

REPLAY

Setting the Scene

Leo may have been given a bit part in the school play . . . but he dreams he is the biggest star on Broadway. His big, noisy family makes him feel like a sardine squashed in a tin, and they call him “fog boy” because he is always replaying things in his head. As an actor in the school play, he is eager for the curtain to open. But in the play that is his life, Leo is ready to discover what part will be his.

Before Reading

Ask your students to open the book. Explain to them that the front matter has been designed to look like a play, complete with a cast of characters and a scene list. Discuss what a cast of characters might look like for your class or for their individual families. What types of scenes might make up an average day? After you finish the book, discuss why the author formatted the story in this way.



Discussion Questions

1. Leo's family call him by two nicknames, “sardine” and “fog boy.” How did Leo get these nicknames? What do these nicknames tell you about Leo's family?
2. When Mr. Beeber is trying to get the cast to understand their characters better, he asks them to describe what their characters might have been like when they were younger. He also suggests that the cast imagine people they knew when they were kids. What does Leo imagine? Who does Leo think about? What do you learn about Leo's father and brothers from this exercise?
3. Leo imagines what it would be like if everyone was given a Life Script that foretold everything that was going to happen. What would be some pros and cons of possessing such knowledge? Would you like to have a Life Script?
4. “It was like everyone else was in a play and I was the audience. I couldn't see myself, but maybe everybody feels this way” (p. 48). What emotion is Leo describing? Use examples from the text to describe why he feels that way.
5. What does Leo learn about his father from reading *The Autobiography of Giorgio, Age of Thirteen*? In what ways was his father like him as a child? What does he learn about the rest of his family? Do you wish you could read a journal your father kept when he was your age?
6. “Leo, you make gold from pebbles” (p. 83). What does Leo's father mean by this? How does Leo's ability to use his imagination impact his life?
7. Leo is worried that he will mess up, or “glurt” during the play. What happens during the play? How does the play impact the story?
8. Grandma Navy tells Leo, “As long as there are children, there is hope” (p. 145). What does she mean by this? How does Leo's family feel about children?
9. While thinking about the play, Leo muses, “Maybe when you write a play you can only choose one very small part of one or two lives, but how do you choose which part, which lives?” (p. 148). How does this thought relate to the book as a whole? How does the author manage to focus on a short period of time for Leo while also discussing years in the lives of Leo's family?



