

DOUBLE-ENTRY JOURNAL

8th Grade Exemplar

Name: Skinner Scholar

Book Title: *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*

Author: Michael Chabon

Quote (include page #)	Analysis
1. "Houdini was a hero to little men, city boys, and Jews.." (3)	Since this book is set in the time of World War II, Chabon might describe Houdini as a hero to Jews because he was such a talented escapist, a 'power' many Jews longed for in the battle of freeing themselves from Hitler's oppressive reign.
2. "'She was talking through her hat,' he said. 'Sorry?' 'She was full of it.' 'Full off...?'" (8)	Because Josef does not understand common phrases, it is evident that he is unaware of humor and sarcasm, leading to the conclusion that he was raised under harder circumstances than Sam.
3. "I already left them once... I just can't do it to them again." (18)	Through Josef's words, it is apparent that his family is very important to him, and the idea of letting them down hurts him incomparably.
4. "'Forget about what you are escaping from,' he said, quoting an old maxim of Kornblum's. 'Reserve your anxiety for what you are escaping to.'" (21)	Josef and Kornblum clearly share a deep fondness of each other that has lasted for a long time, as the opportunity to quote another comes from years of time together.
5. "Kornblum startled him with a rare smile." (26)	With the challenging job of preparing Josef for a journey across countries, his humor and friendliness may have temporarily been abandoned to teach him efficiently.

<p>6. "Josef said, his voice muffled in a way that disturbed his brother." (33)</p>	<p>In preparation for his meeting with the members of the Hofzinsler Club, Josef has instructed Thomas to throw him into the ice cold contents of a river, a daunting task as the probability of death is high. Because Thomas cares for his brother, the concept frightens him.</p>
<p>7. "...to find his Brooklyn-bound brother crouched beside him, three days after he was supposed to have departed." (55)</p>	<p>Thomas must be discouraged to encounter his brother in Germany after all of the effort and money that his family put into sending him closer to freedom.</p>
<p>8. "Half bad is maybe better than beauteeful." (89)</p>	<p>Since the comic book industry was booming in the 20th century, it was crucial that publishers rapidly created books, leaving little opportunity to perfect the comics.</p>
<p>9. "It was impossible for Sammy to imagine his mother as she must have been that summer of 1919..." (100)</p>	<p>After marriage, Ethel was likely hardened by childbirth, hard luck, and the destruction of Germany, her family's home; leading to her changes in personality as an adult.</p>
<p>10. "Young men, drinking, smoking, lying around with their naked big toes protruding from the tips of their socks." (110)</p>	<p>By descriptively illustrating the men, Chabon captures a sense of laziness and troublesomeness that the boys endorse. Personally, this description allows me to picture men in a dirty, dark room, drawing and smoking in an air of carelessness.</p>
<p>11. "I wish he was real." (135)</p>	<p>Joe's inspiration for the Escapist was likely a combination of his childhood hero, Houdini, and his longing to free his family and other Jews.</p>
<p>12. "My cousin. He just got in from Japan." (140)</p>	<p>Sammy's determination to conceal his cousin's true origins suggest that his boss may be Anti-Semitic, and he wants to ensure Joe's safety.</p>

<p>13. “Well what did he do with my brush? That’s a one-dollar red sable Windsor and Newton,” (140)</p>	<p>Since Frank, Sam’s boss, is upset about the loss of a his pen, it is evident that one dollar was worth much more than it is today, and it could afford a pen of such high quality.</p>
<p>14. “The Escapist.’ He frowned. ‘He’s hitting Hitler.’” (153)</p>	<p>Anapol, a publisher, is clearly worried about the concept of publishing a comic with a controversial cover, for fear of selling out.</p>
<p>15. “You know, don’t you, that this is pure trash... and we want a new cover.” (157-158)</p>	<p>George Deasey, their editor, clearly doesn’t understand the importance of the cover page to the plot nor recognize Sam’s pride in his story. His unempathetic personality leads me to believe that Joe and Sam will not sell their comic rights to him, despite the money.</p>
<p>16. “Sammy, is this a trick?’ he whispered. ‘Or are we serious?’” (101)</p>	<p>After declining the money and the offer, Joe is indecisive with worries of not finding another offer as strong as Anapol’s.</p>
<p>17. “Implicitly and passionately, the Kavalier family of Prague--were free.” (166)</p>	<p>Even after Joe’s success in the comic industry and with his relatives, his family’s pain tortures him and shapes his decisions.</p>
<p>18. “You are going to look like the idiot who does not.” (170)</p>	<p>Joe and Sam’s smart business decisions have created room for them to level the playing field between them and their bosses, giving him the confidence to communicate with Anapol in such a straightforward manner</p>
<p>19. “Remarkably bloodthirsty children of America.” (172)</p>	<p>To me, it seems that Chabon is subtly addressing the increasingly violent tendencies of American children in attempts to emphasize the severity attention to the problem.</p>
<p>20. “Every month, Joe’s income increased, and every month, he managed to put more and more money away, only to find that there was nothing to spend it on.” (178)</p>	<p>Because Joe is beginning to feel helpless, I worry that in the future, he will become distracted by his powerlessness, and stop working.</p>

CHARACTER DIARY

8th Grade Exemplar

Name: Skinner Scholar

Book Title: *Water For Elephants*

Author: Sara Gruen

Entry #1: Jacob, Chapter 2

What have I done? By leaving that classroom, I not only ruined my life, but wasted my potential. Technically, I have not graduated college, and now I am sitting on a train headed towards a big sign that says, in bold print: dead end. The longing that I feel to see my parents again is so intense, that I begin to cry. Now, I have made myself seem like a bigger baby than I already did, right in front of these surly old men.

I learn that my new destination will be a traveling circus I have never heard mention of; not a promising sign when looking for work and stability. I understand that a traveling circus is one of the worst places to settle down, but as of now, that is the best I can do. I sit in a corner next to Camel, overpowered with the stark smells of liquor and vomit. I yearn for a bed, a blanket, a pillow, but I am forced to use the ground as a substitute. Camel passes me a small jug of black slime that unsettlingly smells and bares a strong resemblance to tar mixed with whiskey. Determining that it would be rude to decline a drink from such a poor, dirty man, I plug my nose and gulp it down.

The liquid strikes like a blow to my throat. It burns as it skims past my tongue, leaving my taste buds bewildered and horrified. By the time it reaches my esophagus, I have become so sick that I vomit in a corner, only adding to the stench of the train car. Camel laughs and rips the jug out of my clenched fists, taking another swig himself before passing it down the thirsty line.

I peer out of the hingeless door into a dark, unforgiving sky. But for the first time in my travel deprived city life, I see the stars. They are in full bloom, not hidden under the veil of city lights and highrises that plagues the city. With the hope of work and safety in the morning, I close my eyes and let the rattling of the train lull me to sleep.

Entry #2: Kinko, Chapter 4

August hates me. He uses every opportunity he can find to humiliate and enrage me and then, just as I reach my tipping point, he leaves, in an air of satisfaction and superiority. The only reason I am still on this show, is the money. It comes like an angel every other week, the one blessing in my life that keeps me from going completely insane. The only place of comfort and protection from August's pestering was my home, and now it houses some college boy who has never learned how to live without running water.

And, to make matters worse, Marlina, the crowd and workers favorite, is slowly stealing my pay. Each week, my pay check shrinks just a few cents, and Marlina reaps the benefits.

Jacob lies in a corner, unconsciously scratching his neck. The noise is so loud and piercing that it would be a miracle if I got a wink of sleep tonight. I have never been one for sharing and I have my own things for a reason. I feel comfortable buying myself expensive items because I know that they will not be broken. Now I must account for this scratching, reckless ball of emotion eating away at my sanity.

I am often referred to as grumpy, or occasionally cranky and I see this as a compliment. I devote my friendliness to the crowd whilst I perform, and when I return from wowing them with my unique genetics, I have no patience nor energy left to deal with the workers and performers back stage. I believe strongly in hierarchy and I have a large distaste for the workers and stage crew. They smell horrendous, bathe every two or three months, and steal from people like myself. Fortunately, the lunch bells ring, and the opportunity to feed my insatiable stomach has arrived.

Entry #3: August, Chapter 6

Everything is as it should be. I am paid well and respected. I am married to the most beautiful woman in the industry. But suddenly, a 23 year old doctor came galloping into my life. I had to teach him the ropes. I am in charge and if anyone seeks to test this, they will be punished.

He continuously demonstrates affection and longing for my wife, Marlana. Fortunately, she is loyal, as she should be, since I am the most handsome, revered man on the show. His sportsmanship had to be tested if we were to work together, so I had him feed Rex, our tiger.

I have to say, he did not pass the test. Rex bit him and he blamed me! I had a suspicion that the tiger would bite, but I knew that the food would distract him long enough for Jacob to escape. I never would have let him die, yet he tells others that I fed him to the tiger and other ridiculous things like this.

Tonight, I have invited him to a dinner party with my dear Marlana and myself, where he will understand the infinite love Marlana and I share. Although I know how unlikely it is, I still fear that he will steal her from me, and I must show him that I will never let this happen. Newcomers often describe me as mad, insane, bipolar, but this is a mere illusion. I have my moments, but I, as a whole, am loving, loyal, and passionate.

Performing is my greatest passion. Capturing the crowd is my goal during every show; watching their side conversations end, their eyes widen, their jaws drop. This feeling is what keeps me coming back. Without it, there is nothing to say that I wouldn't take Marlana and escape the circus life for good. But, as long as the crowd keeps cheering, the popcorn keeps selling, and the children keep smiling, I will stay.

Entry #4: Marlana, Chapter 10

He's doing it again. In another one of those fits. August can be the sweetest, most affectionate man and the most violent, ill tempered one. He is following Rosie, our new bull, and beating her with that retched hook. Unfortunately, multiple sources have determined her to be dumb as a rock. She doesn't listen to any commands, and, thanks to August, panics whenever

a bullhook is near her. Sometimes I feel that I am Rosie, and he follows me around, yelling, cursing, and spitting. At these times, I understand why she never complies. Now, Uncle Al has wasted our precious money, and workers and performers alike have been deprived of their pay three weeks in a row.

The Ringling Brothers circus show is slowly shoving ours out of the way. Currently, their annual income is nearly twice ours, and based on current circumstances, this statistic will only worsen.

And I am a horrible person. I have loved August for years, but Jacob is nice, and sweet, and never throws these irrational tantrums. I know he likes me too. And this knowledge makes me even more upset. August knows that Jacob likes me, and he hates him for it. If I were to divorce August, he would kill Jacob. This is exactly why I can't stand to live with him any longer. He has enough rage in his heart to kill a man, and what's to say he won't hurt me. But I don't know how to save myself without letting him drown. So each day, I sit and comfort him, trying unsuccessfully to tame his pent up anger. No matter what I say or do, his fear and rage builds. He throws things now. Breaks glass. I want to leave. I need to leave. But for his sake, my heart won't let me. I only wish that Jacob will understand why I haven't left yet. I love him like I loved August when I first met him, but right now, I wonder if he will ever know.

Entry #5: Camel, Chapter 15

My heart is a detonating bomb. But unfortunately, it only has a few beeps left until it explodes. My lungs spasm with every breath that I take. I understand that I am old, but I feel that I should still have a few years left until that old bomb explodes. Jacob and Walter tell me that I need to relax, that seeing him won't hurt as badly as I've made it out to be. But I haven't seen my son in years, and now I call him, old and wilting, begging him to take me in. I love Jacob like a son, and leaving him pains me incomparably. Walter has treated me unnecessarily well and I will forever be grateful to him.

After many of my friends were redlighted, I had to hide somewhere. I couldn't stay with the workers because I would be found instantly. I couldn't camp outside of the train because it moved so regularly that I would never get on in time to come with it. So, Jacob, being the empathetic person he is, offered to hide me in their first class train car.

I hid behind their luggage, living my dying days in fear of being found, and having the bomb explode before my rightful time came. But amidst this worrying, I became used to the pleasures of money; clean water, real booze, infinite cigars. I felt horrible watching Diamond Joe live alone in our train car. That big, bulky man has a larger heart than anyone else I believe to have ever had the pleasure of meeting.

I feel sorry for Jacob. He loves a woman that he knows he may never get. But more significantly, I feel for Marlana. She loved a sweet boy that became a menacing man. Recently, a doctor told me that the alcohol that I have been drinking for my entire life, is the cause of my early death. I am older than every other worker here, but I still fail to understand irony.

Entry #6: Marlana; Chapter 18

I was thrilled. We had just finished a marvelous show, perhaps the greatest in the Benzini Brothers history. I was hopeful that August's dark fits would dissipate with the smashing success of Rosie's performance. But my hopes were set far too high.

Jacob and I were in our train car, preparing to surprise him. Champagne, diamonds, and new money would be his treat. Unfortunately, we were caught off guard. August barged into the car, blabbering to us about our tacit affair and love for each other. Yes, I had feelings for Jacob, but I would never be so naive as to dismiss my marriage to Auggie.

That was when I saw it. It was sudden, unexpected. The release of years worth of built up tension, all exploding in one massive eruption.

First, I saw his eyes. They darkened, narrowed, focused in on his surroundings. At that point, I knew it was coming, all I was unsure of was its severity. He had the background of a bipolar. One minute, he was a charming, handsome man, kissing your hand, holding the door for you. And the next, he was screaming, the veins bulging on the tense plains of his face.

He looked at me, then Jacob, then back at me. "What is this?" He asked the floor, the intensity in his voice forcing it to crack like he was still a teenager. I stuttered, scared that he would take out his anger on Jacob or I and maybe even Rosie. In that moment, I felt that I was genuinely endangering myself by staying around him. But leaving would only worsen our situation.

Then, I saw his hands. They clenched and unclenched repeatedly like he was squeezing something below him. Out of the corner of my eye, I watched Jacob grimace, pained by August's sudden and noticeable changes in appearance and movement. I prayed that it wouldn't happen. That he could hold it together for a little while longer. But that was when I saw his smile. Before fights, Auggie would mentor himself, talking and thinking, and most frighteningly, smiling. He enjoyed the feeling of adrenaline feeding his hate, his despise for anything and everything he can't control.

Jacob cocked his head, innocent and unaware of the imminent danger we were in. August approached me with such hunger in his eyes, that for a second I was convinced that he was one of the emaciated horses I use to work with. Startlingly, he wasn't hungry for food, he was hungry for pain.

I felt safe, he had never once laid a hand on me, and I was confident that this fit would be the same. Jacob now understood that he wanted blood, and he came running towards August, but not in time. He shoved me to the floor, the champagne bottles shattering against my weight. The explosion calmed as I realized that the Auggie I used to love was gone.