Case Study: Thomas Kinsella

Read the following case and be prepared to recommend the most efficacious course of action for Thomas Kinsella. Use the questions below to guide your understanding of the case. The following texts should support this recommendation: testimonials from family, friends, and teachers, school records, and nonfiction articles that describe the teenage experience. Please prepare for this discussion by creating responses to the questions for reflection. Your responses should include SEVERAL PIECES OF quoted evidence, thoroughly warranted and explained, that support your ideas.

Questions for Reflection

1. What is Thomas’ problem? How would you describe it? [remember, to show a pattern over time, you MUST use SEVERAL PIECES OF quoted evidence from the case study, and your explanations must specifically talk about the words in the evidence].
2. Is it possible for him to successfully remedy his own situation? If so, how? If not, what assistance or support will he require? [remember, to show a pattern over time, you MUST use SEVERAL PIECES OF quoted evidence from the case study, and your explanations must specifically talk about the words in the evidence].
Name:

3. Who is the most responsible for Thomas’ current situation? [remember, to show a pattern over time, you MUST use SEVERAL PIECES OF quoted evidence from the case study, and your explanations must specifically talk about the words in the evidence].
4. Is Thomas worth saving? Should the community invest in his recovery/rehabilitation? [*remember, to show a pattern over time, you MUST use SEVERAL PIECES OF quoted evidence from the case study, and your explanations must specifically talk about the words in the evidence.*]
5. Is his experience typical of teenagers, or is it a unique one? [**remember, to show a pattern over time, you MUST use SEVERAL PIECES OF quoted evidence from the case study, and your explanations must specifically talk about the words in the evidence**].
Name:

**Background:** Thomas Kinsella is a seventeen year old senior who attends Pembroke Preparatory School, a boarding school for boys. His parents are worried about his welfare given his change in attitude, his poor grades, and a series of incidents at school. They feel that Thomas’s reluctance to share his feelings and vocalize his problems requires further intervention. Thomas claims that although he recognizes that he has changed, he cannot account for this change nor can he express his current understanding of himself or his world.

**Testimonies from Thomas Kinsella’s Family, Friends, and Teachers**

In order to help Thomas, the therapist conducted a series of interview with those who are closest to him: his mother, his father, his sister, his humanities teacher, his history teacher, his former roommate, and his friend from a previous school. Below are important details from the interview.

**Polly Kinsella, younger sister:** Tommy isn’t the same older brother I used to know. When I was four and he was eleven, he took me to Roxie Wheel Roller Skating Rink and taught me to skate. Three times a year Tommy would surprise me, and just me and him would go to Roxie’s to skate, eat pizza, and play arcade games. He hasn’t roller skated with me for the last two years. Tommy use to walk me to school each morning before he transferred to Pembroke. We’d sing songs, he’d try to trick me with riddles, and, of course, he taught me to look both ways before I crossed the street. I know Tommy loves me—he writes me weekly letters from school—most of them are about our days at Roxie’s or more new riddles or just questions about how my dance lessons are going . . . and when he comes home twice a year, for winter and summer breaks, he always makes sure to buy me the caramel cheese popcorn I like from the train station. Still something’s wrong since the “incident”—he’s not happy. I worry because my parents are always talking about his poor attitude—they don’t think I can hear them at night, but their raised voices keep me up.

**Mrs. Grace Kinsella, mother:** Why, yes, I am Mrs. Grace Kinsella, loving and devoted wife of Mr. Reginald Kinsella, the Chief Financial Officer for CVS/Caremark—you know, number seven in the Fortune 500? What do I do, you ask? Well, in addition to raising three of the most beautiful creatures on this earth, I devote most of my waking hours to providing aid and relief to our nation’s needy, through the Feed The Children organization. But I know today is not about that. You want to know about my precious children. Do you know my first born daughter, Jaycee Grace, just co-directed a Hollywood feature film? It stars that little Emma Stone, what a doll, and that charming young man, Josh Hutchinson. And my little baby, Polly—I just love her to death. She is a ball of energy, she is, keeping me running off here and driving off there to get her to all her darling activities. Of course there’s also my son Thomas, the middle child. He’s off at the Pembroke school being groomed, I hope, to follow in his father’s footsteps. I should certainly check in on him to see how he’s doing. Did I tell you that my very own daughter, Jaycee, just directed a feature film? In Hollywood?

**Mr. Reginald Kinsella, father:** I’m so sorry for being late. Please excuse me, but I may have to cut our conversation short; I have a conference call in 20 minutes. You see our company, CVS/Caremark, is on the verge of making the most significant corporate business decisions in it’s history. It will mean billions, lots of pressure and all. We’d really like to close the deal before the tobacco lobby makes a politically expedient move to prevent it. But let’s focus on Thomas. He is doing ok, isn’t he? Ha, I don’t know why I’m asking you, of course he’s doing just fine. Under the watchful eye of the Pembroke chaps, I’m trusting Thomas will get his business in order in time to apply to Yale. I do miss the boy, though, and am anticipating a visit over the holidays. But it’s not like I haven’t tried to drop in here or there. It just doesn’t seem to work out quite right. At the beginning of the semester I had a 6 hour layover and rented a car to go to Pembroke. Was looking forward to a couple of hours together, just me and him, but when I called he said he had a major project due and didn’t have time. A couple of weeks ago, I was driving by Pembroke and stopped in. I saw his roommate in the dorm lobby, and he said Thomas was in the room, but when I knocked there was no answer. I sure couldn’t figure it out. Well, I’ll see him soon. I’ll bet he’s put on a bit of muscle in these last few months.
Name:

**Peter Newel, former roommate of Thomas Kinsella:** Tommy Boy is one weird dude. Sometimes I would find him staring out the window, plaintively observing a flock of geese. He’d sigh and go back to typing some masterpiece on his computer. At other times, he would be so socially awkward that it was painful to watch. I remember one time when my lacrosse teammates stopped by the room to pick me up for practice, Tommy Boy wouldn’t stop asking them if they had dates for the homecoming dance. Each time he asked the question, he accompanied the query with the steps to the Cupid Shuffle. On the other hand, Tommy Boy was always good for helping a fellow out with composition or two for old Wanda’s class. In fact, one time, when I had a lacrosse tournament over Columbus Day weekend and couldn’t finish my art analysis essay for Schrader’s class, Tommy Boy just gave me his.

**Abner Schrader, Humanities instructor at Pembroke Preparatory Academy:** The tragic circumstances of many an otherwise fine young man at our academy is the failure to accept and play by the rules. Thomas Kinsella’s case is no exception. Albeit an earnest young chap, with respect to manners and social interaction with the administration, I can’t say he has shown the same promise in his studies. Much to the chagrin of most of the faculty, Thomas failed to engage seriously with his coursework. In fact, his marks in nearly every class were failures. There was really no other option, as he faced an insuperable spell on the academic probation list. Why Thomas Kinsella showed seemingly no concern for his future is confounding to me. A week ago, I called him into my office to discuss these matters. I was trying to help him by talking some sense into his head. I can’t imagine his parents will take the news very well.

**Wanda Hutchinson, Rhetoric and Composition instructor at Pembroke Preparatory Academy:** I first met Thomas Kinsella when he enrolled in my Rhetoric and Composition class last year. Although Thomas was a rather quiet student, his compositions revealed a talented writer. I remember a piece he composed which required the class to describe a moment in their lives which changed the way they viewed the world, but the piece had to allude to this changing viewpoint through an extended metaphor, not an autobiographical account. Thomas’ piece was achingly beautiful with a gratuitous and solemn description of his epiphany. I was disappointed by his work second semester—although he wrote some poignant pieces, he only completed half of the work. He earned a C in my class when, in fact, he was my most accomplished writer.
# PEMBROKE PREPARATORY SCHOOL
## Discipline Referral

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Student:</strong></th>
<th>Thomas Kinsella</th>
<th><strong>Date:</strong> September 10</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff:</strong></td>
<td>H. B. Pressor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Incident:</strong></td>
<td>September 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time of Incident:</strong></td>
<td>12:30 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location of Incident:</strong></td>
<td>Cafeteria Grounds</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Description of Incident:** One of the groundskeepers caught Thomas smoking near the cafeteria's solarium. When Thomas met with the headmaster, he acknowledged that his actions violated school rules. This acknowledgement, however, could not be construed as an apology for his infraction. He seemed rather nonchalant about the whole ordeal.

**Action Taken:**
Thomas’ parents were informed about the incident. We talked to Mrs. Kinsella who apologized for Thomas’ behavior and reported that she and Thomas would discuss the dangers of smoking during winter break.

**Student's Signature:** 

**Headmaster's Signature:** 

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Name:
PEMBROKE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Discipline Referral

Student: Thomas Kinsella          Date: October 3

Staff: H. B. Pressor

Date of Incident: October 3

Time of Incident: September 29 and 30

Location of Incident: Off-campus

Description of Incident: Thomas never attended class on September 29 and September 30. The school could not account for his whereabouts during this time—he was not in his dorm room, the library, the playing fields, or the cafeteria. We thought that he might be attending college interviews, but unfortunately this was not the case. When he reported to the headmaster’s office on October 1, he informed us that he “needed to take a break from it all” and that he spent some time in Boston alone. Unlike most students who provide a myriad of excuses or reasons for their truancy, Thomas gave none.

Action Taken:
When we called home, the Kinsella’s housekeeper reported that Thomas’ parents were not at home. She informed us that Mr. Kinsella was on a business trip and Mrs. Kinsella was at a charity event for Feed the Children. We have yet to hear from his parents about the incident. We have informed Thomas that he cannot leave school grounds unless his parents make arrangements.

Student's Signature: _____________________________________________

Headmaster's Signature: ___________________________________________
8111 Third Street
Weston Massachusetts

1. AP Literature and Composition A 1.0
2. AP Government F 0.0
3. AP Statistics F 0.0
4. AP Physics F 0.0
5. AP Psychology F 0.0
6. Honors Philosophy F 0.0
7. Physical Education and Wellness F 0.0

Total Credits: 1.0
Cum. GPA: 2.1

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Student Test Profile

Student: Thomas Kinsella

ACT
English 32
Math 27
Reading 33
Science 29
Composite 30

SAT 1440

IQ: 125