

Dodger and Me

By Jordan Sonnenblick

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Library of Congress Summary:

Miserable because his only friend moved away and he has once again lost a baseball game for his team, fifth-grader Willie Ryan's life suddenly becomes a lot more interesting when he finds Dodger, a furry blue chimpanzee that only he can see, and he has to decide what he really wishes for in life.

Book Information:

Time Period: Contemporary

Genre: Fantasy

Curriculum Ties: Friendship

Booktalk: <http://manzreads.pbworks.com/Dodger-and-Me>

Author Information

<http://www.jordansonnenblick.com/>

This website includes a biography of the author, bibliography, and contact information.

Chapter 1

Questions:

1. What do you think might happen to Willie on his walk back home?
2. What is the name of the girl in the stands cheering Willie on throughout his game?
3. What do Willie's teammates call him?

Journal Topic: Willie was very disappointed in himself for not hitting the ball in his game, has there ever been a time that you were very disappointed in yourself?

Vocabulary:

Encouragement (p 3)

Accent (p 4)

Arthritis (p 5)

Reflex (p 8)

Chapter 2

Questions:

1. What was Dodger inside when Willie found him?
2. Where was Willie when he found Dodger?
3. Now that Willie has found Dodger, what do you think will happen?

Journal Topic: Dodger tells Willie that they have some things in common at the end of the chapter, liking bananas for example, what things do you and your friends have in common?

Vocabulary

Trespassing (p 13)

Underbrush (p 16)

Pollen (18)

Accompany (p 20)

Chapter 3

Questions:

1. How does Willie's mom react when he returns home?

2. Dodger tells Willie that he has a “three part plan,” what do you think this plan involves?
3. What do you think will happen when Dodger goes to school with Willie?

Journal Writing: If you brought home a dirty blue chimp, would you be worried about what your parents would say, why or why not?

Vocabulary

Mysterious (p 25)

Broad (p 27)

Leisure Activity (p 28)

Frantic (p 32)

Commemorate (p 36)

Chapter 4

Questions:

1. Do you remember your first day of school? How did you feel on this day?
2. Why did Willie get in trouble during Mrs. Starsky’s class?
3. What do you think will happen to Willie after lunch?

Journal Writing: There is a new student from another country in your class, it is his first day in school, much like Dodger, what sort of advice would you give him or her?

Vocabulary:

Displeasure (p 39)

Horrendous (p 39)

Cower (p 41)

Ruffian (p 42)

Bizarre (p 47)

Chapter 5

Questions:

1. If your teacher sent home a bad note to your parents, how do you think they would react?
2. What was the name of the game Dodger played with Willie, how did the game work?
3. What do you think the kids will say when Willie goes to school with a plus sign on his forehead?

Journal Writing: Have you ever gotten hurt like Willie (the plus mark on his head) and were worried about how the students will react in school the next day? What sort of advice can you give Willie to stay positive throughout the next day of school?

Vocabulary:

Rampage (p 55)

Confiscate (p 57)

Degrade (p 59)

Severe (p 65)

Chapter 6

Questions:

1. How does Dodger get Lizzie and Willie into the woods?
2. Do you think it was a good idea for Dodger to let Lizzie see him?
3. What was in the woods when Willie and Lizzie entered?
4. The next chapter is entitled “Grounded,” what do you think will happen in the chapter?

Journal Writing: Lizzie and Willie seem to be becoming friends, have you ever become friends with someone you didn't think you liked much?

Vocabulary:

Terrarium (p 68)

Prominent (p 74)

Regimen (p 74)

Chapter 7

Questions:

1. Why do you think Willie's mom is so protective?
2. How did Lizzie react when Willie retold the story of his night to her at school the next day?
3. Do you think Willie will get his room cleaned up before his mom gets home?

Journal Writing: Dodger offers a few ideas to help Willie gain his mother's trust, what sort of advice would you offer Willie in order to gain his mother's trust.

Vocabulary:

Mischievous (p 83)

Sympathy (p 84)

Awe (p 91)

Chapter 8

Questions:

1. What kind of food did Lizzie say was Willie's mom's favorite?
2. What did Lizzie try to make for the main course?
3. What do you think will happen with Willie next chapter?
4. Do you think Dodger is more helpful or harmful to Willie's situation, why?

Journal Writing: Dodger does not seem to think that it is a big deal that everything he has planned has somehow turned out wrong. Dodger believes that in the end

everything will be okay. Are you more like Dodger who thinks everything will be okay no matter what, or are you more of a worrier like Willie?

Vocabulary:

Assortment (p 105)

Paralyze (p 112)

Chapter 9

Questions:

1. Why had Lizzie been following Willie?
2. What did the Great Lasorda call Willie instead of “loser?”
3. What do you think Willie will wish for?
4. If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?

Journal Writing: Willie finds out that Lizzie has not been telling him why she has been following him, and that Dodger is not a genie. Have you ever been lied to? How did that make you feel?

Vocabulary:

Tremendous (p 115)

Ballistic (p 115)

Accordance (p 116)

Acronym (p 117)

Impairment (p 119)

Interject (p 122)

Sinister (p 124)

Chapter 10

Questions:

1. Do you think it was a good idea to wish Lizzie away?

2. Would it be hard to adjust if all of a sudden your parents were completely different?
3. What do you think Willie's last wish will be?
4. Do you think anything will go back to normal?

Journal Writing: Willie wishes that his mother would completely trust him. What sort of changes can we see in his mother? Do you think that these were good changes?

Vocabulary:

Obnoxious (p. 127)

Proposal (p. 130)

Chapter 11

Questions:

1. The last chapter is called "Going Down Swinging," what do you think will happen in it?
2. What was the chimp's name that the Great Lasorda called to practice with Rodger?
3. What was the bet that Dodger made with the Great Lasorda?
4. If you were Willie, what would you wish for as your final wish?

Journal Writing: Willie chose to banish Dodger in order to be granted three wishes. Do you think that Willie made the right choice, why or why not? What would you do if you were given the opportunity to have three wishes, but would have to lose your best friend?

Vocabulary:

Parasol (p 141)

Distinguished (p 142)

Redundant (p 143)

Intermittent (p 143)

Chapter 12

Questions:

1. What sort of adjustments did the Great Lasorda make to Willie's wishes?
2. What was Willie's final wish?
3. How do you think the baseball game ended?

Journal Writing: At the end of the book Willie chooses to free Dodger instead of using his last wish on becoming a star baseball player or something else. If you were Willie and had the choice to get back Dodger, would you?

Vocabulary:

Menacing (p 168)

Other Works by Jordan Sonnenblick:

- *Drums, Girls & Dangerous Pie*
- *Notes from the Midnight Driver*
- *Zen and the Art of Faking It*
- *Dodger for President*
- *Dodger for Sale*

Additional Websites:

<http://www.state.lib.la.us/literacy-and-reading/louisiana-young-readers-choice/lyrc-study-guides-2011> Questions, activities, and more information

<http://us.macmillan.com/dodgerandme> summary, questions, information about the author