

Discover What Happens in **Breathing Room**

- 1) What do we learn about Evvy and her family—and her relationship with her brother, father and mother, in the opening two chapters?
- 2) Why is the second chapter called *Loonless Lake*? What else may the author intend for the reader to feel by titling the chapter this way?
- 3) How does Nurse Marshall treat Evvy throughout Chapters 3-7? What is the nurse’s philosophy about patient care? How does she pronounce Evelyn’s first name and what effect does that have on her?
- 4) What are some of the adjustments Evvy has to make her first days at Loon Lake? Which challenges do you think are the hardest for her and why?
- 5) Why is Chapter 9 called *A Different Tune*? What changes for Evvy in this chapter?
- 6) Consider the Loon Lake Sanatorium Schedule before Chapter 10. Compare that document with the newspaper before Chapter 11 and the illustration at the start of Chapter 11. On their own, what story do they tell? Together how do they add to the story?
- 7) Describe Evvy’s mood in Chapter 10. What are some specific examples that show how “gloomy” Evvy feels “inside and out”?
- 8) What changes for Evvy in Chapters 11-13? How does this change affect her?
- 9) Describe Abe’s first letter to Evvy and her reactions to it?
- 10) Why is Chapter 14 called *The Giant*? Is that a fitting description? Why or why not?
- 11) What does Evvy learn about Beverly in Chapter 15 that surprises Evvy? What advice does Beverly give Evvy?
- 12) By Chapter 15, the reader has met Evvy’s most important roommates—Dena, Pearl, Beverly, and Sarah. What does Evvy think of each one? How do the various girls get along? What issues do they face individually and as roommates?
- 13) Compare the letters written by Evvy’s mother and father at the end of Chapter 16. What does each letter reveal about the writer and the writer’s relationship with Evvy?
- 14) What happens in Chapter 17 *Flying Away*? What is significant about this particular night? What does the end of the chapter reveal about Dena and Pearl?
- 15) Why is Chapter 19 called *Numbers*? Does that title refer to more than one thing in that chapter?
- 16) What is a discharge order? What is the significance of Chapter 21’s title, *Looking Back*?
- 17) What secret is revealed in Chapter 22? Why did this information have to be a secret?
- 18) What gifts do the girls receive in Chapter 24 and from whom? Why are these gifts important? Who gives them and what does that show about the character?

- 19) Why is Chapter 25 called *The Ruby*? What event takes place? What is the significance of the letter that follows the chapter?
- 20) Chapter 26 is called *A Different Tune*. Discuss at least three ways in which things are now different for Evvy. What changes have taken place and how are the characters each affected? What lesson must Evvy learn? When Evvy says, “That was my music” at the chapter’s end, what is she talking about?
- 21) Discuss the gifts in Chapters 27-30. Consider the gifts given—or not—and the ‘gift’ Dr. Keith gives Evvy in Chapter 30.
- 22) What is the warning Evvy gets in Chapter 32? How does she get the message? What decision does Evvy make?
- 23) Explain the significance of the titles *Finding Her* (Chapter 33) and *Losing Her* (Chapter 34). What is the importance of the fan pictured at the beginning of Chapter 34? How does Sarah help Evvy in this chapter?
- 24) To whom does Evvy say goodbye in Chapter 35? What gift does Evvy give? What does Dena mean when she says, “Just go on”?
- 25) What does Evvy mean by “Bed Post,” the words also used as the title of Chapter 37? What are the advantages to communicating in this new way?
- 26) What happens on the *Midnight Journey* (Chapter 38)? Discuss the letter Evvy writes Abe that appears at the end of Chapter 38. How does it compare to her earlier letters to her family? Why the change?
- 27) What information is Evvy hesitant to share in Chapter 39? Why? Does the information get shared?
- 28) Why does Evvy name her poem “Morning” (found just before Chapter 41)? Why would she write this poem?
- 29) What is the final gift given in the novel? What is its significance?
- 30) Compare and contrast the opening and closing chapters of the novel.

