

Making Strong Inferences from Text

An inference is a prediction about a story's events, characters, mood, etc. Reading a story or article closely helps you to make awesome inferences.

This is where writing from me comes in—one of my novels, *Second Chances*.

September 29, 2006

It was a typical Thursday at Wadesboro Elementary School, so typical that it blended into every other day I had ever spent at school. Mrs. Wilkins was my second-grade teacher, and she was always really considerate to us, no matter how traumatic a situation we caused. However, things would change completely that day, particularly between my best friend Seth Morgan and me.

Seth was not the typical second grade boy. He had dark brown hair and thick glasses. He was also a lot smaller than the rest of the boys in our class. It seemed as if every boy towered at least a foot over him. His voice was also very high and possessed a nasal quality. Yet what made him stand out even more was that he was a complete brainiac for his age, reading on at least a fifth grade level. While everyone toiled through *Horrible Harry* and *Time Warp Trio* books, he would sit and read books way beyond his age. His favorite of all was *Johnny Tremain*. He could multiply and divide really well, and he was fascinated with science. When he grew up, he wanted to become a crypto zoologist, while I was completely fascinated at the time with becoming a race car driver. Yet even though Seth and I seemed incredibly different, we possessed a lot of similarities. We met through our fathers before kindergarten because they both worked in carpentry. They got around to talking when my dad mentioned that I was already reading, and Seth's dad chuckled, mentioning that he had been reading just before he turned four. We then met of course, and the rest was history.

However on that fateful Thursday, we were on the swings, discussing the rules of chess. Seth enjoyed playing with his father, and I appreciated a lot of what he did, even though I was not as brilliant. All of a sudden, Dillon Randall and Patrick Delmar came marching up to us. Patrick grabbed at Seth's glasses and vengefully snapped them in half. Dillon then followed Patrick and knocked Seth out of the swing with great force. Seth began bawling his eyes out, and the two boys persisted even more. I just sat there, appalled on the inside but not displaying much emotion on the outside. I was speechless. Suddenly Dillon swung on his heels and blurted out to me, "Are you actually going to keep hanging out with this dork?"

My mouth was as dry as the Sahara Desert, and if they would have poked me in any way, I probably would have bawled my eyes out. Seth's eyes were brimming with tears, glancing pleadingly in my direction. He may have been thinking, *Please, set them straight, yet I*

was numb from head to toe. I did not want to be in Seth's predicament and a crowd began surrounding us (as well as Mrs. Wilkins), so I blurted out the first thing my preposterous mind told me to say- "No, Dillon. I am not going to be his friend anymore."

It was like Pandora's Box had opened at that moment. Seth was devastated with his mouth hanging open. His lip with quivering and he began shaking from head to toe. I was even more devastated that I betrayed him. Yet I could never take that moment back; I *had* to move on. Dillon and Patrick were beaming with delight that I had caused harm to my best friend. A few particularly mean kids, one named Jordan and another named Brent, began clapping. Seth then ran for his life.

Mrs. Wilkins broke up the fight and hauled the two instigators down to the front office on their heels. Seth was escorted by a girl named Emily to the guidance office. She was a kind, quiet spirit who cared about everyone in her class. She consoled him while I sat in the swing like a complete fool. An extremely introverted boy named Jonathan then looked at me and snarled, "Good going. *You hurt your best friend.*" He then disappeared when another second grade teacher, Ms. Morrow, gathered our class to bring us inside. I followed reluctantly, struck, eventually out to become sort of an outcast.

The thing was, we boys had so much to hide. I really wanted to tell Seth that I was sorry, but over time, that desire faded. Dillon was also really intelligent, though he never wanted to admit it to everybody. He had seemed fine up until that point, back in kindergarten and first grade. Patrick was the instigator of all, very harsh and controlling of all his friends. Nobody wanted to have him on their bad side, though perhaps Patrick also had something to hide.

It would be almost by fate that this entire crowd reunited for fourth grade. Our somewhat unfortunate teacher, Mrs. Farley, had Seth, Dillon, Patrick, Emily, Jonathan, Jordan, and myself on her roster. I am sure she was half mortified at first and asking the front office to remove at least one of the two bullies from her class. Yet everything progressed, and at Open House, I was staring at Mrs. Farley's fourth grade class list including all our names.

Make 5-8 "thick" inferences from this text. What can you gather from the description of the characters and plot?

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