

Name: _____

Ms. Kamrass

English 9 STR; Study Guide

(T)The First Part Last, by Angela Johnson **(A)**; a novel **(G)**

What does it mean to be an adult?

How does hardship change people?

Can we survive without family?

Literary Terms:

allusion -

irony –

metaphor -

mood -

narrative –

repetition -

simile -

Review of past literary terms:

symbol -

setting -

image -

Note about the novel's narrative style: For a majority of the book, the chapters' time sequences switch from "then" to "now." You will simultaneously learn about the past and the present.

Characters:

Pre-reading question (long journal): What would you do if you could relive a part of your life over again? What time would that be? What makes you want to change it? **Or:** ***Why wouldn't you change anything about your life?***

Part I (pp. 3-29)

“now” (3-4)

1. What is the setting (the “place” portion)?

2. How old is the baby? What is her name?

3. **Q** How do you know that the protagonist loves his daughter? Describe an action or thought from this chapter.

4. What does the protagonist mean when he says, “...But I figure if the world were really right, humans would live life backward and do the first part last. They’d be all knowing in the beginning and innocent in the end” (4)?

“then” (5-6)

5. What part of New York City is the setting for this part of the story?

6. What do you think when you read about Nia as she holds the red balloon? In other words: what does this image show about her?

“now” (7-11)

7. What question does “Just Frank” ask the protagonist?

8. The protagonist uses a *simile* to describe the way that Feather sleeps. Write it here:

9. What does the simile in question #8 make you understand about her father? What *mood* does it create for you?

10. We finally see the protagonist's name. What is it? Why has the author waited until now to reveal it?

11. Bobby's mother, Mary, says, "Put that baby down, Bobby. I swear she's going to think the whole world is your face. ..." (8). What does this show about the way Bobby treats Feather?

12. Explain this quote: "Everything is different if there ain't no love" (10).

13. **Q** What shows Bobby's devotion to his daughter when he's with his two best friends.

"then" (12-13)

14. What does Bobby's father, Fred, do when he tells him that Nia is pregnant?

15. If you did something wrong, would you rather that your father yell at you, or cry? Explain.

"now" (14-17)

16. Describe one CD that shows how responsible Bobby is.

17. Which main character is missing in all of the "now" chapters?

“then” (18-21)

18. Describe both Nia’s and Bobby’s apartment.

Nia’s	Bobby’s
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19. Describe the reactions of both Nia’s and Bobby’s parents to the news that Nia and Bobby are having a baby.

Nia’s	Bobby’s
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“now” (22-25)

20. What’s ironic about the doctor that Bobby takes Feather to see?

“then” (26-29)

21. Summarize the events in the chapter.

Part II (pp. 33-61)

“now” (33-36)

22. Why is Bobby in such bad shape? Describe two CDs.

“then” (37-41)

23. What does Bobby tell his friends in this chapter? Why is he so nervous?

“now” (42-46)

24. Who does Feather look like?

*25. In the “now” chapters, we haven’t heard, or seen, Nia. Where do you think she is?

“then” (47-50)

26. What does Bobby get for Nia that shows his devotion to her?

“now” (51-54)

27. Do you believe in K-Boy’s philosophy: “...it doesn’t matter much what you do, what’s gonna go down is already set. ...” (51).

28. **Q** Write a sentence from the end of this chapter that foreshadows an unpleasant event.

“then” (55-57)

29. What happens to Nia in this chapter?

“now” (58-61)

30. What does Bobby spend his day doing? Why do you think he does it?

31. Describe two reasons why he’s in trouble.

Part III (pp. 65-87)

“then” (65-69)

32. Why is this chapter written as a fairy tale?

33. **Q** What do the doctors say that Nia needs to do?

“now” (70-75)

34. Was there ever a time where you messed up and knew you’d be in trouble when you saw the authority figure (parent, guardian, school administrator, etc.)? Describe that feeling.

35. Bobby has this same feeling when he returns home and must face his mother. What does he think about in order to comfort himself?

“then” (76-80)

36. Pregnancy is taking its toll on Nia’s body. Describe three of its unpleasant effects on her body.

“now” (81-82)

37. What three-word sequence does Bobby keep repeating.

38. Why is there this repetition (what effect does it create)?

“then” (83-87)

39. What is Nia doing in this chapter, and why should it concern you?

40. What important matter do Nia and Bobby talk about?

Part IV (pp. 91-132)

“now” (92-96)

41. “...she’s looking at me like I’m a baby that just walked across the room for the first time.”
“Maybe I just did” (95). Explain what Bobby means by this.

“then” (97-100)

42. What does Bobby list as the positive aspects of giving up the baby?

43. **Q** What does his wish to paint really mean?

44. **Q** Describe the imagery at the end of this chapter.

“now” (101-104)

45. Why won't Mary – Bobby's mother – “take over” like “most grandmothers would do”?

46. What change did Bobby make?

47. Who does the baby resemble?

“then” (105-107)

48. What Bobby and Nia decide to do about the baby?

49. We know that they didn't follow through with this plan. What do you think is the reason?

“now” (108-112)

50. **Q** Where does Bobby go?

“then” (113-114) and “Nia” (115-116)

51. What seems to happen to Nia in these two chapters.

“now” (117-119)

52. **Q** Why did Bobby decide to keep the baby?

“then” (120-127)

53. **Q** Find the allusion about King Arthur and write it here. Why is Bobby thinking in terms of this Medieval hero?

54. What really happened to Nia?

55. **Q** Why did Bobby name the baby “Feather”?

56. Bobby says, “I’m being a man” (126). Do you agree with him? Explain.

“now” (128-130)

57. Describe Bobby’s latest decision.

58. Why do you think he’s doing it? Is he making the right choice for him, for Feather?

“heaven” (131-132)

59. Why is the title of this chapter important?

Post-reading question: If Bobby could relive the past, what do you think he’d do differently.