

The Lottery Rose Study Guide

The Lottery Rose by Irene Hunt

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Plot Summary

The Lottery Rose by Irene Hunt focuses on the difficult life of a young boy faced with domestic abuse. After he is taken out of his abusive situation, he must heal himself with the help of new friends and people who care for him. He also learns how to forgive and not quickly judge others.

Georgie Burgess is a seven-year-old boy living in Tampa, FL. At school Georgie seems gruff, mean, and bullish. He talks back to teachers and gets into fights. Quickly the reader learns that Georgie is abused by his mother and stepfather. One day, while at the grocery store, Georgie is given a lottery ticket by Mrs. Sims, a clerk. Georgie feels as though he will definitely win. When the lottery drawing occurs, Georgie wins a rosebush. He is extremely excited by his prize. He runs home with his rosebush and is upset to see Steve, his mother's boyfriend. Steve beats Georgie with a leg of a chair. Georgie passes out from the brutality of the beating. When he wakes up, he is helped by a policeman and a nurse. Georgie is sent to live with Mrs Sims and her husband as their foster son. The court then decides Georgie should be sent to a boy's school.

Georgie arrives at school and meets Sister Mary Angela, a kind nun, who runs the school. He also meets a new friend, Timothy. Georgie was allowed to bring his rosebush to school. He gets excited when he sees a beautiful garden in which he wants to plant his rosebush. Everyone tells Georgie he may not plant the rosebush in Mrs Harper's garden. Mrs Harper lost her son and husband in a terrible car accident. The garden is her only memory of them, so she allows no one from the school to disturb the garden. Georgie does not listen. He sneaks out of school one night and buries his rosebush in Mrs. Harper's garden. The next day Georgie discovers that Mrs. Harper has ripped his plant out of the ground. He marches back to the garden and begins replanting the bush when Mrs. Harper approaches Georgie. As she yells at him she sees the scars from his beatings. Georgie passes out from a fever.

Georgie must spend a lot of time recovering from his wounds. He learns through Tim and Sister Mary Angela that Mrs Harper is sorry and has replanted his rosebush. Georgie is also visited by Robin and Mr. Collier, Mrs. Harper's son and father. Mr. Collier decides to teach Georgie to read. Time passes and Georgie gets to know Mr Collier and Robin better. He acts like a big brother to Robin. Mrs. Harper decides to pay for Georgie's tuition at the school and to go to Georgie's choir show. Georgie is slow to forgive her, but slowly realizes that he likes (maybe even) loves Mrs. Harper like a mother. Just as Georgie feels he can completely forgive her, disaster strikes. Robin wanders into a pond and drowns. Mrs Harper and Georgie grow closer through their own mutual losses.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The Lottery Rose by Irene Hunt focuses on the difficult life of a young boy faced with domestic abuse. After he is taken out of his abusive situation, he must heal himself with the help of new friends and people who care for him. He also learns how to forgive and not quickly judge others.

Chapter one begins with Georgie at the library. He is hunched over his desk, pinching his shoulder blades together to get rid of the pain from the stretched wounds on his back. Calmly, the school librarian, Ellen Ames, asks Georgie if he will bring his favorite book back to the library. She will let him check the book out again, but the school policy only allows students to keep a book checked out for two weeks at a time. Georgie loves this particular book because it is filled with colors and pictures of a beautiful garden. He spends hours staring at the book and never reads it. He has repeated first grade two times and still does not know how to read. When Georgie reads the book, he feels calmer, and safely away from Steve and his mother. He also feels protected against Miss Cressman, his teacher. Georgie hates Miss Cressman because she is mean to him and thinks he is a bad child. Earlier in the year, he set a fire underneath her new car. Georgie thinks that Miss Cressman moved him to the back of the classroom so she could ignore him. She also lets the rest of the class laugh and giggle at him and does little to protect Georgie.

Georgie's home life is not much better than his school life. When he was a young baby, his mother's boyfriend purposely threw hot coffee on Georgie head and neck. He not only has these old scars, but has fresh bruises from Steve today. Steve comes to the apartment every couple of weeks. Whenever Steve visits, Georgie feels he must hide in his room or out on the fire escape to not get beaten. Georgie goes to school with the bruises but never tells anyone who has beaten him. He always claims he got into a fight with kids in the neighborhood out of fear that Steve will kill him for telling. The pictures in his books are the only thing that make him happy.

During lunch time that day, Georgie slowly enters his mother's apartment, fearful that he will find Steve there. Instead, he finds his mother passed out on the couch. She wakes up to apologize to Georgie for the beating. She promises not to let Steve back in but Georgie has heard these lies before. He knows Steve will be back. Georgie has not eaten in two days, so he asks his mother to give him food money. She happily does and Georgie rushes to the store. There, he sees Mrs Sims, who gives Georgie a small card with numbers. She tells Georgie that there is going to be a lottery drawing for prizes at the grocery store. Georgie becomes excited because he has something to look forward to. He happily runs all the way home.



Chapter 1 Analysis

As the novel begins, the reader learns that Georgie is not the boy he appears to be on the surface. While the teachers at school are cruel to him and the students laugh at him, he hides behind his force and anger to get through life. Georgie is hiding a big secret for a seven-year-old boy. His mother and boy friend abuse him while no one does anything to help. Child abuse and its effects become one of the central themes of the novel. To hide what has happened to him at home, Georgie builds up a hard shell around himself. He also acts out with aggression because he cannot take his frustration out on the adults that hurt him. This causes him to get into fights at school. The only time Georgie feels safe from school and the adults that do not protect him is by looking at his books. These books offer him an escape from his real life.

Instead of protecting Georgie, his mother aides in Steve's abuse. She also does not make sure that her son has the basic items he needs to survive. She forgets to feed him and does not care that he ditches school or is disrespectful to his teachers. All she wants is to please her boyfriend and drink alcohol. She blames Georgie for the beatings he gets from Steve. She threatens him to keep quiet so that he feels like he can never tell anyone about Steve's abuse. This leads Georgie to understand that even though someone is your mother, it does not mean they love you or will take care of you.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Georgie walks down the street with a new sense of hope. Never before was he excited about his life. He is certain that after the drawing, his life will change. His mother awakens upon his return and tells Georgie she is too tired to cook him his lunch. Georgie makes himself a sandwich and decides not to return to school for the day. He walks to the park where he daydreams about his prize. He suddenly becomes worried. Whatever he wins, Steve will accuse him of stealing. Steve will destroy the prize or take it away from him. As Steve stays away from the apartment, Georgie gets less worried about his prize being taken away. Georgie stays at home with his mother, who complains that having Georgie ruined her life. She also thinks he needs to be a man and accept that people will knock him around. She was knocked around when she was younger. From this talk, Georgie knows that Steve will be coming back soon.

Finally Saturday arrives. As his mother sleeps, Georgie goes to the grocery store. He stands next to Mrs. Sims who has become worried that she gave Georgie a little too much hope in the lottery. They listen to the numbers being called. George and Mrs. Sims are excited when they hear Georgie's numbers. The grocery store owner hands Georgie a rose bush. Georgie is amazed. This is just like the rose from his book, Georgie is so excited that he takes his book and runs through the neighborhood holding it. The hot Florida sun is pounding down on him, but he keeps going. Finally, he stops when he gets to a nice neighborhood. He wonders if he should plant his rosebush here, but then realizes he might not ever be able to make it back to visit. He finally returns home and cautiously open the apartment door. To his dread, Steve gets up from the couch and Georgie begins screaming.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Georgie is extremely excited about getting his prize. One might think that he was expecting a gift of money, but Georgie is genuinely happy because the rosebush resembles the ones he fantasizes about in his novels. Finally he has something he can call his own. He is able to nurture the rosebush in a way that he has never been cared for. Before Georgie can be completely happy about his new rosebush, however, he is fearful of Steve and how Steve will punish him. This proves the psychological damage that Georgie has been forced to endure a long with the physical abuse.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

When Georgie finally gains consciousness, a kind nurse is staring over him. Steve had beaten him with the leg of a chair. Someone in the building finally called the cops on Steve and Georgie's mother. She is dressing his leg and tending to a deep wound in his scalp. Also in the apartment are a young police officer and the janitor, who is cleaning up the mess that Steve left in the apartment. The officer tries to get Georgie to name Steve as the person who beat him, but all Georgie can remember are the threats against his life if he ever tells. Georgie begins to beg for his rosebush, which the janitor must pull from the garbage. Georgie takes no notice of the thorns in the bush as he presses his face into the rosebush.

While in the hospital, Georgie's wounds on his neck, back, and head are cared for. He also has a broken leg. The nurses even water his rosebush. Mrs. Sims comes to visit him and tells him that when he is better, he will come and live with her and her husband as a foster child. Georgie moves in with the Sims. He is happy there but keeps to himself. He gets lonely when the Sims are at work every day. Mrs. Sims then takes Georgie to see a social worker and judge. The judge has decided the Georgie should go to an all boys school where he can learn and be with other boys his age.

When the time comes for Georgie to leave, Mrs. Sims decides to go with him and the social worker. They drive Georgie to the school, which is a huge building but not very attractive. It used to be a women's college and a famous writer lived in what used to be the president's house. The trio is greeted by Sister Mary Angela. She chooses to have Timothy, a student, show Georgie around the school while she speaks with Mrs. Sims and the social worker. As they walk, some of the boys tease Georgie, but Timothy tells Georgie to forget the mean kids. As the boys walk, they see a beautiful garden. Georgie knows instantly that he wants his rosebush to live here. He is shocked when Timothy tells him that no one can go to the garden or the house. It belongs to Mrs. Harper, whose husband and son died in a car accident. She no longer allows any of the school boys over to her house or lets them into her garden. Next, the two boys go to chapel, but Georgie sneaks out to look at Mrs. Harper's garden.

When Sister Mary Angela asks Georgie where he would like to plant his rosebush, he insists it has to be Mrs. Harper's garden. Sister refuses and wants to find another place at the school. Georgie is stubborn and they decide to talk about the problem tomorrow.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Finally some adults in Georgie's building have called the police. Often they had turned a deaf ear to what happens in Georgie's apartment. Everyone has seen the bruises on Georgie but no one has reported it to the police or asked Georgie what has happened.



Georgie suffers the effects of a very brutal beating from Steve and all of the abuse is brought to light. In this section, Georgie becomes obsessed with the rosebush. To him, it is the only thing that provides him any sort of comfort. He buries his face in its thorns even though they stab him in the face. The bush takes the place of a mother or father for Georgie. He can care for the bush in a way that no one has ever cared for him.

Mrs Sims and her husband prove themselves to be sweet and kind people. They would like to take care of Georgie for a longer amount of time but cannot because they cannot afford to raise a child. For a brief period, Georgie is allowed to see what it would be like to live with a real family. Georgie likes the Sims but starts to feel lonely when they go to work. When he learns he will go to a school with boys his age, he is nervous. As long as he can bring his rosebush, he thinks he will be okay.

After arriving at the school and seeing Mrs. Harper's garden, Georgie is sure it is where his rosebush should be. It is just like the garden in the book, the garden that brought Georgie so much comfort and an escape from all the evil he experienced in his life. Georgie becomes very stubborn and aggressive at the prospect of not being able to put the rosebush in Mrs. Harper's garden. He will simple not take no for an answer.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

The chapter begins with Sister checking on Georgie. She offers to place the rosebush in a special place at the front of the school or have Timothy and Georgie work on creating a garden. Georgie says okay, but has no intention of putting his rosebush in either of those places. Georgie develops a plan to go over to the Harper's house when Mrs. Harper is not there. As he approaches the house he meets Rosita, the Harper's housekeeper. Georgie's appearance startles her and she tells him to go out back and speak with Mr Collier, Mrs. Harper's father. Georgie asks if he can plant his rosebush in the garden. Mr. Collier is very kind and nice to Georgie but firmly insists that he cannot plant the rosebush there. Mr. Collier takes the time to introduce Georgie to Robin, Harper's grandchild. Robin is mentally retarded, but Georgie is not cruel or mean to Robin.

Georgie goes back to school, but continues to think about the garden. Instead of going to eat with the other boys, he sits on the curb staring at the garden. When it is time for everyone to go to sleep, he chooses to stay up. He creeps outside and over to the Harper's garden. He digs a hole in the garden and plants his rosebush. Georgie then runs back to school and falls asleep happy.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Again, Georgie's attitude is off putting and stubborn. He only wants the best for his rosebush, so he has forced it into Mrs. Harper's garden. Georgie acts as if it is his right to put his rosebush where ever he would like. Georgie has not been entitled to a lot but he thinks he is entitled to having the best for his rosebush. While everyone kindly refuses him, Georgie does not seem to understand that just as the rosebush is sacred to him, the garden is sacred to Mrs. Harper. Although he has been wronged, it is not his right to hurt Mrs. Harper's garden.

All of the adults around the school see the scars that Georgie is forced to bear. They actually ask him whether or not he is alright and refuse to ignore what has happened to him. This is very different from the adults that were around Georgie previously. These people care when a little boy seems hurt or abused. Too many times, people do not pay enough attention or care enough to save the life or well being of someone else.



Chapters 5 & 6

Chapters 5 & 6 Summary

The next morning, Timothy wakes Georgie by telling him the Mrs. Harper ripped his rosebush out of her garden. She came storming into the school to speak with Sister Mary Angela. Hearing the news, Georgie runs out to the field and grabs his rosebush with his one good arm. He runs back over to the Harper's garden and begins to replant the bush when he notices all of the flower bulbs he damaged last night. He tries to repair the damage when Mrs Harper comes storming into the garden. She yells at Georgie. All she can think about is how he ruined her husband's surprise to her. As she continues screaming at Georgie, he gets extremely upset. He collapses on the ground and begins threatening her. He rolls on the ground and tears his shirt. Underneath she sees horrible cuts, welts, bruises and scars. Some of the welts are oozing from infection. Mrs. Harper begins to question who inflicted the wounds on Georgie, but he is irate and enraged with fever. He grabs onto his plant and hugs it for dear life. He passes out and does not realize that Mrs Harper picks him up and carries him back to school.

Georgie's fever runs high for five days. On the sixth day, he feels well enough to notice Mrs. Harper, Molly, bending over his bed. He begins to panic, realizing that she is so close to him. Sister Mary Angela tries to explain that Mrs Harper has replanted the rosebush and been to visit him often. Georgie begins to hate Sister and think that she is a liar, just as his mother used to say that Steve would never hurt her again. Sister brings in Timothy to assure Georgie that his rosebush has been replanted. They both promise to take him to see the plant when he is feeling better.

Sister Mary Angela comes for Georgie and asks for him to listen to music with her. They begin to talk about music and God. Sister wonders what George would ask God to do for him. Georgie states that he would want God to kill Steve, his mother, and Mrs. Harper. Sister tells God she is sorry that Georgie cannot forgive Mrs. Harper. Georgie wonders if he will be able to listen to Sister's music again and she agrees. Timothy comes to visit Georgie again and gives him a little history on the Harpers. Before Paul and his father died, Mrs Harper would invite the boys from the school over to play with Paul. They even started building a bird house. They begin to discuss Robin and how he is a sweet young boy. None of the boys at the school really say anything bad about Robin.

Chapters 5 & 6 Analysis

The reader finally sees a different side to Mrs. Harper. Before she was the sad, hard, angry widow who was unfeeling or caring to other's pain. When she sees what has happened to Georgie, she realizes that he is simply a boy who has been treated so badly by all those around him that she cannot bear to see him suffer anymore. Mrs Harper is appalled at the thought of hitting Georgie.



When Georgie first arrives at the school, his health is very delicate. Arguing with Mrs. Harper sends him over the edge and causes him to relapse into his sickness. The events in the garden as well as the fever cause a deformed view of Mrs. Harper to develop in Georgie's mind. This image will remain fixed in Georgie's head for a long time. Georgie relates Mrs Harper's cruel actions with those of his mother and Steve. To him, she is no better than either of the people that made his life so difficult.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Before supper that night, Georgie has two other visitors, Robin and Mr. Collier. Georgie is excited to see both of them. Mr. Collier has brought Georgie some books to read. He tells Mr. Collier that he likes books with pictures inside. He also admits that he never learned how to read because no one ever offered him a book he found interesting. Georgie really likes the book that Mr. Collier has brought over for him to read. Georgie invites Robin to sit with him on his bed and puts his arm around Robin. The two settle in together while Mr. Collier reads them the book, letting them look at all the pictures. After they have gone through the book, Georgie begins reading some of the passages by memorizing the words and sounds that Mr. Collier made.

Mr. Collier soon understands that Georgie will read if he is interested in the subject matter. He begins to write a story about Georgie, Robin and his rosebush. As Mr. Collier writes, he reads the story to Georgie. Georgie begins to attempt reading because he is so excited by the story. He becomes upset however when Mr. Collier tries to write Mrs. Harper into the story. He insists that she is not a part of his garden or story. Mr. Collier decides he will ask Sister Mary Angela if she can be allowed to teach Georgie to read. Georgie decides he would very much like to spend time with Mr. Collier and Robin, but not with Mrs. Harper.

Georgie meets with Sister Mary Angela and they are both excited for Georgie's new tutor. Sister reveals that Mr. Collier used to be a professor who trained men and women to become teachers. They then go to service together where Sister Mary Angela plays the organ. After service, Timothy asks if Georgie may take part in the other boy's sleep-out. Judge O-Niel sent over air mattresses, so the youngest boys will have a sleep out at the end of the corridor. Georgie is jealous he cannot partake, but Sister Mary Angela finally says that he can join if he promises to stay calm and rest.

That night, all the boys that are Timothy and Georgie's age gather for their sleep-out. They take turns telling each other scary stories. Georgie calmly listens. The boys also tell jokes. Georgie realizes he has no stories or jokes but promises to share the boys' stories with his rosebush. Soon, everyone quiets down to go to sleep, but Georgie misses his rosebush. He decides to go and visit it. In the cool night air, he feels excited to see his bush. He tells the bush about reading, the sleep-out, Robin and Mr. Collier and everything new that has been happening to him. Finally he decides to lay down in the dirt and sleep next to his bush.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Georgie is finally able to excel when someone takes an active interest in his life and his education. For so long he is unable to read because no one wants to help him in the



way that Mr Collier is able to. In school, Miss Cressman was too concerned with making Georgie behave and pay for his bad actions that helping him read. Mr. Collier believes that the best way to learn is to actually get children excited about learning and reading. Mr Collier feels no hate towards Georgie and truly wants him to succeed in life. Miss Cressman, on the other hand, only wanted him to fail.

Georgie's mental view of Mrs Harper has still not changed. Although Sister begs him to find forgiveness in his heart, he cannot make himself see her differently. Thus, forgiveness becomes an important theme throughout the book. Will Georgie ever be able to forgive Mrs. Harper? After his sickness, she replanted the rosebush. Everyone tells Georgie so but he refuses to believe. Even when Mr. Collier tries to write Mrs Harper into the story, Georgie refuses to forgive. As the plot continues, it will be necessary for Georgie to learn the power of forgiveness.

This section also introduces the closer relationship of Robin and Georgie. Right away the two share a bond. Georgie know what it is like to be an outsider. He takes a liking to Robin even though Robin is Mrs. Harper's son.



Chapters 8 & 9

Chapters 8 & 9 Summary

Chapter eight is told from the point of view of Robin. Robin has memories of Paul and how Paul would always force him to try. Paul would get Robin to talk and be around others. Robin says that he has not forgotten Paul and misses him very much. Recently, Robin noticed an older boy that reminds him of Paul. He is excited when his grandfather takes him to see the new boy and read stories. This new older boy is very kind to Robin. Robin likes the way it feels when Georgie puts his arm around Robin. This makes Robin want to continue hanging around Georgie.

In chapter nine it has been many weeks since Georgie arrived at school. Already, his face looks much better. His casts have been removed and his attitude has improved. During many months over the summer Georgie and Mr Collier have worked together to teach Georgie how to read. Sister Mary Angela lets Georgie know that he is going to be able to stay at school because someone paid for his tuition. She then reveals that it was Mrs. Harper who decided to pay Georgie's tuition. Again, Sister tries to talk Georgie into forgiving Mrs. Harper, but he insists he cannot help being mad at her. In the meantime, Georgie tries to completely ignore Mrs. Harper. He spends a lot of time with Mr. Collier and Robin and acts as Robin's interpreter. A lot of the time, he is the only one that understands what Robin is saying. Mr. Collier gets worried about Georgie spending too much of his time with Robin. So he tells Georgie to try to make friends with the boys his age at school.

As Georgie begins to spend more time with the boys at school, he realizes that he might have to answer more questions about himself. As all the boys swim one day, one of the boys, Richie, hounds Georgie to take off his shirt. When Richie grabs Georgie's shirt, he punches Richie. After the two boys have been reprimanded by Sister, Timothy begs Georgie to tell him what happened to his body. Georgie finally shows Tim his back. He explains how he received all the scars and Tim promises not to tell anyone.

Chapters 8 & 9 Analysis

It is interesting to have the novel shift gears and have a little bit more of a focus on Robin. Since his brother's death, Robin has not felt entirely sure or happy with life or himself. Whenever Paul was around, there was someone to push him to be better. Now, there is no one asking him to try harder. Robin feels a little lost without his big brother. More and more he is feeling trapped in his own world. This is an interesting perspective for the novel because it gives insight to how someone who cannot always share their emotions might convey them. No one ever says what specific condition Robin has, just that he is slow or mentally retarded. So many times, these people are not able to have a say in their lives.



Again the theme of forgiveness returns to the story. Mrs Harper has paid for Georgie's tuition. Even though she is related to two people he has come to care a lot about, he does not want to hear anything good of Mrs Harper. He feels frustrated with his anger but cannot get over the ill feelings he has for the woman.

Finally Georgie feels as though he can trust someone enough to reveal to them the horror that occurred in his home all those months ago. Finally he has found a true friend in Tim and feels he can bare his scars to someone else's eyes. By showing Tim the scars, he finally admits what happened to him. He could finally say that Steve was beating him without feeling threatened. This acts as a release for Georgie. He is one step closer to becoming healed.



Chapters 10 & 11

Chapters 10 & 11 Summary

One day Mr Collier suggests that Georgie helps Old Eddie at work in chapter ten. Old Eddie is Mrs. Harper's gardener. At first, Old Eddie is not excited to work with Georgie, but when Georgie proves he has a love of gardening, Old Eddie warms up to him as much as Old Eddie can. Georgie begins to take on Old Eddie's mannerisms. They also talk about Paul and Robin. Paul was loved by his mother because he was special and bright. Mrs. Harper also loves Robin because although he may never shine, he is her son and important to her. For some reason, Georgie begins to get jealous of Paul and the relationship he had with his mother. Sometimes they talk about Mrs Harper's forgetfulness, but when Georgie is rude to Mrs. Harper, Old Eddie yells at him. After Old Eddie's reprimand, Georgie begins to think of Mrs. Harper as Robin's mother. But Georgie hates mothers. To him, mothers are not good. His own mother was awful towards him.

In chapter eleven, Sister Mary Angela meets with each of the boys that are Georgie's age to check on their progress at school. When she meets with Georgie and Timothy she asks them if they would like to sing for her. After listening to both of their voices, she puts the two boys in choir. One day, when Tim and Georgie were walking back to school from the playground, Mrs Harper approaches them. Tim invites her to the choir concert. Georgie says nothing but secretly hopes that she and Robin do come to the show. He can sense that Mrs Harper is lonely, just like he is often lonely.

At the choir show, Georgie gets excited when he sees Mrs. Harper walk in. She is wearing a nice new outfit and looks very pretty. He wants to impress her with his voice. After the concert, Mrs Harper thanks all of the choir boys for coming to her show. Georgie hides from her because he is shy. The next day, Sister asks all the boys Georgie's age if they would like to have a drama class and put on a play at the end of the year. The class will be taught by Mrs Harper. Georgie chooses not to join in because he still does not think he can like her. He gets angry that he is missing out on the play.

Chapters 10 & 11 Analysis

Georgie finds happiness in his work with Old Eddie. Not only can he watch out for his rosebush, but he can also learn how to make the entire garden completely beautiful. In Mr Collier and Old Eddie, Georgie has two male figures that are a positive influence on him. This is great for a young man who has had no positive adult male figures in his life. Georgie begins to copy both men as he figures out who he is.

Georgie finds that he has a talent for music and becomes excited when he can use his music to entertain Mrs Harper. He is slowly opening up to her. He is excited for the chance to make her happy and perform for her and Robin. Has Georgie had a change

of heart? Does he understand that Mrs Harper is not cruel like his mother? While he still acts shy, Georgie is learning that he can forgive.



Chapters 12 & 13

Chapters 12 & 13 Summary

All of the boys that chose not to participate in the class sat and watched all the rehearsals in chapter twelve. At first Georgie swore he would not get excited about the play, but he soon learns that he is very much excited about it. He secretly begins learning all of the lines. At night he practices the lines in his room and then practices in front of Mr. Collier and Robin. Tim gives him the gossip from the play. Richie, who is playing the Mad Hatter, has been teasing Kevin, who will play Alice in Alice in Wonderland. Kevin gets so upset over the teasing that he punches Richie in the face. Richie is now missing teeth and Kevin refuses to act as Alice. Mrs Harper has pulled the skit, even though it was her favorite.

Georgie meets with Sister Mary Angela and reveals that he wishes he had never hated Mrs. Harper. He also wishes he could act the part of the Mad Hatter in the play but is unable to ask Mrs. Harper for the part. He realizes how special it was to her, because it was Paul's role before he died. The next day, while everyone else gets ready for the play, Georgie sits by himself. Finally Mr Collier approaches him and says that he and Mrs. Harper overheard Georgie's wish to join the play. He says Georgie can play the Hatter since he knows the line. When the play opens, Georgie and all the other boys are shocked to see that Mrs. Harper is playing Alice. Georgie is excited by the play and happy about his interaction with Mrs. Harper. After the show, he goes to the rosebush and explains his happiness concerning Mrs. Harper. He even admits to the rosebush that he would like Mrs. Harper to be his mother.

Chapter thirteen centers on the actions of Robin. Since Robin has been spending so much time with Georgie, he has gotten a lot more active and excited about life. He sees Rosita and asks her to take him to the feed the ducks. Rosita tells him to wait and has him go with Amanda. Amanda also tells Robin to wait for Georgie. Robin then finds Old Eddie, who tells him to wait for Georgie too. Amanda then tells Robin to wait by the gate that Georgie enters from. Robin goes to the gate but then walks past it. Soon, he finds himself near the pond where the ducks live. He holds out his hand the way Georgie showed him, but is then attacked by all of the ducks. They push him into the water and Robin drowns.

Chapters 12 & 13 Analysis

The play finally gives Georgie the chance to realize that all along he has wished that Mrs Harper was really his mother. She is the mother of Robin, so he feels a connection with her. Georgie feels sorrow over his actions and wishes he had never had such awful feelings toward Mrs Harper. When he is given the opportunity to act in the play, he gets extremely excited. He can finally show Mrs. Harper that he likes and maybe even loves

her. He wants to impress her in the same way that a son wants to make a parent happy. Georgie has also learned the power of forgiveness.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Chapter fourteen deals with the aftermath of Robin's death. Everyone in the Harper household as well as the school are very sad. Georgie cannot feel anything but sorrow. He does not know what to do with himself. Sister Mary Angela asks him to sing at the funeral because Mrs. Harper wishes it. Georgie tries to sing, but cannot get the words to come out and runs away at the funeral. After the funeral, there is a small service for Robin at Mrs. Harper's house. Once everyone leaves, Georgie runs to the garden and digs out his rosebush. He then lugs the rosebush over to Robin's grave site. Georgie begins digging. He is getting tired when a car pulls up and Mrs Harper steps out. She came looking for him when everyone discovered he was missing. She asks Georgie to be sure that he wants to move the bush. Georgie is sure and she helps him dig. As they drive back, Georgie tells Mrs. Harper that he wishes she was his mother. She tells him that she thinks of him as hers. The two drive together away from Robin's grave.

Chapter 14 Analysis

The novel ends on a sad yet hopeful note. While Robin is dead, Mrs Harper has found a new son and Georgie has found a new mother. The ending of the novel is very open ended. The two characters drive off back to school, but one cannot be sure what kind of permanent form their relationship will be. Either way, Mrs Harper feels like she can help a lost boy while Georgie has learned to forgive. He is also ready to love someone that could be an amazing mother to him.



Characters

Georgie Burgess

Georgie Burgess is a seven year-old-boy from Tampa Florida. As the book begins, he seems to be an aggressive, mean boy. He has repeated the first grade twice and still does not know how to read. In school, his teachers take no interest in him and his schoolmates laugh at him whenever he struggles in class. Georgie appears to be a bully that no one can control, but it turns out that he has been abused at home ever since he was a child. His mother lets his stepfather beat him relentlessly. No one does anything to help Georgie and the boy will not admit that he is being beaten out of fear. The only thing that Georgie can connect with is a rosebush that he won in a lottery. The rosebush reminds him of the beauty of a garden that he has found in a book. The book allows for Georgie to escape into a world where others can no longer hurt him.

Georgie's character allows the author to explore the theme of forgiveness. While Georgie will never be able to forgive his mother, he can find it in his heart to forgive a kind and beautiful person that he prejudged before he really knew her. At first, Georgie hates Mrs. Harper because she rips his rosebush out of her garden. In his mind, Mrs Harper is like his own mother, an adult that lies to him and continues to hurt him and everything he loves. As Georgie learns to trust other people, he sees the love that Robin and Mrs Harper share. He realizes that he wishes he would have never hated Mrs Harper and has found it in his heart to forgive her.

Molly Harper

Molly Harper owns the house and garden that are close to Georgie's new school. Molly has suffered much in her life. While her family has money, it is not always what one needs to make them happy. Molly lost her husband and son in a car accident. Although it has been a little while since the accident, she is unable to forget her two beloveds. Molly works in her garden every day because it is what her husband loved to do. Being in the garden reminds her of him. This is why she takes offense to Georgie's decision to plant his rosebush in her garden. She feels like he should not have betrayed the one place she holds sacred.

Contrary to her original feels for Georgie, Mrs Harper learns to love him. When she discovers that he has been beaten and treated so poorly, she feels like this boy needs the love she has been wanted to share. She watches him grow and sees how much he is like Paul. Through Georgie, Molly is able to forget her grief for a short while. She thinks she can help him and love him in a way that he has never experienced. Being able to love and help Georgie will also help her mend a part of her that has been in pain for so long.



Mr. Collier

Mr. Collier is Molly's father. He is an intelligent, smart, and kind older man. After the deaths of Paul and Mr Harper, Mr Collier moves in with his daughter. He wants to help raise Robin and as well as help his daughter get over the loss of her husband. Mr. Collier was a professor at a prestigious university. He taught young people how to become teachers. He decides to help Georgie learn how to read and is successful because he brings in books Georgie will be interested in. He also writes stories that Georgie is interested in reading. Mr. Collier sees that Georgie is interested in learning and creates a special curriculum for him. He also tries to help Georgie see that he should forgive Molly.

Robin Harper

Robin is Molly's youngest son. He is mentally delayed, and many people cannot understand what he is saying. When Paul was alive, Robin would rely on his older brother to help him. After Paul's death, Robin feels trapped within himself. It does not seem like anyone else can connect with him in the same way. All the boys at Georgie's school love Robin because of his sweet and kind demeanor. Georgie takes an instant liking to Robin because both of them cannot read. With Georgie's help, Robin feels as though he can communicate better and do more things. Robin becomes so adventurous that one day he wanders off into the forest to find the pond where he and Georgie feed the ducks. When Robin tries to feed them alone, he is pulled under the water and dies.

Sister Mary Angela

Sister Mary Angela runs the all-boys school that Georgie is sent to. Sister has a love for music and plays the organ whenever possible. She also knows how to run the school with a kind, but strict personality. She does not have to be brutal to show that she controls the school. Sister takes a very special approach with Georgie because she knows what he has suffered through. She is able to adapt herself to what each student needs.

Timothy

Sister Mary Angela calls Timothy her public relations specialist because he is so friendly and talkative. He likes to sing, act, and help Georgie in his garden. Right away, Timothy feels a connection with Georgie and they become friends. Tim is the only person that Georgie has ever shown his scared back to. Tim promises not to tell anyone about what has happened to Georgie.



Old Eddie

Old Eddie is Mrs Harper's gardener. He takes Georgie under his wing and helps him learn who to garden properly. Old Eddie is sharp and stern, he seems like her does not like Georgie at first, but the reader learns this is a front.

Anita

Anita works in the Harper household. She is a housekeeper but also sometimes looks after Robin when Mrs Harper and Mr Collier are not around. She thinks that Georgie is bothersome at first, but learns to like him.

Amanda

Amanda is described as a very lazy girl that works in the Harper's household. She helps to look after Robin.

Richie

Richie is a bully at Georgie's new school. He tries to force Georgie to show his back while all the boys are swimming, but Georgie refuses to. Georgie punches Richie for his intrusiveness.

Steve

Steve is Georgie's mother's boyfriend. He is described as being intolerant and angry. He often beats Georgie for being around. Steve is arrested after he beat Georgie with the leg of a chair.

Rennie Burgess

Georgie's mother, Rennie, is an alcoholic. She cares nothing for her son and would rather spend all of her time with her boyfriend, Steve. She lets Steve beat Georgie. Sometimes she apologizes to Georgie and promises to be a better mother, but Georgie learns these are all lies.

Mrs. Sims

Mrs. Sims is a kind woman that works at the grocery store. She has always been concerned for Georgie. When Georgie almost dies, she agrees to take care of him as his foster mother. She is upset that she and her husband are not younger because they would like to keep Georgie.



Objects/Places

Georgie's apartment

This is where many of Steve's beatings of Georgie occur.

The grocery store

Mrs Sims works at the grocery store and tells Georgie to take a lottery ticket when he visits her there.

The lottery ticket

Georgie memorizes all the numbers on this ticket because he is sure he will win something.

The rosebush

Georgie is given a rosebush when he wins the lottery at the grocery store. He becomes very excited about the rosebush and treats it as his best friend.

Mrs Harper's garden

This is where Georgie thinks he should be able to plant his rosebush. At first, everyone resists, but then when they see it will help Georgie heal, the rosebush is put in the garden.

Sister Mary Angela's school

Georgie is sent to a school for all boys because a judge thinks this will help him adjust. The school is run by Sister Mary Angela.

Air Mattresses

One of the judges donates air mattresses so all of the boys that are Georgie and Timothy's ages get to have a sleep out on the mattresses.



Alice and Wonderland play

Mrs Harper and Mr Collier put on a play for the boys at school. The boys get the chance to act out skits from Alice and Wonderland.

Library

At the beginning of the book, Georgie spends time here because he always wants to check out his book about the garden.

Garden Book

Georgie often refuses to turn this book back into the library. He loves the book because its pictures allow him the chance to escape from his life.



Themes

Forgiveness

All of Lottery Rose can be seen as a story of forgiveness. A couple of characters use the novel as a journey. They grow into more responsible, caring people that eventually learn to forgive and love again.

Georgie is the most obvious person that needs to work on his ability to forgive. The reader cannot blame Georgie, however, for not being able to easily forgive those around him. Georgie was forced to deal with verbal and physical abuse that most human beings never have to deal with. His mother, who is supposed to love and protect him, did not do her job. Instead, she chose to leave her child to the mercy of a cruel, violent man. She also cared too much about her drinking to take time for Georgie. Georgie takes this all in, witnessing his mother's betrayal. In his mind, all mothers become the same person. Mothers do not protect their children like they should. This makes Georgie struggle with his ability to forgive Mrs. Harper. She is a mother, but she was mean to him. How can he come to forgive her for harming his rosebush, the only thing he has ever loved or cared about.

Just as Georgie needs to forgive and forget, Mrs Harper, must try to forgive and forget what has happened to her husband and son, Paul. Mrs Harper loves her garden with every fiber of her being. It is the last thing she has to remind her of her husband and son. When Georgie makes a mess of the place in order to plant his rosebush, all she can see is anger and hurt. It takes the horrible events that have taken place in Georgie's life to show her that she can forgive. Discovering Georgie and beginning to love him, makes her feel as though she can forget her longing for her husband and son.

Motherhood

Three characters display their ability to act like mothers throughout the novel. These characters are Georgie's mother, Mrs Harper, and Sister Mary Angela. All three women have different ways of mothering the boys around her. Georgie's biological mother's character shows that just because a woman has born a child, does not mean that she is maternal or meant to be a mother. She exemplifies the worst of what a mother can be: uncaring, unloving, and extremely self involved.

Mrs. Harper, on the other hand, shows the side of a sad grieving mother who feels as though she cannot live without her sons and husband. For her character, the men in her life shaped her life. As she works in the garden, she relives being with her husband and son. Deep down, Molly is a good woman, but she is so focused on healing herself and her family that she feels she has little room for others.

Sister Mary Angela is a mother, although she does not have any biological children. In running the school, she has adopted all of the boys into her care and treats them all like



her own. She loves each and everyone of them unconditionally and attempts to see improvements in all of their lives. Sister Mary Angela is kind, caring and nurturing. She also creates an environment for all her students to strive in. These are not only great qualities in a teacher, but also wonderful qualities in a mother. Being close to God she offers her boys unconditional love and support.

The effects of child abuse

As the novel begins the reader is bombarded with the horrible after effects of child abuse. Georgie is not only forced to physical abuse, but he is also forced to take a large amount of verbal abuse. Much of the story is his quest to trust others and overcome what has happened to him. One of the ill affects of child abuse is the constant lack of trust that young children feel for others. For so long, they have been lied to by people that are supposed to love them that they are unable to begin trusting others.

Another negative effect of child abuse is the fear that the victims live with. For instance, Georgie is afraid to admit that Steve has been abusing him because he is scared Steve will find him and kill him, even after he is taken away from his home. It takes Georgie months to finally realize that he will not be harmed by Steve. Finally he is safe and can function without fear of being killed by Steve.

Georgie also feels that he may never be able to love again. After being burned by those close to him, love is hard for him to express. Because he is treated nicely by Mr Collier, Robin, and Mrs. Harper, he finally learns that he can let himself be vulnerable and learn what is important about love.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel switches between third person limited and third person omniscient. Most of the time, the narrator focuses on Georgie and his feelings. The reader gains insight into what Georgie feels and thinks. This is interesting because immediately the reader learns why a boy who appears to be an asocial, mean, bully is really going through. His life at home is what has turned him away from the rest of the people in his community.

When the novel uses third person limited, it is to show what some other characters think about what is happening. There are small glimpses of what minor characters think about Georgie's situation. For example, the young police officer that is brought to Georgie's home to question him. The author inserts the officer's shock and awe about what has happened to Georgie as a result of Steve's beating.

For two chapters in the novel, Robin's point of view is explored. In this case, the author uses third person omniscient. There is a difference in the way that Robin sees the rest of the world. As a person that has developed differently from others, it is interesting to see how Robin views the rest of the world. The reader can tell that the narration has shifted because Georgie is not present. The author also uses words like Robin thinks or feels to let the author know that they are discovering something new about Robin's feelings.

Setting

The novel begins with Georgie at the school library. Again, he has refused to return the book about his favorite garden. The reader learns more about Georgie's poor performance in Miss Cressman's classroom. His teacher will not help him learn to read because she does not like Georgie. Georgie decides to go home for lunch, where he finds his mother laying on the couch in their apartment. She has been passed out for most of the day because she drinks too much. She apologizes to Georgie for not feeding him and sends him to the store to get food. At the store, Mrs Sims gives him a lottery ticket for a lottery being held at the local grocery store. The next Saturday, Georgie is the first at the store. He wins a rose bush and is determined to find somewhere to plant it. He walks all throughout his neighborhood in Florida but decides to take the rosebush home. When he gets back to the apartment, he is beaten by his mother's boyfriend.

The courts decide to have Georgie live with Mrs, Sims. Then after a while they move him to an all-boys school run by nuns. The school looks like it was once someone's expensive house. Next to the school is a beautiful garden. Georgie would like to plant



his rosebush here. The rest of the novel takes place at the school and the Harper's house and garden.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is straightforward but not formal. Large words are not used. Instead, easy to understand language must be used for Hunt's target audience. The author wants to present events and character feelings as simply as possible so that her audience can understand what is happening in the novel. The tone of the novel is kind and descriptive. The author is relaying a sad tale, but does not want to scare her readers. She wants to bring to life that there is child abuse, but not in a way that so harsh that it will be inappropriate for her young readers.

Structure

The structure of the novel is fairly simple. The chapters are numbered and do not have titles. The book primarily follows the thoughts and actions of Georgie but does switch to show the feelings of other characters. There are two character developments that are occurring throughout the plot. Georgie is learning to trust and forgive while Mrs Harper is learning how to let go of the losses she has suffered. By finding each other they discover that they can both love again. Along the way, they discover they both have a love for flowers and Robin. This further helps them come together.

The author's audience is fairly young, so while it is important to keep the plot moving, it is not necessary to go overly fast. If the author had picked up the pace of the book too much, she might have lost the understanding she is seeking from her young reader. This is why it is also important to focus the plot on only a couple of central themes.



Quotes

"His mother told him about the scar and crumpled ear once when she had finished drinking all of her whiskey from her last bottle on the shelf and was angry because there wasn't anymore. It was when her whiskey was gone that Rennie Burgess hated her child most."

Chap. 1, p. 5

"He began to feel sick. The beating would be bad enough, but Steve would either destroy the prize or keep it for himself.

Chap. 1, p. 19

"She held out her hand, but he drew away and walked silently beside her to the room she had prepared for him."

Chap. 3, p. 48

"Tonight there was only one thing that really mattered: the rosebush was at last in the place that was right for it."

Chap. 4, p. 61

"It was a purple and red mass of swollen flesh, welts, and knots imposed one upon the another, some of them beginning to heal, some oozing the yellowish liquid of infection."

Chap. 5, p. 66

"Georgie caught his breath as the music grew louder and sweeter; when it finally turned to a whisper and then stopped altogether, he looked up at Sister Mary Angela with wonder."

Chap. 7, pp. 76-77

"Robin wanted to cry. He wanted to boy that was like Paul to come to him. He wanted the boy to make a house for birds and to let Robin hep him. "

Chap. 8, p. 102

"All of them laughed noisily and yelled at times, but in secret part of Georgie's mind, everything was quiet and peaceful like the garden was in the early part of the night."

Chap. 9, p. 116

"Still the memories that hurt him were too sharp for him to speak; they made his face grow hot and this throat begin to tighten."

Chap. 11 p. 132

"He was half afraid Old Eddie would ignore him as he had done earlier, half afraid that he might stop and continue with the earlier scolding.



Chap 10, p. 126

"He waved his arms and tried to make them go away, but they wouldn't. They pushed against him relentlessly, and when he tried to run from them he fell face downward into the water."

Chap. 13, p. 17

"You are though, Georgie. I didn't 'born' you, but you're mine- no matter where I go or what I do- you're mine. Please, please understand that."

Chap. 14, p. 180



Topics for Discussion

How should more characters have worked together to protect Georgie from Steve?

Describe Georgie and Mrs Harper's journey to find forgiveness.

How do their two journeys intersect with one another?

How does Timothy work to bring his new friend to life?

What does Timothy do with the secret Georgie has entrusted him with?

How does Georgie use his book about gardens and roses as an escape from everyday life?

What does the rosebush become for Georgie?

How does he choose to relate to the rosebush?

What characters take on the role of parents for Georgie? Does Georgie realize they are taking over this role?

When is Georgie able to realize that he wants to forgive Mrs. Harper?

How and why do Georgie and Robin become so close to one another?