

To: English 9H Students 2016-17 School Year

From: Mrs. Amanda M. Blunt

Date: May 23, 2016

Subject: Summer Reading

You are receiving your summer assignments for English 9H. All assignments are due before you return to school next school year.

You are receiving one copy of *Homecoming* by Cynthia Voigt, a reading guide, 3 non-fiction articles, and 2 double-entry journal pages. You must purchase a composition notebook in order to complete the assignment.

The independent assignment is as follows: Read *Homecoming* and complete the reading guide questions as you go in the composition notebook. Be sure to answer in complete sentences and answer **all** parts of **each** question. After reading the novel and completing the questions, read the accompanying nonfiction articles. Complete a double-entry journal for “Our Tired, Our Poor, Our Kids” and “The Other America: Homeless Families in the Shadow of the New Economy.” Your responses should connect the non-fiction articles to the novel. Write in complete sentences and fill the space provided.

If you have questions as you go, I will be checking my email on occasion. Pace yourself, and don't save it up for the week before school begins! I look forward to learning along with you next school year.

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***Homecoming (1981)***  
**By Cynthia Voigt**  
**Reading Guide**

**Directions:** Answer each of the following questions in your journal in complete sentences. If you are asked to list or define, you need not supply a complete sentence. If the question has multiple parts, make sure you answer each part.

**Part 1: Chapter 1**

1. Describe Dicey's mother. What problems does she seem to have been experiencing lately?
2. What are the Tillerman children's names and ages? Provide a brief description of each one.
3. Where has their mother gone? Why?
4. What is the shopping mall like to the Tillerman children? Why do you think this is so?
5. What does Dicey think happened to their mother?
6. At the end of the chapter, Dicey lies to the security guard. Do you think it was right for her to lie? Why or why not?

**Part 1: Chapter 2**

7. What does James mean when he says, "It's still true?"
8. Where are the children going? Why?
9. Why do you suppose the author focuses so much attention on the exact amounts of money that Dicey spends?
10. What problems does Dicey anticipate? What problems do you think they will encounter that she hasn't thought of yet?

**Part 1: Chapters 3-4**

11. What new challenges does Dicey face in Chapter 3? What are some old ones that keep popping up? You may list these.
12. Who always knows how to get Sammy to cooperate? Why do you think this is so?
13. Dicey always seems to be at peace when she is near the water. How do you know this is so?
14. Why does Dicey lie about her name and gender?
15. What happens to James? Why is this such a big problem for Dicey.
16. Describe Louis and Edie.

**Part 1: Chapters 5-6**

17. Where did Sammy find the food? Louis doesn't consider this stealing, but Dicey does. What is your opinion? Why?
18. Dicey thinks that the world has been "arranged for adults." What does she mean by this?

19. Sammy steals again. Why is it more serious this time? What does Dicey do?
20. What does Dicey do to earn money to buy a map? What does this say about her character?
21. Dicey chooses Sammy to get food from the bakery. Why does she send him?
22. What does Dicey daydream about? How is this different from what you daydream about?
23. What type of kindness do the Tillerman children find in the grandfather and young girl?
24. Dicey "borrows" a boat to get them across the river. What message does this send to her siblings?
25. At the end of Chapter 6, James asks Dicey some pretty serious questions about life and death. If you were there, how would you have answered him?
26. Why are Dicey and James worried about craziness or insanity?

#### **Part 1: Chapters 7-8**

27. What is Dicey's view of death and heaven? What do you think?
28. In Chapter 7, what do Dicey and her siblings do to escape the rain?
29. Who is Windy? How does he help the Tillermans?
30. Why does Dicey tell Windy the truth about where they are going and who they are?
31. What does James do that makes Dicey so angry? How does Dicey deal with the problem?
32. What does Stuart tell James about stealing? Do you agree?
33. Why is Dicey resentful of the help that Windy and Stuart offer?
34. What does Dicey say she will do if Aunt Cilla doesn't want them?

#### **Part 1: Chapters 9-10**

35. What "sneaks up" on Dicey on their journey?
36. Who do the children meet at Aunt Cilla's house? What happened to Aunt Cilla?
37. Who does Cousin Eunice call for advice? What are they going to do with the children?
38. Why does Dicey repeat, "Crisfield, Eastern Shore, Maryland," as she drifts off to sleep?
39. Describe Cousin Eunice's general reaction to the children. Does this give Dicey hope?

#### **Part 1: Chapters 11-12**

40. How has Sammy's behavior changed since they reached Aunt Cilla's house? How does Cousin Eunice treat Maybeth?
41. When Dicey looks at the picture of her grandmother and Aunt Cilla, what is the foreshadowing?
42. What does Father Joseph tell Dicey about her mother's family?
43. What does Father Joseph suggest about each child and what should be done with them? How does Dicey react?
44. What does Dicey do to earn money this time?
45. Why do you think Maybeth is the only one that Cousin Eunice takes to church?
46. What did Cousin Eunice have planned for her life before the Tillerman children arrived? Why has she agreed to care for them, then?
47. What are Sister Bernice's concerns about Maybeth?
48. Why does Sammy get into a fight?
49. Why is Dicey suddenly in a hurry to go to her grandmother's house?
50. Look up the word "dicey" in a dictionary. Write down the definition. Why do you think the author chose this name for the protagonist of the novel?

**Part 2: Chapters 1-2**

51. What does Dicey mean when she says, "Cousin Eunice's house wasn't free; it was expensive."?
52. Why does Dicey have James buy two bus tickets instead of buying all four herself?
53. What does Dicey buy at the army-navy surplus store? (list) Why do you agree or disagree with her purchases? What would you have purchased instead?
54. Who are Jerry and Tom?
55. What does Dicey suspect about their grandmother? Why?

**Part 2: Chapters 3-5**

56. Where does Dicey decide her home should be? How do you know this?
57. Dicey uses an extended metaphor about boats being families at sea. In her metaphor, what is the sea? What type of boat would the Tillermans be? Why does she choose this kind of boat to represent them?
58. Who are Will and Claire? Describe them.
59. What do the children do to earn more money? What are the dangers they face in this job?
60. How do the children finally escape Mr. Rudyard? Why doesn't the dog go after them?

**Part 2: Chapters 6-7**

61. How do the children get away from Mr. Rudyard the second time?
62. What is Claire's reaction to Mr. Rudyard?
63. What does the lady at the grocery store have to say about Abigail Tillerman?
64. Describe Abigail Tillerman. What is she like?
65. Make a prediction: Do you think the grandmother will let the children stay? Why or why not?

**Part 2: Chapters 8-10**

66. How are Dicey and the grandmother similar? (331)
67. Why doesn't the grandmother ask Maybeth questions directly?
68. What does Dicey mean when she says that she has had "the same feeling as the crabs in the steampot" at times? (347)
69. Dicey says her grandmother doesn't want the children to stay, but she doesn't want them to go, either. Why do you agree or disagree with Dicey?
70. What is the simile used to describe the rain on the barn roof at the beginning of Chapter 10? Simply quote it.
71. We finally learn the truth about Mrs. Tillerman's "telephone incident." What happened? (379) What do you learn about Sammy's name?
72. Why does Dicey refuse to allow Sammy to be sent to bed without dinner?

**Part 2: Chapters 11-12**

73. Define "eccentric". Is the grandmother eccentric? Why or why not?
74. Why can't the grandmother keep the children?
75. In what ways has Dicey been "beaten" as she says she has? (400)
76. Do you think the grandmother is too rough with Maybeth during school registration? Why or why not? (408)
77. What are some signs in the final chapter that indicate to you that the grandmother, "Gram", will let the children stay before she actually tells them? List them.
78. In what ways is *Homecoming* like *The Odyssey*? In what ways is it different? List.

## **Cynthia Voigt Autobiography**

When I was a child I loved to read *Nancy Drew*, *Cherry Ames*, and *The Black Stallion*. One day at my grandmother's house, I discovered *The Secret Garden* and read it. This was the first book I found entirely for myself, and I cherished it.

By the time I started high school, I knew I wanted to be a writer. After graduating from Smith College in Massachusetts, I moved to New York City and worked for the advertising agency J. Walter Thompson. I married in 1964 and moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where I ended up teaching. In college, I had vowed I would never teach, but the minute I walked into a classroom, I loved it.

After my divorce, I moved to Maryland. While working full-time, I decided to take up writing again and stuck to a regime of writing one hour a day. I taught English to second, fifth, and seventh graders at the Key School in Annapolis. To see what books were available for my older students, I made many trips to the library. If a book looked interesting, I checked it out — I once went home with 30 books! It was then that I realized that kids' novels had the shape of real books, and I began to get ideas for young adult novels and juvenile books. That first year of teaching and reading really paid off!

In 1974 I married Walter Voigt, a teacher of Latin and Greek at the Key School. When I became pregnant, I decided to teach part-time and to dedicate more time to writing.

My writing process often begins with a question. I write down ideas and let them stew for about a year. Then, when I sit down to write, I make a list of characters and try to see how they fit.

I enjoy almost everything I do, perhaps because when I don't enjoy something, I don't do it. I enjoy writing; I enjoy teaching; I enjoy having a family to live among. I am neither a feminist nor an antifeminist, because it seems to me that we are first human beings and after that men and women. Human beings have, so far, proved interesting enough to keep me busy just trying to figure out what might be right and true about them.

### **The Tillerman Cycle**

- 1: *Homecoming* (1981) by Cynthia Voigt
  - 2 : *Dacey's Song* (1982) by Cynthia Voigt
  - 3 : *Solitary Blue, a* (1983) by Cynthia Voigt
  - 4 : *Runner, the* (1985) by Cynthia Voigt
  - 5 : *Come a Stranger* (1986) by Cynthia Voigt
  - 6 : *Sons From Afar* (1987) by Cynthia Voigt
  - 7 : *Seventeen Against the Dealer* (1989) by Cynthia Voigt
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**Title:** Our Tired, Our Poor, Our Kids.

**Authors:** Quindlen, Anna

**Source:** Newsweek, 03/12/2001, Vol. 137 Issue 11, p80; , 1p, 1 Color Photograph

**Document Type:** Article

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HOMELESSNESS  
HOUSING  
POVERTY

**Geographic Terms:** UNITED States

**Abstract:** Offers an essay on homeless children in the United States as of March, 2001. Impact of homelessness on children, including the likelihood that they will repeat a grade in school, be hospitalized, and go hungry; Importance of affordable housing; Impact of welfare reform on homelessness.

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## OUR TIRED, OUR POOR, OUR KIDS

### Homeless in America: they're sick, they're hungry and they're under 12. Can we live with that?

Six people live here, in a room the size of the master bedroom in a modest suburban house. Trundles, bunk beds, dressers side by side stacked with toys, clothes, boxes, in tidy claustrophobic clutter. One woman, five children. The baby was born in a shelter. The older kids can't wait to get out of this one. Everyone gets up at 6 a.m., the little ones to go to day care, the others to school. Their mother goes out to look for an apartment when she's not going to drug-treatment meetings. "For what they pay for me to stay in a shelter I could have lived in the Hamptons," Sharanda says.

Here is the parallel universe that has flourished while the more fortunate were rewarding themselves for the stock split with SUVs and home additions. There is a boom market in homelessness. But these are not the men on the streets of San Francisco holding out cardboard signs to the tourists. They are children, hundreds of thousands of them, twice as likely to repeat a grade or be hospitalized and four times as likely to go hungry as the kids with a roof over their heads. Twenty years ago New York City provided emergency shelter for just under a thousand families a day; last month it had to find spaces for 10,000 children on a

given night. Not since the Great Depression have this many babies, toddlers and kids had no place like home.

Three mothers sit in the living room of a temporary residence called Casa Rita in the Bronx and speak of this in the argot of poverty. "The landlord don't call back when they hear you got EARP," says Rosie, EARP being the Emergency Assistance Rehousing Program. "You get priority for Section 8 if you're in a shelter," says Edna, which means federal housing programs will put you higher on the list. Edna has four kids, three in foster care; she arrived at Casa Rita, she says, "with two bags and a baby." Rosie has three; they share a bathroom down the hall with two other families. Sharanda's five range in age from 13 to just over a year. Her eldest was put in the wrong grade when he changed schools. "He's humiliated, living here," his mother says.

All three women are anxious to move on, although they appreciate this place, where they can get shelter, get sober and keep their kids at the same time. They remember the Emergency Assistance Unit, the city office that is the gateway to the system, where hundreds of families sit every day surrounded by their bags, where children sleep on benches until they are shuffled off dull-eyed for one night in a shelter or a motel, only to return as supplicants again the next day.

In another world middle-class Americans have embraced new-home starts, the stock market and the Gap. But in the world of these displaced families, problems ignored or fumbled or unforeseen during this great period of prosperity have dovetailed into an enormous subculture of children who think that only rich people have their own bedrooms. Twenty years ago, when the story of the homeless in America became a staple of news reporting, the solution was presented as a simple one: affordable housing. That's still true, now more than ever. Two years ago the National Low Income Housing Coalition calculated that the hourly income necessary to afford the average two-bedroom apartment was around \$12. That's more than twice the minimum wage.

The result is that in many cities police officers and teachers cannot afford to live where they work, that in Las Vegas old motels provide housing for casino employees, that in shelters now there is a contingent of working poor who get up off their cots and go off to their jobs. The result is that if you are evicted for falling behind on your rent, if there is a bureaucratic foul-up in your welfare check or the factory in which you work shuts down, the chances of finding another place to live are very small indeed. You're one understanding relative, one paycheck, one second chance from the street. And so are your kids.

So-called welfare reform, which emphasizes cutbacks and make-work, has played a part in all this. A study done in San Diego in 1998 found that a third of homeless families had recently had benefits terminated or reduced, and that most said that was how they had wound up on the street. Drugs, alcohol and domestic abuse also land mothers with kids in the

shelter system or lead them to hand their children over to relatives or foster homes. Today the average homeless woman is younger than ever before, may have been in foster care or in shelters herself and so considers a chaotic childhood the norm. Many never finished high school, and have never held a job.

Ralph Nunez, who runs the organization Homes for the Homeless, says that all this calls for new attitudes. "People don't like to hear it, but shelters are going to be the low-income housing of the future," he says. "So how do we enrich the experience and use the system to provide job training and education?" Bonnie Stone of Women in Need, which has eight other residences along with Casa Rita, says, "We're pouring everything we've got into the nine months most of them are here--nutrition, treatment, budgeting. By the time they leave, they have a subsidized apartment, day care and, hopefully, some life skills they didn't have before."

But these organizations are rafts in a rising river of need that has roared through this country without most of us ever even knowing. So now you know. There are hundreds of thousands of little nomads in America, sleeping in the back of cars, on floors in welfare offices or in shelters five to a room. What would it mean, to spend your childhood drifting from one strange bed to another, waking in the morning to try to figure out where you'd landed today, without those things that confer security and happiness: a familiar picture on the wall, a certain slant of light through a curtained window? "Give me your tired, your poor," it says on the base of the Statue of Liberty, to welcome foreigners. Oh, but they are already here, the small refugees from the ruin of the American dream, even if you cannot see them.

PHOTO (COLOR): Anna Quindlen

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By Anna Quindlen

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