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The Soloist - Movie Questions

1. When they first meet, Steve looks at Nathaniel as a potential news story. Why do you think Steve continues to take on responsibility for Nathaniel’s wellbeing following the initial news article?
2. Although Steve didn’t enter into his relationship with Nathaniel looking for either a friend or a musical teacher, he winds up with both. Discuss how their relationship progressed from writer-subject to friendship.
3. For Nathaniel his music seems at times to almost calm his illness. Do you believe that these creative kinds of therapy can ever be a replacement for anti-psychotic drugs?
4. Steve works hard to shed light on the homeless situation on Skid Row and the mental health problems that many people there suffer. How do you think families should handle a mentally ill relative?
5. Do you think it is okay to force treatment on a person?
6. How did Steve’s attitudes towards people experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles change over the course of the movie?
7. How does Nathaniel’s mental illness affect his friendship with Steve?
8. How has Nathaniel’s mental illness affect his relationships in the past (family, classmates, teachers, etc.)?
9. Readers begin to donate instruments and money almost immediately following Steve’s first article. What do you think compels people to help a stranger?
10. What are your personal experiences with homelessness? What are your personal experiences with the mentally ill?
11. Did Nathaniel’s story make you want to do something about the homeless and mentally ill population in America?