

Giant George: Life with the World's Biggest Dog Study Guide

Giant George: Life with the World's Biggest Dog by Dave Nasser

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Plot Summary

In the book "Giant George: Life with the World's Biggest Dog," author David (Dave) Nasser tells the story of his family's life with their pet Great Dane who grows to be the world's tallest dog. Christie, Dave's wife, makes a deal with Dave that she will move to Tucson if he allows her to get a dog. She chooses a Great Dane, whom they name George. Dave records their lives through six years as they are married, buy, and renovate a home, lose two pregnancies, finally welcome a daughter into their home, and marvel over George's surprising growth. A group of friends suggest to Dave that he should enter George in the Guinness competition for the tallest dog. George wins the competition as well as a spot on the Oprah Winfrey Show. In conclusion, Dave summarizes that it is not George's title that matters most, but that they are a family.

When Dave and Christie get married, Dave does not have any particular interest in having a dog. Dogs to him mean responsibility. Christie, however, has always wanted a dog of her own and makes this a prerequisite to her agreement to move to Dave's hometown of Tucson, Arizona. Christie chooses a Great Dane because the breed has the reputation of being friendly, calm, and not likely to chew up the house. They settle on a dog who is the runt of his litter as their pet, but do not take into consideration that they are still living in an apartment. Since Christie works as a pharmaceutical salesperson, much of George's care falls to Dave. He is frustrated by the clingy, loud puppy who seems to be getting bigger by the day. Dave announces to Christie that they have to give George away. It is just before Dave is about to call one of the people who has requested to be George's new owner that Dave realizes that he can't give George away because the puppy is part of the family.

Things begin to look up when Dave and Christie finally find a house to buy. It is a fixer-upper, however and therefore, Dave is busy doing renovation work at the house. When Christie decides that she is ready to start a family, Dave realizes that he needs to put the renovations into high gear. The baby is born but Dave and Christie are both heartbroken when they learn that their baby has severe birth defects. He does not survive past the 21st week of Christie's pregnancy. Dave finds himself taking the lead from George on how to behave around Christie. He is surprised at how sensitive George is. About a year later, Christie loses her second baby.

About the same time that Christie learns that she is pregnant for the third time, George tops out at a weight of two hundred and forty-five pounds. A group of friends with whom Dave and Christie have been spending their Friday nights suggests to Dave that he submit George to the Guinness book of world records' competition for the world's tallest dog. While the group intends the competition to be fun, they are surprised by what a challenge it turns out to be. They encounter a cruel person who puts snide comments on George's website as well as another who issues a challenge to the Guinness people concerning the validity of George's measurements. Despite the roadblocks, however, George is named the world's tallest dog. The title comes with an appearance for George and Dave on the Oprah Winfrey Show. Dave decides that despite George's titles, what is most important is that he is part of the family.



Chapters 1: Life's Mistakes and 2: Things That Go

Chapters 1: Life's Mistakes and 2: Things That Go Summary and Analysis

In the book "Giant George: Life with the World's Biggest Dog," author David (Dave) Nasser tells the story of his family's life with their pet Great Dane who grows to be the world's tallest dog. Christie, Dave's wife, makes a deal with Dave that she will move to Tucson if he allows her to get a dog. She chooses a Great Dane, whom they name George. Dave records their lives through six years as they are married, buy and renovate a home, lose two pregnancies, finally welcome a daughter into their home, and marvel over George's surprising growth. It is a group of friends who suggest to Dave that he enter George in the Guinness competition for the tallest dog. George wins the competition as well as a spot on the Oprah Winfrey Show. In conclusion, Dave summarizes that it is not George's title that matters most, but that they are a family.

Chapter 1 begins with a newspaper ad offering a four-month-old Great Dane puppy to a good home. Author Dave Nasser indicates he put this article in the paper for what he considers the unrealistic sum of \$40. Dave figures the family has already put out about \$2,000 for the puppy, along with its food dishes, crate, leash and collar. Putting this much money into a dog indicates someone in the family had wanted it pretty badly, but Dave writes that he is out of patience.

Dave has already had two people who have answered the ad. Dave's wife, Christie, has reluctantly said "yes" to the sale, indicating she is probably the one who so much wanted the dog. George is sitting next to Dave, which Dave says the dog is always doing, indicating he is a very clingy animal. Dave looks down at the dog, named George, who looks up at him with sparkling blue eyes, the same eyes that attracted Dave and Christie to him in the first place. It is when George puts his head in Dave lap that her realizes the dog is part of the family and that he cannot get rid of him.

Dave goes on to tell the story of how George became part of the family. He explains that he had bribed his California-raised wife to move to his hometown of Tucson, Arizona by promising her a dog when they made the move. Dave describes himself as a person who has never particularly considered himself a dog lover even though his family had dogs when he was growing up. He writes that he was happy to live without the hassle and responsibility that the ownership of a dog included. Christie, however, had always dreamed of having a dog of her own, one who loved her as much as she loved it.

Dave writes that he was thirty-eight years old when he was set up on a date with Christie by his sister-in-law. In less than a year, he knew that Christie was the woman for him. He had proposed to her at an outdoor restaurant in December. The two were married in September of 2005.



Once they had decided to move to Tucson, Dave writes that Christie started to work right away searching for her perfect dog. She knows she wants something big, and finally settles on a Great Dane. By the time the couple moves to Tucson, Christie still hasn't found a puppy and Dave still hasn't found a suitable house. They move into a small two-bedroom apartment. Although Dave believes it would be best to wait until they find a house to get a puppy, especially since their apartment complex doesn't allow animals, Christie moves ahead with her plans to find the perfect dog. When she finds an advertisement in the LA Times, she has Dave make the call. The woman tells him the puppies' parents are big with the mother weighing in at 160 pounds and the father at 200 pounds, information that Dave doesn't write down or even remember.

The breeder e-mails them a picture of the puppies and Christie falls in love with the runt of the litter, the one puppy who stands apart from his twelve litter mates. The puppy is a blue Dane with blue eyes and no white fur on him anywhere. The puppy is shipped by air to Phoenix, and Christie and Dave drive two hours to meet the plane. Because of their jobs, Dave knows that most of the care of the puppy will fall to him. Christie is a pharmaceutical seller while Dave works for himself.

Before they've even gone to pick up the puppy, Christie settles on the name George. As a hint of foreshadowing, Dave indicates that he didn't realize at the time how well that name could pair with the word "giant." The puppy they meet at the airport is cowering in his blanket, and weighs only seventeen pounds. Christie decides the puppy does look like a George. Dave concludes the chapter with the foreshadowing mention of how big George's paws are. People often say that a puppy with big paws will grow into a big dog. He also indicates he and Christie never dreamed that one day George would be strutting in front an audience.

In Chapter 2, Dave describes George's behaviors that lead to his brief decision that the puppy is too much trouble for him to handle. Dave puts his sense of humor into play in this chapter as he writes about the way that George destroyed all the expectations that he'd had for the way the dog would act. While he intended for the dog to sleep in his crate in the kitchen, the puppy howled and barked so much that he made his new parents feel as if they needed to bring him into their bedroom instead of abandoning in the kitchen.

Another problem that crops up with puppy ownership is that Dave learns that if his landlord finds out they have a dog, they could be kicked out of their apartment and forced to pay the rent for the remainder of their agreed contract. Dave is worried George will be discovered because he whines and howls even when he is left alone for short periods of time during the day. Christie and Dave had knows that Danes were known as being a highly affectionate and emotionally responsive breed but didn't realize that this trait would also causes him to really hate to be left alone. In order to keep him from making such a fuss when they are away, Dave begins taking George to work with him.

It is at this point that Dave introduces Nosy Rosie, one of the other tenants of the apartment complex. Keeping George a secret becomes a game of outsmarting this apparently older lady who makes it her business to know what is going on in the



complex. While George is still small, it is easy for Dave to sneak him in and out in his crate. George's rapid growing soon makes this difficult and Dave has to resort to wrapping the dog in a blanket and sneaking him out under his arm.

Dave indicates that dealing with George at work is just as bad as it is at home. Because he can't leave George, Dave has to give up his habit of a long lunch in favor of eating with George at whatever house on which he is working. Dave is afraid George will hurt himself in some way in the house he is working on, but is also afraid to leave him in the heat and mess of the yard. He is resentful because he believes they should not have bought the puppy until they had bought a house.

After three weeks, the problems with George become worse than ever. Since they have gotten him, George has doubled in weight. In order for him to have a place to sleep, Dave and Christie buy the biggest dog crate on the market which Dave remarks is appropriately named the "Colossus." The crate is four and a half feet long, just over three feet wide and nearly four feet tall. Dave believes that this crate should accommodate George for the remainder of his life.

As George gets bigger, Dave becomes more resentful of Christie. He believes it is her fault that they have gotten the dog before they were really ready. Christie is disappointed, that Dave wants to give George away, but won't say anything to Dave as it seems that he's already made up his mind that he can't handle George any longer. While she tells Dave that she doesn't want to force him to do anything that he doesn't want to, Dave can tell that she is upset with his decision. He believes that her use of "honey" in her speech to him makes him feel even worse for his decision.



Chapters 3: Home Sweet Home and 4: It's A Jungle Out There

Chapters 3: Home Sweet Home and 4: It's A Jungle Out There Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 3, Dave describes how badly he felt after telling Christie he wanted to get rid of George, then counters the bad feelings with his feelings of heroics when he decides to keep the dog. A week after Dave makes his decision; they he and Christie find a house that fits their purposes. Dave fills out his book with bits of history, and insight into what is happening to both himself and Christie during the time that George is growing up. Here, he shares a description of the area in which they live as well as the history of the area. Dave also describes the house that they have purchased. The words that he chooses are that the house "needed some loving." In another portion of the house he says the house looks like the backdrop for a Disney horror ride.

While Dave has big plans for the new house, Christie wants the plans to move along a little more quickly. Although Dave is happy in his role as the renovator of his new home, he agrees that they are more cramped than they were in their apartment. Dave also begins to realize how important George is to Christie. He is familiar with the neighborhood, but it is all new to her. Her job also does not give her the opportunity to make friends with her co-workers. The more that Dave thinks about his quick decision to give George away, the more he realizes how stupid a decision that was.

Meanwhile, George is growing by leaps and bounds. At five months old, George already weighs seventy-seven pounds. The vet, William Wallace, tells the couple that for his age, George is the biggest Great Dane puppy he's ever seen. The vet explains that George will need to be neutered and will also need a gastropexy to keep him from getting bloat. Both these procedures can be done at the same time. Dave seems to have a hang-up with the idea of having George neutered. He transfers his own feelings to George, believing that the dog would run for the hills if he knew what was about to happen to him.

Now that George had his shots and is free to interact with other dogs without the worry of getting sick, Dave and Christie decide to get George trained. This training is particularly important, Dave writes, because Great Danes have a tendency to have emotional problems if they are not trained properly. Since Great Danes also grow to be such big dogs, Dave realizes that it is important that they be able to control him. The trainer uses a pinch collar to help train George and show him his proper place in their "pack." Dave foreshadows the next chapter by indicating that he and Christie did not realize how hard it would be for George to socialize with other dogs because of his size.

In Chapter 4, George goes to the dog park for the first time. Dave explains that the park is divided into two parts. One part is for puppies and small dogs, up to 30 pounds, and



one part is for large dogs. Although George is still a puppy in age, he weighs much more than 30 pounds, leaving Christie and Dave wondering where they should let him play. They put him in the puppy part the first time they visit and soon learn that he is not welcome there. Christie overhears a woman talking about the way that George is too big to be in the puppy part. Dave ignores her comments because she won't complain to them in person. The next day, however, a man does confront Dave about George. While the man complains that George might hurt the smaller dogs, Dave notices that it is just the opposite. The little dogs are always running around him and under him, making him nervous especially when they try to hump his legs.

They decide to try George in adult part of the park believing that it can't be much worse. The adults, however, realize that George is still a puppy and treat him in a mean and aggressive manner. A few weeks later, George is attacked by two adult dogs and he comes out of the situation with his confidence in shreds. Dave has learned the lesson that by allowing the other pet parents to bully him, he had put his dog in the situation where he was bullied and could have been seriously hurt. A few days later, they meet the owner of a full sized Great Dane. They believe that if George ever gets as big as that Great Dane, who is 140 pounds, no dog will ever try to take him on. At the conclusion of the chapter, Dave forecasts that George is going to get very big when he indicates that someone upstairs is listening when Christie tells George that he needs to grow more.



Chapters 5: Honey, I Shrunk the House and 6: The Birds and the Bees

Chapters 5: Honey, I Shrunk the House and 6: The Birds and the Bees Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 5, Dave begins his chapter by describing the way that Christie has started calling the dog Georgie, a feminized pronunciation of the name with which he is not particularly pleased. Despite this feminization, Christie and Dave are both surprised by how quickly George is growing. He has outgrown his "Colossus" crate and now sleeps on a single sized bed mattress. Dave also notes that the dog managed to dent one of their cabinets just by wagging his tail as he walked past it.

Another aspect of George's personality is his love of the way Christie smells. In fact, anything she puts on that masks the scent, George has taken to licking off anything on their bodies, including face cream, lotion, and perfume. What George appears to love best is when Christie blows her hair dry with a hair dryer, an activity that sends him into raptures. While Christie's smell makes George happy, Dave notes several factors that make the dog very unhappy. When Dave makes noises when he is working on the house, George makes it clear that he is displeased. George also doesn't like water. He is especially unhappy when Dave and Christie try to enjoy their swimming pool. He paces the circumference of the pool, barking until his owners get out. Dave admits he might have added to the dog's fear of the water by pulling him in the pool with him one day in an attempt to persuade him that water wasn't all that bad. The trick makes George mad, and does nothing to lessen his dislike of the water.

Next, Dave goes on to tell his readers that George's favorite place to be is in bed. George has gotten so big that he can only fit on his single mattress in one position. He enjoys sleeping in Dave and Christie's king-sized bed but is getting so big the three of them no longer fit comfortably. At his last vet visit, George weighed in at 147 pounds. He is still only nine months old, stats say that they should expect him to continue to grow for two or more years. For this reason, Dave and Christie decide to buy George a queen sized mattress on which to sleep. Dave details the disappointment from the store clerk as he learns that Dave and Christie are buying only a mattress and have no need for a set of box springs or a bed frame. The man also seems surprised that one dog would require a queen-sized mattress.

At the end of his chapter, Dave comments that with George now having a bed that will comfortably accommodate him that he and Christie will be able to concentrate on starting a family. He uses this comment as a transition to the next chapter, which will deal with George's experience with puberty.

In Chapter 6, Dave describes George's puberty as being almost like human puberty. The dog goes from being a happy puppy to one obsessed with legs. If George can't find



anything horizontal to hump, he will stretch out and hump the floor. George has also started irritating Christie by humping her legs as she lies in bed watching old movies. One night she calls Dave to the bedroom. He notices first, that she seems to be affected by some constant tremor which is explained by the fact that George is laying across her legs "going at it like a steam engine." She is both frustrated that he is destroying her enjoyment of her movie and humored at the absurdity of her situation.

Dave and Christie have also realized that George's active libido is beginning to disturb guests. One day when Dave's family is over for supper George is sitting on the couch with Christie when Dave notices the dog's erection. He tries to distract the dog but Christie misreads Dave's hints. Finally, it is his father who comments about the dog's obvious puberty.

Dave continues to feel guilty about taking George to be neutered. He feels as if he is betraying the dog. Because George was a pure blue Great Dane, Dave indicates that for a short while he and Christie had considered breeding him but soon realize how much commitment this would require on their part. Dave admits that he and Christie worked too many hours and enjoyed their down time too much to get involved in the time and travel requirements that breeding and showing dogs would require.

Dave and Christie are extremely anxious on the day that Dave takes George to have his surgery done. He will have both procedures done at the same time. The two text each other back and forth like two worried parents until they hear from the vet a little after noon that all went well. Although dogs generally stay at the vet's office for a night after this particular surgery, Dave and Christie are allowed to take him home that evening. George sleeps soundly that night, Dave reports, even though he and Christie don't.



Chapter 7: Party Animal and Chapter 8: The Road Less Traveled

Chapter 7: Party Animal and Chapter 8: The Road Less Traveled Summary and Analysis

Chapter 7, with George fixed and calmed down, Dave writes that the dog has taken up eating as an Olympic sport. At just one year old, the dog weighs 180 pounds and is tall enough to reach and scarf down any food left on the kitchen cabinets. He can now reach the tops of the cabinets, as well as the barbecue grill standing with all four paws on the ground.

George has also developed an affinity for the doorbell. Again, Dave's sense of humor comes into play as he describes how the dog responds when he hears the doorbell as well as the reactions of the people on the other side of the door who have perhaps never met George before. Dave describes how they have learned to keep George locked in their bedroom until after company is safely in the house and ready to meet George.

In addition to his love for the doorbell, George is obsessed with paper. Dave indicates that if the dog were human he'd have worked in an office or at a newspaper business just so he could be around the stuff more often. Paper towel rolls are George's absolute favorite so Christie and Dave decide against putting a paper towel roll on the wall.

Dave also notes that every time that they take George out, George garners attention, whether it is positive or negative. While some people just make flip comments comparing George to a horse, Dave notices that others are scared of their dog. They note that George now towers over Drake, their Dane friend from the dog park and decide to call the family from whom they bought George to see how the rest of the litter is shaping up. Dave takes this opportunity to recall that George had been the runt of his litter as he and Christie wonder if any of the other puppies are bigger than he.

When Dave and Christie contact George's breeder, she is shocked to learn how big George is. She provides the couple with the name of one of the owners of the other puppies and Dave and Christie decide to take George on a road trip to visit his sister. The two dogs take to one another right away and both owners wish they lived closer to one another. The new friends part with the promise to meet up with each other the next time they are in Pheonix, Dave foreshadows that they didn't realize how soon this would be.

On George's first birthday, Christie insists that George has to have a party. Even though Dave isn't as excited about the idea, he humors Christie by agreeing. They have the party at the dog park with the other dog owners. Her mother, aunt and grandmother will also be in town to enjoy the festivities. Dave writes that Christie plans the party perfectly



with hats for the dogs, games and even special treats. Even though he is surprised at how well it all comes off, Dave writes that he considers this to be the most embarrassing event in which he had ever been involved. It is as they are preparing to go home that Dave notices the difference that he sees in Christie. This party is a sign, he writes, though he doesn't say what it is a sign of.

In Chapter 8, Dave wonders if they have created a monster in George as they travel to California. So far, after four hours of driving, George had refused to go to the bathroom. Dave worries not only because George's refusal to go might not only mean that he has become more choosy about where to pee, but also that something might be medically wrong with dog, something he didn't want to have to face hundreds of miles from their regular vet. With Dave and Christie imagining all sorts of scenarios that George's refusal to go to the bathroom might lead to, George finally does his business six hours into the trip at a McDonald's parking lot.

Dave describes the town in which Christie grew up as well as the way the house in which her parents now live is bedecked in Christmas decorations. The house is crowded with family and children, which George loves. Christmas day is the highlight for George as he is enthralled by the wrapping paper. Notice the way that Dave and Christie treat George much like a child, wanting him to be involved in all of the Christmas activities even though he is large, often in the way and sometimes in danger of accidentally hurting someone or something. Despite these drawbacks, the family allows George to stay in the thick of things as they unwrap gifts as a family, with George's help.

George loves the grass in Christie's parents' backyard, but doesn't like the avocados from their avocado tree. He also doesn't like the ocean as he barks madly when Christie and Dave play in the waves at a dog beach. Dave can tell, however, how much Christie misses the ocean and the area in which she grew up. They agree there is no place better to be than their own home even though they do enjoy their visit. At the conclusion of the chapter, however, Dave learns Christie's real desires. He spends much of the book talking not only about George, but also about important events that are going on in their own personal lives. In this particular portion of the book, Dave indicates that Christie has decided that she is ready for a baby.



Chapter 9: The Road Less Traveled and Chapter 10: Into Each Life...

Chapter 9: The Road Less Traveled and Chapter 10: Into Each Life... Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 9, Christie reasons that George would love to be part of a big family and would love the company that a child would bring. Dave wonders to himself what people would think when they told them they'd had a child to keep their dog company. Although Dave agrees with Christie that the time has come for them to become real parents, but is surprised how seriously Christie goes about getting pregnant. Within two months, Christie announces that she is pregnant. It is at this point that the bulk of the book moves away from George, to focus on Dave, Christie and their pregnancy. George is important in this part of the novel for the part that he plays as a member of the support system of the family.

It is during the 20th week of Christie's pregnancy that things go awry. Although the amniocentesis had come back clear, something seems to be wrong with the baby. Christie has gone to the appointment alone as it was to be only a routine scan but the technician begins to appear nervous and tells Christie that he needs to get the doctor in.

In Chapter 10, it is George who hears Dave's cell phone ringing. The dog recognizes Christie's ring tone. She tells Dave that there is something wrong with the ultrasound scan. Dave writes about the experience, and the emotions and thoughts that he experiences as a result of Christie's phone call just as he probably experienced them on the day of the actual phone call. He writes about the way that George has noticed the change in the atmosphere and is standing next to him with his head cocked questionably, wanting to know what is wrong.

Dave is frustrated with the traffic as it is at the lunchtime rush hour. He has a mental image of Christie curled up on the sofa reading books on babies and sharing information with him. When he gets close to the hospital, he sees a young husband helping his heavily pregnant wife out of the car. Her arm is curled protectively around her belly. Dave feels as if he has been punched in the gut. He sees Christie in the hallway and hugs her even though he is afraid it might cause her to break down.

As they ride together to the hospital, Dave notices Christie's arm around her tiny belly, just as the other pregnant woman had done. Unfortunately once they had the test redone at the hospital, the results are the same. They discover that their baby has multiple congenital birth defects. It will not survive. The doctors tell Christie and Dave that the best thing to do is to let nature take her course. Christie is to come in for scans every two days.



Dave takes his cues from Christie and does not say anything to her about the baby. Unexpectedly, though she turns to him and tells him that she had looked at the notes on her file in the doctor's office. She has learned that their baby was a boy.



Chapter 11: ...Some Rain Must Fall and Chapter 12: From Little Acorns

Chapter 11: ...Some Rain Must Fall and Chapter 12: From Little Acorns Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 11, Dave writes that he and Christie name the baby Sebastian. Dave writes that he cannot truly understand the connection that Christie has already formed with the baby. He notes that now the baby has a name, it seems more real, more like a life, to him. The forty-eight hours that pass between the scan in which the troubles with Christie's baby are found and the next scheduled scan seem endless to Christie. Dave does not know how to best support Christie, but does agree with her that they need to keep the problem to themselves, especially since they don't know exactly what they should tell people.

Dave admits that during this time, he takes his cues on how to behave from George. George stays next to Christie during the entire two days. Dave is surprised to learn how sensitive George is to Christie's needs. Although he doesn't know what is wrong, he senses that she needs him close.

On the morning of Christie's second ultrasound, Dave takes George to the dog park. They are very early and only one other owner with a puppy is there. Dave briefly remembers the plans that he and Christie had made for their new life with their baby, plans that Dave now feels were useless. He notices that George has made one circuit of the park and has returned to Dave with his tail down, looking at him with an intense expression. Dave wonders what is going on in his mind.

Although Dave has planned to reschedule a meeting to go with Christie to her next scan, she encourages him not to do so. She asks to be allowed to go to the scan by herself. That morning, Dave is surprised how closely George is tuned into their feelings as he is just as antsy, if not more so, than they are. When Christie calls that day, Dave is ready for the call. When he answers, she is crying. The baby has died.

Christie cries all the way home from the hospital. They have an appointment made in Phoenix to have Christie's labor induced. Dave makes tentative plans to have his mom keep George for them during the night they will need to spend in Phoenix but Christie asks that the dog be allowed to go with them. Dave finds a hotel online that claims that it will take big dogs. Even when Dave calls the front desk to warn them how big George is, they tell him that there will be no problem. When he arrives at the hotel, however, there is sign that indicates the hotel allows dogs up to 35 pounds. Dave doesn't have the energy to argue with the front desk lady so he sneaks George in the back.

The procedure only takes about three hours. When Dave and Christie arrive back at the hotel, they hear George barking before they even get to their room. Two staff members,



one with a ring of keys, are headed toward their room. Dave greets them, says that it is their dog barking and unlocks their room, hoping to push George back before the staff members can get a look at him. Dave convinces the staff members that George will make no more noise now that they are back. Christie heads for bed and goes straight to sleep.

In Chapter 12, slowly, Dave and Christie begin to recover from the loss of Sebastian. The focus of Dave's writing begins to return to George. He is now two years old. He weighs two hundred and fourteen pounds. Dave indicates that George is top dog not only because of his size, but also because of his eating and pooping habits. Dave has fashioned a rake and snow shovel to use as a poop scooper.

Dave writes in this chapter about his decision to buy a golf cart to ride around the neighborhood on. George develops a love for this cart right away. He is able to sit with his haunches on the bench of the cart and his front paws on the floor. The open sides and front let him have the feeling of the wind in his face.

In February, Christie is pregnant again. This time she does not get excited at all. At eight weeks into her pregnancy, it is discovered that Christie has a molar pregnancy. A D and C is required to remove the benign cancer that had formed in place of a healthy baby. Dave and Christie begin to wonder if it was really meant for them to have a child.

It is also during this time that Dave has reconnected with some of his high school friends. Dave and Christie have begun joining Jim and Paul and their wives for a happy hour Friday night. George's size soon becomes a talking point among the couples. One night as they are talking about George's size, the idea of checking the statistics of the biggest dog comes up in conversation. Paul, who believes it will be interesting, promises to check out the stats.

Dave doesn't put much weight on George being the biggest dog in the world until George's next visit to the vet. In Nov. 2008, George is nearing three years old. Both Dave and the doctor are shocked to see that George weighs two hundred and forty five pounds. The doctor says that a weight of one hundred and thirty to one hundred and sixty pounds is normal for male Great Danes. He agrees with Dave that George should not even be growing any longer at three years old. The doctor warns Dave not to let George put on any more weight as it will be bad for his health. When Dave calls Christie with the news, she has news of her own. She is pregnant again.



Chapter 13: Guinness on Tap and Chapter 14: And Baby Makes Four

Chapter 13: Guinness on Tap and Chapter 14: And Baby Makes Four Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 13, because they are afraid they would not be able to handle the emotional strain if they were to lose this baby as well, Christie and Dave do not tell anyone about the pregnancy. Since they have gotten to the time in the construction of their house that it is time to decorate, this helps to occupy Christie's mind. They figuratively hold their breath until Christie's twenty-week scan comes back normal. When the doctor asks if they want to know the sex of their baby, they decide to go ahead. They learn that their baby is a girl. At this point, they finally allow themselves to get excited about the baby. They tell their friends about their coming daughter and decorate the nursery.

During one of their Friday night get togethers, Christie has stayed at home, tired out from the pregnancy. Paul asks Dave if he's seen the latest article in the newspaper, about the dog who holds the Guinness world record. Although Dave obviously isn't as interested as the other two since he has a daughter on his mind, Paul tells him that the dog that had held the world record for four years had just died. A Great Dane as well, the dog measured forty-two inches at the shoulder. They use a measuring tape to determine that George is about forty-two inches tall, but Dave still isn't terribly serious about the competition, seeing it only as something fun.

Dave's friends, however, are serious about seeing if George can beat the record. Dana has learned that the next dog in the running was a Newfoundland who was thirty-six inches tall. Because they believe that George could easily beat this height, the friends decide to take getting George into the Guinness Book of World Records as their official project. Later, at home, Dave shows a little bit of individual interest in the project by looking up both the past world record holder tallest dog as well as the one that is vying for the title. As George noses up next to him, Dave tells George that he believes that George can beat both of these dogs.

In Chapter 14, Dave reports that Christie's water breaks right in the middle of her prenatal yoga class. Dave meets her at the hospital where she is checked in and given an epidural. Just before she drifts off to sleep, she asks Dave if George needs to be checked on. He goes home to check on the dog, who is obviously put out because he has been left alone so long. George is also obviously out of sorts when Dave leaves again just after fixing his food and water. Later, Christie admits to Dave that even while she was in labor, she was concerned about George and his bladder.

Since Dave doesn't want Annabel's arrival to cause any undue stress for George, Dave decides to try to introduce her to him slowly. He brings home a baby blanket from the hospital filled with Annabel's scent. George is so obviously distraught that he has been



left alone for so long and that Dave still hasn't brought his mother back that Dave decides to treat him by taking him for a ride in the golf cart. At the end of the ride, George refuses to get off the cart and Dave has to force him into the house. Dave introduces the blanket, but it seems to have little affect on George.

When Dave and Christie first bring Annabel home from the hospital, George ignores her. At night, however, George is obviously irritated with Annabel. Dave compares the way that George huffs when Annabel wakes him in the night with the way that he acted when George was a small, crying puppy. In fact, he describes the dog's huffing sounds as sounding just like his own.



Chapter 15: The Rising of a Star and Chapter 16: Be Careful What You Wish For

Chapter 15: The Rising of a Star and Chapter 16: Be Careful What You Wish For Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 15, Dave writes that George continues to show indifference toward Annabel. Though Dave and Christie wish this were different, they are glad that the dog isn't showing any open hostility toward the baby. Christie has even joined the Team George movement and is helping to fill out the Guinness applications. He describes what they have to go through to get the dog signed up which includes notarized paperwork, a professional movie and precise measurements.

It is Paul's idea to have a website set up for the dog with the domain name giantgeorge.com. Dana suggests that they set up a Facebook page for George which can be linked to both the website and to Twitter. Paul suggests that they have Phil Villareal, a reporter with the Arizona Daily Star write an article about George and his intention to win the award of the biggest dog ever.

Two weeks later, George's story is out. Dave notes in his book that it is ironic that this is the same paper in which he had put the article in which he tried to give George away as a puppy. Dave indicates that the interest in George snowballs with Dana managing the website and Paul posting facts and quotes on the Facebook page. Paul's daughter makes a YouTube video of George playing in the park. In addition, when the local story is picked up by other papers and news sources throughout the country Paul and others begin to get phone calls asking for George to appear on their television shows. Paul decides they should have a press conference, which turns out to be a big success with every print media and local television station attending. During the conference, they issue a challenge asking any one to come for a face-off.

Meanwhile, Dave learns that one of Paul's nephews had been getting picked on because he has told his classmates that he knows Giant George. He is fed up with his peers not believing him. A visit is planned with the help of Will's teacher and the school principal. Dave sneaks George into the school just as lunch is beginning. The children surround George, who laps up the attention. Will is now the star of his class, with all of his classmates convinced that he does know Giant George. It is not until the following morning when the number one television show in America runs a story on George.

George has a brush with major stardom when they are contacted by the people at the Oprah Winfrey Show requesting that they allow George to be on the show's That's Incredible! series if he were to win the Guinness title. Although Dave and his friends are



flattered by the invitation, they believe that there is no way that they would ever be able to get George to Chicago.

In Chapter 16, Dave tackles another issue that might stand in their way to obtaining a world record for George. He needs to find some way to make George stand up as straight as he possibly can to be measured. Dave believes the best way to train George to do this is to include some food in the process. He comes up with a plan that he believes will work. He fixes a platform, using four planks of wood on the tailgate of his truck, from which George can eat treats if he stretches up as tall as he possibly can. George catches onto the new trick quickly. Dave decides to use grilled chicken on the day of George's official measurement.

It is on October 22, 2009 that George is officially measured. Dave indicates that George rises to the occasion. Since all the attention is getting George out of the house and away from the new baby, Dave figures that George is pretty happy. The idea that George's schedule is getting a little out of hand finally comes to a head when Christie blows up at him one day. She is exhausted from trying to care for an infant that is only a few weeks old while Dave is wrapped up with George and the Guinness competition. Phone calls have interrupted Christie as she has been trying to feed Annabel. The phone has also constantly woken the baby. Christie suggests to George that they don't need all of the frenzy surrounding George at that particular time. She asks if George winning the competition really matters, if it really matters to George. After they talk, Dave agrees to let Paul and Dana take care of the publicity issues for Giant George for awhile while they focus on the family.



Chapter 17: The Dark Side of Fame and Chapter 18: Every Dog Has His Day

Chapter 17: The Dark Side of Fame and Chapter 18: Every Dog Has His Day Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 17, although Christie drives her point home to Dave that their family is more important than the Guinness World Title, Dave hints that something is coming that gets even Christie fully involved in the process to win the title. Dave introduces the problem by indicating that he and his friends had been keeping up with the Guinness records for tallest dog. The Newfoundland, whose owner they had met, has been beaten out by another Great Dane. Deciding that it would be fun to get to know this dog's owner as well, they try to contact this person as well, but never get a return phone call. Dana calls Dave and tells him to check the guest book on George's website because "there's something really unpleasant going on."

Dave writes that by putting information about their dog on the Internet and on their website domain, they had opened themselves up to the opinions of other people, as many other famous people have suffered through in the past. While they had expected other pet and dog lovers to respond to their websites, they had not expected anyone to put spiteful, false comments on the website's guest book. Dave indicates that the person accuses Team George of lying about George's weight and height, and of exploiting George simply for publicity.

The members of Team George are offended by the posts. They pay close attention to these comments, which are beginning to appear on all of the websites and other social media, and begin to realize that the person posing them is the owner of another dog that is vying for the title. They hope that if they ignore the comments, whoever is posting them will realize how silly they are being and stop. Instead, Dave indicates that more and more comments begin to appear posted in conjunction with videos and news articles about George. In order to put a stop to the comments, at least on their own guest book, Team George members decide to close down the guest book.

Dave writes that although Christie had been less than enthused about the quest for the title, she is angered by the lies being spread about her and her pet. She becomes determined that they earn the title so that they can put the hateful allegations to rest. Dave sends in the Guinness application packet, calls the Guinness people to let them know that he has sent the package, and then tries to forget about the competition so he can concentrate on his family.

Dave again returns to his descriptions of George's behaviors. He writes that George is still ignoring Annabel, but has become infatuated with one of the baby's dolls. George had loved the doll from the minute that he had first seen it. He takes off with every time



he has the opportunity. Although the doll was a gift to Annabel, Dave and Christie decide to let George have the doll as they figure they can always buy a new one.

It is also with much relief that Dave reports in this section of his novel that George finally recognizes Annabel's presence in their family. On Christmas Day, George licks the girl's hand. After this initial gesture, George devotes himself to protecting this youngest member of his "pack." Meanwhile, George's family of Internet admirers is growing by leaps and bounds. Right after the holidays, the number of fans on Facebook hits 1,000. The dog continues to enjoy the attention he gets. Although he tends to drool on his admirers, George is never uptight or bad tempered. By the end of January, George has 10,000 Facebook fans. In contrast to this good news, however, Dave writes that he receives a call from Guinness that there was a problem. Dave concludes his chapter on this note, without giving his reader any idea what the problem might be. In this way, though, he draws his reader into the following chapter.

In Chapter 18, Dave clarifies that someone has stirred up controversy about George's height. Since Dave has just outlined the cruel posts he and his friends have noticed on George's social media, it seems strange that Dave would be as surprised as he is about this newest stumbling block. The man from Guinness tells Dave that they will be sending an adjudicator to Tucson to verify George's measurements. He asks Dave if they can arrange another measuring session with a different vet. Dave sets up the appointment and an adjudicator is flown in from New York.

As Dave and Christie talk about the person responsible for the controversy, Christie mentions that it is "incredible" that anyone would want to cause trouble for them concerning George's height. Dave uses this key word "incredible" to transition to a discussion of the invitation for George to appear on a special segment of the Oprah Winfrey Show, That's Incredible! Shantel, a producer from the show, calls Dave and arranges for a film crew to come to Tucson on the day that the Guinness adjudicator will verify George's measurements.

Dave and Paul drive to pick Jamie Panas, the Guinness adjudicator, up from the airport. Dave and Paul seem to be worried about what type of person that Jamie will turn out to be and if she will be a person who likes dogs. It seems irrelevant that the person coming to oversee the measurement of a dog like them. They are happily surprised to learn that Jamie is beautiful and is friendly, but professional. On the day that George is to be measured for the second time, Paul notices that Jamie continues to use a phrase that she had used the day before. She continually mentions what will happen, "if George is tall enough." Paul, however, gets a peek in Jamie's briefcase and sees a framed Guinness certificate with Giant George on it.

When Jamie sees George the first time, Paul and Dave are both pleased because she gives a little squeal of surprise at George's size. They are even more pleased when she confirms George's height at forty-three inches. This puts George as not only the tallest living dog, but also the tallest dog ever. As a result, Dave and Christie are set to fly to Chicago for George's appearance on the Oprah Winfrey Show.



Chapter 19: Love Me, Love My Dog and Chapter 20: It's a Small World After All

Chapter 19: Love Me, Love My Dog and Chapter 20: It's a Small World After All Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 19, Dave precludes the meat of his chapter with Christie's excitement when she learns that they will be flown first class to Chicago. He then goes on to describe the way that the film crew from Oprah recorded some footage from Dave, George and Christie spending time together at the house. They show off George's food bowls, his bed and even meet the film crew at the front door to invite the viewers into their home. Dave even takes the film crew to the dog park where he shows off his homemade poop scooping equipment.

Oprah's people want to get George, Dave and Christie to Chicago on the following day but they run into a myriad of problems getting a flight set up to carry the outsized dog. They consider a pet charter, but these animal only flights don't allow dogs more than 150 pounds. The next option is a private jet, but that is too expensive. Few airlines are willing to fly an animal as big as George in the cabin but Shantel works with American Airlines to work out a solution. They require George and Dave to come to the airport for a test run of how the dog will fit in the plane. During this trial run, they learn there is no way that George will fit in the first class section of the plane so they have to downscale to the economy section where the row of seats next to the bulkhead is the only row that gives George enough room to lay without spilling into the aisle. All the while they are trying their options, Dave notices that Pete, the man from American Airlines, doesn't seem too sure about the arrangement.

On his way home, Dave stops at a Petco to pick up the largest dog muzzle that he can find. Christie still has to rework the muzzle so that it will fit George while Dave packs. She has already gotten Annabel's things ready to go to his mother's house that evening as well as her own bags packed. It is nearly 10 p.m. before they learn from Shantel that all the problems with the flight for George have been ironed out.

In Chapter 20, Dave mentions that it is strange that Shantel has asked them to keep George's title a secret since there are so many people at the airport. George draws attention as he is so big. As a touch of humor, Dave mentions that he again hears the questions of whether or not Dave and Christie have a saddle for George.

Although they had thought that all of the problems with George's flight had been taken care of, the TSA has a problem because George takes up three seats, but only has one ID. After what seems like an eternity, the problem is taken care of but Dave, Christie and George are asked to wait until last to board. To their surprise, when they try to muzzle George to get onto the plane, George attempts to refuse to wear the muzzle. Dave compares the surprise of the other passengers when they see George being led down



the aisle of the plane as being similar to what might happen if someone were to lead a tiger on board the plane. Christie and Dave had thought that George would nap through the plane ride but were surprised by a great many of the passengers making their way up to row where George was stowed to meet and greet him. One of the stewardesses finally notices the attention is getting to be a little much and turns the "fasten seatbelts" sign back on to give Dave, Christie and George some peace.

The three are in for another shock when they disembark from the plane in Chicago. There is a crowd with cameras clicking pictures. It is surprising to them that no one comes close to them to try to pet George. They all keep their distance while George prances as if he is on a red carpet.

An AA manager escorts Dave, Christie, and George out of the airport to a waiting limo. After a forty-minute ride, they are delivered to the Omni Chicago Hotel where they are shown to the Governor's Suite. Dave writes that while the suite is luxurious and roomy, there is no bed for George. The bellhop brings up a roll away bed, but this mattress is too small. They order another rollaway and line the second mattress up with the first. George lies down on the mattresses, but as they eat dinner, Christie and Dave notice the mattresses won't stay together. George looks highly uncomfortable. They try to prop the mattresses every which way to make them stay together with no success.

Jokingly, Dave tells Christie they should sleep on the rollaways and give George their bed. Unfortunately, Christie doesn't understand he is joking and agrees with him. Unable to go back at that point, Dave helps Christie set up the two rollaway beds so they can sleep on them. As they try to sleep on the thin rollaway mattresses and watch George sprawled on the king-sized bed, Christie mentions that it is George who is the star, indicating that he deserves the royal treatment since he is the reason they are there.



Chapter 21: Showtime; Chapter 22: And the Winner Is... and Epilogue

Chapter 21: Showtime; Chapter 22: And the Winner Is... and Epilogue Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 21, Dave writes that the people at the Oprah show treat them royally, giving them their own designated green room with a bed made up for George. Dave and Christie are told that the staff are happier and more honored to meet George than some of the famous people who make their way through Oprah's studios. Dave figures that this is because George is low maintenance and happy with just having his ears scratched.

Dave writes that the morning of the taping, he was more nervous than he'd been in twenty or so years. He describes Oprah as being a legend as she is the only African American woman to own her own studio complex. He notes that he is glad their episode of the show will not be aired live. Once they are inside, Dave and Christie meet Shantel and are escorted to their green room. George eyes the plate of pastries in their green room and seems only mildly discouraged when Christie warns him to stay away from the sweets.

Shantel explains to them how the taping will go. She wants George and Dave to go through a dry run in the studio so that George can get used to the equipment and people who will be there. Even Dave is a bit surprised when they reach the filming area when he sees that it has been replicated in chocolate. Dave learns that they will not meet Oprah until they are actually on the set with her as this will make their interaction seem more fresh and natural.

Since Dave has done all of the appearances with George in the past, they have decided that it is George who should meet with Oprah even though he feels as if he is hogging the spotlight a little bit. Christie, however, has forgiven him and goes happily to her seat in the front row of the studio audience. As soon as Christie is gone and Dave is alone, he realizes that he needs to go to the bathroom.

Since taping had begun, Dave is alone with George in the green room. Although Dave worries that George might start barking if he leaves him alone, he decides to chance that the green room is far enough from the studio that the barking wouldn't be heard. Dave tells George he'll be back in a second before he leaves but when he returns to the green room, there is no George. Dave does notice that George had eaten about half the platter of pastries before he left the room. Panicked and considering the possibilities that might have happened, Dave starts up and down corridors looking for George. He literally runs into a security guard. Not having time to explain what he was doing, Dave continues down the hall until he finds a larger green room to which George had decided to relocate. He is sprawled on the huge couch in the room. The security guard helps



Dave get George back to his assigned room. Just as Dave is called to bring George out, George passes gas. As Dave fans the air, he begs the dog not to fart on Oprah.

In Chapter 22, Dave indicates that the show went by quickly, even if it did start with a bang of sorts. He explains that the segment was introduced by Oprah who gave some basic information about George, then the video clip taken with George and Dave welcoming the film crew into the house had been played. In the video clip, the film people had rung the doorbell. The sound caused George to bark in the film, and also causes the real life George, who was backstage, to begin barking when he hears the doorbell on the film clip. Oprah talks to them for a few minutes, then presents George with his certificate. Dave indicates that Oprah appears to be scared of George all through the taping.

The taping is finished and they are free to leave late morning. Dave now faces the issue of getting George to pee. Since they were inside, it has begun to snow heavily and both Christie and Dave are concerned it might be a problem for George if it gets much deeper. They ask the driver to pull over when he sees an opportunity. Meanwhile, Dave tells Christie about his scare with losing George just before their taping was to start.

When the driver makes the requested stop at the park, it is still snowing heavily. George refuses to get out of the car into the snow. Christie reminds him that he cannot make two hundred and forty five pounds of dog do anything that he doesn't want to do. They decide to try later and hope that the snow eases off.

Dave and Christie wait until an hour before they are to leave for the airport and the snow shows no signs of easing up any at all. George does not like the snow at all. He hops from one foot to another trying to avoid it. Christie tells Dave they need to find somewhere dry for George to go. The two of them are wondering where that might be when spot what they think is a church with a raised garden of some sort in front of it. Dave and Christie are trying to figure why the snow isn't sticking to this part of the yard when George yanks on the leash, headed toward the spot. Just as George squats, they hear someone banging on the glass of an upstairs window of the building.

The man appears to be furious and George is finished, so Dave and Christie pull him away. The man runs after them until they get to a streetlight where he can see how big George is. It is at this point that both Christie and Dave realize that the man has given up his pursuit of them. It is at this point that Dave concludes his story with the note that he is proud of his family, and proud of the fact that George is part of his family.

In the Epilogue, Dave writes that they had been flooded with calls, e-mails and interview requests over the next few days after it was announced that George was the world's tallest dog. Since they refuse to fly George all over, the new media wants the story badly enough that they send their people to Tucson.

Dave also reports that he and Christie are staying busy and that Annabel is doing well. He writes that the family is busier than ever with the introduction of their son, Luke, into the family. George stays busy as his family tries to find ways for him to give back to his

community. He visits schools and nursing homes and has even been part of a fashion show.

George is again flown across America to meet Guinness's world's smallest dog. The two meet in New York for a photo shoot as Guinness wants George and Boo Boo to be the face of its 2011 record book launch.

Characters

George

George is a Great Dane dog, owned by Dave and Christie Nasser. For all intents and purposes, he could be considered the main character, and maybe even the hero of the story. George is described as being "blue" in color. Dave notes in his description of George that the dog does not have any white fur at all on him, a very rare coloring for a Great Dane. George's eyes are also blue, one of the traits that attracts Dave and Christie to him. Dave and Christie are also attracted to George because he is the runt of his litter of puppies. This is noteworthy, especially since George grows from this runt into a dog who wins the title of tallest dog in the world, ever. At his biggest recorded height and weight in the novel, George stands forty-three inches at the shoulder. He also weighs two hundred and forty-five pounds.

In addition to his astounding size, George also has an exceptional personality. One of the George's personality traits that seems to strike Dave especially strongly during the loss of the family's first baby is how in tune George is to Christie's emotions. Even while Dave is at a loss as to what to do to comfort his wife, George seems to anticipate her needs by just staying by her side and providing company. Although the couple has noticed that George interacts well with children in general, they are surprised that he does not take quickly to their own daughter when they first bring her home from the hospital. He does not act aggressively toward the infant, but simply ignores her presence. As a result, both Christie and Dave feel as if a breakthrough has been made when George licks Annabel's hand on the morning of their first Christmas together. After this, George seems to welcome Annabel as a member of their "pack" watching over and protecting her with doggie devotion. Dave mentions in his story that he and Christie often feel as if they are reading to two children when they read Annabel her bedtime stories as George listens in from his spot on his "bed."

Unlike other dogs, George cannot stand the water. He refuses to get into Dave and Christie's backyard pool and is quite angry when Dave pushes him into the pool believing the dog will like the experience once he is in the water. Dave and Christie also try George out in the ocean at a dog beach in California, but get the same reaction. George accidentally gets his paws wet trying to get Dave and Christie out of the water, but otherwise will not have anything to do with the waves. George also is very finicky about where he will use the bathroom. This gives Christie and Dave cause for concern during their first road trip to California because it is almost six hours into the trip before he finds a spot suitable to use. George's bashful bladder also becomes a problem for the couple in Chicago. The evening of his appearance on the Oprah Winfrey Show, it begins to snow and George refuses to go to the bathroom any place that has snow on it. He finally finds some sort of raised garden near what appears to be a church that is suitable, but he almost gets his owners in trouble in the process of relieving himself.



Dave Nasser

Dave Nasser is the author of the book "Giant George: Life with the World's Biggest Dog." He is also one of the main characters of the novel. He is the husband of Christie and the father of both George, the dog, and Annabel. Dave admits from the beginning of the novel that he is not terribly excited about the idea of having a dog. He had dogs growing up, but they always seemed to him to be a great deal of responsibility which he is happy to live without. Because Christie, his wife, agrees to move to Tucson with him if they can have a dog, he agrees to take on the responsibility again.

Since Dave works for himself remodeling homes, it makes sense that the care of George falls on him. Also because they live in an apartment building that does not allow animals, Dave has to take George to his work sites with him to keep the dog from being discovered. Dave indicates that he had believed Christie's decision to get a dog before they had found a suitable house was premature on Christie's part, but didn't really do anything to slow down the getting of the dog besides just hoping that she wouldn't find one that she liked. As a result of the situation in which he finds himself, Dave soon becomes frustrated with the care of the dog. It is as he is trying to find a suitable home to give the puppy away to that Dave realizes that the dog has already become part of their family. He knows that it would be unfair to Christie and to the dog to get rid of it.

Over the course of his novel, Dave tells the story of how his friends convince him to enter George in the Guinness world record competition for the tallest dog. At first it becomes a project that the group works on "just for fun." Soon, however, George has his own Facebook page, Twitter account and website. Media from across the nation are picking up on the story and the Oprah Winfrey Show proposes a spot for them in a coming segment if George wins the title. Meanwhile, Christie is nearing the end of her third pregnancy. She has already lost two pregnancies but she and Dave are finally anticipating a health baby. Dave spends so much time with the Guinness application that he neglects his family but agrees to change his ways when Christie calls his attention to the problem.

Dave details the roadblocks that he and his friends encounter in George's application for the world record. He also tells of his experience with George at the Oprah show, including a heart stopping moment when he "loses" George just before the two are to go on the stage. At the conclusion of his story, Dave writes that the most important lesson that he had learned through his experience with George was that breaking the record wasn't really what matter. He writes that what mattered was the George was part of their family.

Christie Nasser

Christie Nasser is one of the main characters of this story. She is the wife of Dave Nasser and the mother of George and Annabel. It is Christie's idea for the family to get George because as a child she had always wanted a dog who would be "her" dog. Christie agrees to move away from her hometown of Seal Beach, California to Tucson,



Arizona with Dave if he will agree to let her have a dog. She begins searching for the perfect dog as soon as they make the move even though they are living in an apartment complex that doesn't allow animals. Because Christie works as a pharmaceutical salesman, she is not around much to take care of George, so much of his tending, especially when he is small, falls to Dave.

Since she is pregnant with their daughter, and then busy taking care of the infant during the time that Dave is busy with George's application for the Guinness award, Christie isn't fully on board with the project at first. In fact, she discourages Dave from spending so much time on the project because it is taking him away from her and the baby. When the spiteful poster begins putting degrading comments about George and the family on social media sites, however, Christie really buys into the project, hoping to prove the poster wrong. Although Christie is allowed to go with Dave and George to the Oprah Winfrey Show, she has to sit in the audience instead of being allowed on stage with her husband and dog.

Jamie Panas

Jamie Panas is the adjudicator that Guinness sends to Tucson from New York to verify George's measurements. All through their conversations before the measuring, Jamie keeps using the phrase "if George is tall enough," making Paul and Dave nervous. Paul also notices that in Jamie's briefcase there is a custom framed Guinness certificate. He later notices the words "tallest dog" and "Giant George" when he peeks at the certificate again. Jamie confirms Dr. Boulay's measurement of George at forty-three inches. She tells Dave and Paul that George is not only the tallest dog alive, but is also the tallest dog ever.

Shantel

Shantel is the producer from the Oprah Winfrey Show who works with Dave and Christie to get George as a guest star on the program. She asks that if George does meet the height requirements to be the world record tallest dog that they not share the information with any other news sources before their Oprah appearance. Shantel is the one who works out all the bugs so that George can fly to Chicago. Shantel is there to greet Dave, Christie and George when they arrive at Harpo Studios. Shantel also leads George and Dave through a dry run of their television appearance.

William Wallace

William Wallace is the veterinarian to whom Dave and Christie decide to take George for his medical needs. Although Wallace has taken care of many Great Danes, he is surprised by how quickly George grows. Wallace is the one who does the first measurement on George for his Guinness submission. Although George likes Wallace when they first meet, George develops a dislike for Wallace after several sessions



where Wallace pokes and prods him in the name of good health. George's dislike of Wallace is sealed, Dave believes, when Wallace neuters George.

Annabel Mary

Annabel Mary is the name that Dave and Christie give to their baby daughter. The name honors two of the child's grandmothers. Annabel is an infant through much of Dave's book. She is significant because George ignores Annabel so completely during her first few months with the family. It is not until Christmas Day that George acknowledges Annabel's presence in the family by licking her hand. After this point, George decides that he is responsible for taking care of and protecting Annabel.

Paul

Paul has been Dave's friend since the two were in the second grade. They reunite and rekindle their friendship as adults beginning a traditional Friday happy hour. Paul is one of Dave's biggest supporters in seeking the Guinness title for George. In fact, it is at Paul's suggestion that Dave becomes interested in seeking the title at all. Paul also sets up George's Facebook page and keeps this page updated with new information and facts about George.

Dana

Dana is the wife of one of Dave's friends who is a member of Team George. She uses her knowledge of public relations and marketing to help George's cause. She is responsible for setting up and tending a website for George. She also answers all of the e-mail received for George. It is also Dana who alerts Dave to the unpleasant posts that have begun appearing on social media associated with George.

Sebastian

Sebastian is the name that Dave and Christie give to their son, who dies after Christie's twentieth week pregnancy. Although they had at first not wanted to learn the sex of the baby, Christie peeks at her records and sees that the baby is a boy. Although there were no findings in Christie's amniocentesis, doctors discover that he has multiple defects during a scan in the midpoint of her pregnancy.

Nosy Rosie

Nosy Rosie is a woman who lives in the same apartment complex as Dave and Christie when they first moved to Tucson. Pets are no allowed in their apartment and Dave is afraid that this lady will discover that they are keeping George illegally in their



apartment. Dave often sees the woman peeking out of her windows and watching what he is doing as he comes and goes, trying to hide George from her sight under a blanket.

Will

Will is Paul's nephew. He is a student at Fruchthendler Elementary School. Since Will has been picked on at school after telling his classmates that he knew Giant George, Pal and Dave arrange to have the dog snuck into school so he can be introduced to the children.

Dr. James Boulay

Dr. James Boulay is the veterinarian who agrees to perform the second height verification for George's Guinness application. He is pretty busy as he runs one of the largest and most well-respected clinics in Southwest Arizona.

Drake

Drake is a Great Dane whom Dave and George meet at the dog park. When they first meet, Drake is much larger than George, who is still a puppy. By the time that George is finished growing, he towers above Drake.

Phil Villareal

Phil Villareal is the senior writer from the Arizona Daily Star who writes a story about George and his run for the Guinness title. It is because of Villareal's article that George's story spreads throughout the world of media.

Jami

It is Jami, with the help of her friend Andrew, who makes the YouTube video of George. Jami is Paul's daughter.



Objects/Places

Arizona Daily Star

The Arizona Daily Star is the newspaper in which Dave places the ad in which he tries to give George away in the beginning of the novel. It is in this same paper that an article about George vying for the Guinness title appears.

Tucson, Arizona

Tucson, Arizona is the town in which Dave grew up. It is to this town that Christie agrees to relocate after Dave promises to buy her a puppy.

Toy Poodles

Toy poodles are the dogs that Dave had as pets when he was growing up.

LA Times

It is in the LA Times that Christie finds the ad from George's breeder advertising Great Dane puppies for sale.

George's Crate

Dave buys a crate for George called the "Colossus." Although this is the biggest dog crate that he can find, George outgrows this crate before he has reached the age of one year old.

Gastropexy

A gastropexy is one of the surgical procedures that George's veterinarian suggests that Dave and Christie have performed on George. The gastropexy will keep him from getting bloat, a condition that is sometimes fatal in large breed dogs.

Pavlovian-Style Conditioning

Pavlovian-style conditioning is the type of training that Dave and Christie choose to use to train George.



Clickers

Clickers are a tool used to train animals. George's trainer shows Dave and Christie how to use clickers to train George.

Pinch Collar

A pinch collar is used by George's trainer to get George's attention and help establish his place in Dave and Christie's "pack."

Morris K. Udall Park

The Morris K. Udall Park is the dog park to which Dave and Christie take George for exercise. It is at this same park that Christie plans George's first birthday party.

Puppy Side of the Park

Although George is young enough to be in the puppy side of the dog park, other owners complain because he exceeds the weight limit for the puppy side of the park.

Adult Side of the Dog Park

Although George is big enough to be in the adult side of the dog park, he is bullied by the older dogs even though they are bigger than he is.

Palm Springs Branch of McDonalds

It is at this McDonald's that George finally uses the bathroom during his trip to California.

Dog Beach

While in California, Dave and Christie take George to a dog beach. Even though there are other dogs swimming in the ocean, George refuses to go anywhere near the water.

Poolgate

Poolgate is the term that Dave and Christie use to refer to the incident where Dave pulled George into their pool with him.



Phoenix

Phoenix is the town to which Dave takes Christie to have her labor induced after their first baby dies in vitro. It is also in this city that George's sister, Bella, lives.

Golf Cart

Dave buys himself a golf cart, which George loves to ride in, to drive around his neighborhood.

Molar Pregnancy

A molar pregnancy is the term for the medical condition that causes Christie to lose her second baby.

Guinness

Guinness is the type of beer that Paul likes to drink. It is also the name of the competition that Dave hopes that George will win.

Two Hundred and Forty-five Pounds

Two hundred and forty-five pounds is George's top weight.

Tape Measure

A tape measure is what Dave and friends originally use to measure George's height.

Newfoundland

It is a Newfoundland that is vying for the title of tallest dog.

Team George

Team George is the name that Dave and his friends give themselves as they try to get George admitted into the Guinness competition.

Giantgeorge.com

Giantgeogre.com is the domain name that Paul obtains for a website dedicated to Dave and Christie's dog.



Fruchthendler Elementary School

Fruchthendler Elementary School is the school into which Dave sneaks George, with the permission of the principal, to prove to the classmates of one of Paul's nephews that the child really does know George.

The Oprah Winfrey Show

The Oprah Winfrey Show is the television show to which George is invited to appear on if he is awarded the title of tallest dog.

Grilled Chicken

Grilled Chicken is the treat that Dave uses to get George to stand his tallest on the day of his official measurement.

October 22, 2009

October 22, 2009 is the day that the veterinarian officially measures George according to Guinness standards.

Giant George Total World Domination Campaign

When Christie talks to Dave about her frustration at being left at home alone to tend to an infant she refers to the work being done to secure the world record for George as the "Giant George Total World Domination Campaign."

Website Guest Book

It is on the guest book of George's website that unflattering posts begin appearing about George's campaign as the tallest dog. Dave and his friends finally decide to shut the guest book down in order to keep the unwelcome comments off the site.

A Green Stuffed Doll

Even though George will have nothing to do with Annabel, he falls in love with one of her toys, a green stuffed doll that plays a nursery song when squeezed.



Pfizer's Animal Health Division

When the animal health division of the drug company Pfizer holds its annual convention in Tucson, they invite George to take photos with the attending veterinarians.

February 15, 2010

Because the data that Dave and Christie send in on George's height is questioned, an adjudicator is sent from Guinness to make additional, official measurements. The measurement is set to take place Feb. 15, 2010.

A Pet Charter

A pet charter is a special airplane used to transport animals. When George is asked to attend the Oprah Winfrey Show, a pet charter is considered to get him there but only animals up to 150 pounds are allowed on these planes.

Petco

Petco is the store at which Dave stops at the last minute to buy a muzzle for George in preparation for the plane ride to Chicago.

TSA

The TSA, or Transportation Safety Administration, throws the last wrench in the plans to get George to Chicago because they require that each seat sold must have an accompanying ID. They aren't sure what to do about George since he will be taking up three seats but has only one ID.

Omni Chicago Hotel

Dave, Christie and George stay at the Omni Chicago Hotel courtesy of the Oprah Winfrey Show during their time in that city to appear on television.

Governor's Suite

Although Dave and Christie are set to stay in the Governor's Suite of the Omni, they wind up sleeping on rollaway beds so that George can sleep comfortably on the king sized bed.

Plate of Pastries

A plate of pastries is the food that George gets into before his debut on the Oprah Winfrey show when Dave leaves him alone for a minute to use the restroom.



Themes

George's Quirks

One of the themes that Dave often includes in his writing is his description of George's oddities. He not only writes about the way the dog has grown to be larger than any other dog, but also that he has strange personality quirks that Dave notices and plays upon in his writing.

Just being big opens George up for being an odd dog. He can only sleep comfortably on a queen-sized mattress. He also has the ability to steal food off the barbecue grill as well as the kitchen counters while still standing flat pawed on the floor. Dave notes that the dog is so big that his food dishes have to be raised up off the floor so that George doesn't strain his neck trying to reach down to them.

In addition to being big, George also has some unusual personality traits that Dave shares in his writing. George hates water. He will not go in the water with Dave and Christie at the dog beach at the ocean or in their backyard pool. Dave's attempt to convince George the water is not bad only makes George dislike it even more. George seems to have the same dislike for snow that he has for water. Although Christie and Dave know that George must need to go to the bathroom, he won't go during their trip to Chicago because there is snow on the ground. George almost gets his owners in trouble when he uses to bathroom in a church garden because this is the only spot he can find that isn't covered in snow. The Chicago trip is not the first time that George has shown off his choosiness when it comes to bathrooms. When the couple takes him to California with them they are worried because he doesn't use the bathroom for a full six hours into the road trip.

While George has odd things that he does not like, he also had oddities about the things that he does like. For instance, George gets almost unbearably excited every time that the doorbell rings. Dave indicates that the dog's barking and love of meeting people at the door sometimes takes their guests aback. George also loves paper. He shreds whatever paper he can get ahold of. Dave indicates that if the dog had been a human, he would have worked in a newspaper office because he likes paper so much. George also likes the way that Christie smells. He enjoys her scent so much that if she puts on lotion or perfume, he will compulsively lick it off.

Peoples' Reactions to George

Another focus of Dave's book is the way that people react to George. Because he is so big, Dave indicates that people often react badly to him. Some of the people who have less than negative reactions to George are they people who they meet in the dog park. Dave indicates these people tell Dave that he should allow George to run in the puppy part of the park because he is so big even though he is still a puppy in age. In fact,



Dave indicates that these people were often hateful in their insistence that George did not belong.

Dave is also bothered by the way that so many people seem to be scared of George. He reasons that people are scared of the dog because he is so big. Dave notices that sometimes when they are walking George in town, people with children will cross to the other side of the street. Dave wonders why people automatically assume that big dogs are threatening. Similarly, Dave is also irritated by the people who make snide jokes about George's size. He is particularly irritated by those who compare George to a horse and ask if he and Christie have a saddle for him.

More often than not, Dave indicates the people whom they meet are friendly and are thrilled to get to meet George. They exclaim over his size and how good natured that he is, but don't treat him as if he is a freak of nature. Some people, like Paul's nephew, Will, are delighted when George is able to make a surprise visit to his school, just to prove to Will's classmates that he really does know the huge dog.

Road to Guinness

Another theme with which Dave deals in his book is the process of getting George considered and accepted for the designation as the world's tallest dog. He teaches his reader that while he and his friends had decided to enter George into the competition just for fun, it turned out to be a great deal of work. Along with a written application, they had to provide a video of George and well as official, notarized measurements. Because George's measurements are challenged, he had to be measured again. This time the measuring has to be done with a different veterinarian and has to be overseen by an adjudicator from Guinness.

Dave also writes that while they are seeking the Guinness title for George, they encounter the ugly side of fame. Apparently, the owners of another dog vying for the spot as the world's tallest dog begins to make a case against George by attacking him and his owners. They make a point to make negative comments on each of George's social media pages describing how Dave and Christie are frauds, and that they are exploiting George for publicity. Dave and Christie and their friends decide to shut down the guest book on George's website to keep the negative comments off it, but are unable to do anything about the other comments except to hope their dog wins the title so that the poster can be proven wrong.

Style

Perspective

Dave writes his story from the first-person point of view. He tells the story of a family pet who grows not only into a Guinness record-breaking animal but also one who endears himself to Dave. Although Dave describes himself as a dog lover, he does admit that he is not as excited about including a puppy in their family as his wife, Christie, is. Dave's standpoint in the beginning of the book is one of just putting up with the animal. At one point, Dave becomes so frustrated with the work that he has to put into taking care of the dog that he makes up his mind that they must give the dog away. As he is trying to decide which perspective owner he should give George to, Dave realizes that even though the dog is a hassle, he is also a member of the family. It is at this point that Dave's view of George, who is the focus of the book, moves from one where George is an inconvenience to one where George is a member of the family.

The only real experience that Dave has with dogs is the toy poodles that his family had when he was growing up. Hence he doesn't qualify as an expert in the field of dog care. He allows Christie to do much of the dog research and decide what type of dog they want. Dave is generally just along for the ride. He learns about Great Danes through hands on experience as he spends time taking care of George. He shares with his reader what he has learned through his experiences with George in his story. Dave also shares his surprise with how quickly and how big George grows. Although with keeping the reader posted on how quickly George reaches a record-breaking size, Dave also explains the Guinness process. He details all the steps that he had to take to get George registered for the competition as well as the stumbling blocks that were encountered. The beauty of the story is that Dave and Christie did not seek out to raise a dog that they believed would be a record breaker. They just happened to pick the right dog who turned out to be a record breaker.

Tone

The tone of the story is one of humor. Dave looks back on his story and tells it so that he identifies the humor in the situations in which he finds himself. There is humor in the way that Dave describes George's habit of running for the door whenever he hears the doorbell. This same humor is used when Dave describes the way that he and Pete, the airport manager, try to find a place on the plane where George will fit comfortably. Dave also looks back with humor on the moments before the Oprah show appearance when he "lost" George, even though he probably wasn't feeling the situation was very humorous at the time it was happening.

While humor is the main tone of the story, there is also tension in the story. Some of the more tense moments come when Dave learns that George's measurements have been challenged and that they must be verified. Dave and Paul are worried about what sort of



person might be sent as the adjudicator from Guinness to complete the verification of George's measurements. Dave also worries that George will act up during the session and they won't be able to get a good measurement on him. A bit of the tension is relieved when Paul notices the framed certificate in Jamie's briefcase, but neither can fully relax until George's height is verified at forty-three inches.

As in any other story, Dave's story also has sadness. This sadness comes especially sharply when Christie loses her first baby during her twentieth week of pregnancy. The loss of the baby is included because it helps illustrate just how integral a part of the family George really was. He is able to comfort Christie in a way that Dave can't. When Christie has to go to the doctor out of town to have labor induced, she wants George to go with them.

Structure

For the most part, Dave tells his story in a linear fashion. He breaks from this linear timeline only at the beginning of the book where he introduces his story with the article that he had put in a newspaper advertising for a home for George. Dave starts at this point because it is a turning point in his relationship with the dog. Before this point, when Dave realizes that George is already a member of the family and that he can't just give him away, Dave had just been putting up with George. It is at this point that he acknowledges his emotional investment in the dog. After this introductory portion of the story, Dave backtracks to describe how he met Christie, the circumstances under which they married and why they came to have George in the first place.

The book is divided into twenty-two chapters and an epilogue. Each chapter is not only given a number designation but is also given a short, catchy title that introduces the subject matter of the subsequent chapter. The epilogue gives information about what George has been doing since he won the title. Notice also that throughout the book, Dave indicates several specific dates so the reader can keep up with the timeline of George's growth and the time in history when he received his title. The book covers from 2003 when Dave and Christie first meet up through their wedding in 2005, the purchase of George in 2006 and George winning the world record in 2010.



Quotes

"I looked back at the ad, to the two numbers I'd scribbled down, and I realized that, actually, I couldn't let him go. He was part of our family, and no matter what the hassle, no matter what the pain, one thing you don't give up on is family" (Chapter 1, p. 3).

"Twelve of these were entangled with one another, as young puppies tend to be, but our eyes were immediately drawn to one pup who was standing apart from the rest. He seemed the runt of the siblings, the outsider in the family, and that endeared him to Christie immediately" (Chapter 1, p. 11-12).

"As soon as we were out of sight - even before we'd left the kitchen - he'd start whimpering at the top of his lungs. He'd change instantly from being this cute little fella with blue eyes and winning ways to a caterwauling banshee from Hades" (Chapter 2, p. 20).

"We also had to be careful around paper. Georgie was developing a real personality, and it seemed that, if he'd been human, he'd have been office bound, for sure, or, if not, he'd have had a job working at USA Today" (Chapter 7, p. 75).

"There are moments in life that always stay with you, aren't there? Happy moments; sad moments; moments of great wonder. But those moments when you know that a loved one is suffering, and there's nothing you can do, aren't they the very worst kind" (Chapter 10, p. 110).

"This new doctor completely agreed with the diagnosis of Christie's doctor: our baby had multiple congenital abnormalities, and was very unlikely to survive" (Chapter 10, p. 113).

"There was no way you could overstate how vital a part he'd played in helping her get over what had happened to our baby. It was almost as if it had made a man of him" (Chapter 12, p. 130-131).

"He was a gentle giant precisely because he had nothing to prove; he could take on the world, and he knew it. He didn't need to be aggressive, or pushy, or run around asserting his authority. In dog terms, he really was top dog" (Chapter 12, p. 131).

"To say that George was in any way distressed at Annabel's arrival would be to paint a completely misleading picture. He wasn't distressed at all; he was just completely uninterested. From the moment she arrived home he made it clear as clear could be that he wanted absolutely nothing to do with her" (Chapter 14, p. 159).

"Where once it was me huffing irritably at the sound of our new puppy's incessant nocturnal whining, now the tables had definitely turned. And funniest of all was that he sounded just like me" (Chapter 14, p. 160).



"The story about George and the big photo that accompanied it filled the whole front page of the Arizona Daily Star — the very paper in which I'd placed that Puppy for Sale ad back in the spring of 2006" (Chapter 15, p. 164).

"Maybe it was a pretty slow news week - who knew? - but as soon as the paper hit the newsstands that morning of Friday, October 9, it was like a publicity floodgate opened, and the story was picked up by a whole bunch of other papers, both in print and online, across the world" (Chapter 15, p. 165).

"Yet pretty much every local print media and TV journalist turned up, many of them accompanied by photographers and videographers. And it was here that we threw down our challenge: we announced that we were certain George was the tallest dog in the world, and invited all challengers to a nose-to-nose face-off" (Chapter 15, p. 166).

"A Guinness World Record doesn't come easily. We kind of knew this, of course, because we'd already read a lot about it, and George and I had begun to put work into it" (Chapter 16, p. 171).

"While his mom was busy attending to the new, demanding creature who'd suddenly been recruited to our family, he could swan off with me— we were a bit like a pair of truants from high school, looking back— and once again be the center of attention" (Chapter 16, p. 173).

"Some things were so much more important than getting entries in the Guinness World Records: our growing little family, our baby, our pet, our ordinary lives" (Chapter 17, p. 180).

"But there now, for all to see, were these really spiteful comments, saying not-so-nice things about me, the Giant George Team and, most unkindly, we thought, about George himself. These comments questioned his height and weight and said he couldn't possibly be that tall or big. In short, they said we, and he, were frauds, and that we were exploiting George for the publicity" (Chapter 17, p. 183).

"Now the whole unpleasant business fell into place: the blog belonged to one of the people whose dog was vying for the same Guinness record that we'd submitted George for" (Chapter 17, p. 184).

"We felt we could see his mind working; not only had she now been accepted into our 'pack,' it seemed he also understood that she was the pack's youngest member, and so was in need of, and due, our boy's affection and protection. We couldn't have had a better Christmas present" (Chapter 17, p. 187).

"Though it had never crossed our minds that there was another record up for grabs, Jamie told us that George was not only the World's Tallest Living Dog, but also the World's Tallest Dog Ever. Not that George cared how many records he had; he was just happy about the chicken" (Chapter 18, p. 204).



"I told Shantel to reassure them that he really was a gentle giant, that he had a bladder capacity that could probably bust a few world records of its own, and that I didn't doubt for a second that he'd deal with air travel the same way he dealt with everything else - without the least bit of fuss" (Chapter 19, p. 208-209).

"After all, and it had never seemed so clear to me as that night, he might be an entry in Guinness World Records, have a fan club, a website, a whole bunch of followers around the world; he might be unique, and a record-breaker and very, very famous; but the only thing that mattered was that he was part of our family - always had been, always would be. That was really what he was" (Chapter 22, p. 250).



Topics for Discussion

Describe the way that Dave's attitude toward George has changed from the time they first get him to the end of the novel.

Do some research on the Great Dane. In what ways is George's personality like that of a typical Great Dane? How is it different?

Consider the way that Dave is the one who winds up taking care of George even though he wasn't the one who really wanted a dog to start with. Do you believe this is fair to Dave? Consider also that the dog was Dave's gift to Christie for agreeing to move to Tucson, does it make it any more fair to Dave since he is getting to live in his hometown?

Which one of George's odd traits do you find most interesting? Why?

Why do you believe that George is so indifferent to Annabel when she first comes home from the hospital?

Consider the way that Dave regularly reminds his readers how emotionally sensitive George is. How is this a benefit to the family when Christie loses her first baby? In what other ways does George's emotional sensitivity surface?

Why is it ironic that George was the runt of his litter of puppies?

Consider the problems that Dave and Christie have encountered with their huge dog. Would you be willing to live with a dog like this? Why or why not?