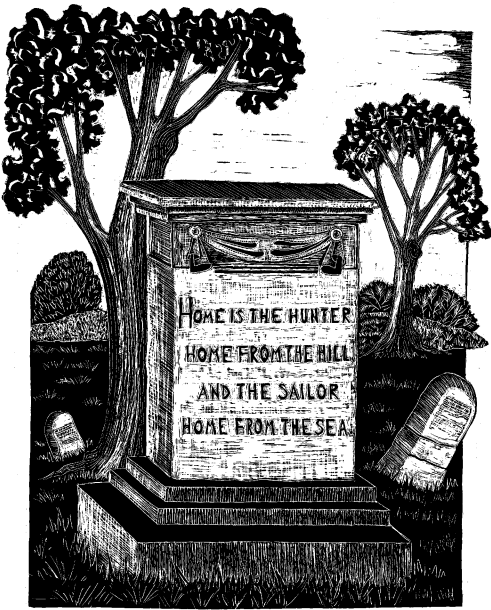
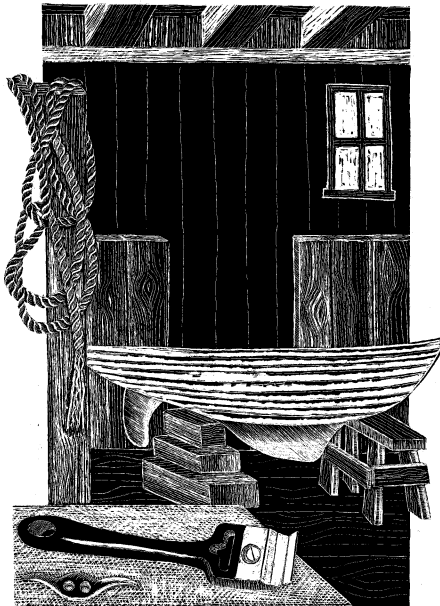


Critical Reading Activities for the Works of Cynthia Voigt



Homecoming



Dacey's Song



A Solitary Blue






The Runner

Catherine DePino
illustrated by Margery Niblock

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Check Your Comprehension

HOMECOMING

Directions: As you read, take the time to answer these questions. Your answers will help you recall what happens in the story.

Part 1, Chapters 1–6

1. State the names and ages of the Tillerman children, from the youngest to the oldest. _____

2. Why does Sammy refuse to go when Dicey tells him and the other children that they are going to walk to Bridgeport?

3. Why do the children at school tease James and Sammy? _____

4. What happens to James in Rockland State Park? _____

5. What does Dicey do with the wallet Sammy took? _____

6. What problem do the children face when they have to cross the Connecticut River? _____

Chapters 7–12

7. What happens after Dicey meets Windy on the park bench near the college? _____

8. What happens when Dicey finds out that James has stolen \$20 from Stewart? _____

9. What does Dicey tell Sergeant Gordo about why her mother left them? _____

(continued)

Check Your Comprehension *(continued)*

HOMECOMING

10. Why does Father Joseph think that it will be easy for them to find a home for James? _____

Part 2, Chapters 1–6

11. Why does Dicey decide to go to Annapolis? _____

12. How will the children get to the Eastern Shore? _____

13. What does Jerry mean when he tells Dicey it's too bad that she's 13? _____

14. What do the children notice about the boys they see on the small boat before they arrive at the Eastern Shore?

15. Why can't the children eat the food the farmer's wife sends them? _____

16. What happens when Mr. Rudyard comes to the circus? _____

Chapters 7–12

17. What does the children's grandmother say about the children's father? _____

18. What, according to Dicey, would make Sammy obey? _____

19. Why does the children's grandmother throw her phone through the phone company's window? _____

20. Why does the grandmother want Maybeth to take the test by herself? _____

Reading Strategies Questions

DICEY'S SONG

Directions: Dialogue, the words characters use to talk to one another, helps us learn more about the characters' personalities. Find examples of dialogue in Dickey's Song that show how each character displays the traits listed below. Indicate the page numbers and include a short excerpt of dialogue.

1. Gram (strength and toughness)

2. Maybeth (lack of confidence)

3. Mr. Lingerle (generosity, kindness)

4. Sammy (rebelliousness, fighting spirit)

Graphic Organizer: Inference Chart

THE RUNNER

Directions: An inference chart will help you “read between the lines”—or make **inferences**—about characters by prompting you to think about their facial expressions, gestures, and other body language. Fill in the chart this way: (1) The Quotation column contains a quote from the story. (2) Use the Context column to describe the situation happening at the time of the quote. (3) Fill in what you have learned about the character in the Inference column.

When you complete the chart, you and your partner will write an original dialogue between two characters in the novel. Include stage directions that tell about their facial expressions, gestures, or other body language. Exchange dialogues with another pair of students, and write down an inference you made about one of the characters from their nonverbal expressions. Check to see if you have each made the inferences you thought of when you wrote your dialogues.

Quotation	Context	Inference
(p. 111) <i>“Bullet’s chin went up as he clamped down on a surge of pride.”</i>	<i>Acorn team member compliments Bullet.</i>	<i>Bullet feels proud for a moment; then he reconsiders.</i>
(p. 128) “He gunned the motor, slipped the car into first, took off with a squeal of tires and shifted quickly into second.”		
(p. 153) “His father was staring at the toes of his shoes and his eyes didn’t even flicker.”		
(p. 186) “The next day Bullet stood by the door to the cafeteria, leaning against the wall, watching. People moved past him, leaving the lunchroom, occasionally glancing sideways at him and then away.”		

Discussion Questions

COME A STRANGER

1. With a partner, discuss how Mina is different from Isadora, Charlie, and Tansy, the girls in her dorm at summer dance camp.

2. Discuss with the entire class: In Chapter 5, Mina's mother says that her father's worried about her. What kinds of things is Mina thinking about, and why is she thinking differently than she did before? Write a journal entry from Mina's viewpoint, discussing how her thinking has changed on one of the issues mentioned in Chapter 5. Make notes below.

3. Discuss in your reading circle: How does Mina think the girls at the dance camp feel about her? Do you agree with her? What should she do?

4. Discuss with the entire class: What reasons does Miss Maddinton give for sending Mina home? What is your opinion of how she treats Mina? Write a letter from Mina to Miss Maddinton about Mina's having to leave the dance camp. Keeping in mind Mina's personality, what would you have written to Miss Maddinton if you were Mina? Make notes for your letter draft below.

(continued)



Discussion Questions *(continued)*

COME A STRANGER

5. With a partner, discuss how to retell Miz Hunter's story about her great-grandfather and how she felt after going out to visit the swampland he walked into when he tried to escape. Write the story as a news article about her great-grandfather's escape. Make notes on the lines below.

6. In your reading circle, reread paragraph 2 on page 121 of *Come a Stranger*. What would life have been like for Mina in the days of slavery? How are things still the same? What is Mina's reaction to this?

7. Discuss with the entire class: Why does Mr. Bryce give Mina a C in social studies? How does she respond to this? How do her parents react?

8. With a partner, describe Bullet. Why was his friendship with Bullet important to Mr. Shipp? How did Mr. Shipp feel when Bullet was killed in Vietnam? What does he do to keep Bullet's memory alive?

(continued)

