

Name _____

Date _____ Class _____

2 *The Lives of a Cell*

Notes of a Biology Watcher

—*Lewis Thomas*

Synopsis

Lewis Thomas's essays are a combination of science and lyricism. He stresses the interconnectedness of life, celebrating the beauty and poetry inherent in science. To him, paradoxes inspire awe, rather than causing worry. From ants to the atmosphere, Thomas observes the things that seemingly very different organisms, events, and humans have in common.

In these essays, Thomas provides us with a wealth of scientific information, coupled with philosophical wonderings and sometimes whimsical, profound insights. Each of the 29 essays deals with Thomas's thoughts and theories about different aspects of science and their impact on and implications for our lives.

Student Focus

You should pay close attention to the interplay between the information provided in each essay and the observations and conclusions drawn by Thomas. These pieces are written to make the reader think about what the author is saying and also to think on his or her own. Debate the different aspects of each issue with yourself as you read in order to arrive at a conclusion that is your own.

As you read, you should be carrying on an internal dialogue with the author. Do you agree or disagree with the conclusions drawn? What are your own thoughts on each subject? Do you reach the same conclusions as the author or does the information given lead you in another direction? Keep a log of your thoughts as you read each essay. When you have finished reading the book, examine your log to see if you have changed your ideas about any of the topics. The essays are short, but they contain a world of thought for you to take part in.

Correlation to Subject Matter

Genetics, Biolinguistics, Viruses, Symbiosis, Entomology, Astronomy, Technology, Mitochondria, and Sociology