

# **The Thing About Georgie Study Guide**

**The Thing About Georgie by Lisa Graff**

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# Plot Summary

The following version of this book was used to create this study guide: Graff, Lisa. *The Thing About Georgie*. HarperCollins, 2006. Kindle Version.

At the beginning of the novel Georgie has a normal life. He is a dwarf, but for him, the limitations he faces because of this fact is just the way it is. He has a best friend, Andy, and loving parents who are both professional musicians. Before he was born, they had hoped that he would be a musician like them. Even though they try to find an instrument he can play, they cannot. Still Georgie loves listening to his parents play. The only negative thing about his life is that a girl nicknamed Jeanie the Meanie picks on him more than the other kids. Georgie takes her treatment in stride, however.

Things begin to change with the introduction of new people in his life who he fears will threaten his position with his parents and Andy. He and Andy have a dog walking business and one day when they are walking the dogs, Andy suggests that Russ, a new kid he knows but that Georgie does not know, join their dog walking business. Georgie does not like the fact that Andy has been talking to Russ without his knowledge. He tells Andy that he does not like the idea. Andy drops the topic even though he looks disappointed. Then, when Georgie gets home he finds out that his mother is pregnant.

The next time Georgie sees Andy, he tells him about the baby. Andy tells him that his grandmother from Italy is coming to live with his family and he has to share his room with her. Georgie helps him put up a barrier so that he has some privacy and then he helps Andy's family put up their Christmas decorations. Later, he helps his family do the same, but becomes sad when he realizes that the baby will take his job of putting the star on top of the tree because he or she will be the smallest in the family. He gets even more upset when he realizes that one day the baby will be taller than he is. He is used to taller children outside of his house, but not in his own house.

Georgie thinks that things are really bad for him on Christmas Eve. His mother gets a shock when she turns off the Christmas tree lights. Worried about the impact on the baby, Georgie's parents go to the hospital to have the baby checked. They think that Georgie will be better off spending the evening with Andy, so they drop him off and go to the hospital. Georgie does not like this at all. He sees it as his parents already paying more attention to the baby than to him.

During the evening, Georgie and Andy see Russ at church. Russ tries to talk to Georgie about the dog walking business, but Georgie ignores him. Georgie becomes angry as Andy and Russ talk to each other. Finally, he disconnects from them. When they get back to Andy's house, he and Andy have a fight about the dog walking business because Georgie says he does not want Russ to be a part of it and it is his business because it was his idea. Andy tells him that he will start his own business with Russ. Andy insults Georgie and Georgie insults Andy's grandmother. Georgie and Andy originally decided not to sleep in Andy's room, but during the evening, after the fight,



Andy goes upstairs to sleep in his room, with his Grandmother, leaving Georgie to sleep alone downstairs on Christmas Eve.

Georgie calls his father to pick him up early the next morning. The baby is okay, but this news makes Georgie madder. He calls Andy to apologize, but their rift grows when Georgie tells Andy that he cannot be friends with Russ if he is friends with him. Andy chooses Russ.

When they get back to school, it is time for the class to choose partners to work with for their school project. Normally, Georgie would have worked with Andy, but Andy pairs up with Russ. In the end there are only two people without partners, Georgie and Jeanie the Meanie, so Georgie has to work with her. They have to write a report on Abraham Lincoln. While they are working in the library, Georgie realizes that Jeanie checked out a book about dwarfs that the librarian had ordered. He wonders why she did this because he thinks that she hates him. For the duration of the project, Georgie tries to avoid working with Jeanie. When he finds out that they do not have class time to finish the report, he realizes he has to go to her house. She spends a lot of time talking about things other than the project, like which president she would like to be in the school play and suggesting the Georgie be George Washington. He fears that she has discovered that his middle name is Washington, which she has done. When they are about to finish, her brothers come in and make fun of her, first saying that Georgie is her boyfriend and then that she does not have any friends. When they ask Georgie whether he is her friend, he says nothing. This makes Jeanie mad and she calls Georgie mean.

When the report is finally due, the students need to sign up to say who they would like to play in the performance. Georgie wants to put down George Washington, but does nothing. He later finds out that Russ is going to be George Washington and Jeanie has signed him up to be Abraham Lincoln. He tries to get out of it, but cannot.

During the rehearsals, Jeannie realizes that Georgie is nervous and creates a costume that makes him tall and gives him long arms. His performance is a hit. While waiting to go on stage, he realizes that Allison, a girl he has a crush on is not nice and that Jeanie is, in reality, the nice one. On the way home he has a conversation with his family about the baby and whether they were upset when they found out that he could not play a musical instrument. Their answer pleases him. Georgie and his friends decorate his room and he gives it to the baby. At the end of the novel he is friends with Andy, Russ, and Jeanie and is ready to be the big brother of his little sister.



# Section 1: Chapters 1 – 5

## Summary

The first chapter begins with someone asking readers to reach their right arm over their head and touch their left ear. Then the narrator notes that this is something that Georgie cannot do. When the action begins, it is the last day before Christmas break and Georgie is in class when his friend, Andy, drops his pencil on the floor, which is usually a signal for Georgie. Georgie sees it and volunteers to go to the board to answer a question. On the way back to his desk, Georgie retrieves a note Andy has written for him saying that he is not to take the bus because Andy's mother is coming to pick them up from school. Jeanie, a girl who annoys and picks on Georgie, wants to know what the note says, but he ignores her. When the bell rings he gathers his things to leave. The hook for his coat was lower than those of the other children from the other students' hooks because he is a dwarf.

At the beginning of Chapter 2, the author wants readers to pull their knees up to their chest and rest their head on their knees. Then the narrator wants readers to realize that this is something that Georgie cannot do. When the action starts, Georgie and Andy are going to Andy's house. When they get there, Georgie calls his mother to tell her where he is and then he and Andy go to work. They have a dog walking business, which was Georgie's idea, and they go to get the dogs. Georgie walks the smaller dogs because they do not pull too hard on the leash. As the boys walk them, they talk about what they are going to do with the money. It is pay day, and Andy suggests that they get another partner, Russ, a kid who is in their class and is a good basketball player that Andy knows, but Georgie does not know. Andy says that Russ is cool. Georgie does not like the idea and tells Andy so. When Andy sounds disappointed, Georgie is about to give in, but then they start talking about something else and Georgie is glad that he did not say anything.

Chapter 3 begins with the narrator wanting readers to measure their height and the height of things they reach for on a daily basis and think about how easy, or hard, it would be for Georgie to reach for the same objects. The action begins with Georgie going upstairs after greeting his mother who is giving a piano lesson when he returns. While he is up there, he thinks about what he can get his parents for a Christmas present while still having enough money to buy his comic books. During this time, his parents, who are professional musicians start practicing and he imagines that he is an artist himself. When he goes downstairs to eat, he tells his parents about the school presentation which is about U.S. presidents. The students can volunteer to be in it and write their own parts. Both of his parents suggest that he be George Washington, which is also an inside joke as his middle name is Washington. He has thought about it himself, but thinks that he looks nothing like the real George Washington and if the real George Washington had had his body, no one would have listened to him when he gave orders. He says he will think about it. Then, as they sit down to eat, Georgie's farther tells him that he is about to become a big brother. The news shocks Georgie.



In Chapter 4, Georgie's mother is giving piano lessons to Allison, a girl Georgie has a crush on. The girl is pretty, but she is not very good at playing the piano. She greets Georgie as she leaves and then Georgie's mother says she will take him to Andy's house. Before they go, Georgie's mother sits down with him and asks if there is anything he wants to ask her and whether he is okay, something that she had also done when they told him that she was having a baby. He says that he is okay and gets up to get his things to go to Andy's house. His mother calls him back for him to give her a kiss. He normally would think it is childish, but does so because he thinks that she needs one.

In Chapter 5 the narrator wants readers to stare at a picture of Georgie. The exercise comes about because when Georgie goes to the car with his mother, a car drives by and the driver stares at Georgie. When he gets to Andy's house, Andy is cleaning his room because his grandmother from Italy is coming to live with them and he has to share his room with her. Georgie tells him about the baby and Andy thinks that is terrible because of all the things babies do. Then they decorate the Christmas tree and eat dinner. Andy's family is Italian and Georgie recognizes that they decorate their tree differently than his family does, but he likes it. Andy's real first name also reflects the fact that he is Italian. He and Georgie became friends as a result of Georgie standing up for him when Jeanie the Meanie told Andy that his name, Andrea, was a girl's name. On Sunday afternoon, Georgie and his mother and father decorate their tree. Georgie's job is to put the star on top, but when he does, he realizes that when the baby comes, it will be the smallest and take his job. He has some relief when he realizes that it will grow and then he will be the smallest again. While he is used to being the shortest amongst children in the outside world, he does not like the idea of living in a house with one that he has to watch grow.

## Analysis

An important point to note about this section is that it introduces a narrator who helps readers understand the challenges Georgie faces in life because he is a dwarf. Understanding his day-to-day challenges helps readers see just how well-adjusted Georgie is at the beginning of the novel. His limitations do not stop him from behaving like the other school children. He participates in the exchange of notes behind his teacher's back just like children tend to do in class. He has to deal with an annoying classmate, but he manages her by ignoring her. He has a best friend and the two of them are in business together. Georgie has business sense and uses it to come up with the idea of walking dogs to make extra money, just like kids tend to do. He has to walk the smaller dogs, but he takes this point in stride as well. When the narrator describes why he walks the poodles the description is in a matter of fact tone. "Georgie always walked the small ones, and Andy took charge of the bigger ones. One time Georgie had tried to hold on to Tanya, the Great Dane...she'd run so fast that Georgie thought she was going to rip off his arm. So now he stuck with Buster and the two poodles...But at least they didn't yank too hard at their leashes" (10). He does not feel sorry for himself for having to do this. There is no mention of him having to do it because he is a dwarf or even Andy making fun of him because he has to. It is just the way things are.



It is the same when he gets his coat after school. He does not think about the fact that his hook is lower than the hook for the other kids. “Georgie usually didn’t think much about it. He didn’t usually think about the step stool under the chalkboard either... That was just the way things were...” (5).

By the end of the section, though, he does begin to think about what makes him different from other kids. This shows how much the news of things that will change his way of life upset him. The first piece of news is that Andy wants Russ to join them. He feels threatened by Russ because he is a good basketball player and because Andy has already made friends with him without Georgie. “He’d rather have anyone else, even Jeanie the Meanie, but not Russ Wilkins” (11). The second piece of news is the fact that his mother is pregnant. Now his height begins to bother him. First, because he will not be the smallest and will not be the one to put the star on the tree, then because the sibling will become taller than he will ever be. “But the thought of some kid living in his own home, growing taller every single day, made him seriously queasy” (42).

Still, even though he focuses on his height, in reality he is focusing on what he sees as a weakness which is common for anyone to do when they feel threatened by another person. The root of Georgie’s problem is not that he is a dwarf. This is just what he happens to be. It is that he is growing up and has to learn how to deal with things that every child has to adjust to if they are going to become well-adjusted people.

Another thing to note is the presentation of mirror families in this section. This is an element of the family motif that runs throughout the novel. It shows that families are different and one can enjoy being part of another family’s traditions and ways just as much as they enjoy that of their own family. The opposite is also true. There is no reason to turn ones back on the ways of one’s family just because one enjoys the ways of another family. Andy’s family is Italian and decorates the Christmas tree in a manner that is different from the way Georgie’s family decorates their tree. Andy’s family puts white lights on their tree instead of ones with different colors. In addition, they put an angel on the top whereas Georgie’s family puts a star on top. Both families put stockings on the mantelpiece, but the ones at Andy’s house are “longer and skinner than the ones at George’s house” (39). Georgie thinks that life at the Morettis’ “was pretty good. But life at the Bishops’ was pretty good too” (41).

A final point to note about this section is that it highlights the notion that friends stand up for each other. Georgie and Andy become friends when Georgie stands up for Andy when Jeanie the Meanie is picking on him because of his name.

## Discussion Question 1

How does the author help you get to know Georgie better? What do you discover about him?



## Discussion Question 2

How do you think Georgie feels about the fact that he is going to be a big brother? How would you feel in his situation?

## Discussion Question 3

What do Andy and Georgie have in common? Whose situation do you think is worse?

## Vocabulary

favor, arch. flexible, ignore, bugged, detour, dwarf, chanted, allowance, allergic, partner, lever, nimble, rhymes, surrounded, volunteer, curiously, ruffled, gigantic, strenuous





## Section 2: Chapters 6 – 10

### Summary

In Chapter 6, the narrator wants readers to write down what they identify as the thing about them. When the action begins, Georgie is trying to write a poem for his parents because he decides that that is all they are going to get since they are being dumb enough to have another child. He is having problems though because all he can think about is the coming of the baby. He measures himself in a secret place that his parents do not know about and realizes that he has not grown since August. He thinks that the baby is already gaining on him in terms of height, throws away the paper he had been writing on and decides that his parents are getting cookies.

It is Christmas Eve in Chapter 7. The cookies Georgie baked for his parents at Andy's house are hidden in the refrigerator and Georgie is eyeing his presents under the Christmas tree. Georgie's father helps him get ready. Georgie and his father go outside and his mother unplugs the tree. Then all of the lights go out and they hear Georgie's mother scream.

In Chapter 8, Georgie and his father find out that she got a small shock when she unplugged the Christmas tree. She is okay, but Georgie's parents are worried about the baby so they decide to go to the hospital to make sure everything is okay and that it would be best to leave Georgie with Andy and his family. They leave Georgie at Andy's house and rush to the hospital. Andy's grandmother opens the door for him. After being reassured that everything will be fine with the baby, he goes upstairs to help Andy create a barrier, as Andy now has to share his bedroom with his grandmother. While they are working on it Andy mentions Russ's viewpoint of his living situation. Georgie finds out that Andy talks to Russ on the phone and that their parents go to the same church. Then Andy tells Georgie that Russ can start walking dogs with them next week and that Russ found two new clients for them. As Georgie never agreed that Russ could join them, the two boys argue about Russ joining the team, but then Georgie agrees that he can. Andy's mother summons the kids downstairs to help set the table. Even though he is busy, Georgie thinks of how his normal Christmas Eve is. Then his father calls to say that he will most likely have to spend the night at Andy's. Georgie is not happy. Matters get worse when Georgie goes to church with Andy's family and the boys run into Russ. Russ tells Georgie that he has some ideas about advertising their business. This information makes Georgie angry. He also does not like the fact that the church does not have candles like his and he does not know the religious procedures. In the end he gives up trying to fit in.

When they get back to Andy's house, Georgie finds out that he has to spend the night there. The boys decided not to sleep in Andy's room. Everything is fine until Andy mentions the advertising for the business. When Georgie says it is his business and he does not want Russ involved, Andy says that he will start his own and work with Russ.



They will walk the big dogs and leave the poodles for Georgie. Then Georgie insults Andy's grandmother. Andy ends up going to sleep in his room, with his grandmother.

During the narration, the narrator mentions that Georgie's shoes are velcro and Andy and Russ have laces. The narrator wants readers to try to tie shoe laces with fingers like Georgie's to explain why this is.

In Chapter 9, Georgie thinks that he should apologize to Andy and even goes up to his room, but uses Andy's grandmother as an excuse not to. He blames the baby for the argument. Early the next morning, Georgie calls his father to pick him up. When he does, his father forgets to say Merry Christmas to him and tells him that the baby is fine, but this does not make Georgie happy at all. His parents are tired, so they do not open presents until late. When Georgie finally does get to open his, he finds out that he has gotten a new bike, but he is not as excited about it as he normally would have been because he also gets a book about being a big brother instead of the rocket book he hoped to get. He makes another excuse as to why he cannot call Andy to apologize, but finally does so the day after Christmas only to find out that Andy is going over to Russ' house. The two boys argue again and when Georgie says that Andy cannot be friends with him if he is friends with Russ, Andy chooses Russ. After the call, Georgie goes to his parents to help him fix the situation, but says nothing when he sees his father reading about babies and his mother reading about knitting with her hand rubbing the baby. The next day a flyer is delivered to the house advertising for dog-walking services with Andy's phone number on it.

The kids are back in class in Chapter 10. It is time for them to pick their partners for the class project about the U.S. presidents. Georgie would normally look at Andy, but is afraid to because the two boys have not spoken since the fight they had on the phone. Georgie finally does look at Adam though and sees him looking at Russ. In the end, Georgie has to work with Jeanie because they are the only two students without partners.

## Analysis

One of the major points this section highlights is that one's fear of the unknown can make one's life miserable. It also shows that when someone feels sensitive about something, innocent comments or events seem to be aimed at that very thing.

Georgie cannot avoid two of the things that represent his fear of change in this section. One of these things is the fear that his parents will love the baby more than they love him. He sees this fear coming to fruition when his parents leave him on Christmas Eve to check the health of the baby. Georgie's sensitivity regarding his place in his parents' life compared to that of the baby's keeps him from seeing the truth. The truth is that his parents have to go to the hospital on Christmas Eve because it is the responsible thing to do after his mother receives an electric shock. They do not take Georgie to the hospital with them because as Georgie's mother says, "Georgie shouldn't have to spend Christmas Eve in a hospital waiting room" (54). They think that they are doing Georgie a



favor by making arrangements for him to stay with Andy. Georgie's fear that his parents will love the baby more than they love him makes him oversensitive though, and he sees their action as a sign of things to come. The narrator's word choice creates a tone that shows Georgie's perception of the incident. "Georgie was dropped off at Andy's house, and his parents streaked off in the car to check the health of their precious Baby Godzilla" (55). The words "dropped off," "streaked off," and "their precious Baby Godzilla" demonstrates that Georgie feels as if he is being tossed aside in preference of the baby.

Then Georgie's other fear - that Russ will take his place in Andy's life - is realized when Andy talks about Russ. "Me and Russ. Georgie didn't like the sound of that. He didn't like the idea of Andy and Russ on the phone, talking about all of the things they could do together, saying Georgie couldn't walk any of the big dogs because he was so small, he might get trampled" (59). At this point, it is important to remember that in the previous section, walking small dogs was best because they did not pull of the leash. The fact that Georgie cannot walk large dogs is just the way it is. Now, in Georgie's mind, the reference to the fact that he walks the small dogs is a put down. What is even more telling of Georgie's state of mind is that he is imagining that this is what Andy and Russ are talking about. Neither Andy nor Russ mentions it when they try to talk to him about the business. Instead, they talk about advertising and getting more customers.

Both Georgie's parents and Andy wants to include Georgie, not replace him. At one point Georgie even realizes that nothing has validated his fears about Andy and Russ, and agrees to let Russ join them. He does not keep this mindset for long and by being oversensitive and letting his fears take over, he ruins his Christmas Eve and his relationship with Andy.

Georgie gets mad because he is not having his normal Christmas Eve. He even gets upset at the idea of sleeping in. "Sleep in? That wasn't how it worked. Georgie was supposed to be at his house, already asleep on the couch so he could wake up super early...and who in their right mind would go to church at ten o'clock at night? Georgie couldn't believe this" (64). Georgie's current attitude is completely different than it was in the first section when he thought that life was pretty good at Andy's house. Then, he had nothing to fear. Now, because he is letting his fear rule, he cannot enjoy himself.

Georgie's fears make things worse when he goes to church and Russ is there and he finds out that he has to spend the night at Andy's house. The negative result is far reaching as not only does it lead to a fight with Andy, but also to having to work with Jeanie the Meanie. Georgie cannot blame the miserable state he is in at the end of the novel on anyone but himself.

This section also shows another way Georgie is like other children. He can be a brat and he can be mean. He wishes that the baby is not okay. Russ tries to talk to him at church, but he is not nice to him. He is not nice to Andy when they get back to Andy's house and he insults Andy's grandmother calling her "Your smelly old grandma, who stinks up your whole room" (70).



## Discussion Question 1

What do you think about the way Georgie's parents handled the Christmas Eve emergency? Explain your answer.

## Discussion Question 2

What is your opinion of Georgie based on how he treats Russ? Based on what he thinks about the baby? Explain your answer.

## Discussion Question 3

When it comes to the dog-walking business, who is right and who is wrong (if anyone)? Is it Georgie? Is it Andy? Explain your answer.

## Vocabulary

crumpled, illustration, installed, chucked, congregation, precious, reassuring, crammed, apparently, mound, insulation, trampled, conversation, melody, explode, convince, yanked, concerned, spine, plastered



## Section 3: Chapters 11 – 15

### Summary

In Chapter 11 Georgie and Jeanie are in the library doing research on Abraham Lincoln for their project. Georgie is trying to work, but Jeanie is goofing off. Her actions annoy Georgie. He is even more annoyed when the librarian comes by to see whether everything is okay and Jeanie acts nice and as if she is working. They go to look for their books and Georgie looks on a shelf with a book about drawfs. He sees that someone has checked it out and later discovers that it was Jeanie. He wonders why she would want to learn about him because he thinks that she hates him.

At the beginning of Chapter 12, the narrator wants readers to pick up a pencil and notice that they probably pick it up as if they are going to write. The narrator then draws readers' attention to the fact that Georgie cannot hold a pencil like that and helps them realize how difficult it is for Georgie to write. The action starts with the Georgie and his parents going to the concert hall where Georgie's parents are going to perform. As they go, they pass Andy and Russ walking dogs. Georgie's mother recognizes Andy and suggests that they stop and say hi to him. Georgie tells her that it is not Andy in such a rude tone that he has to apologize. His parents perform in the concert and afterwards one of the orchestra members comes up to him and starts talking about the baby and what instrument it will play.

When Georgie gets home, he sits at the piano, but he cannot play it even though he had tried to when he was younger. His fingers and legs are too short. He cannot play any instruments, even a child's violin that his parents had gotten for him, however, everyone is already saying what the baby will play. He bangs the piano keys and goes upstairs and slams his bedroom door, but his bedroom upsets him too because of the poem his parents had written for him before he was born. He thinks that it is a bedroom for a musician. Later that night, he goes downstairs and looks in the baby book to see how tall the baby is now. He realizes that it is as tall as the child's violin his parents had gotten for him.

Georgie feels that things really get bad for him In Chapter 13. Andy gives his signal, but this time it is Russ who gets the note. Plus, Andy will be moving soon and will no longer be so close in terms of location to Georgie. The only good thing is that the project is almost due, but then he finds out that it is due in the morning, not in the afternoon. He does not want to work with Jeanie after school, so he tells her that he will finish the project and tries to get her to sign the paper that shows what they worked on individually and together. While they have each worked on parts of the report together, they have not worked on anything together. She will not sign the paper, however. Instead, she gives him her address and tells him to be there at 6:00 pm.

In Chapter 14 Geogie's father drops him off at Jeanie's house saying that he bets Georgie is going to make a new friend. When Georgie gets in, Jeanie rushes him pass



her father and brother and takes him up to her room. Georgie works on the report, but it is hard because Jeanie will not focus. She talks about her mother, who is dead, and Herbert Hoover who she wants to play in the school play. She tells Georgie that he should play George Washington. Her statement makes Georgie think that she must have discovered his middle name, but then he thinks that is impossible. They finish the report and right before he goes, her bothers come in and start making fun of her. They say that she does not have any friends and that they bet Georgie is even not her friend. When they ask him whether he is, Georgie does not respond. Jeanie tells Georgie that she used to feel sorry for him, but now she thinks that he is mean. Right before he leaves, she tells him that she saw his middle name in the roll book.

Chapter 15 opens with the narrator wanting readers to do something that George can do to point out that Georgie can do a lot of things that everyone can do. The action in the chapter starts with the class turning in their report. Then they have to write down the name of the president they want to play. Georgie wants to write the name George Washington on his piece of paper, but cannot. Jeanie goads him from behind saying that he has stage fright. Finally, he does not sign up for any role. After lunch, the teacher announces who will play which president. Russ is going to be George Washington and then Georgie sees his name next to the name Abraham Lincoln. He tries to tell the teacher that he did not sign up for the role, but he cannot get out of it. The teacher even says that he thinks it will be good for him and his report was inspiring. Then Georgie catches Jeanie's eye. She says that it is a good thing he does not have stage fright.

## Analysis

This section uses Jeanie to highlight that appearances can be deceiving. Georgie calls Jeanie a meanie. Yet, she has checked out the book about dwarfs. He wonders why she has bothered to do so if she hates him. The answer is that she does not hate him. In fact she wants to try to understand him. At this point, readers may begin to wonder whether she is the one who is also trying to help readers understand how well Georgie deals with life. She has read the book, after all and readers have seen how she can take charge of situations by how she makes sure Georgie takes part in the school play and how she makes sure that the two of them work together on the project.

Even though Jeanie wants to understand Georgie, she behaves the way she does towards him in a manner that he thinks is mean because this form of treatment is all she knows. Readers see this and get another view of a family when Georgie goes to her house. This family is not like his or Andy's, though. Jeanie is the only female in the household as her mother is dead. There is no interaction with her family members as there is with Andy's family when Georgie arrives. When her brothers do talk to Jeanie they call her names like "Puke Breath" and "Skunk Feet." When Mike calls Georgie her boyfriend, she responds by saying, "Shove it, Fart Face" (127). Mike praises her comeback. It is as if they are training her to behave the way they do. She treats other children, especially Georgie, the way her family members treat her. Family members are supposed to love each other. If this is the way her family expresses its love for each



other, then it is natural that she would think that this is an appropriate way to treat someone you want to have as a friend.

It is also interesting to note that Jeanie is sensitive. She is really hurt when Georgie does not stand up for her. They have just completed a project together. She has told him about her mother and Georgie cannot stand up for her the way he stood up for Andy before he even knew him. His treatment of her also shows that appearances can be deceiving because it is true that he is mean to her. Georgie does not try to be friendly with her at all. He just wants to rush through the report and finish it so that he does not have to work with her any more.

This section shows Georgie at his lowest point as shown through the technique of repetition. The situation in the classroom is not at all like it was at the beginning of the narrative. Andy still gives signals, but now they are for Russ. At the beginning of the novel, Georgie is happy in his room. When Georgie comes back from the concert, however, he is not happy. He no longer feels at home in his room and he takes out his frustration on the piano by banging it. This is the situation Georgie has gotten into because he fears the changes in his life, but he still has not learned how to move forward as shown by the fact that he is still obsessed by the baby's height.

Another point to note about this section is that it highlights how parents, and those around them, expect children to follow in their footsteps. Georgie's parents had thought that he was going to be a musician. As it turns out he cannot even play a musical instrument, even though they have tried to find one that he can play and he does love music. Now they are betting on what this baby will be able to do, once again, before it is born. It is such a natural thing to do that Franco talks to Georgie about it not thinking that the conversation would upset George. The conversation also shows how people view Georgie as they would view any other child. This is another reason that he thinks that the topic of the conversation will bother Georgie. He sees him as being a well-adjusted child that accepted that the inability to play a musical instrument is just the way it is.

## Discussion Question 1

Why do you think Jeanie checked out the book about dwarfs? Do you think it foreshadows any upcoming event in the novel? If so, what? Explain your answer.

## Discussion Question 2

What you think of the tendency for parents to expect their children to follow in their footsteps especially if they have some type of artistic talent? Explain your answer.

## Discussion Question 3

Who is the mean one, Jeanie or Georgie, or both? Support your answer.



## Vocabulary

informed, produced, scribbled, scanned, drifted, entire, humming, annoying, thud, stowed, polished, permanently, miserable, shoved, scurried, patience, consecrate, collected, gesturing





## Section 4: Chapters 16 -20

### Summary

Georgie does not tell his parents about his role in the play (Chapter 16), but they find out anyway when a letter arrives about practice. Both of them think that playing Abraham Lincoln could be good for him. He still does not think so, but is happy to be distracted by his private swimming lessons. He goes to the first one and is doing fine. Then he sees Allison and she is all he can think about. He convinces his mother to let him stay once his lessons are over and he talks to Allison. She is with a friend of hers, Nicki. Nicki makes remarks about Georgie being “that kid,” but Allison tries to keep her quiet. She tells Nicki that she knows Georgie because his mother is his piano teacher. Georgie goes back in the pool and then all of a sudden Jeanie is there informing him that Allison is never going to fall in love with him.

Jeanie will not leave Georgie alone (Chapter 17). She follows him as he swims which embarrasses him because he is trying to impress Allison. She gets in trouble for her actions and George is finally left alone to show off. By that time, though, it is too late because Allison and her friend have left. When it is time for Georgie to walk home, he bickers with Jeanie and she ends up following him. They get to Andy’s house and when Georgie pauses, Jeanie realizes who it belongs to. Once she realizes that he and Andy are no longer friends, she wants to throw rocks at his windows. Instead she throws rocks at Georgie when he calls her by her nickname. Andy’s grandmother comes out and is happy to see Georgie. She offers to give them a ride. At first, Georgie thinks that he is going home. Then he thinks that she thinks that he wants to see Andy and is taking them to Russ’ house. Georgie tries to tell her that he just wants to go home, but she does not understand him.

It is not long before Georgie stops worrying about showing up at Russ’s house with Jeanie the Meanie because he realizes that they are lost (Chapter 18). Jeanie is no help because she is crying, telling him that she hates him and punching him because she thinks that she will never get home. The punching causes Andy’s grandmother to stop by the side of the road. Georgie sees some stores and walks towards them thinking that he can call home. They are closed, but he sees a pay phone. The problem is that he is too short to put the money in. Jeanie will not help but Andy’s grandmother does and Georgie reaches his mother.

In Chapter 19 Georgie’s mother finds them. They head home with Georgie and Jeanie in her car and Andy’s grandmother following them. During the ride to Jeanie’s house, Georgie’s mother is nice to Jeanie, which makes Georgie mad. Jeanie tells Georgie’s mother that he hates her and calls her Jeanie the Meanie even though she has tried to be friends with him. When she finds out about the baby, she is about to ask if it will also be a dwarf, but Georgie stops her. When they drop her off, Georgie’s mother says that she seems nice. Georgie realizes that there is something he wants to ask his mother, but did not know what it is exactly. Before he can figure it out, they are home.



Andy and Georgie finally make up in Chapter 20 when Andy comes to Georgie's house and stays for dinner. They agree to ride bikes with Russ the next weekend. When Andy's mother comes to pick him up, Andy's grandmother is there too and is happy to see Georgie. Andy's mother says that his grandmother wants to thank Georgie for getting everyone home and she is going to take English lessons. She thinks that if Georgie can overcome his limitations, so can she. Andy's mother thanks him and tells him that he is a good boy. When they leave, Georgie tells his father that he needs to learn how to ride his bike right away.

## Analysis

One of the points that this section highlights is how different people treat Georgie. Thus far, readers have seen Georgie interact with people who treat him like there is nothing that sets him apart from other people. Now in this section he encounters Nicki who does not want to interact with him because he is different. It is interesting to note that Allison tries to keep her from saying what she thinks in front of Georgie, but she does not come to his defense and correct her attitude. Instead she justifies the fact that he speaks to her by saying that it is only because his mother is her piano teacher.

Allison is another type of person Georgie encounters. This is the type of person who does nothing to correct the attitude of those who put others down due to their differences. In essence, they put their head in the sand, which allows negative attitudes to persist. This attitude is even more serious in Georgie's case because he has a crush on Allison and he thinks that she may like him, too.

Allison's behavior is the opposite of Jeanie's. This fact shows what friends are willing to do for each other and shows how appearance can be deceiving. Allison is pretty and sophisticated, yet her friends are snobs who do not tolerate differences. Jeanie is goofy and appears to be annoying. In fact though, she follows Georgie around at the pool to protect him. She knows that Allison will never be interested in him and that it is a bad idea for him to try to impress and talk to her, especially with Nicki around. He is only going to get hurt. Later, Jeanie shows what she is willing to do to protect Georgie when she wants to throw stones at Andy's windows. In her mind, Andy has hurt Georgie so he deserves this type of treatment. She tells Georgie, "You know what we should do? Cause he stopped being friends with you? We should break his windows" (149). Her methods are extreme, because this is the only way she knows how to behave, but she is doing what friends do for each other in trying to protect Georgie.

Another point this section makes is that one's fears can get not only you but others in trouble as well. Andy's grandmother cannot speak English. She wants to help Georgie, but she ends up getting lost with Georgie and Jeanie and one of the reasons is that she cannot understand Georgie when he tries to intervene. She realizes this and overcomes her fear with Georgie's help. Once she does, she decides to take English classes. When Andy's mother comes to pick Andy up at Georgie's house, she tells Georgie that Andy's grandmother said, "if you could fight your battles, she could too" (177).



Georgie also begins to overcome his fear in this section. He agrees to go bike riding with Andy and Russ. Once this happens he is happier and finally wants to enjoy the bike he had ignored at Christmas time because his fears had put him in a bad mood. He is beginning to grow, learning how to replace old ways with new ones and getting rid of views that no longer suit him just as one gets rid of clothing that does not fit. He even becomes big enough to state his apology, something that he had not been able to do before. "Hey Andy? I'm sorry about before. About what I said before" (176).

When Andy and Georgie becomes friends again, the narrative makes the point that just because people are friends, it does not mean that there will not be any form of conflict between them. Friends do not always have the same opinion about things. It is good for them to communicate though and this communication can lead to conflict. When real friends are apart they miss each other and forgive each other. When Andy and Georgie apologize to each other, "it was easier to talk to each other" (176). This is a step friends much take when there is conflict if they are to remain friends. In addition, the section shows that friends make positive additions to each other's lives. "It was funny, Georgie realized. Even though he'd thought of a million reasons why he missed Andy, he'd never once wondered what Andy might miss about him" (174).

## Discussion Question 1

Why do you think Allison is nice to Georgie? Would she ever be able to have Georgie and Nicki as friends? Explain your answer.

## Discussion Question 2

If Jeanie wants to be friends with Georgie, why does she treat him the way she does?

## Discussion Question 3

What does Andy's behavior towards Russ and Georgie say about his personality? About people in general? Are these traits good or bad? Explain your answer.

## Vocabulary

witness, embarrassment, rehearse, attitude, draped, concentrating, hollered, absolutely, shuffled, snickered, impressive, scrolling, expression, confused, emphasis, traced, screeching, vigorously, defend, grumbled



## Section 5: Chapters 21 – 25

### Summary

Chapter 21 begins with the narrator wanting readers to fill glasses with water and tap them to hear the different notes they make. Next readers need to fill them to make specific notes and then play a specific piece. This is something that Georgie can do. When the action begins, Georgie is involved in rehearsing for the play and Jeanie still taps him on the shoulder, but now he is playing with Andy and Russ and he spends time with Andy alone as Russ is helping with the sets for the play. He continues to practice riding his bike and when the time comes to ride with Russ and Andy everything goes well. He even decides that he likes Russ. After riding their bikes, the three boys design Andy's new room, as Andy is no longer moving and his parents have said that he can have the new room they are adding to the house. Georgie comes up with the idea to have a rock climbing wall that also serves to take Andy to his bed, with a ladder for the days he does not feel like climbing. Russ starts sketching the plans. Georgie also agrees to help them walk dogs, but not poodles.

The children practice their lines one last time in Chapter 22. When Russ finishes his, he and Georgie work on their new dog walking flyer until it is time for Georgie to go. Georgie says his lines quickly and has to do it again. When the rehearsal is over, he talks to his teacher and tries to get out of playing the role, but he cannot. Jeanie has been there throughout the rehearsal and comes up to Georgie while he is waiting for his mother. He tries to get rid of her, but she has already told her father that Georgie's mother is going to bring her home. She wants to go to the grocery store to get coffee because she has a plan to help Georgie get over the stage fright she says Georgie has, even though he says he is fine. According to her, the plan will make him tall. She says that she is helping him to pay him back for saving her life when they were lost with Andy's grandmother.

The performance takes place in Chapter 23. Georgie is nervous because Andy is in the front row and Allison is there, too. She is in charge of pulling the curtain and has a perfect view of what is going on onstage. George decides to wait until the last minute to get dressed. Russ is also nervous and Georgie helps him with his lines. When Russ finishes his performance he looks green and runs to the bathroom after talking a little to Georgie. While he waits for his turn, Georgie watches Allison flirt with a boy named Cody. Finally Jeanie comes backstage and tells him that he needs to start getting ready. She is helping him when Cody comes up and asks her what she is doing there. Then he insults Georgie, prompting Jeanie to kick him. Allison does nothing while Cody is making fun of Georgie. She follows Cody, though, as he limps off. Jeanie finishes dressing Georgie who is tall and has long arms thanks to the costume Jeanie created.

Georgie gives his presentation and the audience loves it. After the play is over, Georgie still feels tall and everyone tells him what a great job he did. When Andy asks him where he got the costume he is about to say from Jeanie the Meanie, but stops himself and



just says from Jeanie. He spots Allison, but decides not to talk to her because even though she is pretty she is not as nice as Jeanie. When Jeanie speaks to him, she informs him that she is going to sign them up for drama.

Georgie and his parents are on their way home in Chapter 24. Georgie finally realizes what he wants to ask his parents, which is would they love him more if he could play the violin. He realizes that it is a stupid question and as soon as he asks and expects his parents to give a stock answer. Instead they are silent, which worries him. His father pulls the car over and both of Georgie's parents explain that they had wanted him to play a musical instrument because music makes them happy, but they realize that he is happy and that is what is important. He could have been a great musician and unhappy. Now they hope bigger things for him and they could not love him more than they do now. The response makes Georgie happy.

In Chapter 25, Georgie is spending time with Andy, Russ, and Jeanie and is looking forward to doing drama in the fifth grade. When Andy signals him in class, Jeanie lets him know and Georgie lets her know what the note says. After school he and Russ go to see Andy's new room which has the climbing wall. Russ and Andy climb to reach the bed and Georgie gets their first using the ladder. While he is at Andy's, Georgie tells them that he needs their help in preparing his room for the baby. They repaint it and write a new poem. Russ enhances it with his drawings. Georgie's parents love it and agree that Georgie can have the guest room. One week later, Georgie's little sister is born. She does not have the name of a great person because his parents say that she has Georgie to help her do great things. The narrator now wants readers to tear up paper with the one great thing they can do into pieces and realize that there are many great things they can do. Readers discover that Jeanie has been writing these sections.

## Analysis

This section continues to show that appearances can be deceiving. At rehearsal, Russ, who signed up to be George Washington says his lines, but doesn't "make it sound very interesting (185). Things get worse for him on the night of the performance. Then, Russ, the awesome basketball player gets stage fright and cannot remember his lines. "Russ seemed to be scared right out of his powdered wig" (195). He tells Georgie, "I don't remember any of my lines! I don't know my lines!"(195). Once he's done, Georgie notices that he looks a bit green and Russ tells him, "I feel kinda sick. Like I might barf" (196). When Russ panics, Georgie is the one who calms him down and helps him with his lines. As readers know that Georgie is nervous, they might have expected it to be the other way around. However, Georgie does not forget his lines and gives a great performance. This is in contrast to his performance during the rehearsal when he says his lines so quickly that no one can understand him and he had to start from the beginning.

In addition to seeing that Russ is not always as confident as Georgie thought he was, Georgie sees that Allison is not as nice as he thought she was and that Jeanie is nicer than he thought she was. After the performance he sees Jeanie "shoving cupcakes in



her mouth” (204). Allison is standing alone and it would be easy for Georgie to talk to her. He chooses not to, though, because he now sees beyond the appearances of the two girls. “Allison Housman might have been the prettiest girl Georgie knew, but Jeanie the Meanie was way nicer” (204). Calling Jeanie, Jeanie the Meanie in this quote reinforces the appearance versus reality motif. Jeanie appears to be mean, but in reality she is nice.

This section also continues the motif of the family and shows family love through the conversation Georgie has with his parents. It also shows the importance of communicating within the family unit. When Georgie finally figures out what he wants to ask his parents, they give him an answer that shows how much they love him. In addition to what they say, they stop the car to make sure that they can have an earnest conversation with him. When they talk to him they tell him the truth, but also tell him why they had hoped he would play a musical instrument and how his accomplishments have broadened their vision of what they want for him. “But now we hope bigger things: that you’ll grow into the kind of person that you want to be” (210). They continue to reassure him when they tell him that he taught them “that you can’t ever know what to expect” (210). They would never have guessed that “Georgie would turn out to be the best president in the whole school” (211).

Once Georgie finally communicates his fears to his family and they have a frank conversation with him, he is able to release his fear of the coming of the baby. His fear of losing Andy to Russ is gone. He realizes that Jeanie is not a meanie and now his life is even fuller than it was at the beginning of the book. He has more friends and more things to do. He is even able to give to the baby instead of wishing something would happen to it. All of this marks his growth. His parents’ realization that they just have to wait and see what kind of person the baby wants to be shows their growth as well.

## Discussion Question 1

Why do you think some people act like Andy, Russ, and Jeanie towards Georgie and others act like Cody? What do you think about people like Allison? What why does she act the way she does? Explain your answer.

## Discussion Question 2

How well do you think Georgie’s parents have done in raising him? What do you think they will do differently with Charlotte? Explain your answer.

## Discussion Question 3

What is the thing about Georgie and the other characters in the novel? How do you think people can find out what the thing about them is?

## Vocabulary

determined, sketched, audience, humiliating, stunted, backstage, nervous, lines, surveyor, contraption, tucking, loomed, bizarre, midget, applauded, stability, podium, devoured, enormously, detailed



# Characters

## Georgie Bishop

Georgie is the novel's main character. He is a dwarf, but at the beginning of the novel he is not bothered by the things that make him different from other children. Georgie is outgoing, smart, has his own business, and likes classical music. His parents are professional musicians, his best friend is Andy and he later becomes friends with Russ and Jeanie. He also has a crush on Allison until the end of the narrative.

The well-adjusted child readers meet in the first few pages of the novel changes, though, as events threaten what is normal in his life. Georgie does not take well to change and becomes mean, selfish and self-conscious about the fact that he is a dwarf. He tells Andy that the business is his and refuses to let Russ join it even though he has not met him. Georgie makes matters worse when he gives Andy an ultimatum. He wishes that something bad would happen to the baby because he feels that his parents will love it more than him. He even does not help Jeanie when her brothers are making fun of her. The baby makes him start thinking about all of the things that he cannot do because he is a dwarf.

Georgie grows throughout the narrative. He realizes that he does not have to compete with new friends. Russ adds to their team as he has different talents. He also realizes that one cannot judge another person's character based on how they look, or even act. He has a crush on Allison because she is pretty. She, however, has mean friends and is not strong enough to stand up for him when it really counts. Jeanie, however, has an off-center ponytail and a strange way of showing that she wants to be one's friend, but she is the one who stands up for Georgie.

In addition to learning to let other people in his life, Georgie learns to vocalize his fears to his parents about the baby. Their response gives him the confidence to let the baby into his life.

## Andy Moretti

Andy is Georgie's best friend and also Russ's friend. He is Italian and his first name is Andrea which is what makes him not normal as it is known to be a girl's name in the United States. He is a true friend to Georgie. Even when they fight, he realizes that he misses Georgie and comes to his house to mend their friendship.

Andy's presence in the novel shows that everyone has something about them that makes them different. In his case it is his name and the fact that he is Italian. He also serves to introduce conflict in Georgie's life when he becomes friendly with Russ. Andy's conflict with Georgie supports the notion that friendship involves conflict and forgiveness. In addition, Andy shows that everyone can have things that upset the status quo. This happens to him when his grandmother comes and he has to share his





room with her. Andy also shows how one can make the best of a “bad” situation in trying to create his own space and then convincing his parents to let him have the new room and design it himself. Finally, Andy serves as a bridge opening the world of new friendships to Georgie. If it were not for him, Georgie may have never become friends with Russ.

## **Jeanette Ann Wallace (Jeanie the Meanie)**

Jeanie is a girl in Georgie’s class. She sits behind him and at the beginning of the novel he calls her Jeanie the Meanie because she always picks on him. It turns out, though, that she really wants to be Georgie’s friend. Her manner is unrefined, bossy, and tomboy-like because she is the only female in her household. Her mother is dead and her brothers treat her the same way she treats Georgie. In essence, she is a product of her environment. She knows how to behave “correctly” in front of adults, however.

Jeanie shows that she is Georgie’s friend by standing up for him when Cody verbally abuses him, helping him grow by signing him up for the play, and creating his costume. The fact that he calls her a meanie upsets her. She has taken the time to understand what Georgie’s life is like and is the one who narrates the instructions for the readers.

Jeanie's character does not change, as much as George’s perception of her does, and the more he lets her into his life, the more she shows her friendship. Her character demonstrates how people can misjudge others based on surface appearances. Jeanie is not pretty like Allison, but she is a much better person. She also shows that everyone has something about them that makes them different. In her case, it is the fact that she only has one living parent.

## **Russ Wilkins**

Russ is a new kid in town who Andy has gotten to know, but Georgie has not, even though they are in the same class. Once Georgie does get to know him, Russ treats Georgie like any other classmate, not like someone who needs special treatment because he is a dwarf.

Russ serves to upset Georgie’s world when Andy wants to include Russ in their dog walking business. As the business represents a special partnership between Andy and Georgie, Georgie sees this fact as a threat to his friendship with Andy. The situation creates conflict and a challenge that Georgie must overcome in order to grow.

Russ’s presence also shows that no one is perfect. He is good in sports, has good business ideas, and can draw, but Russ is not as good at playing a certain game as Andy and Georgie are and he has stage fright. Georgie has to come to the rescue and help Russ with his lines, and Russ feels queasy even after his performance is over. In addition, his performance is okay, but not great.



## Mr. and Mrs. Bishop (Georgie's Parents)

Georgie's parents are caring parents who love Georgie and are raising a well-adjusted child. They name him George Washington to encourage him and give him something to live up to. They represent the hope of parents that their child will follow in their footsteps. The fact that they are both musicians makes it obvious to them what this should be the case. It is so obvious to them, that they write a poem for their unborn child to inspire it.

Although they adjust to the fact that Georgie will never play an instrument, they still think that a baby without Georgie's limitations will follow in their footsteps. Everyone in the orchestra tries to figure out which instrument the baby will play.

As the novel progresses, however, and they learn more about Georgie's talents, they grow as a parental unit. They realize the real reason they wanted their baby to have a musical talent. It is because playing music is what makes them feel alive and happy. Georgie is happy even though he cannot play an instrument and playing one would not necessarily make him happy. The name of their daughter shows their growth. They do not give her the name of a famous person as they did with Georgie. They realize that they cannot control the happiness of their child. Whatever they try to do, the child will still surprise them and this is something they are open to. Knowing that his parents realize this fact, and that he helped them do so, makes Georgie an even happier child than before.

## Allison Housman

Allison is a piano student of Georgie's mother and a girl he has a crush on. She has a crush on Cody and Nicki is her friend. Allison is polite to Georgie, but she will never be his friend. Her actions and the type of people who are her friends show that this is the case.

Allison represents the type of people who are polite to people who are different from them, but do nothing to help them when others are mean to them. In this way, she is just as bad as Nicki and Cody. In her mind, though, she is tolerant because she is not attacking the person herself. When Cody verbally attacks Georgie, she pretends that she does not see what is going on. Her thought process is that if she does not see it, then she does not have to take action.

## Franco

Franco is an orchestra member who talks to Georgie after the concert about what instrument the baby will play. The conversation depresses Georgie and leads to negative feelings about the baby and himself.



Franco is a minor character, but his conversation with Georgie demonstrates several points. First of all, it shows how well-adjusted people think Georgie is. Franco is not having this conversation with him to be mean. He thinks that Georgie can handle it. The fact that Georgie cannot shows that he is no longer as well-adjusted as people think he is or as he was in the past. It is a low point for Georgie and helps measure his growth by the end of the book.

The conversation also shows how prevalent it is for people to think that children will inherit the talents of their parents and will want to follow in their footsteps.

## Mr. Myers

Mr. Myers is Georgie's teacher. He is compassionate and uses psychology to get the best out of his students and help them grow as he does with Georgie in making him go through with the performance of Abraham Lincoln.

Mr. Myers shows the role outside forces, like teachers, have in shaping the character of children and helping them grow.

## Cody

Allison has a crush on Cody. Georgie watches Allison flirt with Cody while he waits to go on stage during the play. Cody is like Nicki. He is a snob, intolerant when it comes to dealing with people who are different from him and a bully. He is mean to Jeanie when he sees her behind stage and he makes fun of Georgie.

Cody is a minor character, but his presence serves several purposes. In addition to demonstrating the negative type of treatment Georgie has to face, it also reveals more about Allison's character as she likes Cody and does nothing to defend Georgie when Cody begins to verbally attack him. It also shows that Jeanie is a real friend as she stands up for Georgie even though Georgie did not stand up for her when her brothers verbally attacked her.

## Nicki

Nicki is Allison's friend. She is a snob and an intolerant person when it comes to dealing with people who are different from her. She shows these characteristics when she and Allison see Georgie at the pool, by telling Allison that she did know that Allison knew, that kid, putting the emphasis on the word "that" which shows that she thinks that something is wrong with Georgie and that he is below them.

Nicki is a minor character, yet her presence serves to show that Georgie faces intolerance. It also shows Allison's character because even though she tries to keep Nicki quiet and she speaks to Georgie in her presence, she is still friends with someone



with Nicki's character and she later leaves with her, not bothering to say goodbye to Georgie.

## **Nonna Rosa**

Nonna Rosa, Andy's grandmother, comes from Italy and upsets Andy's life when she permanently moves in with his family and he has to share his room with her. She is a nice person who treats Georgie like a member of the family. She has a limitation, though - she does not speak English. When this causes a problem and she sees how Georgie does great things in spite of his challenges, she decides to overcome her's by learning English.

Nonna Rosa's presence shows how people, no matter how old they are, can learn from others, have fears, and limitations.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## The Signal Andy Gives With His Pencil

Andy's signal in the classroom symbolizes friendship. At the beginning of the novel, the signal is for Georgie. In the middle, as a result of Georgie's fight with Andy it is for Russ. At the end of the novel, it is once again for Georgie.

## The Dog Walking Business

The dog walking business represents Georgie's partnership with Andy as well as Georgie's abilities. Thus when Andy wants to involve Russ, he is threatening Georgie on two fronts. One is on the level of his friendship with Andy, but the other is his role as the person who "owns" the business as Russ has ideas that can improve the business. In this sense, Russ is not only taking his place as Andy's friends, but also as the mastermind of the business.

## Andy's Family

Andy's family represents a mirror family which functions as part of the family motif that occurs in the novel. It shows that families are different and while one can love the ways of their own family, it is possible to love the traditions of another family as well.

## Music

Music symbolizes happiness in the Bishop household. Georgie is happy when he hears his parents practicing and his mother giving piano lessons. His parents later tell him that they had hoped that he would take up music because it made them happy.

## The Poems in Georgie's Room

The poems in Georgie's room symbolize the growth of his parents and Georgie as well. His parents have already created a path for him before he is born and the poem in his room shows that they assume that he will follow their musical path. The only question is what instrument will he play. They learn, though, that no matter how much planning parents do when it comes to their child, the outcome will surprise them. They pass this realization along to Georgie which creates a new poem of hope for the baby. The fact that Georgie thinks of creating the poem for the baby shows that Georgie has grown and now accepts the coming of the baby.



## Georgie's Role in the Play

Georgie's role in the play represents a time when he has to stand tall as he plays Abraham Lincoln, a man who was very tall. This is significant as, once Georgie learns about the baby and Andy's wish to have Russ join their business, he worries about his height. His success makes him feel tall even once the play is over and gives him the courage to communicate with his parents. His name makes him a leader, but standing tall gives him authority.

## Allison's Laugh

Allison's laugh symbolizes her interest in a boy. Thus she laughs when Cody speaks and Georgie wishes that he could make her laugh like that, as he has a crush on her.

## Walking Poodles

Walking the poodles symbolizes Georgie's growth. In the beginning of the novel it is something that he accepts doing because it is just the way it is. This view represents how he handles many situations in his life. In the middle of the novel, it is an insult for him to have to walk the poodles. Doing so references his height and limitations and separates him from "normal" boys like Andy and Russ. At the end of the novel he lets go of the poodles. No one is going to walk them. This shows his growth and the fact that he has let go of beliefs that no longer suit him. In this case it is the idea that he has to walk poodles at all. He does not like doing so, so it is okay to say no.

## The Name of Georgie's Little Sister

The name of Georgie's little sister symbolizes the growth of his parents. When they named her, they gave her a name to live up to. His sister, however, does not have the name of a famous person. This is because they realize that she has to find her own path. They cannot try to map it out for her. They also do Georgie homage by saying that he is the one who can show her the way when she needs guidance.

## The Title

The title symbolizes people's split second idea of who a person is and the fact that many people only see one attribute in a person. However, appearances can be deceiving and it is often the case that people need to look deeper to discover the real person.



# Settings

## Georgie's School

Georgie appears in his class at points in the novel which represent his journey towards growth. In the beginning of the novel life is normal for him and readers see how he interacts with Andy and Jeannie the Meanie. In the middle of the novel, when he is experiencing growing pains, his relationship with Andy is nonexistent and he has to work with Jeanie the Meanie. At the end of the novel, when he has grown, Georgie is friends with Andy, Russ, and Jeanie who he no longer calls a Meanie.

The school also shows the physical adjustments that have been made for Georgie (lower hooks and a stool for him to stand on). In all other ways though, the teacher treats him like all of the other children. He acts like them too, getting notes from Andy, ignoring Jeanie, and complaining when they cannot work on the report in the morning on the day that it is due.

## Georgie's House

Georgie's house is one of the places where readers learn about the strong influence of music in the family as Georgie's mother gives piano lessons and she and his father practice to prepare for performances. It is also where readers learn about the wish his parents had for their child to follow in their footsteps through the poem they wrote which is in Georgie's room.

Several shifts in Georgie's character take place here. First he is well-adjusted. Then he reaches a low point when he believes that his parents will choose the baby over him because it will be "normal" and musically inclined. Finally he learns to accept change and realizes that he has talents and people will love him no matter what. This is when he creates a new poem for the baby and gives him or her his room.

Georgie's house, like the school, shows physical changes that had to be made for Georgie, but other than that, his parents treat him like any other child.

## Andy's House

George goes to Andy's house so much that Andy's parents have done what they can to make adjustments for his height. It is like a second home, but it is not his home. Andy's home serves to introduce a mirror family. Georgie enjoys decorating the Christmas tree there, but he also enjoys doing it at his house. It shows one of Georgie's low points when on Christmas Eve, he is busy, but unhappy because it is not a normal Christmas for him. It is here that the beginning of his rift with Andy begins. It later shows his growth as it is also here that he shows that he has learned to work with others as he plays a major role in designing Andy's new bedroom.



Another event that takes place at the house is the meeting with Andy's grandmother which causes the misunderstanding that gets them lost and encourages her to learn English.

## **The Swimming Pool**

The swimming pool is where Georgie sees Allison in a setting that is outside of his house and with a friend of her's who is a snob. He wants to impress her, but does not get a chance to do so because she leaves without saying goodbye. It is also where Jeanie tries to be a friend by telling him that he is wasting his time trying to get Allison's attention.

## **Andy's Church**

Georgie goes to Andy's church on Christmas Eve and Russ is there. Because of the fact that it is different from his church, Russ is there, and he is there because of his parents' concern for the baby, Georgie is in a bad mood. This shows one of his low points when he behaves like a brat because he feels threatened by things outside of his comfort zone. It is interesting that Georgie is not compassionate in a setting that is meant for compassion.

## **The Concert Hall**

The concert hall is where Franco talks to Georgie about what instrument the orchestra members think that the baby will play. This conversation brings Georgie to the lowest point in the narrative as his actions when he returns home demonstrate. His frustration causes him to bang the piano and he believes that he does not belong in the room that he once loved because of the poem.

## **Jeanie's House**

Georgie goes to Jeanie's house to finish the report. Here he has to adapt as Jeanie does not make allowances due to his height when he needs to get the dictionary. Readers gain insight as to why Jeanie is the way she is once the narrative reveals how her brothers treat her. Georgie earns the nickname "meanie" here when he does not help Jeanie by saying that he is her friend.

## **The Stage Where the School Performance Takes Place**

Georgie has to perform on the stage and it is here that he gets over his stage fright and learns that he has a talent, realizes that Jeanie is a friend and not a meanie, and realizes that Allison might be pretty, but that does not mean that she is nice.



# Themes and Motifs

## Friendship

The novel explores friendship by showing that things are not always perfect between friends, that true friendship survives conflict and can grow stronger as a result of it, and that friendship has the power to change lives. The narrative explores these issues through the relationships Georgie has with Andy, Russ, Jeanie, his parents, and Andy's grandmother.

Friendship changes the lives of Andy, Russ, Georgie, and Jeanie. Andy is able to make money due to Georgie's idea to start a dog walking company. Later, he gets a great room with the help of Georgie's and Russ' great ideas.

Russ makes it through his performance with Georgie's help. He also maintains his reputation of being a cool guy. If he had made the mistakes on stage that he made while going through his lines with Georgie, he would have embarrassed himself onstage. Public embarrassment is not good for anyone, but it is especially not good for children because they are in the midst of building their character and are particularly sensitive to others making fun of them. Both Andy and Georgie let Russ express his artistic abilities by looking to him to do drawings associated with both of their rooms.

Georgie not only gets through his performance, but learns of his love for drama with Jeanie's help. This opens up a new perspective for him that makes him proud that he is good at something. Before, he had only focused on the fact that he could not play a musical instrument. Andy and Russ turn him into a collaborator and he learns that when one lets people in their lives and works with them, one can be better than when they are alone. The dog walking business thrives with the three boys. He is able to prepare the room for his little sister with the help of both Andy and Russ. They help him paint. Russ does the drawings. Andy helps Georgie write the poem. Readers have seen Georgie struggle with writing poetry in the past. He had problems writing a poem for his parents for Christmas. Jeanie helps Georgie get over Allison. Seeing the contrast between Jeanie's actions and Allison's when Cody verbally attacks him shows Georgie who his friend really is.

The friendships in the novel are not only between children. Adults also help children and vice versa. Georgie's teacher supports him as he struggles with his role as Abraham Lincoln by giving him the role, knowing that it will lead to his personal development, and not letting him give up. Georgie's parents help him learn to embrace the idea of being a big brother through their words. Georgie, in turn, helps his parents broaden their horizons when it comes to what to expect from their children. Georgie changes Andy's grandmother's attitude about learning English. She is encouraged to learn English after seeing Georgie fight, even with his limitations, when they are lost, and knowing that the fact that they got lost was partly because she cannot speak English.



One of the qualities of a true friend is that that person fights, or stands up, for their friend. In the narrative, Georgie stands up for Andy when Jeanie makes fun of Andy's name. This incident is the beginning of Georgie's and Andy's friendship. Jeanie literally fights to protect Georgie. When Cody verbally attacks Georgie, she kicks him. She is also violent when she finds out that Andy and Georgie have had a fight. She wants to throw rocks at Andy's windows because he is no longer Georgie's friend.

The fact that friends stand up for each other makes the times that people do not do so obvious and shows that these people are not the character's friends. While Allison tries to keep Nicki quiet when she shows displeasure that Allison talks to Georgie, she does not stand up for him and she leaves without saying goodbye. When Cody really says mean things to Georgie, Allison pretends that she does not hear what is going on. Her actions show Georgie that she is not his friend. Georgie faces a low point with Jeanie when he does not stand up for her when her brothers are making fun of her. All he has to do is say that he is her friend to make them stop, but he will not do it. This causes Jeanie to call him a meanie.

Even though there are strong friendships in the novel, all is not always good between them. Friendship involves conflict and forgiveness. Georgie and Andy have a huge fight. Jeanie calls Georgie a meanie. Georgie gets mad at his parents for having another child and Georgie and Jeanie think that Andy's grandmother is a bit off when she gets them lost. Yet, they all forgive each other and their bonds become even stronger afterwards.

## Family

The narrative uses family events, mirror families, and displays of the love that exists between family members to examine family dynamics. It does so by looking at Georgie's interaction with several different families.

Andy's family serves as a "mirror" family in the novel. Mirror families show that all families are not the same and that one can both embrace the mirror family's way of doing things and the way things are done in one's own family. Georgie spends a lot of time interacting with Andy's family. In fact, their house is as close to Georgie's home as a home-away-from-home can be. They have a stool for Georgie to stand on so that he can brush his teeth next to Andy. When he spends the night with Andy on Christmas Eve, they do not leave him to his own devices. They make him feel at home by finding clothes that he can feel comfortable sleeping in. Andy's family is different from Georgie's, however, in that Andy is Italian, so they have customs that are different from those of Georgie's family. Andy's family decorates the tree differently from the way Georgie's family does. They use white lights instead of lights with different colors and they put an angel at the top of the Christmas tree instead of a star. Georgie thinks life is good at both places. "...life at the Morettis' was good. But life at the Bishops' was good too" (41).

The narrative also uses Andy's family to illustrate that it is hard when one is torn away from their true family as Georgie feels that he has been on Christmas Eve. This is the



only time Georgie is not happy at Andy's house. When Georgie cannot go home the differences in how Andy's family celebrates Christmas and how his family celebrates the holiday annoy him.

Georgie's own family shows the importance of communication in maintaining family harmony. Georgie is fine until he learns that he is about to become a big brother. Then things that did not bother him before, like his height and the fact that he cannot play a musical instrument, begin to bother him. His parents realize the importance of communication and continuously ask him whether he is okay or if there is anything that he wants to ask them. He knows that there is, but he cannot express it. Once he does, however, everything is better and he is able to accept the coming of the baby as shown by the fact that he is ready to give up his room for the baby and writes a new poem for him or her.

Knowing someone's family can also help one understand why that person is the way they are. Jeanie says she wants to be friends with Georgie, but he thinks that she is mean. Readers understand why she taunts people once they see her home environment. Her brothers treat her the same way she treats Georgie. If this is the way family members treat each other, then it is normal for her to think that this is how one treats a friend.

The coming of the baby in Georgie's family and the coming of Andy's grandmother show how changes in the composition of a family can influence children. Both boys feel displaced. Andy is physically displaced because he has to share his room with his grandmother. Georgie feels that he will lose his place in his parents' hearts when the baby arrives. The narration shows, however, that if handled correctly, children can grow and become better, more confident people, as a result of the changes. Both Andy and Georgie create a new role or place for themselves. They literally create new rooms and Georgie steps up to being a big brother.

## Appearance Versus Reality

Through several instances in the novel, the author demonstrates that things - and people - are not always what they appear, and it is important to get to know them better before passing judgement. The appearance versus reality motif manifests itself in the characters of Georgie, Allison, Jeanie, and Russ.

Georgie is a dwarf. His appearance, therefore, may make people feel sorry for him. Jeanie tells him that this is how she felt until he does not stand up for her and tell her brothers that he is her friend. A man drives by and stares at Georgie. There is no reason to feel sorry for Georgie because he is a dwarf, however. He is comfortable within his own skin. When the man stares at him, the narrator writes, "Georgie was used to getting stared at. People had been staring at him for ten whole years...Really, Georgie couldn't blame them for staring. If he saw a man who was ten feet tall, or a woman whose skin was dyed green, he'd probably stare too, just to make sure it was real...Once they adjusted their eyeball, there was really nothing to look at but Georgie. And he wasn't



that interesting” (33). The only time his limitations bother him is when he feels threatened by the new baby. In reality though, being a dwarf is not the root of his insecurities. He reacts the same way many children do when they realize that their family is growing. Georgie just happens to focus on his height and the fact that he cannot play a musical instrument. He views these things as his weaknesses. Children who are not dwarfs focus on other issues about themselves.

Jeanie appears to be a meanie. She makes fun of Andy because of his first name. She harasses Georgie, always tapping him on the shoulder in class and calling him names. Yet, when she talks to Georgie’s mother, she tells her that she wants to be Georgie’s friend, but he calls her a meanie. “I’ve been trying to be friends with him forever and a half, and he just hates me” (166).

In addition to appearing mean, but really trying to be nice, Jeanie can appear to be nice to adults when she has been annoying Georgie. After Georgie’s mother takes her home, she says, “she sure seemed like a nice young lady” (168). When Georgie is trying to work with her in the library and the librarian comes to see whether they need help, the narrator says that he “hated when grown-ups acted like Jeanie the Meanie was funny instead of just mean” (89). Jeanie also appears to not be interested in working on the report, but when Georgie says that he will finish it by himself, she makes him go to her house after school to work on it with her because they have not worked on it together and working on it together is part of their grade.

When it comes to being a meanie, it is interesting that Georgie appears to be nice, but he is the meanie when he feels threatened. He gets mad at Andy because Andy wants to include Russ in their business. Georgie is the one who issues the ultimatum that causes Andy to choose Russ over him. He will not help Jeanie by saving her from her brothers by saying that he is her friend. He even wishes, for a short period of time, that something bad happens to the baby.

Two other people who are different from how they appear are Allison and Russ. Allison speaks to Georgie and seems to be nice, but she is not. She does not step up and help Georgie when her friends make fun of him. Russ is good at sports, drawing and has good business ideas, but he is not good at the game that Andy and Georgie play and has stage fright. His performance on stage is okay, but not great.

## Fears

The notions that one needs to conquer one’s fears to move forward and perceived limitations are no excuse to prohibit one from overcoming their fears are explored in the novel. The narrative also highlights the point that fears can cause problems in the lives of the fearful person and those around them.

Georgie is growing up and at this point in his life there are several fears that he needs to conquer in order to continue to be well-adjusted as he gets older. One of these fears is having to share his friends and parents with other children. He fears that they will get all



of the attention and he will be tossed aside. While he lets this fear manifest, he loses his best friend and begins to doubt himself. He has a terrible Christmas Eve, decides that his room is not meant for him because he is not a musician, and does not enjoy the bike that he gets for Christmas. In contrast, when he overcomes them, he surges ahead and has more fun than ever with his friends and make his parents proud of him.

Georgie also has stage fright. He wants to be in the play, but cannot bring himself to sign up. When he practices he says his lines as fast as possible so that he can finish. He worries that people will laugh at him. Once he gets over his fear, he feels taller than ever and his parents tell him how proud they are of him.

Andy's grandmother fears learning a new language. She thinks that her age prohibits her from learning English. Not speaking the language results in her getting lost with two children, Jeanie and Georgie. Once she sees how Georgie manages with his limitations, she gets over her fear and decides to take an English as a Second Language class.

## Growing Up

The author demonstrates that kids, even if they have disabilities or extra challenges, still have to endure many of the typical growing pains of maturing into adulthood. Georgie has to deal with making new friends, having a crush on the wrong girl, dealing with his strengths and weaknesses, and finding his place in his family when his parents decide to have another child. These events cause growing pains for him.

In the beginning of the novel, Georgie has a secure life with his best friend Andy. Suddenly, Andy gets to know someone he does not know. This person messes up his orderly life and, in the beginning, he refuses to let that happen. Georgie does not know how to deal with the change. He learns what he values, though, and one of those things is his friendship with Andy. Thus he opens up, gets to know Russ and gives up his feelings of hatred as he realizes that Russ will not threaten his friendship with Andy. Russ will actually strengthen the team.

Allison is the wrong girl for Georgie. He sees her beauty, but not her character. It is so important that he impresses her that he even stays at the pool and has to walk home. She leaves without even saying goodbye, but her action is not enough to deter him. Georgie finally receives an awakening when he sees Allison flirting with Cody. He learns even more about her when Cody makes fun of him and she pretends that she does not see what is happening. This event makes him realize that he does not need to waste his time with her any longer. Jeanie might be strange and have an uneven ponytail, but Georgie realizes that she is the better person.

As Georgie overcomes his fears, he learns about talents that he has and realizes that no one is perfect. Allison is pretty, but she is not nice and cannot play the piano well. Russ is a good athlete and has a head for business, but he is not good at certain games and does not have a flair for acting. Jeanie is very creative even though it is hard to get

her to focus at times. He has limitations due to his height, but he has a head for business, design, and acting.

Learning all of these things allows him to get over the awkward growing phase filled with doubt and self-pity and continue the maturation process with happiness and confidence.



# Styles

## Point of View

The narrative is written from two distinctive points of views that emerge in most of the chapters. One is first person point of view written from Jeanie's perspective. It has an interesting impact on the narrative as it shows that appearances can be deceiving. Georgie thinks that she is mean, but she has taken the time to learn about him. She also serves to make readers who might not be tolerant of dwarfs aware of what their lives are like. Those who might be tempted to see him as a boy like Andy and Russ see how well-adjusted he is. It helps all readers realize that people can overcome their limitations.

The third person narrative moves the story forward. It is from Georgie's perspective and is appropriate in supporting the motifs that appear in the novel. It shows that this is not a novel about a boy who is a dwarf, but the story of a boy who happens to be a dwarf and is experiencing growing pains as he grows up. It also allows readers to experience Georgie's growth as the novel progresses by getting into his head and using language to create a tone that shows how he feels. For example, he begins to call the baby a derogatory name, Baby Godzilla. When his parents leave him at Andy's house on Christmas Eve, the narrator says that they "streak off" to make sure their "precious little Baby Godzilla" was okay.

## Language and Meaning

The language in the novel is appropriate for the readers of a middle grade novel. The children speak like children really speak using words like "cool," "gonna," and "hung out." They also trade insults the way children do. When Jeanie talks to her brothers they call her childish derogatory names like "Puke Breath," "Skunk Feet," and "Elephant Nose."

Georgie and Jeanie find a word while doing their report that they do not understand the meaning of, as is common for children to do. Georgie needs to look up the word "consecrate." It is interesting how the narrator does not give the definition, inviting readers to look the word up themselves to find the meaning. In this way, the narrator is using language to teach children the value of looking up words in the dictionary.

The language is also appropriate in setting the tone of the novel. For example, Georgie gives the baby a name with a negative connotation which shows how much he dislikes it. When Andy tells Georgie about Russ the narrator shows how much Georgie feels that Russ is a threat to his friendship with Andy by using the words "all of a sudden" in the sentence, "All of a sudden Georgie knew that he did not want Russ to be their new partner" (11). He gets this feeling when he finds out that Andy has been hanging out with Russ without him. This event is what triggers his instant dislike for Russ.



Finally, as Andy's grandmother is Italian and does not speak English, she brings the Italian version of names with her, calling Georgie "Giorgino." Georgie also understands her saying the word "casa," and when Jeanie sings she says, "Brava ragazza" (153). The exchange she has with the children shows how her lack of the ability to understand English limits her in this situation as she cannot communicate with the children. As a result they get lost.

## Structure

The novel has 25 chapters that make up a distinct beginning, middle, and resolution of Georgie's story. In the beginning Georgie has created a world that makes him happy. Then the narrative introduces the changes in his life that threaten his way of being and propel him into a downward spiral. At his lowest point, he is no longer friends with Andy and feels as if he does not belong in the room he used to love. Jeanie even calls him a meanie. Readers then see Georgie learning to adapt to the changes in his life and throw away views that no longer suit it. In the end, he is more fulfilled and happier than he was in the beginning of the novel.

The narrative uses the repetition of certain settings and items to represent these changes. The classroom is one such setting as Georgie is in the classroom during all of these stages in his life. Poodles are an example of such an item as they represent different things throughout the stages in his life. First he walks them because that is just the way it is. Then it is an insult when Andy says that they will leave the poodles for him to walk. Finally he is able to banish the poodles from the business as he banishes thoughts that he once had about his life.

It is interesting to note that in the use of the repetition of certain elements in the novel, the author has structured it like a piece of music. These elements repeat as variations do in classical music. First things are nice, then they get darker, and then the ending is perkier than the notes were in the beginning of the song.





## Quotes

I need you to do me a favor. Yes, you.  
-- Jeanie (chapter 1 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** This quote sets up the format for the reoccurring instructions Jeanie, who at this point is an unknown narrator, gives readers to help them understand Georgie's world. It is interesting that once readers get to know Jeanie, the bossy tone of these two sentences give readers a clue that Jeanie is the narrator.

The thing about Jeanette Wallace, Georgie thought, was that she was mean.  
-- Narrator (chapter 1 paragraph 7)

**Importance:** This quote appears at the beginning of the book when readers first meet Jeanie. It serves to both introduce and characterize her. It also supports the title as it presents the idea that there is a thing, or way to classify Jeanie. It is a quote that readers should remember because at the end of the novel they find out that there are many things about Jeanie and being a meanie is not one of them. In this sense, this assessment of Jeanie compared to his assessment of her at the end of the narrative gives an effective measurement of Georgie's personal growth.

The things about Andy, Georgie figured, was that he was Italian.  
-- Narrator (chapter 1 paragraph 16)

**Importance:** This quote shows that Georgie has to put everyone into a category at the beginning of the novel. The narrator uses the words "Georgie figured" which shows that Georgie had to think about it and the fact that Andy is Italian is what he came up with.

That was just the way things were, and Georgie knew there wasn't anything he could do to change it.  
-- Narrator (chapter 1 paragraph 23)

**Importance:** This quote appears after the narrator tells readers about the accommodations that have been made for Georgie at his school and how Jeanie picks on him more than other children. The fact that none of this bothers him shows the state he is in at the beginning of the novel. At this point he has his world figured out and is well adjusted.

All of a sudden Georgie knew that he did not want Russ to be their new partner.  
-- Narrator (chapter 2 paragraph 26)

**Importance:** This quote appears after Georgie learns that Andy has talked to Russ "behind his back." It shows that he does not like Russ because he fears that Russ is going to take his place in Andy's life.



Allison was definitely pretty, but that didn't make her any good at playing the piano.  
-- Narrator (chapter 4 paragraph 7)

**Importance:** This quote shows that no one is perfect. Everyone has challenges that they have to face. One of Allison's is trying to play the piano well.

Georgie was used to getting stared at. People had been staring at him for ten whole years.

-- Narrator (chapter 5 paragraph 4)

**Importance:** This quote shows that Georgie is well adjusted when it comes to dealing with issues related to him being a dwarf. It also shows how people can behave when they see people who are different from them.

But life at the Bishops' was pretty good too.

-- Narrator (chapter 5 paragraph 54)

**Importance:** This quote appears after Georgie notes that things are good at Andy's house. It shows that families can be different, but that does not mean that one type of family is better than the other.

Georgie was dropped off at Andy's house, and his parents streaked off in the car to check the health of their precious little Baby Godzilla.

-- Narrator (chapter 8 paragraph 10)

**Importance:** This quote shows how much the coming of the baby upsets Georgie. His fears are coming true. He sees being dropped off at Andy's house as a sign of things to come. His parents have already dumped him in favor of the baby.

We'll leave all of the poodles for you.

-- Andy (chapter 8 paragraph 113)

**Importance:** Andy says this to Georgie when the two boys fight about Russ joining their business. The fact that Andy says this to Georgie shows how large the rift is between them. Andy knows that Georgie does not like walking poodles, but he also knows that Georgie cannot walk larger dogs because of his size. Thus, the quote hits Georgie where it really hurts, as it is an attack coming from his friend.

Why on earth would Jeanie the Meanie want to check out a book about him? She hated him.

-- Narrator (chapter 11 paragraph 99)

**Importance:** This quote gives readers a hint that maybe Jeanie is the narrator who tells readers what to do so that they see what Georgie's life is like. She gets her knowledge from the book. It also shows that appearances can be deceiving as he thinks she hates him, yet she is taking time to learn about him.



You taught us that, Georgie, that you can't ever know what to expect. We'll just have to be surprised.

-- Georgie's Father (chapter 24 paragraph 20)

**Importance:** This quote shows family love as Georgie's parents know just the right thing to say to him. It also shows the importance of communication because after this conversation, Georgie no longer fears the baby's birth. Finally it shows that Georgie's parents have also grown as they no longer expect the baby to naturally do what they do.