

A Girl Named Zippy: Growing Up Small in Mooreland, Indiana Study Guide

A Girl Named Zippy: Growing Up Small in Mooreland, Indiana by Haven Kimmel

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Plot Summary

"A Girl Named Zippy" is the memoir of Haven (Jarvis) Kimmel about her childhood in Mooreland, Indiana, a small town that houses a mere 300 residents. Living in a small town is not without conflict and adventure, as Kimmel demonstrates throughout the book. She describes pets she has gained and lost, encounters she has with neighbors, relationships with family members and hard life lessons learned, unwillingly in most cases.

Kimmel, who is a strange-looking child with an oddly shaped head, large eyes, and tufts of hair, is nicknamed Zippy by her father, Bob Jarvis, who sees a chimpanzee of the same name performing tricks on a television show. Zippy grows up in the Jarvis family, which is comprised of her father, her bookworm mother Dee Dee, her beautiful and kind sister Melinda and her handsome but moody brother Daniel. Zippy is the youngest in the family—arriving a full ten years after her closest sibling. As a baby, Zippy contracts a bad staph infection in her ear, to which her pediatrician attributes her inability to speak. Once she starts speaking, her curiosity cannot be contained and she even ends up speaking for her friend Julie who refuses to talk.

Zippy's father is a prominent character in the stories—he is the disciplinarian in the household as well as the protector. Zippy regales the audience with tales of her father showing her what his church is like, how he put their cranky neighbor in his place when the neighbor complains about the doors, and how he cleaned up her beloved, deceased hen's coop so she would not be reminded of her loss.

A lot of animals that Zippy possesses a deep love for come and go through her life—deformed dogs, sick woodpeckers, ponies, runt pigs. Neighbors also come and go from the house next door including Zippy's crush (whom Zippy describes as being an ideal specimen) and a bully and tormentor of animals (Petey Scroggs). Throughout the course of the book, Zippy goes camping, is hypnotized by a rabbit, roots for her sister in the Fair Queen contest, sits for a dog (an experience that ends in a death), spies on the town witch, attends Sunday school and helps her dad build a grown-up bike.

Along the way, some of her coming-of-age experiences include that Zippy witnesses the slaughter of animals for meat, discovers her neighbor had an animal graveyard in her house, protects a friend from an inappropriate music teacher, and becomes a do-gooder without realizing it. The book concludes with Zippy maturely and bravely putting on a happy face when her best friend receives the Christmas present she covets; Zippy is ultimately rewarded for her behavior.



Prologue, Baby Book, Hair

Prologue, Baby Book, Hair Summary and Analysis

"A Girl Named Zippy" is the memoir of Haven Kimmel about coming of age in a small town in Indiana. In the prologue, Kimmel discusses the strange mathematical principle at work in her town, Mooreland, Indiana, where the population stays at 300 people for several decades. Shortly after Kimmel is born, another resident, a barber named Tony is taken away. Kimmel remarks that Mooreland is untouched by the prevailing trends in America during the sixties and seventies. Part of Kimmel's inspiration to write the book is because there has never been a definitive source of information about Mooreland. She also explains that her memoir is a sigh of gratitude—a way to return to a place she no longer lives.

Kimmel summarizes the records her mother took of her baby years in "Baby Book." The nickname "Zippy" comes from her father, who calls her that after a roller-skating chimpanzee he sees on television. Zippy is a quiet baby and Zippy's mom wonders if she does not talk because a bad staph infection has affected her brain. She feels that God is in control of Zippy's life and he has a special plan for her. Zippy's favorite activity as a baby is rocking. At 30 months old, she has not been weaned because her mother cannot bear to take anything away from her and she has only a few wisps of hair. Four months before Zippy's third birthday, her father asks Zippy to give up her bottle and Zippy utters her first words—a full sentence "I'll make a deal with you."

In "Hair," Kimmel describes her physical features as a baby. She is bald until nearly three, with a crooked head and eyes that are large and close together. Her hair, when it starts growing, is thick and sprouty and curly—like fourteen thousand cowlicks. She tries several different hairstyles, including a really short pixie. Her father wins a wig (or rather a fall, which attaches to the middle of the head with a comb) in a card game and Zippy immediately loves it, despite having no prior interest in her physical appearance. Her sister also bestows on her a pair of house slippers she has been coveting. To celebrate her windfall, Zippy goes to play rodeo on her bicycle.



The Lion, Qualities of Light, or Disasters Involving Animals

The Lion, Qualities of Light, or Disasters Involving Animals Summary and Analysis

As a child, Zippy is not enthusiastic about any of the standard answers to "What do you want to be when you grow up?" as mentioned in "The Lion." Teacher, cowboy, veterinarian and ice skater do not appeal to her. Her dad encourages her to think about what she enjoys the most and how she wants people to see her when she is grown up. At the same time, her love for Telly Savalas prevents her from being satisfied with her own life. Zippy concludes that her ambition is to belong to the Mafia. Zippy's dad procures a framed certificate, partly in Italian, signed by Leonardo "The Lion" Gravitano Salvatore. She reflects that her life changes for the better after this, with the exception of the treatment from her sister.

In "Qualities of Light , or Disasters Involving Animals," Kimmel recalls a time when she sighs in response to any question or request, specifically to her father's questioning of whether she has fed the animals. She finally stops sighing after a frightening confrontation by her father. Kimmel describes her family pets. Tiger, who her sister picks out at the animal shelter, is oddly deformed and suffers from bowel problems and short legs. Their other dog, Kai, is magnificent—the "color of coins falling from a winter sky." Kai is the protector—ensuring that Zippy never gets too close to the street or that the family members do not rough house too much. At night, Kai patrols the house and checks on both the children and the parents. Unfortunately, Kai dies of heartworms when Zippy is six.

In this chapter, Zippy also describes her favorite place—her best friend Julie Newman's farm, three miles outside Mooreland. Julie and Zippy rescue one of the pig runts and name him Sam. The girls have big plans for Sam—raising him, entering him in the fair, and building him a cardboard apartment to live in until they buy their own farm. However, Zippy is not a fan of all the animals on the farm. She calls Biz, the German, "deeply and truly Satan's own." When Sam dies his first night, Zippy is horrified when Julie throws Sam's dead body into Biz's pen.

Later, Zippy's father takes her to get a pet chicken from Tinker Jones. She likens the experience of going to the Jones' with visiting an orphanage. The Joneses house a variety of fowl, including ducks, geese, quail and guinea hens. The air smells of the birds, a scent Zippy thinks lovely. Zippy selects a junior-sized chicken with black and white speckled feathers. The chicken, who is named Speckles, is tamed by the time the two return home. Zippy holds up her end of the bargain (caring for Speckles without reminder); she loves Speckles. Her dad even suggests that the family get a rooster so they can raise some babies. The rooster Zippy's dad chooses, Chanticleer, is relentless and Zippy and Speckles' relationship changes dramatically. Zippy works up the courage



to tell her dad how she feels about Chanticleer and how she wants to return him, but is hampered when she discovers that Speckles has been killed. While Zippy's mom and sister find humor in her grief, Zippy's dad "takes care" of the dogs he suspects attacked the chicken and cleans and dismantles the chicken cage so that nothing might remind Zippy of what had been there.



Julie Hit Me Three Times, Daniel, There She Is

Julie Hit Me Three Times, Daniel, There She Is Summary and Analysis

Zippy describes her friendship with Julie in "Julie Hit Me Three Times." Julie does not talk much because her brother knocks out her two front teeth when she is young and she never learns how to speak correctly. Instead, Zippy talks for Julie. On the first day of kindergarten, Zippy insists that Julie does not want the blue crayon, that she likes green, but the teacher wishes Julie to speak for herself. When Zippy proves to be correct, she does all of Julie's talking for her, although the teacher chooses not to acknowledge it. Zippy continues to talk for Julie—both at school and at home. Zippy even manages to say what is on Julie's mind over the phone. Julie's parents, who are tired of reading her mind, are grateful for Zippy's skill, but also tease her about talking too much—something Zippy is humiliated by. When Julie's granddad gets sick, Julie does not tell Zippy and when she expresses her condolences, Julie, who never cries, has tears in her eyes and punches Zippy violently in the stomach. Later, when Zippy admires Julie's red hair and wants to touch it, Julie punches her twice in her arms. Like the previous time, Julie goes on to pretend nothing happened, but Zippy does not need an apology or explanation from her best friend.

Zippy dedicates a chapter, called "Daniel," to her older brother. Daniel is the firstborn son. He is healthy and beautiful—deserving of a strong Biblical name. When he is a senior in high school, he takes the bus to school, which requires him to leave earlier than Melinda, who gets a ride from a friend. One day, Daniel gets frustrated by Melinda consistently hogging the bathroom and breaks down the bathroom door. He slaps Melinda with such force that she falls into the tub. Melinda demands Daniel be punished, but Zippy's mom thinks that she provoked him and admits that she would have slapped Melinda too. Zippy is fearful of her father's wrath when he returns home to find the bathroom door off its hinges. However when he returns home and the situation is explained to him, all he asks is that Dan help him put the door back up.

In "There She Is," Zippy describes how in Mooreland, no event is more celebrated than the Mooreland Fair. In 1972, Zippy's sister Melinda runs for Fair Queen. The Queen is determined by a process called "a-penny-a-vote"—whichever candidate collects the most money in their coffee can is granted the title. Since Zippy thinks Melinda is the most beautiful girl, she believes Melinda will be a shoe-in. However, as the coronation draws closer, she begins to worry about fraud and cheating. Seeing other coffee cans are brimming, Zippy makes the decision to dump her life savings (\$1.61) into Melinda's can. Melinda is named first runner-up and incredibly gracious when she loses. Zippy is devastated by the loss, feeling as though she was punched in the gut because she felt nobody was more deserving of the title than her sister. Later, Zippy sees the Fair Board



president crown Melinda with the Fair Queen tiara and fears that her father took the Fair Board hostage or that there was a recount and Melinda won by one hundred and sixty-one votes. Zippy later learns that Melinda was crowned by default after it was discovered that the Fair Queen, Carolyn, was pregnant. As the sister of the Queen, Zippy is allowed to ride along with Melinda in the Fair Parade.



Blood of the Lamb, Unexpected Injuries, The Kindness of Strangers

Blood of the Lamb, Unexpected Injuries, The Kindness of Strangers Summary and Analysis

In "Blood of the Lamb," Kimmel writes about her church experiences. Before Quaker church every Sunday, the Jarvis family listens to Batsell Barrett Baxter, an early version of a telepreacher. Although he is a man of God, he lacks the energy and enthusiasm of an evangelist and sometimes has guests who are as lackluster as him. Although Zippy's mother loves Baxter, Zippy's father has decidedly less patience, making jokes like "Batsell Barrett Baxter was born dead." Zippy comments on the power of being grown up—how she is forced to spend hours worshiping a God she does not believe in without complaint while her Dad is able to just call it like he sees it. Zippy employs a variety of strategies to procrastinate going to church such as "I can't find my other shoe." She also pretends to lose her pink Bible—which is successful at getting her out of Sunday School with her father. Although he himself does not attend church, Zippy's father later polices Zippy into attending. Although the church is very close to the house, as with everything in Mooreland, Zippy sees the path as a long trip and lost summer day as she passes her bike and hopscotch court. In her backyard there are many things to explore such as her dad's toolshed full of tools and chains and traps. When Zippy does arrive at church, she never responds to the altar call. She has a hard time opening up her heart to accept God's love and thinks nothing wrong of being left with her godless father if the Rapture comes.

In "Unexpected Injuries," Zippy explains how most vacations in Mooreland involve camping or visiting one's relatives in Tennessee. Since the Jarvises have no relatives in Tennessee, they spend many weekends in campgrounds around Indiana. Zippy's favorite is Tall Trees because it has its own lake and games like pinball and billiards. Preparing to go camping takes Zippy's father all day as he outfits the trailer with supplies, cleans the truck, checks the gas, and hitches the trailer. Zippy also introduces us to Petey Scroggs, a mean, short boy whose reputation for torturing animals precedes him moving next door to the Jarvises. Zippy tries to steer clear of Petey, particularly after her missing cat PeeDink is discovered in the Scroggs' basement, skinny and desperate. One day, while her parents are preparing for a camping trip, Zippy holds one of Petey's rabbits and it bites her very badly. Zippy thinks she is hypnotized by the rabbit and that Petey raises his rabbits to be meat-eaters. As a result of her injury, the family is not able to go camping. A few weeks later, Zippy sees Petey, his brother and father behead a rabbit in the yard. Her father also witnesses this and admonishes and threatens the neighbors to never butcher rabbits in front of his daughter again.

In "The Kindness of Strangers," Reed Ball, the Jarvis' neighbor who never leaves his front porch, complains about Kai and Tiger's barking. He threatens to poison the dogs if



they keep him up another night. Zippy is concerned, but her dad assures her that he is working on it. He returns home with a convoy of trucks with various crates and carriers full of dogs. The cages of coon hounds are lined along the fence separating the yard from the Reed's. Zippy's father says that he is dog-sitting; although he does not know the men, he calls them "good people" and says that "word gets around when a man needs help." That evening, a final man comes to the house with a crate—this time holding a raccoon. The coon hounds go crazy over it and create a loud racket. The local deputy, as well as half of the town gathers in the Jarvis' lawn as if they are hosting a picnic. The next morning, all the dogs are gone. Reed comes over to voice his displeasure, but leaves without confrontation and the neighbors return to being friendly.



Favors for Friends, Haunted Houses, Professionals

Favors for Friends, Haunted Houses, Professionals Summary and Analysis

In "Favor for Friends," Kimmel describes Zippy's relationship with a neighboring family. After the Scroggs move out of the Hodson house, the Hicks move in. Although the Hicks family consists of eight excellent children, Zippy's favorite is Andy—who is funny, tall, blond and sings like an angel. He also tells Zippy about the facts of life in a very graphic way. Andy asks Zippy to dogsit their dog Jiggers when the family goes on a week-long trip to Tennessee. Zippy is not sure how to dogsit and leaves Jiggers along with water and food, but is not able to find her later that evening or for the next several days. During those days, a smell begins to emanate from the Hicks' house. Though both Zippy and her dad recognize the truth of the situation, neither do anything. When the Hicks return, Zippy explains that she thinks Jiggers injured herself crawling under the porch to escape the heat. Homer Hicks, the father, retrieves Jiggers' body from under the porch and they bury her under the mulberry tree. Homer thanks Zippy for being with Jiggers during her final days and Zippy cries on the way home. Her family never mentions Jiggers again and when Zippy sees Andy in church the following week, she recognizes that it is a moment to rejoice, not mourn.

In "Haunted Houses," Julie and Zippy pitch a pup tent in the yard and use binoculars to spy on their neighbor Edythe. Zippy thinks Edythe is immortal and eats stews made of puppies. Zippy notes that she wears the same dress for twenty-three days in a row, tries to kill PeeDink, brings snot-covered cookies to the church picnic and tries to kill her in her baby bed. Melinda once explains that Edythe especially hates Zippy because she and Zippy's mom had been best friends until Zippy was adopted. Zippy's mom plays along with the joke, noting that Zippy was traded for a green velvet bag with no bottom by a traveling group of gypsies. She assures Zippy that they fell in love with Zippy at first sight, partly because she had a tail (which was removed so her pants could fit). Zippy recalls an incident when Edythe got very close to her at the town drug store and Doc Holiday protected her. Zippy compares Edythe to Ruth, another neighbor of similar age. Ruth also wears the same dress every day, but waves whenever she sees Zippy and even gives her a quarter one day. It is later discovered that she has the bodies of 68 animals in her house.

Zippy learns some important life lessons in "Professionals." Rose, Zippy's best in-town best friend, wants to be an artist and decides to practice drawing portraits with Zippy as a model. Zippy enjoys sitting for Rose—the clarity in her head and pleasure throughout her body. Zippy spends a lot of time trying to figure out what she wants to be when she grows up. Rose wants to be an artist and Rose's sister Maggie wants to be a disc jockey. Zippy has a hard time deciding because she believes herself to be so good at so



many things. Once, she plucks a woodpecker off a tree and puts him in a box with a blanket and tries to "rescue" him. The woodpecker dies and they end up burying it—which is fine because Zippy is also very good at digging holes. Though Zippy cares much for animals, she is surprised to realize that people, such as her sister, can care as passionately about other people. Melinda takes Zippy with her to Tom Kizer's house to discuss babysitting for his foster brood. However, the visit is cut short when Zippy rudely points to a girl with disabilities and demands to know "what's wrong with her?" Melinda, although embarrassed and frustrated at first, demonstrates her maturity when she both answers and refuses to answer Zippy's question by saying "She was just born that way, honey."



Chance, A Short List of Things My Father Lost Gambling, The World of Ideas

Chance, A Short List of Things My Father Lost Gambling, The World of Ideas Summary and Analysis

In "Chance," Zippy plays a card game, gin, with her father, though she refuses some cards because she only wants "girl" cards. Zippy has an elaborate set of rules: diamonds are girls and clubs are boys, but threes are boys and sevens are boys but the seven of hearts was sweet enough to join her hand. Zippy's dad also refers to a rule book that only adults can read. Zippy cannot read at this point anyway. Zippy's father is not at work, but Zippy is also not in school. When the two finish their game (Zippy's dad wins), Zippy continues to sort the cards into the girl piles and boy piles.

In "A Short List of Things My Father Lost Gambling," Zippy lists things that her father loses during gambling. Included on the list are her pony Tim, a small motorcycle, her mom's engagement and wedding rings, a boat, her twenty-five dollar savings bond and hunting beagles. All of these items suddenly vanish—present one day and gone the next. In some cases, they appear as quickly as they disappear. They also include the savings bond Zippy wins during a Mooreland Fair for guessing there are 468 pennies in a jar. The list of things her father wins gambling include: hunting beagles, a stuffed monkey, guns, a strange friend named Burns, and money. Whenever her father comes home with money, they go out to dinner and watch movies at the drive-in. Zippy recalls that she sees many movies that way.

Zippy discusses inheritance in "The World of Ideas." Zippy's mother is adopted and her birth mother's request is that she be raised Catholic. However, she has a lot of questions and eventually the nuns ask her to leave and she is excommunicated before puberty. Zippy's mother's adopted mother, Mildred, lives in an apartment in a beautiful house in New Castle. Zippy enjoys visiting because the house is elegant and old-fashioned with a pink bathroom with a tin ceiling. Zippy recalls an incident when the bait shop owner recognizes that she must be a Jarvis and she is no longer convinced that she came from a traveling band of gypsies. Zippy wonders if having her mom and dad's DNA also means she inherited what her dad's eyes have seen and the skills his hands have learned. When she goes to Rose's house to discuss her ideas of inheritance, Rose is busy with chores and Zippy makes herself dizzy by thinking too hard. When she shares this with her mom, her mom tells her a similar story of when she realized how little individuals are compared to the vastness of the universe.



Location, Diner, Slumber Party,

Location, Diner, Slumber Party, Summary and Analysis

In "Location," when Zippy is in second-grade, she meets Dana, who just moved from Los Angeles to Mooreland. Zippy describes Dana as having a completely finished face and is fascinated by her wardrobe and shiny brown hair. Dana's family lives in the only new house in town that is on half an acre. Over time, Dana steals away Zippy's friends, leaving her to resort to lower-tier friends. When Dana tries to steal Julie away, Zippy finally takes a stand. After Dana is beaten by Julie in a game of HORSE, Zippy invites Dana to ride bikes together, pulling off a political coup. Dana and Zippy become friends—even adopting the same speech impediment. Dana comes from a family that is different than Zippy's. Her parents work at the new Chrysler factory, are atheists and leave Dana and her two brothers to their own devices. However, the three of them are extremely responsible—eating well, having clean clothes and an impeccable house. Dana continues to do things better than Zippy, including academic subjects and relating to animals. One afternoon, after a failed game of Ping Pong, Dana decides the two should fight. Although Zippy gets in a hit or two, Dana ends up pinning Zippy. Zippy stomps off afterward, uttering her first big swear. Neither apologizes, but Dana manages to get Zippy to laugh with her bad singing and the two resume their friendship. One day, Dana does not come to school and it is rumored that after a bad fight between her parents, her mother flees town with Dana.

In "Diner," Zippy finds herself returning to an empty house one afternoon. Her sister has married and moved down the street, her father is mysteriously away and her mother has recently started work as a waitress at a restaurant on Broad Street. Hungry and lonely, Zippy goes to the diner to see her mother. She sits at the counter and demands her mother's attention and then vomits up the bag of carrots she ate earlier. Zippy's mother cleans up the mess and gives Zippy a slice of pie. When her mother's shift is over, Zippy asks if she has any money, to which her mother replies that she has everything she needs and Zippy agrees.

During "Slumber Party," Zippy contemplates issues of religion. Although Zippy does not believe in God, she is hesitant to say the words aloud and hurt anyone's feelings. She believes Jesus to be alive, living in the woods, and wishes him to be her boyfriend since he is good with animals and has bronzed skin like a lifeguard. Zippy is dedicated to the Quaker church when she is six years old, the only other time her father goes to the church besides Melinda's wedding. Zippy's mother prays for him each week at church, but he is stalwart in spending Sundays at home. Zippy asks her father why he is not a Christian and he asks, "Who says I'm not?" The next morning, he takes her to his church—a campground called Lake of the Woods. He notes that God is anywhere two or three are gathered together and certainly there are more than two things at the campground. During a slumber party that Melinda holds at the Jarvis house, her friends



hold a seance. Zippy images the various paintings and pictures in the house moving and sees Jesus, a white and filmy figure, at the top of the window. When she tells the girls and her parents, no one believes her. Although Zippy does not believe in God, she still hopes he can hear her when she sings the following week in church.



ESP, Interior Design, Cemetery,

ESP, Interior Design, Cemetery, Summary and Analysis

In "ESP", Zippy's mom tells a story. When Daniel is six and Melinda is four, Zippy's mom subjects them to a children's ESP test developed by Duke's Institute for parapsychology. The ESP test involves the parent looking at a card and the child predicting what the object on the card is. Daniel gets the first fifteen cards correctly and then, after a weird look, gets the next ten wrong and continues to score worse over the next rounds. When he is done, he leaves without a word. Melinda, who has a curious and sweet personality, gets more answers correct as she progresses. Both of their scores suggested a telepathic gift—Melinda as a receiver and Daniel as a blocker. Zippy too wonders if she has ESP, but does not have the attention span for the test.

Kimmel describes how Mooreland is prone to artistic trends and Zippy's father adopts them in "Interior Design." He decoupages, takes to antiquing, a process of turning new things into old things, and paints ceramics. Other residents have niche artistic talents—such as Debbie Newman with hooked rugs, Rose's mom with oil painting, and Rose of Sharon with crocheting. Zippy complains that she lacks a craft and her parents get her several paint-by-number kits which she quickly takes to. At the same time, she trades the new hippies in town haircuts for a beautiful Irish setter that she presents to her father as a Father's Day present.

In "Cemetery," when Zippy outgrows her bicycle, her and her father decide to build her a new one. It is cobalt blue with streamers and a big rubber horn. When Zippy's mother asks if she wants to donate her old rodeo bike, Zippy refuses, saying instead she would like to commemorate it by leaning it against the tool shed and planting flowers around it. Although, or because, Zippy's father has a bad temper, her parents seldom fight. Once, when Zippy's mother is pregnant with her, the two get in an argument, and Zippy's mother, as advised by Mom Mary (Zippy's dad's mother) makes herself clear that she is never to be hit, by slapping Zippy's father on both cheeks. However, one day, Zippy's mother confronts Zippy's father about fixing up the closet. Zippy's mother refuses to let him be the one to leave and drive away, and because she lacks a driver's license, hops on Zippy's bike to make her grand exit. Zippy foreshadows that her mother will leave again.



Drift Away, Reading List, Arisen

Drift Away, Reading List, Arisen Summary and Analysis

Kimmel describes her brother in "Drift Away." Zippy's older brother Daniel is a smart but stubborn guy. Although he can read before he is in first grade, a bad experience with a teacher causes him to rebel by not knowing how to read. He has only one teacher who reaches out to him in high school—Mr. McCutcheon, who suggests that school will be easier if he learns to read. That same day, Danny comes home and reads the TV Guide. He is deeply religious and is dedicated to activities that require his tall stature remain in good posture. Zippy notes that she did not know what to make of him—he was not her friend but not her enemy and she must have loved him because he moved her. When Zippy slept in the room between his and Melinda's, she loved listening to his music collection.

In "Reading List," Zippy is disturbed by the dark poetry by Frost, Dickinson and Leroi James she encounters in school. She wishes to never read them again—even going so far as to try to tear out the poems from books. She is stopped, however, by the notion that to do so would be like tearing the ears off a kitten. Zippy overhears one of her classmate's, Polly, crying to the assistant teacher. Rather than asking Polly, whom she had never noticed existed until that moment, what happened, Zippy tries to uncover the truth by finding a copy of the day's newspaper, which Polly references. She is unsuccessful and both her father and sister tell her to leave it alone. Zippy cannot, however and finally resorts to asking Polly the whole story—which is that her brother, a Marine who was a POW in the Vietnam War, came home to discover his wife was now with his old drinking buddy and shot his friend dead in the chest. During the trial, a picture will surface of him standing atop a huge pile of dead women and children civilians in Vietnam. Zippy realizes she has created a bad situation and although she is rescued from consoling Polly by their teacher, she still feels the obligation to be there for this near-stranger.

In "Arisen," Zippy and her mother argue about attending sunrise Easter service. Zippy argues it is too early and her mom counters that she wakes up in the middle of the night to go fishing. Zippy protests that she goes to church three times a week and fishing rarely. Although Zippy does not believe in Jesus rising from the dead, she mainly detests the sunrise service because she is forced to wear a dress. Zippy's mother sews her a dress with blue and white gingham print and embroidered flowers. She is also forced to wear a scratchy undershirt, a too small slip and fuzzy tights that do not fit. Though she tries to procrastinate, it does not work. However, the service is shorter than she remembers and soon she is back home to change out of the dress and to share in Rose and Maggie's eggs, chocolates and soaps.



The Social Gospel, The Letter

The Social Gospel, The Letter Summary and Analysis

In "The Social Gospel," Zippy decides to ask Sissy, a little Holiness convert, how to be a better Christian because she never gets the fruits of the spirit. Sissy advises her to do good deeds on a daily basis because God is always watching. Zippy attempts to mow the lawn for an elderly woman, but is rejected. She also tries to bring some cookie pans over to her sister-in-law, but ends up getting in an accident along the way and needs rescuing herself. Finally, although not apparent to Zippy at the time, she helps another by protecting Rose from the "private lessons" offered by Mr. Sewell, the music teacher who comes once a week. Rose is clearly frightened by what goes on during those sessions and Zippy insists on chaperoning from there on out. She tells Sissy that good works just are not for her and believes God's business has nothing to do with her.

Finally, in "The Letter," Kimmel describes Christmas in Mooreland as a beautiful event. The residents go caroling and sometimes decorate their houses. The Jarvises have a silver tinsel tree that sometimes remains up as long as March. It is through Rose's family that Zippy learns that most Christmas trees are green and are not meant to last year after year. Each year, Zippy receives one present from Santa Claus. She is seldom disappointed, except when she asks for a Skipper doll, part of the Barbie family and a unique item to Mooreland. Her father informs her that when he was a young boy during the Depression, they were lucky to get oranges, food or shelter. One year, Zippy asks Santa for a piano. She suspects her parents are concerned about the logistics of where it might fit in the house, or how Santa might get it down the chimney. Zippy attends a Christmas party at Rose's family's house; although Rose's parents are unconventional, they celebrate Christmas well, with a large tree and plenty of food. Rose shows Zippy what she got for Christmas: a two octave organ complete with a book of Christmas songs. Zippy wants to cry, but restrains herself, questioning whether she is deserving of a miniature piano. She waits to cry in the bathroom and in the presence of her mother. When the family returns home, Zippy finds an organ capable of four octaves with four music books awaiting her in the living room. The note attached from Santa thanks her for not losing faith and for being so brave.



Characters

Zippy Jarvis

Zippy is the narrator of the book. The unexpected daughter of Bob and Dee Dee Jarvis, she is born ten years after Melinda, almost thirteen after Daniel. She is a strange-looking baby with big eyes, a long face and no hair. She does not speak until she is almost three years old—her doctor suspects that a bad staph infection as an infant is to blame. Zippy continues to grow up somewhat strange-looking with hair that cannot be tamed and always the tallest and skinniest girl in her class. She lives in Mooreland, Indiana and recounts her adventures growing up there. Although only 300 residents large with one main road, Zippy finds plenty to do and learn. Since her siblings are so much older, she is a bit precocious growing up. Her parents alternate between doting on her and joking with her, such as her mother telling her that she is adopted and comes from a family of gypsies. Although forced to go to church every week, Zippy does not believe in God. She has trouble believing some of the stories and does not feel as though her heart is open to Him, thus refuses the altar call. Zippy does, however, love animals. Her family has a rotating cast of pets ranging from chicken to dogs and even horses. Zippy is especially disturbed by the way that some of her neighbors treat their animals and witnesses many things a young girl should not, such as the beheading of a chicken and the slaughtering of a rabbit. There are many people who are friends with Zippy over the years: Julie, whom she speaks for; Rose, her in-town friend; and Andy, her neighbor who asks her to dogsit while his family is away on vacation. Zippy loves her mother and father, although her father frightens her at times and she knows not to test him. She admires her beautiful sister Melinda and spends much effort in helping her get elected as Mooreland Queen. She has a tentative relationship with her brother. Although she acknowledges she must love him because he moves her, she is not particularly close to him because he is very quiet and moody—she suspects he likes no one at all. Zippy's behaviors and tone changes throughout the book as she matures and grows up.

Bob Jarvis

Bob Jarvis is the father of Zippy. He is married to Dee Dee Jarvis. The Jarvises moved to Mooreland in 1955 after being married for five years and living in Muncie, a larger town. He nicknames Haven "Zippy" after a rollerskating chimpanzee he saw on television. Kimmel notes that everyone in town believes in God except for him. He has curly hair, a long face, big round eyes and huge teeth. He is a gambler and wins and loses many things during Zippy's childhood. As head of household, he is responsible for much of the disciplining and the Jarvis children are often warned of what he will do when he comes home. Zippy does not often need to be told to do something by him twice. Although the other members of the household are sometimes scared of him, he clearly loves his family. When their neighbor threatens Zippy's dogs, he sets forth an elaborate plan to teach the neighbor a lesson. He tries to protect Zippy from hard life



lessons, like the Scroggs' slaughter of rabbits, the 68 animal carcasses discovered in Ruth's house, although Zippy's curiosity often overcomes his efforts. He obsesses every time they go camping—insisting on checking and rechecking all the lights on the car. Zippy admires him for his ability to use both his right and left hands equally and hold a full coffee cup while driving without spilling a drop. He does not believe in God, although he makes Zippy listen to her mother and go to church each week. Dee Dee describes him as a wild man for his skills as a hunter, fisherman and beekeeper. Throughout the book he is there in ways that young Zippy does not recognize.

Dana

Dana moves to Mooreland from Los Angeles when her parents are transferred to the new Chrysler plant. Dana starts as a point of fascination to Zippy, although quickly becomes a competitor as she steals Zippy's friends. Zippy and Dana become friends, with Dana superior in most ways to Zippy. Her parents are atheists and also parent in a more hands-off way than Zippy is used to, however Dana is well taken care of. Dana and her mother end up fleeing town after a bad fight between her parents.

Dr. Heilman

Dr. Heilman is the Kimmels' family doctor. He is not concerned by Zippy's lack of speech thought later acknowledges that some of her delays might be due to the staph infection in her ears when younger or the fact that the umbilical cord was wrapped around her neck three times when she was born. Dr. Heilman calls Zippy his "Miracle Baby."

Melinda Jarvis

Melinda Kay Jarvis is Zippy's older sister. She is popular and beautiful with long black wavy hair and gray eyes. She and Zippy do not always get along—she laughs when Zippy is upset over her beloved chicken's death and Zippy thinks that her sister must belong to a powerful mafia. However, it is clear the sisters love each other, as evidenced by Zippy donating her entire life savings to help Melinda become Mooreland queen. Melinda is kind and compassionate and teaches Zippy many lessons about how to act.

Carolyn

Carolyn, whose blond hair and blue eyes are crowd pleasers, is voted Mooreland Fair Queen over Melinda. She holds the table next to Melinda at the fair. However, after admitting to other contestants that she is three months pregnant and getting married in two weeks, she is replaced by Melinda Jarvis.



Batsell Barrett Baxter

Batsell Barrett Baxter is a telepreacher whom Zippy's mom loves and forces the family to listen to as they prepare for Quaker church each Sunday. He is not a very energetic presence—sitting still and lacking enthusiasm when he speaks. Sometimes he has guests on his show—other old, suited and clinically depressed men who have devoted their lives to God.

Daniel Jarvis

Daniel Jarvis is Zippy's older brother by 13 years. He has blond hair and brown eyes and has a tall and muscular frame. Zippy describes him as "faring the best" genetically and so handsome that both parents are reluctant to take credit. Zippy describes him as silent and furious nearly all the time because he judges everyone by standards he never articulates out loud. He once breaks down the door to the bathroom when Melinda spends too long getting ready for school in the morning. He is also kicked by their horse named Princess and suffers two broken ribs and a bruised sternum. Zippy cannot decide if he is a friend or enemy, and finally concludes that he just does not like anyone. Zippy's mother suspects that he has the gift of ESP, but is a blocker rather than receiver.

Minnie Hodson

Minnie is the Jarvis' next door neighbor. She has a spaniel dog named Lucky and chickens in the yard. Zippy witnesses her kill a chicken by picking it up by the neck and spinning it in an arc over her head. Minnie Hodson dies during Zippy's childhood and is replaced by a series of neighbors.

Petey Scroggs

Petey is Zippy's neighbor at one point when his family moves into Minnie Hodson's old place. He is a mean, short boy with orange hair and freckles. Zippy describes him as having mean, crossed eyes and riding a sinister bicycle that looks to be made from the Devil's own bicycle parts. Zippy is afraid of him because of his reputation for torturing animals and thinks him responsible for the kidnapping of her cat PeeDink.

Dee Dee Jarvis

Dee Dee Jarvis is Zippy's mom. She wears patched and remodeled dresses Mom Mary hands down to her. She is adopted after her birth mother drops her off at the orphanage at 9 months with the request that she be raised Catholic. She realizes young that she will never be conventionally pretty and instead works to be the funniest and kindest person—popular by design. She has a little square chin and tiny mouth with a short



torso and long legs. She is good at reading books, making cinnamon biscuits and knitting sweaters. She is very religious and forces Zippy to go to church each week.

Andy Hicks

Andy Hicks moves into Minnie Hodson's house after the Scroggs family leaves. One of eight children, Andy is Zippy's favorite Hicks. Zippy describes him as perfect because he is funny without being stupid, explains the facts of life to Zippy, writes a song about a boy who bullies Zippy, is tall and blond, and can sing like an angel.

Doc Holiday

Doc Holiday is the man who owns and runs Mooreland's drugstore. He wears suspenders and bowties, and has an objectionable personality. Although people always know where they stand with him, he makes it a habit not to get into other people's affairs. He is married to Zippy's third grade teacher, whom she is not fond of. Zippy is surprised when Doc Holiday intervenes when Edythe intimidates her.

Rose

Rose is Zippy's in-town best friend. She speaks her own mind and wants to be an artist. She is different from other Mooreland residents—in her occupational goals, left-handedness and belief in Catholicism. She comes from worldly parents who travel and bring back souvenirs.



Objects/Places

Mooreland

Mooreland is a small town in Indiana 10 miles north of New Castle with a population of 300. The one main street, Broad Street, has the town's only four-way stop sign. Three churches line the street, more or less equally spaced. The town has a gas station and drug store, but no drugs and no doctors to prescribe drugs. Kimmel describes Mooreland as a place where everyone believes in God and there is no such thing as multiculturalism. The Mooreland Fair is the biggest event in the city and Kimmel claims that no town is more beautiful than Mooreland at Christmastime.

Minnie Hodson's House

Minnie Hodson's house is the house next to the Jarvis' and is often used as a landmark to direct visitors coming to the Jarvis house. Although first occupied by Minnie Hodson, an elderly woman with a dog, when she passes away, it becomes host to a series of neighbors. The Scroggs live there, including Pete Scroggs, a mean-spirited boy whose reputation precedes him. The house makes the perfect setting for the Scroggs to butcher rabbits and for Pete to kidnap Zippy's cat PeeDink.

Rodeo Bike

Zippy's first bike. It is lavender with a purple sparkly banana seat with brightly colored streamers dangling from the handlebars. She rides it often, including when she tries out her new wig. When she outgrows it, she creates a shrine for it and plants zinnia seeds.

Lake of the Woods

The campground between New Castle and Dunreith that Zippy's father claims is his church. He justifies it as a church because there are "two or three" gathered together there, if trees are counted.

Diner

This is the small restaurant on Broad Street that Zippy's mom starts to work as a waitress for several days a week. The diner is not very crowded; when Zippy goes there is only one other customer. They serve sugar cream pie at the diner.



Julie Newman's Farm

The home of Julie Newman, Zippy's silent athletic friend, and Debbie and Dave's daughter. Although the farm is outside of Mooreland, Zippy spends much time at their home, playing with Julie and the various animals they have.

Mooreland Fair

The biggest event in Mooreland. There are food tents and games and the crowning of the Fair Queen. Residents, truckers and farmers all attend.

New Castle

A larger town in Indiana that serves as the commercial hub for Mooreland's activities. It contains taverns, department stores, a movie theater and a grocery store.

Tall Trees

A campground in Indiana approximately ten miles from Mooreland. The campsite includes tall trees, a lake and an old wooden barn with pool and pinball. The campsites are not too close together and the facilities are usually clean. The Jarvises frequently go camping there.

The RV

The Jarvis' camping trailer. It spends most of its time parked by the Jarvis house except when they prepare to go camping. Zippy's dad is neurotic about checking the fluids, tires, and lights before setting forth. The RV is very large and it is difficult to mount the trailer to the truck and must be done in the absence of small children.



Themes

Different Manifestations of Love

Throughout the book, Kimmel demonstrates different manifestations of love, and that the definition of love is not always concrete and easily identifiable. She describes love between people as well as less obvious love—such as that for animals and inanimate objects. Kimmel introduces the book as a tribute to the town she grew up in. It is clear that Kimmel has strong memories associated with the town and that she leans towards presenting it in a positive light. From the painstaking description of the town, to the care given in developing the Mooreland residents, it is clear that Kimmel's need to tell the story of Mooreland stems from a deep love for her town.

A more complicated love is that between Bob Jarvis and his family. Although he is seen as a man of quick temper and the enforcer, he also shows a tender and compassionate side. The Jarvises all fear what Bob will do when he comes home to discover that Daniel broke down the bathroom door during a conflict with Melinda. However, he simply asks what happens and then elicits Daniel's help in repairing the damages. Bob's love of family is again revealed when Zippy's beloved hen falls prey to some wandering dogs. He removes all evidence of the bird and "takes care" of the dogs that did it.

Zippy also exhibits a strong love of animals, from her misshapen dog Tiger to her perfect specimen of a dog Kai to a woodpecker she finds on her way home. She is frightened when a cranky neighbor threatens to poison her dogs because of their barking and wants to protect them at any cost. When she gets a chicken, she suddenly does her chores without reminders and is unbelievably responsible in its care. These little acts all demonstrate that love does not fit only one definition.

Compassion for Animals

In "A Girl Named Zippy" we see different examples of how animals are viewed and treated. Petey Scroggs, for example, has a reputation for tormenting animals. He locks up Zippy's best cat in his basement until she is skinny and anxious, he starves a rabbit until it chews off its own leg, and he and his family members thoughtlessly behead and slaughter a rabbit in front of Zippy. He clearly treats animals with no respect for their lives and Kimmel uses him as an example of lack of compassion towards animals.

Contrast his behaviors to those of Zippy. She constantly bring animals home, wanting to help and provide for them. One of the earliest examples of this is when she and Julie discover that the runt of a pig litter is discarded at birth and they decided to adopt and raise him. They have fantasies about feeding him, playing with him and bringing him to the fair and one day creating a whole farm for him. The girls cannot fathom the idea of throwing away such a cute, living thing.



However, the line delineating compassion is not so easily drawn. Zippy witnesses her neighbor Minnie Hodson casually grab a chicken, break its neck and prepare it for eating. Zippy is horrified, although it does not appear that she makes the connection between the meat on her plate and the animals she plays with. Another gray area example is that of another neighbor, Ruth. Upon her death, it is discovered that 68 animal corpses are found in her house. She was caring for many animals without telling anyone or asking for help, which ultimately resulted in a basement full of dead animals.

Kimmel continually demonstrates the need for compassion towards animals and also identifies the benefits gained from a respectful relationship with animals.

Religion

Kimmel presents several different examples of religious beliefs throughout the book. She notes a healthy skepticism with the variations, but even as a child, endorses the notion that each person can choose if and how they accept God. She notes that there are several churches in the town and practically everyone goes to one. Her family, like many others, are Quakers and attend church several times a week. Her mother is the most religious member of the household, although Daniel and Melinda both answer strong callings as well. Church in the Jarvis household is preceded by listening to an early version of a tele-preacher, Baxter, whom Zippy finds monotonous and boring.

As a young child, Zippy is not sure of her belief in God. She hates going to church and pretending, although this might be compounded by the attire she is forced to wear. She never answers the altar call because her heart is just not open to God. She procrastinates going to church and Sunday school and even manipulates her way out of church on several occasions. She would rather spend the day with her father, a non-church goer. However, although she doubts, she also believes. She comments on how it is easy to understand why people love Jesus, she tries to get out of a physical fight by claiming she is a Quaker, and she does not believe her father when he claims he is a good Christian who just chooses to worship in the woods instead of inside a church.

Religion is the most inheritable trait and Kimmel's personality and experience cannot help but be affected by her exposure to religion. She does not specifically dictate what the best way to live one's life is, but it can be reasonable to assume she thinks religious beliefs fall upon a continuum and each person should decide where they stand along it.

Style

Perspective

"A Girl Named Zippy" is a non-fiction memoir written in first person narrative. The author, Haven Kimmel, uses first-person narrative to detail accounts of her childhood growing up in Mooreland, Indiana. She does not simply replay the events of the past, but narrates with the perspective of young Zippy. When she recounts stories from when she is younger, there is a naivete to the voice. It is clear that the narrator is not privy to the wisdom or maturity of the older Zippy who is writing the book. For example, in "The Lion," Zippy truly believes that she belongs to the mafia and that the certificate she receives from her father is authentic, although the adult Zippy who is writing the book can clearly see past that. This perspective is truly first-person and not omniscient—the only information the reader gains is what Zippy the narrator sees and discovers. At times, Kimmel will refer to "we," typically meaning herself and another Mooreland resident.

Kimmel is a storyteller and although she includes tangents within each story, the information provided never strays beyond Zippy's experiences. Since Kimmel speaks through the voice and perspective of a young child, she is not 100% trustworthy. Zippy's imagination frequently runs wild and she is not always grounded in reality. For example, Zippy maintains that Edythe, a Mooreland neighbor who was once good friends with her mother, is a witch. Edythe's actions and behaviors only serve to confirm Zippy's belief, although it is very unlikely that she was actually trying to kill Zippy. In addition, Zippy's naivete makes it difficult to determine the truth. When her mother tells her that she was adopted from a band of gypsies traveling through Mooreland and her father says that Zippy's sister is not his biological daughter, Zippy believes both of them without question. As a child, Zippy also has an overconfident belief in herself and her skills, frequently making comments about being the best at jumping on the couch and having a gift with animals. This contributes to a bias to the way the other characters in her life are described.

Tone

The author sets a very conversational tone throughout the book. She narrates as though she is talking to a friend. Since the author writes from a child's perspective, the language used is simple and the dialogue often colloquial. As a memoir, the tone is automatically going to be subjective—perhaps even more so because of the age and developmental stage of the narrator. Zippy comes across as genuinely believing the things she says, even if her opinions are not always accurate or unbiased, such as her statement that her sister is the most beautiful girl in Mooreland and deserves the Fair Queen title more than any other contestant.



In her introduction, Kimmel makes it clear that the memoir is a tribute to her childhood and the town and people who helped shape it. She does not intend to speak for everyone in Mooreland nor to advocate for the way she was reared—she simply wants to tell a story that she felt has not previously been told and needs to be. All Kimmel asks from the readers is their attention.

Structure

The structure of "A Girl Named Zippy" is that the book is organized into brief chapters focusing on a specific snapshot of Zippy's life. There are approximately 30 brief chapters (ranging from 3 to 15 pages) in all. The stories are not chronologically arranged, but all take place during Zippy's early childhood. The chapters are not self-contained, as the same characters reappear in multiple stories and the stories are loosely woven together with recurring themes. Within each chapter are short vignettes and tangents that ultimately connect to the chapter's title and theme. These tangential stories defy the conventional structure of a linear timeline.

The author uses internal dialogue to express her thoughts as a child as well as external dialogue with characters such as neighbors, family members and friends. The language used is simple and suits the idea of a child narrator from a small town. Although not written as a diary, the prose is reminiscent of an intimate snapshot. In one instance, the chapter consists of two lists: one, things her father lost by gambling; and two, things her father won gambling. This has the powerful effect of getting into the narrator's mindset.

The book is easy to read and the chapters of varying lengths move quickly. The book is dark at times, but also humorous and heart-warming. The author does not appear to have any agenda to her memoir, instead seeming to be dedicated to the art of storytelling.

Quotes

"The book that follows is about a child from Mooreland, Indiana, written by one of the three hundred. It's a memoir, and a sigh of gratitude, a way of retuning. I no longer live there; I can't speak for the town or its people as they are now. Someone has taken my place," p. 4.

"I took to talking for Julie the way some children take to water. I talked for her at school and at home, and her parents were nothing but grateful, because they were completely worn out from trying to read her mind," p. 33.

"It seemed to me that Dan should have shown some sign that he had won, but he didn't. Whatever battle he was fighting was so complicated it couldn't be described in terms as simple as victory, or loss," p. 45.

"The truth of the situation was not lost on my dad, and a certain binding sheepishness grew up around us. I didn't know what to do, and he knew what to do but couldn't do it, and it became clear that our relationship was simply not forged out of confrontation," p. 88.

"It was as if Melinda had both answered my question and refused to answer it. She looked down at me, waiting for me to devil her even more. It was a still kind of look, like the moment when a seesaw is perfectly straight. I had appeared in her life almost without warning when she was ten years old, when she thought she knew what her life was about, and who she was. What she became was my sister. She led me off the dark street and into our house, gently, like a pro," p. 124.

"Dana entered my life like a firestorm in the middle of our second-grade year," p. 144.

"Dana's house could have been cut from a magazine, the kind of home that tells a story, even though no one lives in it," p. 155.

"The days of hard wrestling were already over, although we were just beginning to realize it. From then on, we would spend our lives as girls trying to maintain that flat, sad distance. Some people moved so far away that we never, ever saw them again," p. 166.

"There are a finite number of times one can safely climb the same tree in a single day; after that point the whole venture becomes meaningless, and potentially dangerous," p. 167.

"I wanted him to be my boyfriend. My feelings about Jesus didn't alarm me at all, because it appeared that everyone around me was flat-out in love with him, and who wouldn't be? He was good with animals, he loves his mother, and he wasn't afraid of blind people," p. 174.



"In short, he was what it meant to be a father and a man in 1971. Up against his power I could see none of his failings," p. 177.

"What Melinda had done was obvious: she was a receiver. But what Dan had done was more subtle: he was a blocker. He had the gift to guess the answer, and so he refused to give it," p. 190.

"For a moment he didn't say anything, then he looked up at me. My dad was not a crying man, but his eyes were bright with tears," p. 199.

"I didn't know what to make of him. He wasn't my friend and he wasn't my enemy," p. 214.

"Dear Child, I hope you don't mind that I delivered this a day early, but I thought you might like to have it tonight. I'm sorry I can't also bring you the doll, but to be honest, no one has ever before made such a request. My elves are working on it, but it might be a long time before we get it just right. Thank you for not losing faith. Thank you for being so brave tonight. Love, Santa," p. 275.



Topics for Discussion

Zippy has numerous pets—such as Sam the Pig, a pony named Time, and Skippy the Hamster. Children often have a special affinity for animals. How does a child's relationship with their pet differ from that with a sibling or an adult family member?

Each chapter of the book details a specific part of Kimmel's life in Mooreland. Is there a theme that tie all the stories together as a whole? Do you see the resolution of certain issues as Zippy gets older?

The Jarvis family has very strong and different personalities in Bob, Dee Dee, Melinda, Daniel and Zippy. In what ways is their dynamic strange? In what ways is their family very typical?

Haven Kimmel prefaces the book as a tribute to the town she grew up in. She feels that the story of Mooreland needs to be told. How do you think Kimmel views her upbringing? Is she approving or disapproving of it?

Religion is a recurrent topic in the book. How does religious faith play a role in the lives of the different members of the Jarvis family? How do you think this is affected by living in a small, homogeneous town?

Memoirs often expose dark parts of the authors' lives. Do you think "A Girl Named Zippy" is one of those books? Why do you think Kimmel felt compelled to write this book?

Zippy's friend Dana comes from a very different background from Zippy—she moves from Los Angeles, her parents are atheists and she has had to be incredibly self-sufficient. How does their friendship change Zippy? Discuss why people change—what is usually the driving force?

One gets a better sense for small town life after reading this memoir. Do you think Kimmel paints an accurate picture or do you think she is biased in one direction or the other. Do you think you are well suited to live in a small town? Why or why not?

What do you think is the family's socioeconomic status? What kind of clues does Kimmel give about her family's financial situation? Is the Jarvis family poor? Educated?

When Zippy's day presents her with a certificate from the Mafia, Zippy believes her life changes for the better because of it. How does one's perception of reality have the ability to change their experience and attitude?

Zippy's father has a commanding presence in the Jarvis family. It is clear that at times, the family members fear what he might do if displeased. Describe his relationship with Zippy. Is it one of love or terror? Cite examples from the text.