

The Soloist – Vocabulary for the Final Test

Part One (pp. 3-10)

- 1-2. (P. 3) I can't get the image out of my head, this odd picture of **grubby refinement**.
- **grubby** (adj.) = dirty, messy
 - **refinement** (n) = elegance
3. (P. 3) His playing is a little scratchy and **tentative**.
- **tentative** (adj.) = unsure or uncertain
4. (P. 3) I gaze at the tops of buildings **adorned** with....
- **adorned** (adj.) = decorated
5. (P. 4) He's still **suspicious** of me, **suspicious** of everything around him....
- **suspicious** (adj.) = mistrustful, wary, leery
6. (P. 4) He says he was trying to remember a Tchaikovsky piece he once knew quite well, but now it is as **elusive** as the meaning of a dream.
- **elusive** (adj.) = hard to capture, understand, or remember
7. (P. 6) I tell him I doubt that it's the **late** cellist, who died in 1987.
- **late** (adj.) = recently deceased
8. (P. 7) "All I want to do is play music, and the **crisis** I'm having is right here."
- **crisis** (n) = an emotionally stressful event or traumatic change in a person's life
9. (P. 9) The **antidote** for such fear and loathing is, of course, a good story.
- **antidote** (n) = remedy or cure
10. (P. 10) Juilliard in Manhattan is one of the **elite** music schools in the world....
- **elite** (adj.) = best, first-class
11. (P. 10) A bum with a violin, living out of a shopping cart and worshipping a Beethoven statue, turns out to be a Juilliard **alum**.
- **alum** (n) = a person who is a graduate of or a former student of a specific school, college, or univ.

Part Two (pp. 10-20)

12. (Pp. 10-11) It's late in the day in New York and no one at Juilliard seems prepared to drop everything and investigate my **query**.
- **query** (n) = a question; an inquiry
- 13-14. (P. 11) If the poor soul is that **delusional**, he's even sicker than I thought. Is it **dementia**?
- **delusional** (adj.) = suffering from false beliefs
 - **dementia** (n) = memory loss; madness; insanity
15. (P. 13) When I tell him how impressed I am that he studied at Juilliard, he's all **modesty**.
- **modesty** (n) = humility; shyness
16. (P. 14) The staff at Motter's was always amazed at how **nimbly** Nathaniel switched from one instrument to another.
- **nimbly** (adv.) = quickly and gracefully

17. (P. 15) It was the fall semester of 1972, his third year at Juilliard, and Nathaniel had been tormented by months of confusion, anxiety and **hallucinations**.

- **hallucination** (n) = a sensory experience of something that does not exist; a delusion

18. (P. 17) Was he a child **prodigy**? Were his mother and father musicians or **aficionados** who filled the house with the sounds of Beethoven...?

- **prodigy** (n) = a person with extraordinary talents or abilities

19. (P. 19) Nathaniel **blew off** assignments and had trouble focusing....

- **blow off** (v) = to skip or ignore something

20. (P. 19) That combination of **flattery** and faith got Nathaniel's attention.

- **flattery** (n) = excessive praise (sometimes insincere praise)

21-22. (P. 19) In his late teens, Nathaniel announced with equal parts **arrogance** and **admiration** that he wanted to be like Mr. Barnoff and play in a major orchestra.

- **arrogance** (n) = a display of pride, superiority, or self-importance
- **admiration** (n) = a feeling of wonder, pleasure, or approval

23. (P. 19) Barnoff was **reluctant** to set him [Nathaniel] up for disappointment.

- **reluctant** (adj.) = unwilling; hesitant

24. (P. 20) Nathaniel was often in his **cocoon** at the Settlement school.

- **cocoon** (n) = a place that provides protection and/or isolation

25. (P. 20) "It's an absolute dream here, and I notice that everyone is smiling. The sun is out all day, and the nights are cool and **serene**."

- **serene** (adj.) = calm; peaceful; tranquil

26. (P. 20) His eyes are closed, and in his shuttered world there is order, logic, **sanity**, sweet relief. If only for a while.

- **sanity** (n) = soundness of mind; rationality; reasonableness

Part Three (pp. 140-48)

27. (P. 140) Patience is no doubt a wonderful virtue, but **mendacity** has its advantages as well.

- **mendacity** (n) = untruthfulness

28. (P. 140) And to seduce him into giving it a try, I now have the perfect **bait**.

- **bait** (n) = an enticement or temptation

29. (P. 141) Nathaniel **squirms**.

- **squirm** (v) = to wriggle your body, possibly because you feel humiliated or embarrassed

30. (P. 141) "I just don't think Mr. Snyder would go for it," I say, raising my voice a bit louder than necessary to **accentuate** the noise factor Mr. Snyder would be up against.

- **accentuate** (v) = to stress or emphasize something

31. (P. 142) "It's not my apartment," he insists, **copping an attitude**.

- **cop an attitude** (verb phrase) = to be aggressive, disrespectful, etc.

32. (P. 142) I'm sorry, but Mollie Lowery and Mary Scullion were nuns, and I don't have their **fortitude**.

- **fortitude** (n) = mental or emotional strength that allows one to endure pain or adversity with courage

33-37. (P. 143) He endlessly chastises fellow clients, lets loose **bigoted tirades** and **maligns** [Stuart] Robinson for offering safe harbor to those who **cuss**, smoke or otherwise violate his sense of **civility**.

- **bigot** (n) = a person who is devoted to his own group, race, religion, etc. and is intolerant of others
- **tirade** (n) = an angry or violent speech
- **malign** (v) = to make evil, harmful, or false statements about someone
- **cuss** (v) = to curse, swear, or use profanity
- **civility** (n) = courtesy; politeness

38. (P. 143) ...and he goes along with the idea of using lessons from Pete Snyder as an **enticement** to get Nathaniel into the apartment.

- **entice** (v) = to lure; to tempt

39-41. (P. 145) The patio is an **oasis** of trees and benches, a **manicured** lawn and bougainvillea **cascading** over a wooden arbor.

- **oasis** (n) = a pleasant area; a safe area
- **manicured** (adj.) = clipped or trimmed evenly or closely
- **cascade** (v) = to fall in a way that is like a waterfall

42. (P. 146) The few people who **traipse** through the garden are clients....

- **traipse** (v) = to walk; to walk aimlessly

43. (P. 146) Judging by Nathaniel's reaction, he's not quite as **jazzed** as I am.

- **jazzed** (adj.) = excited or happy

44. (P. 146) I spot an empty bench and tell him it looks like a nice place to **serenade** passersby.

- **serenade** (v) = to sing and/or play music for someone

45. (P. 147) He pivots, grunts and pushes, and by **divine intervention**, the cart squeezes into the room.

- **divine intervention** (n) = the help of God; a miracle

Part Four (pp. 212-221)

46. (P. 212) And I'd be miserable working as a state **bureaucrat**, she insists.

- **bureaucrat** (n) = someone who works in or controls a bureaucracy; the term "bureaucrat" is often used negatively to describe a petty, narrow-minded person

47-48. (P. 213) After a thrilling run of thirty years, did I want to spend the rest of my career with a **scowl**, **reminiscing** about the good old days?

- **scowl** (n) = a look of anger or disapproval
- **reminisce** (v) = to recall past events, experiences, etc.

49-50. (P. 220) He quickly makes himself at home, acting like an **eccentric** and **gabby** uncle who's dropped by after a long absence.

- **eccentric** (adj.) = strange; weird; bizarre
- **gabby** (adj.) = talkative

51-52. (P. 221) In Nathaniel's high-anxiety **monologue**, she [Steve's wife] hears her brother's voice – the brother she thinks might be **bipolar**, though he's never been diagnosed as such.

- **monologue** (n) = a long speech made by one person, often monopolizing a conversation
- **bipolar** (adj.) = a psychiatric disorder marked by alternating episodes of mania and depression