Chapter 1 “Goodbye Daddy”
1. The author tries to convince his mother to let his father come back home. She tells him no, without explaining the details of their separation. Should the mother have explained to her children all the reasons the father left? Students should use other information from the chapter to back up their arguments.
2. Find an article about the impact of divorce on children. Write a summary, applying the information to the author's circumstances.
3. Did the mother gain strength, once she separated from her husband, or was she always strong? Write a response.
4. How might the author and his brother have given their mother strength? Write a response.

Chapter 2 “Carrying the Load”
1. How did the author's mother, Sonya, create a false sense of security for her boys? How did this sense of security benefit the boys? How did it benefit the mother?
2. When the family moves to Boston, the author's father reappears to drive them there. How might this "reappearance" have influenced the author's opinion of his father?

Chapter 3 “Eight Years Old”
1. What role did faith play in the author's decision to become a doctor? Write a paragraph response.
2. What affirmations might the mother have used with her sons, based on her work for wealthy clients? Write 5 examples of affirmations she might communicate to her sons.
3. How might the author have been influenced if his mother had spoken negatively, rather than affirming the positive? Write a brief response.

Chapter 4 “Two Positives”
1. Why might the author's poor eyesight not have been discovered until fifth grade? Write a paragraph in response.
2. The author's mother devises a plan to help her sons improve their grades. Analyze her strategies and determine which one is the most effective.
3. Is the author's mother too hard on him? Write 2-3 paragraphs, explaining why or why not.
4. How did a teacher embarrass the author at the assembly, where his achievement was recognized? What did she imply about his race? Was her intention to belittle the author? Why didn’t the author tell his mother about the incident? How did students respond to the teacher's speech? Why was the author surprised by the teacher's tirade?

Chapter 5 “A Boy’s Big Problem”
1. Why was the author a target for capping in "A Boy's Big Problem"?
2. How did the author initially respond to the capping, or teasing, from his peers? How did the author put an end to the behavior? How was the author conflicted about capping back? What other measures did the author take to fit in? Was the author successful in compensating for being poor? Why or why not?
3. Identify Mary Thomas' values. Make a table, listing those values, how she shares them with the author's mother, Sonya, and how Sonya instills those values in her sons.