

Discussion Questions for *The Soloist*

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1. Discuss the manner in which Steve deals with Nathaniel's angry outbursts.
2. What does it take for society to finally recognize talent? Why are extraordinary means often necessary before one's gift is appreciated?
3. How does this story demonstrate "the redemptive power of music" (see the book's subtitle)? What exactly is meant by that term?
4. Do you feel more or less hopeful as a result of reading this story? Explain.
5. In an *LA Times* interview, Steve claims that one of Nathaniel's greatest contributions to his life was to reaffirm Steve's passion for writing. Do you think Steve would possibly have rediscovered that passion without having met Nathaniel? Why or why not?
6. You can find the entire series of columns written by Steve about Nathaniel online at <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-lopez-skidrow-nathaniel-series,0,1456093.special>. Which one of these columns do you think demonstrates the real turning point in Steve's relationship with Nathaniel?