Sample Dialectical Journal

DATE: 9/8/14

Quote from Text:

"The unvanquished truth, is how Freak would say it, and for a long time it was him who did the talking. …I had a way of saying things with my fists and feet…" (1).

Context: This is at the beginning of the story where we are trying to figure out what is going on. Max is speaking and talking about himself in the early days when he first met Kevin.

Something Literary: Characterization. We learn about both main characters in this passage, but especially Max. He is the narrator, revealing things about himself by making us privy to his personal thoughts.

What it Shows: Max reveals that he had trouble expressing himself when he was little, calling to mind times when you hear moms telling their toddlers "Use your words, sweetheart," as the little terror is clobbering someone with a plastic toy. One of the more subtle things I noticed from this passage is the grammatical mistake when Max says, "It was him who did the talking." Authors will often reveal a character's lack of education or socio-economic status through mistakes in grammar or pronunciation. Max has not learned the rules of English language, usually picked up at home, and then in school. This does not mean he is unintelligent, just missing out on something. His sense of humor is a sign that he is actually very clever.

Your Turn: Analyze the following quotation and fill in box at right with 1) Context 2) Something Literary 3) What the passage shows

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"Except later it was Freak himself who taught me that remembering is a great invention of the mind, and if you try hard enough you can remember anything, whether it really happened or not"(2).