

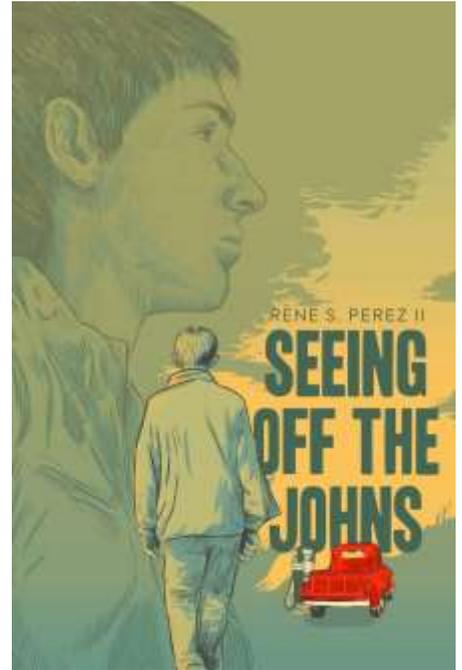
## TEACHER'S GUIDE

ALIGNED WITH COMMON CORE STANDARDS

### Seeing Off the Johns

By Rene S. Perez II

John Mejia and John Robison are the stars of Greenton, headed for glory at the University of Texas as future baseball and football players. The whole town gathers to see their boys off at the end of summer—everyone, except Chon Gonzales, who has had a tenuous relationship with Mejia since before high school began. When “The Johns”—as they are known in town—have a horrible accident, Chon feels conflicted. While he feels sorry for their death, he’s also felt ire for Mejia since middle school because of a girl named Araceli. As Araceli and Chon grow close after the death of The Johns, he comes to realize that the two stars are an important part of the town that he grew up in, even part of the story of himself.



The following questions are aligned with the Common Core Standards for grades 9,10, 11 and 12. The corresponding standard can be found after each question.

#### Summer

1. What is special about “The Johns”? Why does the town revere them? Is the attention deserved? Do the boys and their families appreciate the attention? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1*)
2. Describe Chon. How is he different and similar to The Johns? How does he feel about Araceli? Why does he decide to stay home from the celebration for Mejia and Robison? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3*)
3. Describe the Pachanga. How is it representative of the town of Greenton? How is it representative of Chon’s life? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3*)
4. In the section entitled “Summer”, characters sometimes use phrases in words in Spanish. How does the author (by way of the dialogue from characters) choose when to include these phrases? Find at least three examples in the text where the author chooses to use Spanish in this way to support your response. (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA.11-12.4*)
5. Describe the Mejia and Robison families. How are they similar? How are they different? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3*)

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6. The author describes how the death of The Johns affects different characters from an omniscient viewpoint. How does this affect the narrative? How does this affect the overall tone of the narrative? Is this approach more or less effective than using a singular viewpoint? Support your response with specific examples from the text. (CCSS.ELA.9-10.5, CCSS.ELA.11-12.5)
7. What did The Johns represent to the town? What do they represent to Chon? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA.11-12.2)
8. Why does Goyo try to take down the banner over the town? How does he react when it finally comes down? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA.11-12.6)
9. What happens to The Johns? Why did they take such a strange route to get to Austin? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1)
10. Why do representatives from Ford and Firestone come to the funeral and memorial services for the Johns? How are they received by the townspeople? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1)
11. What is the relationship between Ana and Chon? How did it begin? Why has it continued? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3)
12. What are the stars for? Who had the idea to sell them? What do the stars represent to most people? What do they represent to the parents of The Johns? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA.11-12.6)
13. Henry states, “You think he’s going to remember you tomorrow, or even me?” What is the tone of this statement? How does is this quote representative of Chon’s role in the lives of the people he knows? Support your response with evidence from the text. (CCSS.ELA.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA.11-12.4)
14. Why do Chon and Henry go to the cemetery? What does the scene in the cemetery reveal about their friendship? Why does the author include this scene in the narrative? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.5, CCSS.ELA.11-12.5)
15. How does Araceli respond to the death of Mejia? What are the reasons that she feels uncomfortable while the town is grieving? How had Araceli’s relationship with Mejia changed since the news that he was going to the University of Texas? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA.11-12.6)

### Fall

1. Why is Chon excited about the first day of school? What is he concerned about? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1)
2. How is Araceli’s arrival at school contrary to what the other students at her school expect? How do they react? How does Chon feel about their reaction? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1)

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3. What is Mr. Adame trying to accomplish by changing the way he dresses? How is he perceived by the students as a result? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA.11-12.6*)
4. Why does the author choose to include such a detailed account of the first day of school? How would the story be different if the author had not discussed the first day? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.5, CCSS.ELA.11-12.5*)
5. What is the inciting action that allows Chon to speak with Araceli? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1*)
6. What is Henry's role in his classes? What is Araceli's? Chon's? How are their roles different? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3*)
7. Why is Ana upset with Chon when she sees him at the Pachanga? Is she only angry at Chon, or at something else as well? How does Chon react? Does he understand her frustration? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1*)
8. What are the importance of football and baseball to the town of Greenton? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA.11-12.2*)
9. Chon is happy Araceli joins himself and Henry because he has romantic feelings for her. Are there other reasons that he is happy for her presence? What does this reveal about Chon? What does it help him realize about his high school experience? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3*)
10. Why doesn't Araceli go to the homecoming party? How has she changed since the previous year? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3*)
11. What does the reader know about Araceli that Chon doesn't? How does Chon's incomplete knowledge of the situation between Araceli and Mejia affect how his interactions with her? How does Araceli's confession affect his point of view? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA.11-12.6*)
12. What happens to Chon and Araceli after the game? How does this affect their relationship? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1*)
13. Name two major themes that repeatedly appear in the text up until this point. Explain how these themes are developed, citing examples from throughout the text that support your stance. (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1*)
14. Why is Andres rude to Chon? What motivates his behavior? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1*)
15. What is the significance of February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1999 in the text? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1*)

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### Spring

1. Why does Araceli cry before and after she kisses Chon? How does this make Chon feel? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3)
2. How does Araceli initially feel about Chon's gift? How does her reaction change as they talk? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3)
3. Describe the town of Greenton. How does its location affect the people who live there? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1)
4. Why does Chon go to Goyo to get his car inspected? What does Goyo warn Chon about?
5. How has Chon's opinion of school changed over the course of his senior year? Why? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1)
6. Why is it ironic that Ana won the lottery? Support your response with evidence from the text in both the Fall and Spring sections. (CCSS.ELA.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA.11-12.6)
7. What does Ana mean when she tells Chon "You never win if you don't play the game"? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA.11-12.4)
8. Why does Chon quit at the Pachanga? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1)
9. What elements of the narrative foreshadow Chon's decision to move to Austin? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.5, CCSS.ELA.11-12.5)
10. Why does Domingo go after Chon? What realization does Chon come to concerning the Johns? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1)
11. Why does Goyo say that he fixed Chon's car for free? Does he have other reasons? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA.11-12.6)
12. How has Chon's relationship with his brother changed since he is leaving? What evidence can you provide from the text to support your response? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3)
13. When the narrator mentions that Araceli and Chon filled up the car, he mentions in parenthesis that Araceli paid. What is the significance of this parenthetical? What does it show about the relationship between Chon and Araceli? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA.11-12.4)
14. What was unfair about the way the town discussed death of Julie Mejia? (CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1)
15. How have the people of Greenton moved on since the death of The Johns. Give at least three examples from the text that supports your response. (CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3)

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16. What ultimately went wrong between Araceli and Chon? Why? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.5, CCSS.ELA.11-12.5*)
17. Why does the author choose to tell the audience what happens to Araceli and Chon after they leave town? How does this affect the rest of the story? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1*)
18. How does a town “make” someone? Give examples from the text to support your response. (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA.11-12.2*)
19. How does Chon feel about Araceli after they break up? How does he cope with his feelings during the concert? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3*)
20. What is Chon’s ultimate fate? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA.11-12.1*)

### Whole Text Questions

1. In what ways is this text about what actually happened to The Johns? In what ways is the text about what happened to the people they left behind? Cite specific examples from the text that support your response. (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3*)
2. How do loneliness and loss work together in this book? Choose two characters who have lost something throughout the text and examine how these losses lead to loneliness. How does each character cope with their loneliness? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA.11-12.2*)
3. During the final concert scene, Bob Schneider sings, “How could have this and build it into something beautiful, and then squander it all down?” Explain how this quote applies to the relationship between Araceli and Chon using evidence from the beginning of their relationship until the end of it. (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.4, CCSS.ELA.11-12.4*)
4. How does the author’s inclusion of various points of view affect the complexity of the narrative? Do these inclusions help or hinder the reader’s understanding of the situation that surrounds the death of The Johns? (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.5, CCSS.ELA.11-12.5*)
5. Were Araceli and Chon destined to be apart because of their differences? Support your response with evidence from the text. (*CCSS.ELA.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.11-12.3*)