questions arise that have no real or meaningful answer, as in the question "which came first, the chicken or the egg?" The Souls tell Mrs. Olinski that they were The Souls long before they became a team. Mrs. Olinski argues that they became a team as soon as they became The Souls. Nadia wonders whether she is helping the turtles get back on track or if they are helping her get back on track. Mrs. Olinski asks The Souls whether she chose them or they chose her.

The answers to these questions are unimportant. Each question revolves around a positive event or change. Mr. Singh refers late in the book to an energy that brought Mrs. Olinski and The Souls together. There is a symbolism in these questions that points to that energy. The only available answer to the questions is "yes," just as "yes" is the ultimate expression of positive energy.



## Facts and Feelings

An Academic Bowl competition is all about facts. Noah Gershom is very focused on facts. Nadia knew all the facts about a loggerhead turtle's lifecycle before visiting her father. Feelings, on the other hand, have an overriding importance in the novel. The facts of a turtle's life are meaningless if those facts do not inspire Nadia to exchange her feelings of anger and frustration for generosity and selflessness. The Souls win the Bowl finals by knowing many facts, but the reason they win is about their feelings for each other and their teacher, Mrs. Olinski. The novel clearly presents the idea that feelings are paramount, and facts, however fun and useful they may be, are secondary.



## Themes/Characters

The unifying theme of *The View from Saturday* is the journey. Each of the five central characters makes a journey of the spirit, and the structure of the novel is held together by journeys.

The most obvious journey is the collective one they take to the state championship. This journey forms the backbone of the novel, holding the disparate narrative strands together by providing a consistent background from beginning to end. It is also an important part of Mrs. Olinski's journey to the discovery of kindness in others.

The other journeys are individual and metaphorical. Mr. Singh and his son Julian regard life as if they are travelers on cruise ships who come together, share portions of their journeys, and then part to follow their own journey to its individual end.

Noah Gershom's journey becomes entangled at different times with the journey to happiness of Margaret Draper and Izzy Diamondstein and then also with the journeys of the other Souls. At first unknown to him, his participation in the wedding of Margaret Draper and Izzy Diamondstein links his journey to that of Nadia Diamondstein, who is unhappy about the marriage, and whose father was supposed to be best man before Noah had to stand in for him.

One of the hallmarks of good characterization is that the characters grow during the narrative, and *The View from Saturday* has such growth in abundance. The novel is not a coming-of-age story though; instead, its main characters grow the way characters are supposed to grow in fiction for adults—they learn about themselves, especially their motivations and their capacity to do good, and they develop greater understanding of their environment and the people around them.

Those looking for a single protagonist of *The View from Saturday* may become frustrated in their search.

Although Mrs. Olinski's journey helps bind the narrative together, the experiences of Noah, Nadia, Ethan, and Julian also help unite the novel, and their self-discoveries are as important as her own. Perhaps fittingly for a novel about intertwined journeys and the discovery of kindness in others, there are multiple protagonists, with five characters taking center stage individually during the novel and then taking center stage collectively by its end. Having multiple protagonists allows Konigsburg to look at her unifying theme of the journey from different angles, showing how the journey to discovering kindness not only in others but in oneself can be achieved in both extraordinary and ordinary ways. Nadia's way—traveling from her paper on turtles, to helping turtles survive, to realizing that her involvement with the turtles has been a process of spiritual growth—is extraordinary. Her understanding of nature's design for the life cycle of sea turtles has led her to a greater understanding of her father and of her awkward situation in life, shuttling between parents. This extraordinary journey is



beautiful in its presentation, offering an elegant analogy that allows Nadia's inner life to be explored in depth.

Beautiful though the turtle journey is, more powerful may be Ethan's ordinary journey on a bus. As Mr. Singh points out, Ethan's journey took longer than those of Nadia and Noah, but it was the shortest trip by distance.

He begins his journey by taking a double-seat on the school bus, hoping to keep the whole thing to himself. He is antisocial, trying to keep other students from bothering him, and his journey seems ready to be stifled by his having erected a wall between himself and other young people; when Julian tries to talk with him he avoids conversation and human contact. Yet, Ethan is drawn to Julian even while trying to avoid him because he and Julian are both on important journeys.

It is their journeying that eventually unites *The Souls*, each youngster recognizing in the others people on journeys of the heart. Ethan's breakthrough to helping Julian is important because it reveals how the discovery of kindness works. Julian, the lifetime traveler, is friendly and good to Ethan, and Ethan's discovery of the warming worth of offered kindness helps him find and unlock the kindness in himself, leading to his effort to protect Julian from bullies. This growth in Ethan's heart is made more powerful by taking place on a journey attending school in an ordinary life and by the forthright action by which his newfound kindness is expressed. The ordinariness of the background of his growth reveals to young readers the knowledge that learning to understand the inner lives of others and comprehending the graces of kindness received and kindness given does not require extraordinary lives in extraordinary circumstances—anyone can do it in a normal life. The action Ethan takes to save Julian from humiliation illustrates the crucial moral point that the key to personal growth is not being passive. Individuals can discover through taking action the kindness within themselves and, in so doing, inspire those around them to actions that will both benefit others and show them the latent good that they have in themselves. This is the process whereby right thoughts lead to the ultimate good of right deeds.



# Style

## Points of View

The point of view switches between the first person and the third person. Each of the four students, Noah, Nadia, Ethan, and Julian, has one chapter, which is told in the first person from their perspective. These chapters are given titles with the child's name, such as "Nadia Tells of Turtle Love." Each of these chapters gives the reader a chance to hear from these children in their own voices. The rest of the novel is written in the third person, with Mrs. Olinski's perspective the primary one. Mrs. Olinski, though an important and major character, is not a primary *actor* in the book; rather, she is *acted upon* (with great kindness) by The Souls. It is fitting, then, that The Souls's voices are given primacy in the points of view.

## Setting

The novel is set in a small town in upstate New York called Epiphany. This is the town where The Souls and Mrs. Olinski live. Some scenes that take place before the school year begins happen in Florida, in and near a retirement community called Century Village. When Mrs. Olinski's Academic Bowl team wins the school championship, she and her students travel to other places in New York, finally ending up in Albany for the state finals.

## Language and Meaning

The novel is simply written and should be easy for the average middle school student (or older) to read. The "voice" changes in the chapters where one of the four students, Noah, Nadia, Ethan, or Julian, is narrating in the first person. Noah's voice is marked with his use of the word "fact." Nadia has a precise and careful voice, eschewing contractions and slang. Ethan's voice is full of descriptions of what he sees; of the four students, he is most attuned to appearances. Julian's voice is precise, like Nadia's, but uses some British idioms and words in keeping with his upbringing and education.

The name of the town, Epiphany, comes from a word meaning a sudden flash of understanding or important turning point. In the Christian tradition, Epiphany is the holiday that celebrates the arrival of the magi or wise men after the birth of Jesus Christ.

The four students call themselves The Souls. "Soul" has a specific meaning in Judeo-Christian tradition, but the reader should not limit his understanding of the team's name to that tradition. A soul may be that part of oneself which feels, as opposed to the mind, which understands.

## Structure

The story is told in sixteen chapters of varying length. The chapters that are titled by a number are fairly short and focus on the novel's "present." These chapters tell the story of The Souls's successful drive to win the state Academic Bowl championship. The chapters that are titled with the name of one of the four students tell the background story. Each child is given an opportunity to tell about his or her journey and recognition of kindness, and, taken together, these chapters tell the story of how The Souls came to be.



## Quotes

"They told Mrs. Olinski that they were The Souls long before they were a team, but she told them that they were a team as soon as they became The Souls." Chapter 1, page 1

"I helped distribute the groceries to the proper households, using the new red wagon.

Fact: I did a wonderful job." Noah Writes a B&B Letter, page 12

"'In the interest of diversity,' she said, 'I chose a brunette, a redhead, a blond, and a kid with hair as black as print on paper.'" Chapter 2, page 22

"*Nothing* is a mean answer, but sometimes nothing works. Sometimes nothing else does." Nadia Tells of Turtle Love, page 51

"I, too, had been picked up from one place and set down in another. I, too, had been stranded. We both needed help resettling." Nadia Tells of Turtle Love, page 55

"The man was wearing a long navy blue apron and a white turban. A turban. A white turban. Like an illustration from *The Arabian Nights*. Equally strange. The kid was wearing shorts and knee socks." Ethan Explains the B&B Inn, page 65

"For the first time since I started school - no, even longer than that - for the first time ever, I was looking forward to a party." Ethan Explains the B&B Inn, page 78

"Had I gained something at Sillington House? Or had I lost something there? The answer was yes." Ethan Explains the B&B Inn, page 89

"When she returned from lunch and saw CRIPPLE written on the blackboard, she knew more than the names had changed. Sixth graders had changed." Chapter 4, page 95

"I was not without worry." Julian Narrates When Ginger Played Annie's Sandy, page 106

"Her voice quavering, she answered her critics. 'I have my reasons,' she said, even though she knew she didn't. Something stronger than reason was having its way with her, and she didn't know what that was either." Chapter 5, page 119

"Mrs. Olinski thought, how unusual to find four sixth graders who listen to one another sympathetically, unselfishly. How curious. How *courteous*. Mrs. Olinski thought, when people come to tea, they are courteous." Chapter 5, page 125

"The whole truth was that Mrs. Olinski did not yet know the whole truth." Chapter 7, page 134

"Ethan said, 'Look, Ma, no hands,' and Noah said, 'Look, Ma, no legs,' and Nadia thought, 'Sometimes people need a lift between switches,' and Julian said nothing but rubbed the little ivory monkey in his pocket." Chapter 7, page 138



"Think of the atom, Mrs. Olinski. There are energies within that tiny realm that are invisible but produce visible results." Chapter 8, page 143

"And The Souls and Mrs. Olinski shared the trophy that is called a loving cup. And it was." Chapter 10, page 154

"You must know of something's existence before you can notice its absence. So it was with The Souls. They found on their journeys what you found at Sillington House." Chapter 11, page 157

"She waited until they were all in their usual places, and then she asked, 'Did I choose you, or did you choose me?' And The Souls answered, 'Yes!'" Chapter 12, page 160





## Topics for Discussion

1. What themes and issues presented in the novel affect you most strongly?
2. What does the title *The View from Saturday* refer to?
3. Why do the young people call themselves *The Souls*? Is the name appropriate?
4. Why does Mrs. Olinski have trouble with the term diversity as it applies to students?
5. Why would Jews be excluded from a social setting in which diversity is theoretically supposed to ensure inclusion? What other groups of people does this kind of application of diversity exclude?
6. The narrative mentions a couple of times that sixth graders have changed. In what ways have they changed? Why have they changed?

Are the changes, if any, good or bad?

7. Why would a student write "cripple" on the blackboard to describe Mrs. Olinski?
8. What does Nadia mean when she says that "I wanted silence to make him [her father] as miserable as it had made me"? What kind of silence can make someone miserable?
9. What does Julian mean by "I am as American as pizza pie. I did not originate here, but I am here to stay"?

How might this idea apply to real life?

10. How does each Soul represent a limb of the balancing body for Mrs. Olinski? How do they help her, even when she is helping them? Could you and your classmates have a similar positive influence on the life of an adult?



## Essay Topics

Discuss the theme of kindness and cruelty in the novel. Where do the characters find cruelty, and how do they come to recognize kindness? How does this relate to Mr. Singh's assertion that one "must know of something's existence before you can notice its absence"?

Give three examples in the novel of chicken-and-egg questions. How are these questions answered in the book? What do those answers mean to the characters?

What is the significance of Julian's little ivory monkey? Why does Julian use the monkey to persuade his friends to help Mrs. Olinski?

Who picked whom: Mrs. Olinski or The Souls? Support your assertion with examples from the book.

What is the significance of the name The Souls? Why do you think the name is appropriate for their group?

Which is more important to The Souls' success, their knowledge of facts or their understanding of feelings? Support your answer with examples from the book.

How does Mrs. Olinski change during the course of the novel? What factors go into those changes?



# Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. The theme of resettling recurs throughout *The View from Saturday*.

Locate these references and describe the context in which they are situated.

How do they pertain to *The Souls*, Mrs. Olinski, and the remaining minor characters?

2. "Everyone—even those who had not had diversity training at taxpayer expense—knew that even though it was correct to recognize a person's ethnicity, it was not correct to comment upon it in public." Is this true?

What are other unspoken rules for diversity?

3. How does the turtle analogy reflect Nadia and her father?

4. What important events happen at Sillington House? What do these events tell us about the characters of *The View from Saturday*?

5. How important for Nadia's personal growth are her experiences in Florida? How do these experiences lay the foundation for the themes of *The View from Saturday*?

6. What effects on young adult readers are intended by the multiple-voice narration of *The View from Saturday*?

Does this narrative structure confuse them, as Ilene Cooper (see "For further Reference") suggests, or does Konigsburg succeed in her aims? What aspects of this narrative method might confuse young readers? What aspects promote a greater subtlety in storytelling?

7. How well developed in the novel are Mrs. Olinski, Nadia, Ethan, Noah, and Julian? Are they well-rounded in the fullest sense of meaning that one may perceive the complexity of their minds and the layers of their personalities? How does Konigsburg try to reveal their inner lives? How successful is she? What, if anything, would you require to make the characters come alive for you?

8. What is being done to save the endangered turtle species mentioned in *The View from Saturday*? What efforts seem to work best? What are the challenges people must overcome in order to save the turtles from extinction?

What are the chances for success?

9. Mr. Singh says that Noah returned from Century Village, Nadia from the Sargasso Sea, and that Ethan's journey was on a school bus.

What were these journeys? What did each youngster find on his or her journey?



10. Mr. Singh says, "Noah, Nadia, and Ethan found kindness in others and learned how to look for it in themselves." What does he mean by this?

What thematic points lie under the simple words of the sentence? Describe the mental processes by which knowledge of this kindness was achieved. How did this result in their finding kindness in themselves?

## Further Study

Cooper, Ilene. Booklist 93, 4 (October 15, 1996): 424. In a review of *The View from Saturday*, Cooper says, "Konigsburg's latest shows flashes of her great talent and her grasp of childhood, but the book is weighted down by a Byzantine structure that houses too many characters and alternating narratives that will confuse readers."

Cummins, Julie. *School Library Journal* 42, 9 (September 1996): 204. Praises the artfulness of *The View from Saturday*.

Gutchen, Beth. *New York Times Book Review* (November 10, 1996). Praises *The View from Saturday* for its intelligence.

Konigsburg, E. L. "Newbery Medal Acceptance." *Horn Book Magazine* 73, 4 (July-August 1997): 404-414. Konigsburg tells of how her first Newbery Medal in 1968 changed her life and career by opening up a "Third Place" where she could be, a place where she could discuss in an adult way literature for children.

———. *Talk Talk: A Children's Book Author Speaks to Grown-ups*. New York: Atheneum Books for Children (Simon & Schuster), 1995. This is a selection of Konigsburg's speeches to adult audiences since 1968, covering twenty-five years.

"A Prized Storyteller." *Time for Kids* 2, 20 (March 7, 1997): 7. Notes that *The View from Saturday* has won the Newbery Medal for 1997.

*Publishers Weekly* 243, 30 (July 22, 1996): 242. Finds *The View from Saturday* very attractive for young readers.

Sutton, Roger. *Horn Book Magazine* 73, 1 (January-February 1997): 60-61. In this review of *The View from Saturday*, Sutton asserts that in the novel "nothing seems and no one sounds quite real."

Todd, Laurie Konigsburg. "E. L. Konigsburg." *Horn Book Magazine* 73, 4 (July-August 1997): 415-417. "Readers frequently ask where E. L. Konigsburg, my mother, gets her ideas. I'll tell," says Todd. She explains that the structure of *The View from Saturday* was inspired by "Mozart's Symphony #40 in G Minor."



## Related Titles

Konigsburg has always gone her own way in her fiction for young people, occasionally using sophisticated literary techniques like multiple-voice narration that some adults might find inappropriate. She has also turned literary conventions upside down in some of her work. From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler (1967) won the 1968 Newbery Medal despite her refusal to employ formulaic story ideas and plot devices. Konigsburg presents in this book the novel concept of children who run away from home not into the woods but into that fascinating seat of learning, the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Laurie Konigsburg Todd says that this unique plot element of children fleeing for freedom to a civilized place rather than an uncivilized one was inspired by what her mother overheard at a long-ago picnic. Konigsburg listened to her children complain about "insects and heat" on this family occasion, and she realized that "her suburban children would never run away from home by opting for a wilderness adventure.

Instead, we would seek the comfort and splendor of the Metropolitan Museum of Art" (See Todd's article cited in "For Further Reference").

The unusual structure of *The View from Saturday* also has family antecedents, being indirectly inspired by the author's son Paul, who tried to give her "a course in music appreciation."

The first movement of Mozart's Fortieth symphony was the model Konigsburg used to give her novel its shifting voices and variable pace of narration.

*The View from Saturday* also resembles *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* in that both novels surprise readers in the directions their stories take. Instead of the more likely glorification of *The Souls'* triumphs in their competitions, *The View from Saturday* subordinates this collective journey to brilliant public victory to the individual quests for self-knowledge eventually attained within the hearts and minds of four young people. The outer victories, though notable, are really but the inner victories made visible, the proof-in-flesh that *The Souls* have triumphed on their personal journeys towards self-wisdom won through hard experience.

*The View from Saturday* is also controversial because of how it depicts a few currently sacred educational tenets. The broad philosophy of political correctness is presented as being emotionally destructive to young adults who are not of the "norm," and its chief policy vehicle of diversity is revealed as a sham that shields anti-Semitism and racial discrimination.

Teachers and principals, acting in the name of diversity, sometimes adopt perverse attitudes such as opposing any real learning and unreasoning hostility towards overachieving students. "Educators" like these bask in the glory of the victories of *The Souls* even though they had earlier wanted to deny them the opportunity to compete. Konigsburg takes on similar controversial issues in *T-Backs*, *TShirts*, *COAT*, and *Suit*



(1993). This novel, by holding up for intense scrutiny prudery and prejudice against unusual people, implies about these social attitudes what *The View from Saturday* implies about diversity: both are instruments for denying people their journeys to kindness.



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