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Winter Student/Parent Packet Week 1

December 21, 2023 - January 3, 2024



The Department of Curriculum & Instruction

Literacy Support Parent Guide

How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation

by Kendra Cherry (2019)



In this section of the Literacy Support Guide, we're reading anchor text, "How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation" by Kendra Cherry. In "How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation," Kendra Cherry focuses on how teens need connections and social interactions to feel accepted and supported.

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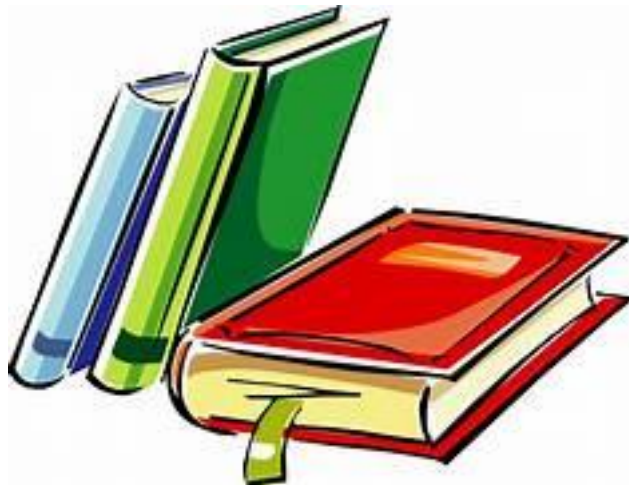
Ways to Support your Child

1. Ask your child about the informational texts: "How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation" and the paired text, "The Party" about?
2. **Parent Answer Keys**-Review written responses together

Related Media

1. Watch the following clips with your child at home.
 - ['How Your Friends Can Affect Your Opinions'](#)
 - ['Dead Poets Society - Conformity Scene \(1989\) HD w/ Subtitles '](#)

ANCHOR TEXT



Name: _____

Class: _____

How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and Motivation

People need personal connections to feel accepted and supported

By Kendra Cherry
2019

*Kendra Cherry is an expert on psychology and the author of The Everything Psychology Book: An Introductory Guide to the Science of Human Behavior. In this text, Cherry explores how people behave when trying to fit into groups. **Purpose for Reading:** To learn about the human need for connection and build our understanding about how and why the desire to belong influences so many of our decisions. As you read, take notes on how the need to belong affects the way people behave.*

- [1] The need to belong, also often referred to as belongingness, refers to a human emotional need to affiliate with and be accepted by members of a group. This may include the need to belong to a peer group at school, to be accepted by co-workers, to be part of an athletic team, and to be part of a church group.

The need to belong involves more than simply being acquainted with¹ other people. It is instead centered on gaining acceptance, attention, and support from members of the group, as well as providing the same attention to other members.



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How the Need to Belong Influences Behavior

The need to belong is a natural motivation to socialize with others to gain acceptance. This need plays a role in many of people's social behaviors, such as self-presentation and social comparison. This need to belong to a group can also lead to changes in behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes as people strive² to conform to the standards and norms of the group.

For example, people often present themselves in a particular way in order to belong to a specific social group. For example, a new member of the high school football team might adopt the dress and mannerisms³ of the other members of the team in order to fit in with the rest of the group.

1. "Being acquainted with" someone means knowing them a little bit, but not being close to them.
2. **Strive (verb)** to try very hard to achieve a goal
3. ways of acting or speaking that are habits of a specific person

- [5] People will also spend a great deal of time comparing themselves to other members of the group in order to determine how well they fit in. This social comparison might lead an individual to adopt some of the same behaviors and attitudes of the most prominent⁴ members of the group in order to conform and gain greater acceptance.

So what inspires people to seek out specific groups? In many cases, the need to belong to certain social groups results from sharing some point of commonality.⁵ For example, teens who share the same taste in clothing, music, and other interests might seek each other out to form friendships.

In other instances, factors such as shared goals, socioeconomic status,⁶ religious beliefs, political beliefs, and pop culture interests can lead individuals to seek out groups that share these interests.

Why the Need to Belong Is an Important Motivator

Our need to belong is what drives us to seek out stable, long-lasting relationships with other people. It also motivates us to participate in social activities such as clubs, sports teams, religious groups, and community organizations.

By belonging to a group, we feel as if we are a part of something bigger and more important than ourselves.

4. **Prominent** (*adjective*) well-known

5. **Commonality** (*noun*) a feature or trait that two individuals have in common

6. "Socioeconomic status" is the level of society a person is in, influenced by their education, wealth, and background; similar to class.

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. Which of the following best summarizes the central idea of the text?
 - A. People behave in ways that make them feel confident in groups.
 - B. People gravitate toward people who are different from themselves.
 - C. People want to stand out, which causes them to change who they are.
 - D. People have a natural desire to belong, which can impact their behavior.

2. Why do people feel the need to belong?
 - A. it fulfills a social obligation
 - B. it fulfills an emotional need
 - C. it answers a societal problem
 - D. it answers a common question

3. What statement best describes the relationship between conformity and acceptance?
 - A. People conform to a group in order to stand out from the crowd.
 - B. People conform to those around them in order to gain acceptance.
 - C. People accept others' differences if they understand their motivation.
 - D. People accept those who are similar to them in order to promote conformity.

4. How does paragraph 4 contribute to the development of the text?
 - A. It helps the reader understand social conformity by providing an example.
 - B. It helps the reader explain motivation by providing a definition.
 - C. It gives an example of how belief systems impact behavior.
 - D. It explains why all high school football players dress alike.

5. Which of the following best summarizes the author's purpose in the article?
 - A. to present a solution to a social problem
 - B. to encourage people to change their behavior
 - C. to explain the psychology behind social behavior
 - D. to suggest reasons behind religious organizations

6. How does the need to belong affect behavior?



Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. Do you think the human need to belong and **conform** is a positive or negative trait? Why?
2. **CROSS-TEXTUAL:** How does the narrator from "Hello My Name is ___" illustrate the idea that "the need to belong is a natural **motivation** to socialize with others to gain acceptance"?

PAIRED TEXT



Name: _____

Class: _____

The Party

By Pam Muñoz Ryan
2001

Pam Muñoz Ryan, a Mexican American author, has written over forty books for young people. She worked with and around young people for many years before starting a family of her own.

A young girl experiences not being invited to a party hosted by a popular girl in her school.

- [1] It didn't take me long to figure out that I wasn't invited to the party. I got off the bus and saw my friends huddled under the tree where we all stood every morning before the first bell. There were six of us: Theresa, Becky, Barbara, Carol, Kim, and me. I can't even say that we were close friends. We had come from different elementary schools and never fit with the predictable middle school jocks, pops, or nerds. We were flotsam and jetsam¹ that washed under a tree in front of the library and became an entity² by default and by simply standing together.



"The Balloons" by Adi Goldstein is licensed under CC0.

The circle seemed tighter as I approached; the flittering of small white envelopes being hastily stuffed into backpacks and binders gave it away. I knew as well as the entire universe that Bridget's party was this weekend. Bridget was one of the pops, the popular ones and the antithesis³ of me. She was thin and wore clothes that looked like they came straight from the pages of magazines. She had that hair — red, and cut into a perfect page, smoothed into a bowl around her face, and every shade of shoes to match even her wildest outfits. She had a select group of followers who squealed and hugged each other between every class, as if they hadn't seen each other in years. We all wanted to be like her or them and being invited to her party meant elevation in the school pecking order. To not be invited meant standing in stagnant⁴ water.

My stomach churned,⁵ and I hoped that Bridget was still holding an envelope with my name on it to be delivered later. But my friends' shuffling feet and furtive glances guaranteed my fate. Their too-eager hellos told me that everyone already knew who was invited and who wasn't.

"Hi," I responded, but that one word already sounded hollow with disappointment.

1. useless or discarded objects
2. **Entity (noun)** a thing with distinct and independent existence.
3. **Antithesis (noun)** a person or thing that is the direct opposite of someone or something else
4. Stagnant (adjective) : having no current or flow and often having an unpleasant smell as a consequence.
5. **Churn (verb)** agitate or turn (milk or cream) in a machine in order to produce butter.

- [5] Becky, always the diffuser of uncomfortable moments, said, "Hey, did you get all the algebra homework done?"

"Everything but the last problem," I mumbled.

"Here, want to see the answer?" Eagerly, maybe out of guilt, she gratuitously flipped open her binder before I could tell her it didn't matter.

I pretended to be interested in her calculations but my head swam with that sinking feeling that there was something wrong with me. That I wasn't worthy.

Thankfully, the bell rang and I hurried toward English. When I passed the cafeteria, the impending lunch smells followed me, and I felt nauseous by the time I reached class, but I knew it wasn't from the aroma of creamed turkey and overcooked green beans. I couldn't concentrate on the short story we were supposed to be reading in class, but I had no trouble attending to the faux wood grain on my desk and wondering if I could dissolve into it and disappear.

- [10] Why hadn't she invited me? My feet were too big? No. Maybe. My face was broken out? Who wants someone with acne at her party? Why did she invite every person in my group except me? I tried to think of any interactions I'd had with Bridget recently. A few days earlier, we'd been partners during a sixth-period project. I was intent on getting the project done and impressing her with the grade we could get, and she was intent on looking at teen magazines. She barely spoke to me except to say, "You're so serious. You know, you should smile more."

By the end of second period, I had overheard all the details about the party. They were going bowling. It was a sleepover. There was going to be a scavenger hunt. They were renting scary movies and were going to stay up all night. Each time someone mentioned the party, I smiled weakly and nodded.

During third period, Meredith, one of the drama club girls, who wasn't invited and didn't care, asked me if I was going to Bridget's party.

Instead of saying no, I found myself repeating tidbits that I'd heard earlier. "Her dad is taking everyone to IHOP for breakfast. They're taking two big vans so everyone will fit." I said it with authority. As if I were going, too.

Meredith said, "I wish she'd invited me so I could tell her no. She's such a brat. And all that phony hugging. What's that all about, anyway?"

- [15] Where did Meredith get her confidence? I wondered.

At lunch, I sat with my group around our usual table, and they politely avoided the subject. When Kim got up to take her tray, she said, "I'm going shopping tomorrow after school. Anybody want to come?"

But I knew what they would be shopping for, so I said, "I can't. I'm busy."

Becky hung behind and walked with me to dump our trays.

"I heard Bridget could only invite so many people."

- [20] "Whatever," I said. "See you later." I didn't look at Becky. I couldn't look at her because if I saw any pity or

kindness in her eyes, I'd start crying so I pretended to look for something seemingly important in my backpack until she left.

Maybe she didn't invite me because of my hair. It's so long and stringy. Maybe it's my coat. It is pretty ugly compared to some of the other girls' coats. I should have bought another color. But what does it really matter? None of my clothes match. I'm way too tall but there isn't anything I can do about that, and she couldn't not invite someone to a party because they were too tall, could she? Maybe I should smile and hug more but I just can't get into hugging people unless I know them really well. Probably if I'd smiled more, I would have been invited.

I hated Bridget. I hated her more for having the ability to make my life miserable. I wanted to go home. I felt sick. As I changed classes, I averted my eyes from everyone I knew so I wouldn't have to smile. So I wouldn't have to pretend that I was likeable.

By fifth period, the news was out. Three girls that had been invited to the party couldn't go because of the overnight band trip. They rushed up to Bridget to tell her the sad news, and one of them cried, proving what a good friend she was and how much she wanted to go. They gave back their invitations. I passed the crier between classes and saw her injured, yet superior look. After all, she had been invited.

Then the whispers began, like tiny wisps of drifting clouds, about who might be chosen in their places. I walked to sixth period, trailing behind Bridget, hanging back and watching hopeful faces laughing a little too loudly as they passed her. I counted nine girls who smiled and said hello to her on the short walk between classes. They might as well have been saying, "Choose me. Choose me."

- [25] After school, Becky found me in the bus lines. Breathlessly, she said, "Bridget asked Barbara at lunch who else she should invite, and Barbara said you. And Kim just told me that she just heard Bridget say she was going to maybe invite you to her party. Call me, okay?" She held up both hands with fingers crossed, then hurried toward her bus.

There was still a chance. But what did Becky mean when she'd said Bridget was maybe going to invite me. Was there a condition?

Over all the heads, I could see the red hair bobbing toward the bus lines, then stopping. I heard Bridget laughing. She moved to another group, and there was another little burst of laughter.

Kids began crunching forward to board the bus.

So what if I don't go to the party. I'm still me whether I go or not. And it's just for one night. So what's the big deal? My thoughts were spinning. Bridget headed toward my line, weaving through the crowd, and it did seem as if she was headed toward me. I pretended to not notice and looked straight ahead at the bus.

- [30] I felt a hand on my arm.

I turned my head.

Bridget held out an invitation. "Will you come to my party?"

I looked at the small envelope, relishing the moment. But my mind was a jumble. Now she wanted me to come

to her party, but she hadn't wanted me in the beginning. I am an afterthought. I am not on the A list. I'm just filling a space so the vans will be full. I need to smile more.

Take it, I thought. You know you want to go. Take it.

- [35] The crowd was moving me now and I was only a few feet from the bus steps. Bridget moved with me as I inched forward, still offering the invitation. I looked at the envelope. The original name had been scribbled out but my name hadn't even been written in its place. If I didn't take it, I was sure that it would go to someone else.

I put my foot on the first step of the bus, then looked at her.

I hesitated.

Someone behind me yelled, "Get on the bus!"

I took a deep breath and gave her my answer.

- [40] And then, I smiled.

"The Party" by Pam Muñoz Ryan. Text copyright © 2001 by Pam Muñoz Ryan. Used with permission of the Author and Bookstop Literary Agency. All rights reserved.

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. Which statement **best** states the central message in the story?
 - A. "That I wasn't worthy." (paragraph 8)
 - B. "Where did Meredith get her confidence? I wondered." (paragraph 15)
 - C. "Probably if I'd smiled more, I would have been invited." (paragraph 21)
 - D. "So what if I don't go to the party. I'm still me whether I go or not." (paragraph 29)

2. Which detail from the text best indicates that Bridget does not view the narrator as a friend?
 - A. "And Kim just told me that she just heard Bridget say she was going to maybe invite you to her party." (paragraph 25)
 - B. "Bridget headed toward my line, weaving through the crowd, and it did seem as if she was headed toward me." (paragraph 29)
 - C. "Bridget moved with me as I inched forward, still offering the invitation." (paragraph 35)
 - D. "The original name had been scribbled out but my name hadn't even been written in its place." (paragraph 35)

3. Which statement best describes the change in the narrator's feelings about herself over the course of the story?
 - A. The narrator goes from seeing herself as popular to feeling like an outsider.
 - B. The narrator goes from judging herself negatively to feeling good about herself.
 - C. The narrator goes from thinking she is close friends with Bridget to knowing that she is not.
 - D. The narrator goes from thinking she is less than others to thinking she is better than they are.

4. How is the central message of being true to oneself conveyed in the story?

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. Has a situation ever made you ever feel rejected or left out? How did you react?
2. Have you ever wanted to change yourself to be a part of something your friends or peers were a part of? Why or why not?
3. Do you think the narrator accepted the invitation at the end of the story? Why or why not?

ANSWER KEYS



Answer key > How the Need to Belong Influences Human Behavior and

Motivation

by Kendra Cherry ● 2019

1. Which of the following best summarizes the central idea of the text? **7.RI.KID.2** ^

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary.

- A. People behave in ways that make them feel confident in groups.
- B. People gravitate toward people who are different from themselves.
- C. People want to stand out, which causes them to change who they are.
- D. People have a natural desire to belong, which can impact their behavior.**

2. Why do people feel the need to belong? **7.RI.KID.3** ^

Analyze the relationships and interactions among individuals, events, and/or ideas in a text.

- A. it fulfills a social obligation
- B. it fulfills an emotional need**
- C. it answers a societal problem
- D. it answers a common question

3. What statement best describes the relationship between conformity and acceptance? **7.RI.KID.3** ^

Analyze the relationships and interactions among individuals, events, and/or ideas in a text.

- A. People conform to a group in order to stand out from the crowd.
- B. People conform to those around them in order to gain acceptance.**
- C. People accept others' differences if they understand their motivation.
- D. People accept those who are similar to them in order to promote conformity.

4. How does paragraph 4 contribute to the development of the text?

7.RI.CS.5 ^

Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

- A. It helps the reader understand social conformity by providing an example.**
- B. It helps the reader explain motivation by providing a definition.
- C. It gives an example of how belief systems impact behavior.
- D. It explains why all high school football players dress alike.

5. Which of the following best summarizes the author's purpose in the article?

7.RI.IK1.7 ^

Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of a text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject.

- A. to present a solution to a social problem
- B. to encourage people to change their behavior
- C. to explain the psychology behind social behavior**
- D. to suggest reasons behind religious organizations

6. How does the need to belong affect behavior?

7.RI.KID.2 ^

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary.

Answers will vary. Students should explain that there is a natural desire to belong in all of us that affects the way we will behave. This desire, called belongingness is "a human emotional need to affiliate with and be accepted by members of a group" (Paragraph 1). People are motivated to behave a certain way in order to gain acceptance, attention, and support from others (Paragraph 2). Because humans want to belong to groups, they can change their behavior in order to gain the acceptance they want. This can be seen when people belonging to a group dress the same way: "For example, a new member of the high school football team might adopt the dress

and mannerisms of the other members of the team in order to fit in with the rest of the group" (Paragraph 4). The need to belong motivates people to find others with shared interests in order to provide relationships that make them feel loved, welcome, and happy.

Answer key > The Party

by Pam Muñoz Ryan ● 2001

1. Which statement **best** states the central message in the story? 7.RL.KID.2 ^

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary.

- A. "That I wasn't worthy." (paragraph 8)
- B. "Where did Meredith get her confidence? I wondered." (paragraph 15)
- C. "Probably if I'd smiled more, I would have been invited." (paragraph 21)
- D. **"So what if I don't go to the party. I'm still me whether I go or not." (paragraph 29)**

2. Which detail from the text best indicates that Bridget does not view the narrator as a friend? 7.RL.KID.1 ^

Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw logical inferences; cite several pieces of textual evidence to support conclusions.

- A. "And Kim just told me that she just heard Bridget say she was going to maybe invite you to her party." (paragraph 25)
- B. "Bridget headed toward my line, weaving through the crowd, and it did seem as if she was headed toward me." (paragraph 29)
- C. "Bridget moved with me as I inched forward, still offering the invitation." (paragraph 35)
- D. **"The original name had been scribbled out but my name hadn't even been written in its place." (paragraph 35)**

3. Which statement best describes the change in the narrator's feelings about herself over the course of the story? 7.RL.KID.3 ^

Analyze how specific elements of a story or drama interact with and affect each other.

- A. The narrator goes from seeing herself as popular to feeling like an outsider.
- B. The narrator goes from judging herself negatively to feeling good about herself.**
- C. The narrator goes from thinking she is close friends with Bridget to knowing that she is not.
- D. The narrator goes from thinking she is less than others to thinking she is better than they are.

4. How is the central message of being true to oneself conveyed in the story? **7.RL.KID.2** ^

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary.

Answers will vary. Students should explain that although the narrator judges herself harshly when she isn't invited to the party, she later changes her mind. She spends most of the day wondering why she was the only one in her group of friends not invited to the party. She evaluates herself throughout the story wondering what it is about her that makes her "not worthy" of an invitation. "I pretended to be interested in her calculations but my head swam with that sinking feeling that there was something wrong with me. That I wasn't worthy" (7). However, after spending the day judging herself, the narrator realizes that she doesn't want to change who she is. The narrator thinks, "So what if I don't go to the party. I'm still me whether I go or not" (30). The narrator decides it is better to be yourself and not have been invited than to change yourself for a person or party.



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Winter Student/Parent Packet Week 2

December 21, 2023 - January 3, 2024



The Department of Curriculum & Instruction

Literacy Support Parent Guide

The Save

by Joseph Bruchac (2019)



In this section of the Literacy Support Guide, we're reading anchor text, "The Save" by Joseph Bruchac. In "The Save" a teenage lacrosse player named Oren needs help gaining confidence and learns from his grandfather.

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Anchor Text

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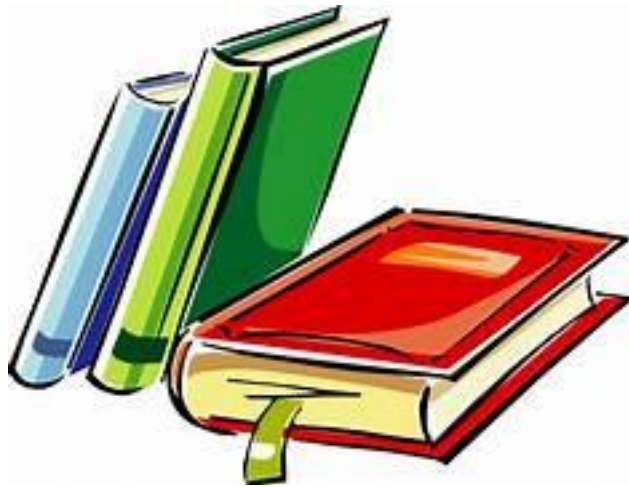
Ways to Support your Child

1. Ask your child what the literary texts: "The Save" and the paired text, "Between the Lines" are about?
2. **Parent Answer Keys**-Review written responses together

Related Media

1. Watch the following clips with your child at home.
2. ['Meet Joseph Bruchac!|Scholastic'](#)
3. ['Roots: Exploring the History of Lacrosse| Premier Lacrosse League'](#)

ANCHOR TEXT



Name: _____

Class: _____

The Save

By Joseph Bruchac
2019

Joseph Bruchac is the author of dozens of books for children and young people that celebrate and teach about Indigenous people and culture. In this story, the main character Oren plays lacrosse, a sport that evolved from games played by various Indigenous peoples of North America, including the Iroquois Nation.

As you read, take notes on how Oren views his abilities as a player and his performance in the game.

- [1] Oren shifted the stick from one hand to the other. Usually that was no big deal. Right now it felt heavy as a sledgehammer. Even with the mask on his face, his padding, and his gloves, he was feeling naked. The goal behind him was the standard six feet by six feet, but it seemed as big as a barn door now that he was the one guarding it.



"Untitled" by Dan Gold is licensed under CC0.

In front of him in their various positions ranged nine other Onondaga¹ boys on their team. Paul Hemlock, who had the wingspan of an eagle and who was even taller than their coach, was to his right. Paul's face, as usual, looked serious, even though he was always the first to crack a joke after the game was over. To Oren's far left was Billy Crouse, who was always grinning. He was much faster than he looked and their best defender. Perry Elm, the third defender and closest, turned to look over his shoulder at Oren.

"No worries," Perry said. "We got this. No one's getting past us."

Oren nodded. He was actually on the same field with these guys, in a real game. His heart should have been pumping with excitement. He'd finally been given the opportunity to play the position he'd practiced for so very long. Instead, what he felt inside his chest seemed like a lump of lead.

- [5] *Why am I so upset?*

Nothing was at stake now. They were ahead 14-2. Only two minutes. No way we can lose. No way. He mouthed those words for the fourth or maybe the fifth time. No way we can lose. No way. That was why he, the third-string goalkeeper, had been given a chance.

1. one of the original five nations of the Iroquois, who traditionally live near Onondaga County in New York

A chance to look like a bum.

The team they were playing, the Buffalo Bulls, actually wasn't that bad. His own guys were so far ahead because they had gone on a mad scoring streak. Although, to be honest, his team also was winning because they were a whole lot better. After all, the Bulls weren't buffalos at all. They were just city kids.

He'd bet none of them had ever set foot on a lacrosse field before they hit middle school. How many of them had held their first stick before they could even walk? How many of them had a grandfather like his who was a legend and an All-American? And not one of those kids on the visiting team was Indian.

[10] While we invented the game. We are the Iroquois.

We are the Iroquois,

we're proud, we are strong

That's how Joanne Shenandoah sang it on his mom's favorite CD. How it sounded on the playlist on Oren's own iPhone. It was sort of a corny song, but it usually inspired him way more than Jay-Z's latest rap.

Iroquois. We're Iroquois. And everybody on our team is head and shoulders above these guys.

[15] *Except me.*

For some reason, even though he was trying to concentrate, his mind wandered back to when they were showing those Buffalo kids around. Maybe because he was a third-stringer, he'd been one of the members of his team delegated to be a tour guide. A way to make him feel more useful, he guessed.

He almost laughed remembering the reactions of those city boys when they were given the short tour of the Rez² before the game. The best moment came when they were taken up onto the hill to see the tribal buffalo herd grazing on the yellow autumn grass in the wide field.

"Wow," one of the kids said, a stocky boy who turned out to be their overmatched goal tender. "Those are real!"

"Realer buffalos than we are," said the kid who'd been standing next to Oren. He was tall and lanky. Rajat was his name, the only name Oren seemed to remember from among them. There was a sort of British accent in the precise English he spoke. Oren had liked him for his politeness. Then he liked him even more for the sense of humor he showed again when he leaned over toward Oren and said, "I, too, am Indian. But of another sort entirely — transposed,³ you might say." He flipped one hand over the other. "American Indian. Indian American."

[20] A third kid, whose hair was cut so short it looked like a newly mowed lawn, reached out to pluck one of the heavy braided-steel cables strung between the iron girders that served as posts for the fence around the field.

2. slang for "reservation," or land set aside for and occupied by Native American communities

3. **Transpose (verb)** to change the order of

"Do they ever get out of there?" he said. He sounded nervous.

"Yup," said Bill Jimmerson, the keeper of the herd, who was leading this part of the tour. "But only when they want to."

That was when the buffalo everyone on the Rez called Big Guy, the largest male in the herd, decided to show his sense of humor. He spun around and charged — hooves pounding like a powwow⁴ drum — straight at the gathered crowd, nostrils flaring, head down. His snorting was loud as a trumpet as he thudded toward them.

To their credit, not all of the Buffalo Bulls and their various coaches and chaperones ran or tripped over their own feet as they tried to flee.

As usual, Big Guy stopped inches away from the fence, his hooves throwing up clods of dirt and brown grass as he skidded to a halt. Then he lowered his head so that Bill Jimmerson could reach through the fence to scratch behind his horns.

[25] "I believe," said Rajat, who'd remained next to Oren, "that this one does not wish to get out yet."

The visiting lacrosse kids recovered quickly.

"Wow," said a thin, long-armed kid whose sweatshirt had a design of crossed sticks and the number 10. He was shaking his head and smiling as he stepped back up the fence. "That is how to charge the goal."

"You bet, Masterson," said the slightly shorter boy by his side. Like his friend, he'd stepped back a few paces but hadn't fled for his life when Big Guy mock-charged. The shorter boy's sweatshirt bore a large number 7.

Number 7.

[30] A whistle sounded.

Wake up!

Oren looked up the field. The ball had been put back into play.

There actually were a couple of pretty darn good players on the Buffalo team. Numbers 10 and 7. The two kids who'd admired Big Guy. The fastest of the three attackers. They'd scored the only goals. One each against Lee Elm, his team's second-string goalie. Those two scores were impressive. Lee was almost as good as Phil Mohawk and would for sure be guarding the net next year after Phil graduated.

Number 10 and Number 7. Both of them were now heading Oren's way at a fast lope,⁵ passing the ball back and forth between them. He bet they were setting up some variation of the plays they'd scored on before.

4. a Native American social gathering that often involves food, competitions, music, and dancing

5. **Lope** (*noun*) a long, leaping walk or run

[35] *Be a panther in the goal.*

That was how his grandfather and namesake put it to him.

Oren crouched. He could feel his heart beating now. It was pounding so hard it was as if an eagle were trying to fight its way out of his chest.

Numbers 10 and 7 were crisscrossing in front of him, trying to draw him one way or the other. Oren stayed in his crouch.

A panther. Be a panther, he thought.

[40] Number 10 had the ball.

Masterson, Oren remembered. That's his name.

Everything was in slow motion now. Masterson was reversing his stick to make a shot over his back shoulder. Oren had seen him work that move with success twice before. The ball was about to leave the webbing just as Number 7 charged Oren.

Oren tried to leap, lacrosse stick extended to stop the shot. But as he did so, his feet crossed and his legs tangled together, at the exact moment when Number 7 ran into him.

Oren flipped in midair and landed flat on his belly. He couldn't move. The wind had been knocked out of him like a piece of Bubble Wrap tromped on by a boot.

[45] *I really am a bum* was all he could think.

He gasped, struggled to regain his breath.

A whistle sounded.

The game was over. People were shouting.

"All right!"

[50] "What a move!"

"Great!"

They're praising that goal scored while I was belly flopping, Oren thought.

Then he realized the voices were those of his own teammates.

And it was not just his own guys who'd been impressed. Number 10 and Number 7 were leaning down on either side of him.

[55] "Man," Number 10 — Masterson — said as the two Buffalo players lifted him to his feet. "That was amazing!"

Oren looked down at the stick he was still clutching with his left hand. There, held in the webbing like an eagle's egg in its nest, was the ball.

Coach White was patting him on his shoulder.

"Oren, my man, you may be Phil's slot next season," the coach said.

I should tell everyone it was an accident, Oren thought.

[60] But he didn't.

* * *

My door is always open. That was what his grandfather always said to Oren.

And it was. When Oren got to his grandfather's cabin, the door wasn't locked. But his grandfather wasn't there.

There was a note on the door.

[65] *Gone to council meeting*

Come on in

Foods in the fridge

Oren pushed the door open and went straight to the fridge.

He was sitting at the kitchen table, finishing off his fourth piece of fried chicken, when his grandfather arrived.

[70] "Sge:no," his grandfather said. It was the old greeting, a word that simply meant "peace."

"Sge:no," Oren replied.

"Leave me any of that bird?" his grandfather said, chuckling as he pulled up a chair and reached for the plate.

"Not much," Oren admitted.

"No problem," his grandfather replied as he picked the meat off the one wing Oren had missed. "Plenty more at Firekeepers. Still hungry?"

[75] Oren nodded. These days he was always hungry. Probably because of that growth spurt his mom said he was about to have. Which would likely end up with him being taller than his uncle Lee. That growth spurt couldn't come fast enough as far as Oren was concerned. He was tired of being half a head shorter than the other boys on the team.

"Ready?" his grandfather said, standing up and gesturing with his chin at the door.

"Born ready," Oren replied.

The two of them set off walking.

It wasn't that far to Firekeepers. No more than a mile. It was the restaurant where everyone on the Rez liked to eat, even if the four-land road that had been cut a generation ago through their community was only two hundred yards from the parking lot. After all, it was Indian-owned and served fry bread⁶ almost as good as his mom made.

- [80] They sat at their usual table. So usual that the waitress — one of the teenage Thompson twins who looked so alike Oren could never tell them apart — brought out the plate of fry bread, two bowls of buffalo chili, and two glasses of water without their having to order.

"Anything else?" Mary or Margie said, wiping her hands on her apron.

"Nope," his grandfather said. "Nya:weh."

"Nya:weh," Oren said, echoing his grandfather's thanks.

The fry bread and chili vanished about as fast as a gray squirrel scooting around a tree trunk. They sat there for a while in companionable silence.

- [85] "Wish I could have been at the game today rather than that council meeting," his grandfather finally said, looking out the open window to their right, where one of the Jemison boys was trying to start his stubborn three-wheeler. "Heard you made a great play."

Oren shook his head. He'd hoped his grandfather hadn't heard about it. But he should have known. News of anything you did — whether good or bad — traveled around the Rez at warp speed.

"No," Oren said.

His grandfather didn't say anything. He just looked at Oren, raising an eyebrow.

Oren took a deep breath. Then he explained it all, how it had been nothing more than a happy accident. How he felt like a fraud. How he didn't deserve any praise at all.

- [90] His grandfather just listened. Then he waved at the waitress behind the counter.

"Hey, Margie," he said. "Got any of that herbal tea?"

"Coming up, Big O," she replied.

His grandfather smiled at Oren. "Know how to tell them apart?"

Oren shook his head.

6. flat dough bread cooked by frying in oil

[95] “Mary is the one with the beauty mark on her right cheek. Margie’s is on the left and half an inch higher.”

His grandfather sipped his tea. Outside in the parking lot the Jemison boy was banging the motor of his ATV⁷ with a wrench.

Oren waited. There was no point in trying to rush his grandfather. He watched as the old man finished his tea, sighed, and then lifted his right hand to rub his chin.

“What was it you intended to do other than stop that shot?” he said. “And what did you end up doing?”

“Gramps, all it was,” Oren said, “was dumb luck.”

[100] His grandfather shook his head. “I think it was more than that. I’ve watched you practice. You have good reflexes. Sometimes we can do things that surprise even ourselves. Plus, what’s wrong with luck? If I had to choose, my goal would be to have somebody on my team who’s lucky any day of the week.”

Oren stood up. He wasn’t sure why, maybe just that it was hard for him to sit and listen to his grandfather’s words trying to convince him he wasn’t the loser he knew himself to be.

What happened next was hard for even Oren to explain. Just that there was a loud bang and a spurt of fire from the Jemison boy’s ATV, followed by something whizzing through the air toward them. And that somehow Oren found himself flying — like a big cat — right over the table, knocking his grandfather to the floor as a shard⁸ of sharp metal spun over their heads.

“Gramps,” Oren said, jumping to his feet and looking down at his grandfather lying on his back. “Are you okay?”

His grandfather smiled up at him. “Better than I would have been if that hit me,” he said, looking toward where the piece of metal was buried in the restaurant wall.

[105] Suddenly there were people all around them.

“You see what that boy did?”

“I never saw the like.”

His grandfather held out a hand and let Oren help him up.

“Well,” he chuckled, “nya:weh, Grandson. Thank you! Remember what I said about you having good reflexes? No way are you going to feel bad about this save.”

[110] “I guess so.” Oren grinned.

7. all-terrain vehicle, often used for off-road transportation

8. **Shard** (*noun*) a small piece

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. Which of the following statements best describes a major theme of the story?
 - A. Believing in luck can make someone luckier.
 - B. Taking credit for an accidental success is wrong.
 - C. Luck can help us gain confidence in ourselves and our skills.
 - D. Luck is more important than skill when it comes to playing sports.

2. Which TWO quotations best show how Oren views his abilities as a player?
 - A. "How many of them had a grandfather like his who was a legend and an All-American?" (Paragraph 9)
 - B. "Iroquois. We're Iroquois. And everybody on our team is head and shoulders above these guys. Except me." (Paragraphs 14-15)
 - C. "Maybe because he was a third-stringer, he'd been one of the members of his team delegated to be a tour guide. A way to make him feel more useful, he guessed." (Paragraph 16)
 - D. "Be a panther in the goal." (Paragraph 35)
 - E. "And it was not just his own guys who'd been impressed. Number 10 and Number 7 were leaning down on either side of him." (Paragraph 54)
 - F. "There, held in the webbing like an eagle's egg in its nest, was the ball." (Paragraph 56)

3. What purpose does the flashback in paragraphs 18-28 likely serve?
 - A. It shows that the Buffalo team is faster than Oren's team.
 - B. It introduces and provides information on Oren's teammates.
 - C. It highlights the hard work it takes to be a good lacrosse player.
 - D. It introduces some Buffalo teammates and compares them to real buffalo.

4. Why does Oren want to be "like a panther" in paragraphs 35-39?
 - A. Panthers are wild and free.
 - B. Panthers rely on luck to survive.
 - C. Panthers are poised and athletic.
 - D. Panthers are very close to their families.

5. How does the figurative language describing Oren's heart contribute to the tone?
"It was pounding so hard it was as if an eagle were trying to fight its way out of his chest."
(Paragraph 37)
 - A. It emphasizes Oren's feeling of victory after catching the ball.
 - B. It emphasizes Oren's nervousness and stress while guarding the net.
 - C. It emphasizes Oren's dislike of lacrosse and his desire to quit the game.
 - D. It emphasizes Oren's excitement at the prospect of becoming a second-string goalie.

6. How do Oren's and his grandfather's points of view toward the lacrosse save differ?
- A. Oren feels guilty for taking credit for the save, but his grandfather believes it was more than an accident.
 - B. Oren thinks the save is less important than scoring against the other team, but his grandfather disagrees.
 - C. Oren is embarrassed that so many people saw the accidental save, but his grandfather wishes he could have seen it.
 - D. Oren feels guilty for not telling his teammates about the save, but his grandfather believes that he should keep it a secret.

7. How does Oren's confidence affect his view of the two saves, at the lacrosse game and in the diner?

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. How does Oren show bravery when he is playing lacrosse and when he saves his grandfather? What does it mean to be brave?
2. Oren thinks his lacrosse save is just "dumb luck," but his grandfather says it is because of his reflexes and skill. Why do you think Oren is successful at lacrosse? Would you rather be talented or lucky? Explain your answer.

PAIRED TEXT



Name: _____

Class: _____

Between the Lines

By Cynthia Leitich Smith
2021

Cynthia Leitich Smith is an award-winning author of books for young readers that center on the lives of present-day Native American people. She is also a citizen of the Muscogee Nation, the fourth largest Native American tribe. In "Between the Lines," teenagers Mel and Ray deal with awkwardness and misunderstandings at a community event.

As you read, take notes on how the narrator describes Mel's and Ray's thoughts and feelings.

- [1] Electric colors and pulsating song beckoned from inside the high school.

Near the busy entrance, Mel leaned against a pillar, clutching a worn paperback novel. Wind felt chilly. Her stomach, hollow. She glanced toward the video shoot on the lawn, where her mom was still — *still* — talking about her time in the coast guard.¹

That boy on the other side of the doors, the one seated against the wall on the concrete walk... was he using his phone to take a picture of her? Why? She wasn't dressed in regalia² or doing anything interesting. "Hey, you! Stop that!"



"Chickahominy Pow Wow" by Tony Alter is licensed under CC0.

The boy, Ray, froze at the warning in her voice. In the parking lot, he'd noticed her arriving with her mom, who was being interviewed along with his grampa Halfmoon for a documentary³ on Native⁴ veterans.

- [5] Earlier that afternoon, Ray had been wandering around the powwow,⁵ sketching and using his hand-me-down cell phone to take reference photos for future sketches. He'd come outside to get some fresh air. The way Mel had gripped her book had caught his eye.

"Don't you have somewhere to be?" she asked him.

1. a branch of the US armed forces responsible for protecting life and property at sea
2. the distinguishing decorations or symbols of any organization, position, or office
3. a film that explores real facts and events and often includes real footage of the events as they happened
4. a term often used to refer describe indigenous peoples from the United States, including Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives
5. Native American gatherings that include singing, dancing, and celebrating rich cultural histories

He opened his mouth and closed it again. He felt embarrassed, unsure what to say.

Right then, a couple of Elder ladies, approaching the entrance, stopped in their tracks.

"You all right?" asked the Elder in long beaded earrings and a long denim coat.

[10] "Yeah." Mel pointed in the general direction of the shoot. "My mom's over there."

"Hmm." The other Elder was sporting a Detroit Pistons jacket and a fuzzy blue scarf. "Looks like they'll be busy for a while." She gestured to invite Mel inside. "You'd best come along. The weather's all over the place this week. We had sleet — "

"More like rain," her companion replied.

"No, it was sleet, and a twister, too."

"It was *not* a twister, Priscilla!"

[15] "Was so! I told you — I heard about it on the radio."

Mel liked them right off, and she was tired of waiting outside.

With a friendly grin, Priscilla added, "This sourpuss is my sister, Laurel. We drove in earlier this week to visit our niece. She's a student in the architecture school at the college."

Nodding, Mel texted her mom that she was heading back to the powwow. Mel was about to introduce herself when Laurel asked, "Where're your people from?"

Meanwhile, Ray had tucked his phone into his clear backpack and gathered up his colored pencils and sketchbook. The girl was already gone.

[20] What a mess that had been! Maybe he should've asked her permission before taking the photo. He definitely should've. He'd even thought about it, but Ray had a shy streak.

Even if he'd been back home at Chicago's annual powwow or splitting deep-dish pizza with his baseball buddies, Ray wasn't a big talker. But he was always doing something, and today he was mostly focused on drawing. His art teacher had told him that hands and feet were among the hardest subjects to draw. "If you can master hands, you'll be able to do anything."

Ray took off jogging across the school lawn. The documentary maker, Marita, had mentioned the importance of natural light and sound quality. That was why she'd set up the shoot outside, but Ray hadn't expected it to take so long. He should've known that Grampa, who was the social one in the family, would get caught up in all the excitement and make a bunch of new friends. In any case, Grampa wasn't being filmed at that very moment, so Ray said, "Okay if I go inside to check out the vendor booths?"

"You go and find that Carly," Grampa Halfmoon said. "Offer to help out at their booth."

Marita paused what she was doing, waved hello at Ray, and raised her camera again. She hailed from the Tigua

people of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, near El Paso.⁶

- [25] While working on the film, she was traveling from coast to coast with family, including her cousin-in-law Carly, who sold books and maps at powwows and other Native events.

That morning at the hotel, over bacon and waffles, Grampa Halfmoon and Carly — who was Muscogee Creek and Cherokee — had really hit it off. Carly had shown a real interest when Ray opened his sketchbook and flipped through a few drawings he'd created on the train ride into Ann Arbor.⁷ Ray had appreciated the attention. His buddies back home were a lot of fun, but they mostly talked about sports, not art.

In the vendor⁸ area, Ray spotted a T-shirt that said *Ancestor Approved*. He studied beadwork and bought a beaded key chain to give his grandfather. Finally, Carly waved Ray over and made space on the display table. "Good to see you again, kiddo. Want to draw right here?"

"Sure thing, wado!"⁹ Settling in, Ray reached for a big coffee-table book on beadwork. He turned to a glossy, close-up color photo of an artist's hands at work. Ray began sketching.

In the concession stands area, Mel had slipped her paperback novel into her puffy purple coat pocket. She was maybe halfway through the story. She'd spent babysitting money on it. Mel felt obligated to push on through, but it was tough going.

- [30] The Elder ladies were telling her all about their soon-to-be-architect niece's plans to study abroad¹⁰ in Shanghai,¹¹ about their visit to a fancy local delicatessen¹² in Ann Arbor, about the station wagon they'd named "Maud," about their car troubles, and about how Sheldon Sundown, the "dashing emcee," had rescued them with jumper cables last night in the hotel parking lot.

Mel listened and listened and listened and listened, and finally, she happened to mention that the documentary being filmed outside was about Native military vets.

"You don't say!" Priscilla exclaimed. "Isn't that interesting, Laurel?"

"She served in the navy," Laurel said, handing Mel an orange pop.

"I served in the navy," Priscilla echoed. "Do I ever have stories to tell!"

- [35] Sipping her icy drink, Mel could only imagine. A few minutes later, the sisters excused themselves to go talk to Marita the filmmaker and... Mel felt better.

6. city in West Texas near the border with New Mexico

7. a city in southeast Michigan where the University of Michigan is located

8. **Vendor (noun)** a person or group that sell things

9. "Thank you" in the Cherokee language

10. pursue an educational opportunity in another country

11. the largest city in China; a major port and global financial hub

12. **Delicatessen (noun)** a shop that sells cheese, cooked meats, and other foods ready to eat; often shortened to "deli"

A hearty dose of caring Elders had done her good.

Mel wandered into the gym, figuring that by now her mom *had* to be done with the filming and probably got caught up chatting. With Laurel and Priscilla in the mix, she might be outside socializing until dinner. Mel grinned at the thought. Her first real smile of the day.

Scanning the bleachers, Mel made her way to a spot in the top corner to sit. She'd tied the padded coat around her waist and had to twist a bit to fish the novel out of the pocket.

Mel opened the paperback, closed it again. She tapped the novel against her knee. It was a fantasy¹³ story, and Mel loved fantasy. It had the word "Indian" in the title, and she'd wanted to read a story with a Native character. But it was chock-full of old-timey Hollywood Indian speak. Mel regretted the five bucks she'd spent on it at her local used bookstore.

- [40] About halfway down the bleachers, a girl about her age with cropped dark hair was using a real camera (not a phone app) to photograph an adorable, chubby baby wearing a beaded headband.

What with the music of the drum and a gym full of people, Mel couldn't hear their laughter — the baby's or the girl's — but she could feel it.

She considered making her way over to them and introducing herself, but what would she say? Mel had felt lost — more anxious than usual — since her best friend Emma had moved to Lansing over winter break. Mel's counselor had encouraged her to come to the powwow today instead of staying home with her auntie and little cousins. "Maybe you'll make a new friend." But it was always hard for Mel, talking to new people. She got nervous, froze up. What if she made a fool of herself?

The photographer girl looked so happy, confident.

Mel opened her book once more and tried again.

- [45] For the first time, Ray's sketch of beading hands, the sketch that poured from his colored pencils, resembled actual human hands. Sort of. Close enough. What a day!

It had helped to begin by breaking the palms and finger joints into basic shapes and paying more attention to the spaces between the fingers. He'd made real progress, and along the way, he'd also helped sell four copies of the pricey coffee-table book on beading.

Passersby were drawn in, curious to watch his artistic process.

"Kiddo, you've got a real future in bookselling," Carly said with a chuckle.

Ray ducked his head, embarrassed, and excused himself to get some fry bread.¹⁴

13. imaginative fiction that contains strange characters, places, or events

14. a flat dough bread fried in oil that was a survival food created by the Navajo nation when they were

[50] “Hang on.” Carly handed over some cash and waved him on. “Get me a Navajo taco¹⁵ and a drink, too.” As Ray went searching for lunch, Carly considered the available options.

Where to show off Ray’s terrific new sketch? Table space was at a premium.

Being a Black Indian¹⁶ cowboy and a two-spirit¹⁷ activist, Carly proudly stocked nonfiction and poetry on both subjects, along with Native-created novels and a handful of picture books. Carly liked poetry the best, the way the words could light up a heartbeat, a misread signal, a careful stitch, or a sudden shift from strangers to friends.

After reconfiguring¹⁸ the book arrangement twice, Carly finally decided to display Ray’s artwork in front alongside the bookmarks and business cards. They propped it up at an angle.

In the concessions area, Ray had more than one option for the World’s Best Fry Bread, but he chose the stand where a boy who was about his age was chopping lettuce. Those would be interesting hands to draw. But then Ray remembered the girl with the book who’d hollered at him outside. Should he risk distracting the boy with the knife in his hand or interrupting while the stand was so busy: Probably not. *Okay*, Ray thought, *back to the camera app*. Only this time he’d be stealthier.

[55] Joey, a Turtle Mountain Band Ojibwe, set the kitchen knife down. “Hey, there. Uh, what’s so exciting about lettuce?”

Ray had been caught in the act again. He shrugged. “I... I wasn’t taking a picture of the lettuce. I was taking a picture of your hands chopping it.” He held out his phone to show Joey all his photos of hands. “I use the pics as models to draw different positions.”

“Huh. Good for you, man,” Joey said, reaching for a ripe tomato.

Ray glanced down at his phone screen. It might be interesting to do a collage with all the photos of the hands in addition to drawing them. “You really sell the world’s best fry bread?”

Joey tossed up the tomato, caught it one-handed. “We’ve all got our talents.”

[60] Appreciating the pose, Ray grinned and took a picture.

Carly took off a straw cowboy hat. “I’ve got just the book for you.”

Mel brightened at the cover of *Skeleton Man*. She liked spooky stories.

displaced from their ancestral lands in the mid 1800s

15. fry bread topped with seasoned meat, beans, and other fixings

16. Native American people who also have significant African American heritage

17. referring to a person who identifies as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit

18. **Reconfigure (verb)** to change the shape or formation of; remodel

"There's a sequel,¹⁹ too," Carly added, reaching. "I've got it right here."

Mel set her orange pop on the display table so she could flip through *Skeleton Man*, not realizing her drink was resting unevenly on Carly's business cards. Then she set her purse on the foldout table next to it and peeked inside her wallet.

[65] "I'll take the first one." Mel frowned. "Don't have enough money for both."

"You don't say." Carly arched a brow. "What's that sticking out of your pocket?"

Mel pulled out the book she'd given up on. "I couldn't get into it."

"Uh-huh." Carly glanced at the cover, read the description on the back, and nodded thoughtfully. "I understand. How's about I trade you this for *The Return of Skeleton Man*?"

What a deal! In the exchange, Mel bumped into her purse, which bumped into her cup, which was already a tiny bit tilted, and *ka-splash!* The orange pop went *everywhere*. Inside Mel's purse, onto her puffy coat, onto her new books, and all over Ray's drawing.

[70] Ray was walking up when he saw the accident. He hurried over, handing the food and drinks to Carly, who quickly turned to set it all on a cardboard box on the floor. Then Ray lifted Mel's purse out of the way.

"Give that back!" she exclaimed, yanking her purse back. A second later, Mel recognized him. "It's you, from outside. Why are you following me?"

"I am *not* following you!" Ray exclaimed. His voice bottomed out. "My sketch... "

"What?" She glanced down. "Oh." She realized that had been his drawing. Biting her lip, she appreciated the time it must've taken. The skill it must've taken. Orange soda pop was already staining the paper. The bookmarks and business cards were ruined, too.

"I'll run and get napkins," Ray said as fizzy liquid dripped off the table to the floor.

[75] "Take it easy, kids," Carly began, clearing a stack of books out of the way. "It's a shame, but these things hap—" Ray had already disappeared in the crowd.

Mel began to back away, hugging her new books. "Sorry, sorry," she said to Carly. "I'm so sorry. I, um, my mom just texted me. I've got to go."

Before long, Ray returned with a whole roll of paper towels — donated by Joey — to sop up the spill. By then, Mel was gone. Ray thought about trying to find her, to tell her that there were no hard feelings. But, he figured, if she'd wanted to be friends, she wouldn't have rushed off like that. Besides, his fry bread was calling to him.

19. **Sequel (noun)** a book or movie that is complete on its own, but also continues a story begun in an earlier work

That evening, settling in on the Amtrak Wolverine²⁰ train, Grampa Halfmoon was admiring his new beaded key chain and telling Ray all about the film shoot. “Grand Traverse Band,” they said. “This lady, Priscilla was her name — she was there with her sister, Laurel. Real friendly, both of them. I sure do like folks who like to talk.”

“Me too,” Ray said, distracted. Right then a familiar-looking girl carrying a new, slightly orange paperback novel was walking toward them with a grown-up woman.

[80] Grampa smiled at the woman. “Good to see you again! This is my grandson, Ray.”

“You too! This is my daughter, Melanie.”

As the two kids traded awkward hellos, their respective grownups picked up their conversation from earlier that day, discussing the Cubs baseball team. Which was all well and good, except that other passengers, standing behind mother and daughter, needed to get seated.

“Ray, how ‘bout you sit over there with Melanie while we visit,” Grampa suggested.

Lacking any excuse not to, Ray grabbed his clear backpack and relocated across the aisle.

[85] For nearly an hour, he and Mel sat side by side on the train in absolute silence. She began reading *Skeleton Man*. He opened his sketch pad and — studying a photo on his phone — began drawing Joey’s hand, modeling the tomato from the World’s Best Fry Bread stand.

Mel liked her new book *much* better than the one she’d traded away, but she couldn’t help sneaking the occasional peek at what Ray was doing. He caught her looking and offered a wan²¹ smile. Was he still mad at her? she wondered. He didn’t seem mad.

“I’m sorry I spilled pop all over your drawing this afternoon,” she said in a quiet rush. “I didn’t do it on purpose. I didn’t even notice the picture until...” That hadn’t sounded right. “I’m not saying it wasn’t a good picture,” she went on. “It was really pretty.” Was he one of those boys who hated anything to do with himself being called “pretty”? She hoped not.

Mel pursed her lips. She still wasn’t happy about him randomly taking pictures of her, but she didn’t want him to think that she’d ruined his work on purpose either.

Ray took a breath. She was talking to him. Least he could do was reciprocate.²² “It’s okay, Melanie.” He said her name slowly, like he was trying out the word. “Really, my ferret has eaten some of my best artwork. He’s spilled watery paint on it, shredded it, stolen it.”

[90] Was that insulting, comparing her to his pet? Ray didn’t mean it that way. “Not that you’re like a ferret. You’re

20. a high-speed passenger train that operates between Ann Arbor, MI and Chicago, IL; the Wolverine is the mascot of the University of Michigan

21. **Wan** (*adjective*) faint; weak

22. **Reciprocate** (*verb*) to give or feel something to the same degree

definitely a person."

At Mel's quizzical,²³ vaguely amused expression, he reached for his phone and tapped his camera app a couple of times to show her a photo of Bandit.

Mel grinned at the image. "He's cute. Lots of personality?"

"So much personality," Ray agreed. "My grampa calls him 'ornery.'"

Ray tapped his screen a couple more times to get back to the grid of photos. He tapped the image of Mel's hands, holding the paperback novel she'd traded away at Carly's booth. He'd done his best to zoom in, but the photo wasn't as good as those he'd taken from a closer distance.

- [95] "Sorry, I should've asked first." There, he'd said it. Ray had been tempted to explain away the mistake by saying he didn't want to interrupt her reading like he hadn't wanted to interrupt Joey chopping lettuce at the fry bread stand. But truth was, it was never easy for Ray to talk to new people. So he handed her the phone instead.

Mel scrolled and studied his images. A lot of pics of Grampa Halfmoon and Bandit, a handful of Wrigley Field and sparkling lake views. So many hands — young and old, shaded in a range of beiges and browns. She glanced at his open notebook again.

Returning the phone, she said, "You're an artist."

The whole train seemed to shimmer. The stars shone brighter out the window.

Ray knew Grampa and his art teacher believed in him, but nobody had ever said, "You're an artist." Just like that. Let alone someone his own age. Maybe Mel wasn't easy to get to know, but she sure did have a kind heart. "I'm trying to learn how to draw people," he said. "Hands — they're hard. So are feet. I haven't even tried feet yet."

- [100] Then they were chatting away. Mel said she was Muscogee Creek and Odawa, that her friends called her "Mel," and that she lived with her mom and a tabby cat named Dragon in Kalamazoo. Ray said he was Cherokee and Seminole, that his friends called him Ray, and that he lived with Bandit and Grampa Halfmoon in the Albany Park neighborhood of Chicago.

"Maybe you and your mom could meet up with me and Grampa for a Cubs game," Ray suggested, ducking his head a little. "Would you like that, Mel?"

He wanted to see her again? "Yeah," Mel said. "I mean, I'd have to check with my mom, but I think she'd really go for it."

Earlier that day, Mel had been in a bad mood. She hadn't liked that one book. She'd hardly paid attention to the Fancy Shawl²⁴ dancers, and they were her favorite. Sure, she'd had some nice moments, hanging out with her

23. **Quizzical** (*adjective*) questioning or puzzled

24. a women's dance originating from the Northern Tribes along the US-Canadian border that involves jumping

mom, talking to Priscilla, Laurel, and Carly.

But mostly, even though she'd been surrounded by so many people, Mel had felt alone and tight in her skin. She and Ray had gotten off to a rough start. Make that "starts" — plural. Who would've guessed that she'd end up with a new friend?

[105] "Can you draw my hands reading this book instead?" Mel opened *Skeleton Man*. "I'm sitting right here beside you. You won't even have to take a picture."

"Glad to," Ray replied, breaking out his colored pencils.

and spinning in time with the music

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. What is the theme of the story?
 - A. Powwows are an important way for communities to share traditions in the past.
 - B. Although Elders mean well, sometimes they make situations worse by interfering.
 - C. Friendship can be found in unexpected places if people are willing to take a chance.
 - D. The best way to overcome shyness is by doing solo activities like drawing and reading.

2. What do paragraphs 42-43 suggest about Mel?
 - A. Mel is frustrated that her counselor made her go to the powwow.
 - B. Mel is jealous of the happy kids around her and would rather be at home.
 - C. Mel wants to have friends, but her shyness makes it hard to talk to people.
 - D. Although she does not want to make new friends, Mel enjoys watching people.

3. Which detail supports the idea that Carly cares about helping people learn about many aspects of Native American culture?
 - A. "You go and find that Carly," Grampa Halfmoon said. "Offer to help out at their booth." (Paragraph 23)
 - B. "Carly had shown a real interest when Ray opened his sketchbook and flipped through a few drawings he'd created on the train ride into Ann Arbor." (Paragraph 26)
 - C. "Being a Black Indian cowboy and a two-spirit activist, Carly proudly stocked nonfiction and poetry on both subjects, along with Native-created novels and a handful of picture books." (Paragraph 52)
 - D. "Ray was walking up when he saw the accident. He hurried over, handing the food and drinks to Carly, who quickly turned to set it all on a cardboard box on the floor." (Paragraph 70)

4. How does Grampa Halfmoon's outgoing personality most impact the development of the plot?
 - A. Because he knows Ray is too shy to do it on his own, Grampa Halfmoon apologizes to Mel on his behalf.
 - B. Grampa Halfmoon invites Mel and her mother to a Cubs game in Chicago because he knows that Ray is too shy to ask.
 - C. Ray is frustrated that his talkative Grampa Halfmoon keeps trying to make him talk to Mel, and that causes him to avoid her even more.
 - D. Grampa Halfmoon asks Ray to switch seats with Mel's mom so they can chat, leaving Ray and Mel to sit together and eventually talk.

5. What does the word "ornery" mean as it is used in paragraph 93?
 - A. speedy and always on the run
 - B. lazy and prefers to lay around
 - C. funny and enjoys playing jokes
 - D. stubborn and difficult to control

6. How does the author use figurative language in paragraph 98 to convey Ray's feelings?
- A. The author uses alliteration to demonstrate that Ray is bored with the long train ride.
 - B. The author uses metaphor to show that Ray enjoys watching the bright stars on a clear night.
 - C. The author uses imagery about shiny, shimmery things to show Ray's happiness at being called an artist.
 - D. The author uses personification to give the train human-like qualities to illustrate Ray's growing friendship.

7. How does the conversation between Mel and Ray on the train contribute to the story's theme?

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. Throughout the story, various characters are either asked about or mention where they are from. Why do you think this is an important question in the context of Native American literature and culture? Is it important in your culture or family to always acknowledge where you are from? Why or why not?
2. In the story, it takes Ray and Mel a while to become friends, even though they obviously have a lot in common. Have you ever become friends with someone who you didn't like or were afraid to talk to at first? What kept you from being able to connect with that person initially, and how did you eventually overcome it to become friends?
3. Elders play an important role in the story and Native American culture in general. Do you have important elders in your life? Who are they, and what sorts of wisdom and value do they add to your life? Tell us about your favorite elder. What sort of elder do you hope to be one day?
4. Mel mentions not liking the original paperback book that she was reading very much because it was "chock-full of old-timey Hollywood Indian speak" (Paragraph 39). What do you think she means by this? When Carly allows her to trade in her old book for the two *Skeleton Man* books, why is Mel especially excited to read them? Do you think it matters whether an author is a member of the same culture about which they are writing? Why, or why not?

ANSWER KEYS



Answer key > The Save

by Joseph Bruchac ● 2019

1. Which of the following statements best describes a major theme of the story? **7.RL.KID.2** ^

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary.

- A. Believing in luck can make someone luckier.
- B. Taking credit for an accidental success is wrong.
- C. Luck can help us gain confidence in ourselves and our skills.**
- D. Luck is more important than skill when it comes to playing sports.

2. Which TWO quotations best show how Oren views his abilities as a player? **7.RL.KID.1** ^

Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw logical inferences; cite several pieces of textual evidence to support conclusions.

- A. "How many of them had a grandfather like his who was a legend and an All-American?" (Paragraph 9)
- B. "Iroquois. We're Iroquois. And everybody on our team is head and shoulders above these guys. Except me." (Paragraphs 14-15)**
- C. "Maybe because he was a third-stringer, he'd been one of the members of his team delegated to be a tour guide. A way to make him feel more useful, he guessed." (Paragraph 16)**
- D. "Be a panther in the goal." (Paragraph 35)
- E. "And it was not just his own guys who'd been impressed. Number 10 and Number 7 were leaning down on either side of him." (Paragraph 54)

F. "There, held in the webbing like an eagle's egg in its nest, was the ball." (Paragraph 56)

3. What purpose does the flashback in paragraphs 18-28 likely serve?

7.RL.CS.5 ^

Analyze the form or structure of a story, poem, or drama, considering how text form or structure contributes to its theme and meaning.

- A. It shows that the Buffalo team is faster than Oren's team.
- B. It introduces and provides information on Oren's teammates.
- C. It highlights the hard work it takes to be a good lacrosse player.
- D. **It introduces some Buffalo teammates and compares them to real buffalo.**

4. Why does Oren want to be "like a panther" in paragraphs 35-39?

7.RL.CS.4 ^

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including allusions to other texts and repetition of words and phrases.

- A. Panthers are wild and free.
- B. Panthers rely on luck to survive.
- C. **Panthers are poised and athletic.**
- D. Panthers are very close to their families.

5. How does the figurative language describing Oren's heart contribute to the tone?

7.RL.CS.4 ^

"It was pounding so hard it was as if an eagle were trying to fight its way out of his chest." (Paragraph 37)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including allusions to other texts and repetition of words and phrases.

- A. It emphasizes Oren's feeling of victory after catching the ball.
- B. **It emphasizes Oren's nervousness and stress while guarding the net.**
- C. It emphasizes Oren's dislike of lacrosse and his desire to quit the game.

D. It emphasizes Oren's excitement at the prospect of becoming a second-string goalie.

6. How do Oren's and his grandfather's points of view toward the lacrosse save differ? **7.RL.CS.6** ^

Analyze how an author establishes, conveys, and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

- A. **Oren feels guilty for taking credit for the save, but his grandfather believes it was more than an accident.**
- B. Oren thinks the save is less important than scoring against the other team, but his grandfather disagrees.
- C. Oren is embarrassed that so many people saw the accidental save, but his grandfather wishes he could have seen it.
- D. Oren feels guilty for not telling his teammates about the save, but his grandfather believes that he should keep it a secret.

7. How does Oren's confidence affect his view of the two saves, at the lacrosse game and in the diner? **7.RL.KID.3** ^

Analyze how specific elements of a story or drama interact with and affect each other.

Student answers will vary. Oren is insecure in the beginning of the passage, so he attributes the saved goal to luck. Later, with his grandfather's confidence in him, his self-esteem improves, and he is more willing to believe that his reflexes and athleticism help him save his grandfather in the diner. In the beginning of the passage, Oren has little confidence in himself. When he is the goalkeeper in the game, he thinks that it is his "chance to look like a bum" (Paragraph 7). When he makes an amazing save at the end of the game, he thinks "it was an accident" (Paragraph 59) and that he is a "fraud... [who] didn't deserve any praise at all" (Paragraph 88). He attributes the save to "dumb luck" (Paragraph 98). Oren's grandfather tries to get him to see that while luck may have contributed to the save, Oren should not discount his skills. When Oren tackles his grandfather to save him from getting hit by flying metal shards, his grandfather says, "Remember what I said about you having good reflexes? No way are you going to feel bad about this save" (Paragraph 108). Oren responds positively and grins, suggesting that he takes his grandfather's words to heart (Paragraph 109). The second save forces Oren to realize that he is athletic and has good instincts. With little confidence, Oren

attributes the first save to luck, but with the second save, he is forced to acknowledge that he might be lucky but he is also skillful, which helps to improve his confidence.

Answer key > Between the Lines

by Cynthia Leitich Smith ● 2021

1. What is the theme of the story?

7.RL.KID.2 ^

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary.

- A. Powwows are an important way for communities to share traditions in the past.
- B. Although Elders mean well, sometimes they make situations worse by interfering.
- C. **Friendship can be found in unexpected places if people are willing to take a chance.**
- D. The best way to overcome shyness is by doing solo activities like drawing and reading.

2. What do paragraphs 42-43 suggest about Mel?

7.RL.KID.3 ^

Analyze how specific elements of a story or drama interact with and affect each other.

- A. Mel is frustrated that her counselor made her go to the powwow.
- B. Mel is jealous of the happy kids around her and would rather be at home.
- C. **Mel wants to have friends, but her shyness makes it hard to talk to people.**
- D. Although she does not want to make new friends, Mel enjoys watching people.

3. Which detail supports the idea that Carly cares about helping people learn about many aspects of Native American culture?

7.RL.KID.1 ^

Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw logical inferences; cite several pieces of textual evidence to support conclusions.

- A. "You go and find that Carly," Grampa Halfmoon said. "Offer to help out at their booth." (Paragraph 23)

- B. "Carly had shown a real interest when Ray opened his sketchbook and flipped through a few drawings he'd created on the train ride into Ann Arbor." (Paragraph 26)
- C. **"Being a Black Indian cowboy and a two-spirit activist, Carly proudly stocked nonfiction and poetry on both subjects, along with Native-created novels and a handful of picture books." (Paragraph 52)**
- D. "Ray was walking up when he saw the accident. He hurried over, handing the food and drinks to Carly, who quickly turned to set it all on a cardboard box on the floor." (Paragraph 70)

4. How does Grampa Halfmoon's outgoing personality most impact the development of the plot?

7.RL.KID.3 ^

Analyze how specific elements of a story or drama interact with and affect each other.

- A. Because he knows Ray is too shy to do it on his own, Grampa Halfmoon apologizes to Mel on his behalf.
- B. Grampa Halfmoon invites Mel and her mother to a Cubs game in Chicago because he knows that Ray is too shy to ask.
- C. Ray is frustrated that his talkative Grampa Halfmoon keeps trying to make him talk to Mel, and that causes him to avoid her even more.
- D. **Grampa Halfmoon asks Ray to switch seats with Mel's mom so they can chat, leaving Ray and Mel to sit together and eventually talk.**

5. What does the word "ornery" mean as it is used in paragraph 93?

7.RL.CS.4 ^

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including allusions to other texts and repetition of words and phrases.

- A. speedy and always on the run
- B. lazy and prefers to lay around
- C. funny and enjoys playing jokes
- D. **stubborn and difficult to control**

6. How does the author use figurative language in paragraph 98 to convey Ray's feelings?

7.RL.CS.5 ^

Analyze the form or structure of a story, poem, or drama, considering how text form or structure contributes to its theme and meaning.

- A. The author uses alliteration to demonstrate that Ray is bored with the long train ride.
 - B. The author uses metaphor to show that Ray enjoys watching the bright stars on a clear night.
 - C. The author uses imagery about shiny, shimmery things to show Ray's happiness at being called an artist.**
 - D. The author uses personification to give the train human-like qualities to illustrate Ray's growing friendship.
7. How does the conversation between Mel and Ray on the train contribute to **7.RL.KID.3** ^ the story's theme?

Analyze how specific elements of a story or drama interact with and affect each other.

Student answers will vary. Students should discuss the fact that even though they both feel uncertain, Mel and Ray both take a chance and talk with each other on the train, which eventually leads to a new friendship. True to the shyness they have shown throughout the story, Ray and Mel "sat side by side on the train in absolute silence" (Paragraph 85) for the first hour of the train ride. Encouraged by Ray's shy smile (Paragraph 86), Mel finally takes the chance and apologizes for spilling soda on his drawing and tells him that it was "really pretty" (Paragraph 87). Ray is nervous but thinks that the "least he could do was reciprocate" (Paragraph 89), so he tries to make Mel feel better by telling her that his ferret has destroyed plenty of his artwork. Just as Mel had worried internally about calling his painting "pretty," Ray worries about comparing Mel to his pet (Paragraph 90). Their shared awkwardness breaks the ice, and soon "they were chatting away" and telling each other about their lives and where they were from (Paragraph 100). Mel is pleased when Ray suggests that they meet up for a Cubs game (Paragraph 101) and begins to reflect on her day. Although she had "felt alone and tight in her skin" and she and Ray "had gotten off to a rough start" (Paragraph 104), the day had ended in an unexpectedly positive way. When Ray and Mel finally get past their insecurities and open up to each other, they find that they are two shy kids with much in common and a probable good friendship ahead of them.