

READING An Excerpt from a Novel

1 What are some reasons that teenage couples break up?

2  Read the excerpt. Why did the couple in the story break up? Was it for one of the reasons you gave in Exercise 1?

3 Decide if the following statements are true or false. Find evidence in the text to justify your answers.



- 1 Colin was with Katherine when she recorded her voice mail message.
- 2 The weather now is similar to Chicago in the winter.
- 3 The walk back from the movie in the cold was very romantic for Colin.
- 4 Katherine is curious to hear Colin's message.
- 5 The word for a person who is not a conjoined twin is the same as Colin's surname.
- 6 Katherine promises to call Colin from camp.

4 Choose the correct answer.



- 1 Colin calls Katherine because he ...
 - a knows she wants to talk to him
 - b feels desperate to communicate with her
 - c feels uncomfortable in the heat
 - d wants to hear her voice mail message
- 2 We understand that the "really good decision" had been ...
 - a Katherine's
 - b Colin's
 - c mutual
 - d Katherine's mother's
- 3 How does Katherine's mother feel about the situation?
 - a She disapproves of Colin.
 - b She has conflicting feelings about Colin.
 - c She feels the two should stay together.
 - d She doesn't know that they have broken up.
- 4 At the end of the conversation, Colin ...
 - a hangs up before Katherine can finish talking
 - b expresses his feelings to Katherine
 - c agrees with Katherine
 - d waits for Katherine to hang up
- 5 What does the last line of the story tell us?
 - a Crying is making Colin embarrassed.
 - b Colin was not sad before making the call.
 - c Crying is a relief for Colin.
 - d Colin expected the call's results to be different.

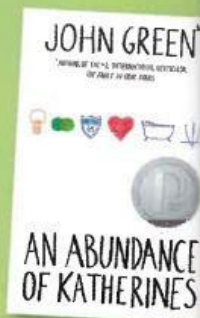
5 Answer the following questions by making inferences.

- 1 Why do you think that Hassan objects to Colin's phone call?
- 2 How does Colin feel about breaking up with Katherine? How does Katherine feel?
- 3 Why do you think Katherine calls Colin back?

An Abundance of Katherines

By John Green

Eighteen-year-old Colin Singleton from Chicago is on a road trip with his best friend Hassan. He asks Hassan to stop the car so he can phone his ex-girlfriend Katherine. Hassan, who has seen Colin do this kind of thing over and over, thinks it is a bad idea. Eventually he drives off, leaving Colin alone in a field.



After five minutes of walking, Colin found a spot where he had okay reception. It was awfully quiet. *Chicago only gets this quiet when it snows*, he thought. And then he flipped open the phone, pressed the voice button, and said "Katherine." He said it softly, reverently.

Five rings and then her voice mail. *Hey, it's Katherine*, he heard, and in the background cars rushed by. They'd been walking home together from the RadioShack when she recorded the message. *I'm not, uh*. And she *uhed*, he remembered, because he'd tickled her as she tried to talk. *Uh, at my cell phone, I guess. Leave me a message and I'll call you back*. And he remembered everything about it, and also everything about everything else, and why couldn't he forget and *beep*.

"Hey, it's Col. I'm standing in a soybean field outside of Gunshot, Tennessee, and it's hot, K. I'm standing here sweating like I had hyperhidrosis, that disease where you sweat a lot. Oh, no. That's not interesting. But anyway, it's hot, and so I'm thinking about cold to stay cool. And I was remembering walking through the snow coming back from that ridiculous movie. Do you remember that, K? We were on Giddings, and the snow made it so quiet, I couldn't hear a thing in the world but you. And it was so cold then, and so silent, and I loved you so much. Now it's hot, and dead quiet again, and I love you still."

Five minutes later, he was trudging back when his phone began vibrating. He raced back to the spot with good reception and, breathless, answered.

"Did you listen to the message?" he asked immediately.



"I don't think I need to," she answered. "I'm sorry, Col. But I think we made a really good decision." And he didn't even care to point out that *they* hadn't made a decision, because the sound of her voice felt

45 so good – well, not good exactly. It felt like the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, the fear and the fascination. The great and terrible awe.

"Did you tell your mom?" he asked, because her mom had loved him. All moms loved him.

50 "Yeah. She was sad. But she said you always wanted to be attached to my hip, which wasn't healthy."

"A better fate than this," he said mostly to himself.

He could hear her eyes rolling as she said, "You are probably the only person I've ever known who *wants* to be a Siamese twin?"

55 "Conjoined twin," Colin corrected. "Did you know that there is a word for a person who is not a conjoined twin?"

"No, what is it? Normal person?"

60 "Singleton," he said. "The word is singleton." And she said, "That's funny, Col. Listen, I really have to go. I've got to pack for camp. Maybe we shouldn't talk till I get back. Just some time away from it would be good for you, I think." And even though he wanted

65 to say, *We're supposed to be FRIENDS, remember? And What is it? New boyfriend? And I love you entirely*, he just mumbled, "Just please listen to the message," and then she said, "Okay. Bye," and he didn't say anything because he wasn't going to be the

70 person who ended the conversation or hung up, and then he heard the deadness in his ear and it was over. Colin lay down on the dry, orange dirt and let the tall grass swallow him up, making him invisible. The sweat pouring down his face was

75 indistinguishable from his tears. He was finally – finally – crying.

MIND YOUR LANGUAGE



1 Look at the false friend underlined in the text. How do you say it in your own language?

2 Watch out for the following commonly confused words:

remember: to have a memory of someone or something

remind: to cause someone to remember something

Complete the sentences with *remember* or *remind*.

- 1 I the night when we walked home together.
- 2 These stars me of the desert.
- 3 Please John to take his medicine.

PRONUNCIATION

3 Listen and repeat the words from the text.
Colin /ɒ/ road /əʊ/

4 Match the bolded letters in each word to the correct phonetic symbol /ɒ/ or /əʊ/. Then listen and check your answers.

sorry ■ phone ■ Chicago ■ spot
what ■ snow ■ softly

Pronunciation Practice: page 115

WORDS FROM THE TEXT

6 Find words or expressions in the text that mean:

- 1 a place (lines 10-15)
- 2 mention (lines 37-47)
- 3 connected (lines 50-55)
- 4 spoke quietly and unclearly (lines 60-70)
- 5 ended a phone conversation (lines 65-76)

7 Complete the sentences with a logical word or phrase. Pay attention to the words in colour.

- 1 You need to **press** this button to the computer.
- 2 I saw the **tears** in his eyes and I asked why he was
- 3 My hands **sweat** when I feel
- 4 We were **breathless** because we had been
- 5 Sorry, but I have to **rush** because I'm
- 6 He **swallowed** his quickly and ran out to catch the bus.
- 7 Looking out of the window, I saw that the was still **pouring down**.

EXPRESSIONS WITH OVER

The word *over* is used in many English expressions.

*Hassan, who has seen Colin do this kind of thing **over and over**, thinks it is a bad idea.*

(*over and over* = again and again)

8 Complete the sentences with the expressions below. Make any necessary changes.

bend over backwards ■ **head over heels**
get it over with ■ **go mad over** ■ **over the moon**
in over my head

- 1 Thomas has fallen in love.
- 2 If you want to break up, let's do it now and
- 3 She wants to make a commitment, but I'm not ready. I think I'm
- 4 She was when she heard the good news.
- 5 He's completely that girl.
- 6 I have to give you everything you want.



STRETCH YOUR MIND

Critical Thinking

What advice would you give Colin? Should he try to get Katherine back, and if so, how? Or should he try to get over her, and if so, how?

