

## “If I Ever Get Out of Here”

By Eric Gansworth

### Pp. 1–91: “If I Ever Get Out of Here”

#### Focusing

First reaction

Feelings

Perceptions

Visual images

Associations

Identification

Judgments of importance

Literary Associations

#### Questions

What were your first reactions to Lewis and George? Who did you identify with and why?

What emotions did you experience as you read part 1?

What has happened so far? Paraphrase the main events.

What do Lewis, George, and Evan (the Wedgie King”) look like in your mind?

What memories – people, places, events, feelings or attitudes did the text bring to mind?

Have you ever experienced anything similar to what Lewis is dealing with? What happened, and what did you do?

What do you think is the most important event in part one, and why do you think so?

Did the text remind you of any other film, poem, play or story? If so, what is the connection?

Writing If you were to write about what you have read so far, what would you focus on as you wrote?

Predictions What do you think will happen between George and Lewis in part 2?

### **Part 2 Pp. 91-235: “Moon and Stars”**

First reaction What was your first reaction to Lewis’s description of Indian boarding schools on pp. 108?

Feelings What emotions did you experience as you read through part 2?

Perceptions What is your perception of George’s father at this point?

Visual Images How do you visualize George’s father? What other images come to your mind when you think of the other characters in the book?

Associations What memories – people, places, events, feelings or attitudes did the text bring to mind?

Identification What do you know of the phrase “Kill the Indian, but save the man”?

Judgments of importance What do you think are some of the most important judgments George, his father, and Lewis have made thus far?

Literary associations Find the poem “Incident,” by Countee Cullen. Discuss the poem’s title, and relate it to the lunch “incident” on p. 123.

Writing If you were to write Lewis at the end of this section, what advice would you give him?

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|-------------|--|
| Inference   | As you read, think about the chapter titles: for example, why do you think the author used “Venus and Mars” for chapter 8? |
| Predictions | What do you think will happen between Evan, the bully, and Lewis? What would you do if you were Lewis?                     |

### **Part 3 Pp. 235–350: “Tragical History Tour”**

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|-------------------------|---|
| First reaction          | What was your first reaction to Mr. Groffini’s news? What do you think happened that Mr. Goffini isn’t telling Lewis?                     |
| Feelings                | How do you think Lewis is feeling about Mr. Groffini’s offer?   |
| Perceptions             | What do you think of Mr. Doyle? How does he compare to the other adults at school?  |
| Visual Images           | What is your mental image of Mr. Haddonfield?   |
| Associations            | What experience have you have that most closely resembles Lewis’s school life?  |
| Identification          | With whom did you identify most with in the story? Who did you identify with least?   |
| Judgments of importance | What seems to be Lewis’s judgment of Mr. Haddonfield and why do you think he thinks as he does? What is your judgment of Mr. Haddonfield? |
| Literary associations   | Did this section of the book remind you of any other film, poem, play or story? If so, what is the connection?                            |

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| Writing      | Who do you think sent Lewis the album, and why do you think so?   |
| Writing II   | Listen to the song “Things we said today” (p. 349). Do you agree with Lewis’s or Albert’s interpretation? Why do you think so?  |
| Writing III  | Have you ever had a friendship like the one between Lewis and George? If so, how did it come about, and what is the relationship like now?  |
| Writing IV   | Who did you admire most in this book and why? Who were you most disappointed with, and why?   |
| Forecasting  | Imagine Lewis and George a year from the end of the novel. What do you think they are doing, and what would you predict of their future?  |
| Extension    | The author provides a playlist, discography and links to all of the song (chapter) titles. Listen to as many songs as interest you, and see if you can explain why each song was selected for its respective chapter. Do the author’s selections make sense to you? |
| Extension II | Many times in the book, Lewis talks about feeling “invisible.” He also talks about being “between two worlds.” Have you ever experienced this? What was it like? How did you feel?  |

**Adapted from:**

Robert E. Probst

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