

Literature Circle Questions

For How to Steal a Dog by Barbara O'Connor

1. Where are Georgina and her mother and brother living at the beginning of the story? Why are they living there?
2. How does Georgina come up with the idea of stealing a dog? Why does she decide to go ahead with her plan even though she knows it is wrong?
3. Why does Georgina think that Carmella is going to be rich? What does she actually find out when she gets to know Carmella?
4. What are the two mottos that Mookie shares with Georgina? Choose one of them and explain what it means, using examples from the story.
5. Compare Georgina's life with her friend Luanne's. What are some of the differences in how the two girls live?
6. List two of the times Mama uses her "mean voice" with Georgina. Why do you think she does this? Do you think Mama is a mean person?
7. Why do you think Carmella continues to be nice despite what Georgina has done?
8. List all of the potential problems that could arise from stealing a dog. How does Georgina address each of these problems in her list of rules for stealing a dog? Does she forget anything?
9. Find three instances where Georgina gets frustrated with Toby. Why do you think she is so impatient with him? Do you think she really thinks he's dumb?
10. Reread the last four pages of the book. Do you think the story has a happy ending? Why or why not?
11. Imagine that the book is written from another character's perspective. How do you think the story would be different if Toby or Mama were the narrator?
12. If you were in Georgina's situation, would you have stolen Willie? Why or why not? Have you ever done anything you know was wrong because you thought you had a good reason for it?

13. Do you think Georgina is a good person? Use examples from the story to support your argument.
14. On page 49, Georgina says to Mama, "Maybe you could act like a *mother*." Do you think Mama acts like a mother? Is she doing everything she can to take care of her kids?

Note: These questions are linked to Bloom's Taxonomy as follows: Knowledge: 1-3; Comprehension: 4-5; Application: 6-7; Analysis: 8-10; Synthesis: 11-12; Evaluation: 13-14.

Activities

1. Imagine that you are Georgina and it is a year after the events in the story took place. Your father has come back to Darby and wants to see you. Would you forgive him? What would you say to him? Write a skit in which your father comes over and you tell him your feelings and ask him any questions you have. Include a paragraph at the beginning that describes the scene – where you and Mama and Toby are living now.
2. Draw a map of Darby, North Carolina. Include all the places where Georgina and her family spend the night – the old abandoned house, Carmella and Willy's house, and any other locations you can remember from the story.
3. Write a passage from Luanne's perspective that takes place the day you find out Georgina is living in a car. Describe your day at school, your thoughts about Georgina's appearance and behavior, and how you feel when you discover your friend's secret.