

The Soloist: Reading Questions (and Answers) for Chapters 1-7 (so far)

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Preface:

1. What is Nathaniel playing when Steve Lopez first sees him? Beethoven (p. i)
2. How does Steve describe Nathaniel? Nathaniel is black, about 50 years of age with warm butterscotch eyes, standing next to a shopping cart filled with his belongings. (p. ix)
3. Where does Steve work? The Los Angeles Times. (p. x)
4. What is Nathaniel's inspiration? The Beethoven statue. (p. x)
5. What is Steve's nickname for Nathaniel? Violin Man. (p. xi)

Part One:

Chapter One:

1. What is Nathaniel's full name and where is he from? Nathaniel Anthony Ayers from Cleveland. (p. 4)
2. According to Steve, what is Nathaniel's life's purpose? To arrange the notes that lie scattered in his head. (p.7)
3. What is Nathaniel's goal in life? To figure out how to replace the strings that are missing on his violin. (p. 8)
4. Where did Nathaniel go to school? Juilliard (p. 8)

Chapter Two:

1. List some of the publications Steve has written for in the past. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Oakland Tribune*, and *San Jose Mercury News*. (p. 10)
2. What are some of the great joys of Steve's job? Exposing the vanities of the rich and famous, delivering public floggings to corporate villains and self-important fools, and discovering the story that is so obvious it's practically invisible. (p. 10)
3. What's the golden rule of Journalism? Everyone has a story, get out of the office and talk to people. There's no telling what you might find. (p. 10)
4. List some of the instruments Nathaniel has played. The Double bass, violin, cello. (p. 13)
5. Who is Jennifer? Nathaniel's younger sister (p. 15)
6. How old was Nathaniel when he got sick? 21 (p. 15)
7. What was his diagnosis? Paranoid Schizophrenia (p. 15)
8. What school did Nathaniel get accepted to? Ohio University and then Juilliard. (p. 20)

Chapter Three:

1. What kind of response does Steve get to the article about Nathaniel? Overwhelming response from the readers who want provide information about various mental health programs, medications, mail strings, unused instruments, new instruments, etc. (p. 22)

2. Who is Al Rich? He's the CEO of Pearl River Piano Group America, Ltd. who sends Steve a student-model cello and violin to give to Nathaniel. (p. 22)
3. Nathaniel is obsessed about removing what from his environment? Cigarette butts. (p. 23)
4. What does Nathaniel call Los Angeles? The Beethoven City (p. 26)
5. Who are Shannon Murray and Patricia Lopez? The Assistant Director and Program Manager of the Lamp Community Agency that works with mentally ill homeless people. (27-28)
6. What are the two things Lamp tries to accomplish? To make its clients make social connections in a supportive setting and to come up with a mission or goal, along with a plan to realize it. (p. 28)
7. What is Steve's devious plan? To store the instruments at Lamp as encouragement for Nathaniel to get help. (p. 31)

Chapter Four:

1. How many instruments does Steve receive? Two violins and one cello. (p. 33)
2. Why is the mouth of the tunnel the "perfect music environment" in comparison to Lamp? Because Lamp is on Skid Row where people swarm, will stand in front of him as he plays and toss cigarette butts at his feet. The tunnel is a wide, open space where there are few people, and no cigarette butts. (p. 38)

Chapter Five:

1. How long does it take before Nathaniel goes to Lamp to play his new instruments? One month. (p. 41).
2. How did Lamp get started? It was established in 1985 by Mollie Lowery. In the 1970's she took notice of the increasing number of homeless people who were suffering from a mental illness. There was a Women's Center in Santa Monica that knew how to treat these people, but no place for men. With the help of a Frank Rice, chamber of commerce conservative and vice president of Bullock's department store, she was able to start the Los Angeles Men's Project.
3. Who is Sister Mary Scullion? A nun in Philadelphia who took her vow of humility to the streets in determination to reach out to those others had given up on. She inspires hope in others who had no hope left. (p. 47)
4. How many times does Nathaniel try to leave Lamp with his instruments? Is he ever successful? He tries twice. The first time, a staff member catches him. The second time, he manages to escape with two violins and a cello. (p. 48-49)

Chapter Six:

1. What's *The Village*? It's a facility in Long Beach created by the Mental Health Services Act in 2004. (p. 53)
2. What is Dr. Ragins' protocol on treating mentally-ill patients? He works on establishing a relationship first to build trust. (p. 55).
3. How does Dr. Ragins' make the patients comfortable enough to want to come in on their own? He has one of *The Village* employees make several visits in order to establish trust. (p. 55)

4. According to Dr. Ragins, which is more important, making a diagnosis or establishing a connection? Why? Establishing a connection because it is through the connection that the patient will want to pursue recovery, not through diagnosis. (p. 57)
5. What is the challenge that doctors, mental health workers and advocates face? They tend to treat the disease and not the person. (p. 57)

Chapter Seven:

1. Where does Nathaniel bed down at night? The Toy District (p. 60)
2. Where does Nathaniel believe children get their nourishment from? The Toy District (p. 60)
3. Who does the woman in soiled pants call and why? She calls 911 because of her heart. (p. 63)
4. Nathaniel decorates his shopping cart with two dead palm fronds. What has he written on them? Brahms and Beethoven (p. 65)
5. How does Nathaniel plan on protecting himself in case he needs to? With a sawed-off wooden chair leg and a hubcap as a shield. (p. 65)
6. How does Dr. Ragins explain a schizophrenic mind? They're cluttered with images and thoughts that can't be organized. (p. 67)
7. What does Nathaniel use the Brahms and Beethoven sticks for? To ward off the sewer rats. (p. 69)
8. Name the play that Nathaniel recites. *Hamlet* (p. 69)
9. Where does Steve spend the night? He checks into a hotel. (p. 71)

Chapter Eight:

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