



Teacher Companion Guide

If I Ever Get Out of Here

By Eric Gansworth

Note about this guide

This book club teacher guide is centered around Eric Gansworth's book, *If I Ever Get Out of Here*. This guide offers a short summary of each chapter and suggested discussion questions to accompany the student journal prompts. In addition, we have provided extension activities for potential deeper learning.

Note about the book

This book tells the story of Lewis Blake, a Native American teenager growing up on the Tuscarora Reservation, and his friendship with George Haddonfield, a white boy who's the son of an Air Force Officer. As the two boy's friendship develops, they navigate the space between their two different worlds and face challenges to remaining friends. The book includes discussion of topics that may be triggering for some students, including bullying, poverty, alcoholism and racism. We suggest teachers provide time and space for students to reflect on these topics.

Materials:

- Teacher Guide (this document)
 - [Before Reading](#): Author Bio
 - Chapter summaries, discussion questions, & extension activities
 - [Chapters 1-3](#)
 - [Chapters 4-6](#)
 - [Chapters 7-9](#)
 - [Chapters 10-12](#)
 - [Chapters 13-15](#)
 - [Chapters 16-18](#)
 - [Chapters 19-21](#)
 - [Chapters 22-24](#)
 - [Chapters 25-26](#)
- [Student Journal](#)
 - Student journal prompts for each chapter grouping (sections include 3 chapters each)

- Each entry contains an analysis prompt, creative/reflective prompt, vocabulary tracker, and additional prompts.

Before Reading

Questions to begin the book club

- What do you think of the cover of the book? What do you think this story will be about?

Brief Bio of Eric Gansworth

Eric Gansworth (S'ha-weñ na-sae[?]), is a member of Eel clan, enrolled Onondaga, born and raised at the Tuscarora Nation. A writer and visual artist, he has published a dozen books, including the novels, *Mending Skins* (Pen Oakland Award) and *Extra Indians* (American Book Award, NAISA Book of the Year), the young adult novels, *If I Ever Get Out of Here* (Honor Award, American Indian Youth Literary Award; One Book, One Philadelphia 2020) and *Give Me Some Truth* (Whippoorwill Award). He has recorded audiobooks for recent books. His collection of poems and paintings, *A Half-Life of Cardio-Pulmonary Function*, was selected for the NBCC Good Reads List. His newest book, *Apple (Skin to the Core)*, a memoir-in-verse and images, was longlisted for the 2020 National Book Award. His first play, *Re-Creation Story*, was selected for the Public Theater's Second Annual Native Theater Festival.

He is a Professor of English and Lowery Writer-in-Residence at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York. As a visual artist, he has had solo exhibitions at the Castellani Museum, Colgate University, Westfield State University, SUNY Oneonta and Bright Hill Center. His work has appeared in the journals *The Kenyon Review*, *POETRY*, *The Cream City Review*, *The Boston Review*, *Provincetown Arts*, *Shenandoah*, *Third Coast*, and *Many Mountains Moving*, among other journals and has been widely anthologized.

Gansworth's work also has been supported by the Library of Congress, the National Book Critics Circle, the Saltonstall Foundation, the Lannan Foundation, the Arne Nixon Center, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Seaside Institute among other institutions. He was NEH Distinguished Visiting Professor at Colgate University. He has also recently been selected for inclusion in LIT CITY, a public arts project celebrating Buffalo's Literary Legacy.

Video on the Author

This [short video](#) about the author was made for his Alma Mater, introducing you to his works.

Discography for "If I Ever Get Out Of Here"

The author created complete list of YouTube links for the songs referenced in each chapter title of the book, as compiled by Eric Gansworth himself.

 [If I Ever Get Out of Here Discography](#)

Chapters 1-3

Summary	Chapter one starts off in 1975 with the narrator chopping off the braid he had been growing for five years. The narrator begins his walk home across half of the reservation reflecting on why he wanted to cut the braid off. He had been sent to the county junior high school with twenty-two white students/strangers, and wanted to fit in better by trying to look like everyone in the class. The narrator said that the two-foot braid just shouted “Reservation Kid Here.” The narrator’s brother, Zach, explains to him that he’ll get used to it, as he had to get his braid cut off when he was sent to Vietnam. Chapter two begins with the narrator starting seventh grade, and despite the haircut, still feeling alienated by his schoolmates. The narrator meets the newest student, George, and they both have some things in common. The narrator agreed with George that someday he’d visit his home, but the narrator’s friends on the bus were discouraging. The narrator’s brother and mother explain to him that kids like George, military kids, are more willing to talk to him because they don’t know much about the reservation. White kids’ parents often threatened them with being dropped off at the reservation with the “wild Indians,” so the White kids were scared of it. Chapter three begins with the narrator and George talking to Summer Barnes. Summer disparages the narrator for his clothes and how he wears them. Even though he takes her advice, the narrator sarcastically responds back to her. George warns him about rubbing people the wrong way, as it leads to exposure and attacks. George continues to give the narrator advice, and though somewhat peeved by it, the narrator admits that it is helpful.
Discussion Questions	• The narrator’s mother said he was just a “dog and pony show” for going to Indian Culture Night. What do you think she meant by that? • At the start of his sixth grade year, the narrator attempted to befriend two kids he wanted to hang out with by making up disparaging nicknames for them. Why do you think he thought that would work? What else could he have done besides that? • Zack, the narrator’s brother, mentions that cutting his braid made him feel like a piece of him was missing, but he got used to it. Why do you think cutting the braid would make him feel like that? Why would Zack encourage his brother that he’d get used to having short hair? • The narrator’s brother and mom told him that other students didn’t want to talk to him because they were scared by their parents with stories about the reservation. Were the parents of those kids wrong for that? Why or why not? • Summer Barnes gave the narrator a tough time about his clothes and how he was wearing them? Why do you think the narrator followed her advice? • Did George give the narrator good advice after the narrator had been sarcastic to Summer? How so?
Extension Activity	Learn about the Beatles • Read short biography on the Beatles • Discussion Questions • Where were the Beatles from? • Where did John Lennon and Paul McCartney first meet? • Paul McCartney said in the moment of his first guitar solo, he got sticky fingers and couldn’t perform in front of the crowd. Can you remember a

	time when you had stage fright? • How did they come up with the name Beatles? If you had a band, what would you name yours? • Where does John Lennon recall that they really took off success-wise? • Where did the Beatles make their debut in the US?
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Chapters 4-6

Summary	Chapter four starts with the narrator and his friend being called a “scummy welfare Indian” by a bully at their school. The narrator’s friend, Carson, hangs out with the bully. The narrator worries about what the bully will do when he finds out Carson is a Native American too. Based on Paul McCartney’s alleged death cover-up, the narrator contemplates being able to alter his appearance to no longer be that “kid from the reservation.” For an English assignment, the narrator recycles a fifth grade show-and-tell assignment to show how the Tuscarora Native Americans lived. George mentions that his dad would love to see it, and invites the narrator to his home. George then speaks about Guam and his English assignment, for which the narrator believes he will receive an “A” grade. Chapter five starts with a couple of the narrator’s classmates having to leave because their father’s had received “their orders.” (Which meant they were moving because their father was going on duty.) George invites the narrator over for Christmas and the narrator has trepidation because he believes he will have to reciprocate and invite George to his home on the reservation. The narrator participated in a concert where he met George’s mother afterwards. The narrator declined a ride home, and instead walked home with his uncle Albert. The narrator thinks about his desire to be seen differently and also of the guilt for feeling that way. George and his mother doubled back from the concert and picked up the narrator and his uncle. Dropping his uncle off outside of town, they headed to Red-Tail Manor, the Air Force base, with the narrator for a visit. Chapter six begins with the narrator arriving at Red-Tail Manor, and being accosted in a military store because of his ethnicity. Once back at George’s house, they ordered pizza and listened to the Beatles. George’s father arrived home and interacted well with the narrator. After pizza and wings, George’s father took the narrator home. He gave the narrator a Beatles album, Band On The Run, to listen to and return at a later date.
Discussion Questions	• The narrator says that their free-lunch program ticket had “pathetic” written on it. How do you feel about that? Would you still accept the ticket? • Carson, the narrator’s friend, was hanging out with the racist bully. Why do you think Carson hung out with someone like that? • The narrator was reluctant to do things outside of school with George because he thought it would eventually lead to George seeing where he lived. Do you think the narrator should’ve been ashamed of where he lived? Would you have been? • When talking to George, the narrator says that the reservation will be his home for the rest of his life. Why do you think the narrator felt like that? • Why would Carson say that he’s “stuck” with his white friends? Do you think that he should be accusing the narrator of wrong-doing, when he is doing the same thing? • The narrator said he felt like he was going across the border into another country when he was headed to Red-Tail Manor. Have you ever felt that out-of-place somewhere? Where? Why did you feel like that? • The narrator and George were threatened by the man in the military store. Why did the store clerk behave like that? Should George or the narrator have said something? • Why do you think George’s father was being so generous by giving the narrator that Beatles album? • The narrator said that his mother would kill him if she knew that he brought food home from George’s family. Do you think she was wrong for feeling like that?

	Why did he bring it home anyway?
Extension Activity	Review video of the hardships youth face on the Reservation. ●  On reservations, at-risk Native American youths find few places to turn ● Questions ○ What did the narrator say the percentage of employment was on the Reservation? How can it be that high? ○ The narrator states that Indian children are twice as likely as any other ethnicity to die before the age of 24. Were you surprised by that? Why isn't something being done about that? Whose responsibility is it to change that? Why? ○ Have you ever heard of the "Battle of Wounded Knee?" What would cause an army to do something so horrific? ○ What did Pat Bad Hand say most kids who are put in the detention center do in their first 24 hours?

Chapters 7-9

Summary	In chapter seven, Lewis, the narrator, is picked up by his reservation friend, Carson, who stole his mother's car for a joyride. The two of them do donuts in the school parking lot before going to a local store so Lewis can buy Christmas presents for his family. Throughout this time, Lewis is nervous about being caught since neither him nor Carson have licenses. After shopping, Carson forces Lewis to drive and instead of driving to Carson's house, Lewis decides to be done with the outing and drives himself home. Lewis is starting to realize a difference in the way he is treated by George and Carson. In chapter Eight Lewis and his family celebrate Christmas. Uncle Albert got Lewis a new album, Venus and Mars by the Wings. His uncle relates his friendship with George to the two planets on the album cover (Lewis and George come from different planets), and says there isn't any rocket to get Lewis to the planet that George lives on. On New Year's Eve, the narrator goes to George's house and they spend the night listening to music, playing pool, and babysitting. George tells Lewis he is his best friend, and Lewis agrees. During the night, George mentions that his father's parents were teachers on a reservation and Lewis questions whether they worked at a Native American boarding school (which was a government-sponsored training school intended to erase the culture of young Native Americans). Feeling guilty about missing the new year's traditions on the reservation, Lewis decides to go home and on the ride home, he opens up to George and his father about some truths about his life on the reservation. Chapter Nine begins with Lewis questioning his Uncle Albert about Native American boarding schools. Lewis doesn't talk to George over the last few days of their school break because he can't stop thinking that his family was involved with the boarding schools. Once school starts, Lewis sees George and Stacey, who George likes, together, and a distance grows between him and George based on his budding relationship. Uncle Albert notices Lewis isn't in good spirits, and takes him to get guitar lessons from an elder. Once Lewis progressed, the elder set up a duet with Lewis and his friend Carson. During the session, Carson makes Lewis feel bad about having ditched his friends from the reservation and being obsessed with his new White friends, but Lewis knows Carson hangs out with White friends too (the bully Evan).
Discussion Questions	● Lewis says that he felt "a funny freedom" in having gone to someone else's home. What do you think he means by "freedom?" ● Why do you think George's dad lent Lewis his Beatles album even though he never lent albums before? ● Why do you think Lewis drove home instead of spending the night at Carson's house? ● Lewis and Carson argue about their friendships with George and the bully, Evan. Why do you think they don't see eye to eye? Do you think their friendships with the White boys are similar? ● Lewis decides to spend New Year's Eve with George. Do you think he was wrong for that? What would you have done? ● Do you agree with Uncle Albert about his characterization of the two planets and the narrator's friend George? Why? ● If you were Lewis, how would you feel about George's grandparents working at a Native American boarding school? Would it change the way you felt about George? Do you think it's right for Lewis to have these concerns when he doesn't know for certain that they worked at a boarding school?

	• Do you believe Lewis should have volunteered information about his family and reservation life to George and his father? What were the pros and cons of his decision? • Why do you think the narrator is so interested in Native American boarding schools? Why is it important for him to know? • Why do you think Albert gets the narrator guitar lessons?
Extension Activity	Learn about Native American and African American training/industrial schools Distribute the handout on the Carlisle School. Read as a class or ask students to read individually • Students can answer the questions independently or as a class discussion

Chapters 10-12

Summary	Chapter Ten starts off the week after spring break. Lewis auditions for the spring concert, in the hopes of being a Choralier, but doesn't make the cut. Later, he sees a flyer for a summertime job that he applies for. Lewis reunites with his friend George and George invites him to go see the band Wings in Toronto. Lewis learned that George and Stacey argued about George's decision to bring Lewis to the concert instead of her. Lewis talks to Uncle Albert about the concert and his uncle gives him money so as to not owe George, or any White people, anything. Chapter eleven begins with Lewis, George, and George's father heading to Toronto for the concert. They arrive at border control and Lewis explains to George's father the free passage treaty that the Tuscarora Nation has between Canada and the United States. They arrive in Toronto and Lewis is amazed at all the landmarks he had heard about. At the concert, George's father purchases a ticket for Lewis, but it is not in the row where George and his father are sitting. George's father offers to switch seats with Lewis, but Lewis prefers to stay where he is. Lewis reflects on Paul McCartney, and decides he wants to be Lewis Blake instead of "Indian Lewis." In chapter Twelve George asks Lewis to sleepover so they can wake up early and see Venus and Mars in the sky. When George says he can then spend the night at Lewis' house, Lewis lies and says his mom is a healer and can't have White people in their home because she has strict rituals-- a made up excuse that George respects. Lewis starts his job cleaning buses and has plans to use his money to buy an acoustic guitar from Carson, but Carson gives a high price and Lewis realizes he will need to give some of his money to his mom for food and bills. Carson invites Lewis to the drive-in movie, but Lewis declines and instead goes with George, which upsets Carson. Lewis spends the night at George's and they see Venus and Mars. As a thank-you, Lewis invites George to watch a game of "Fireball" at the reservation.
Discussion Questions	• George got Lewis' free-lunch ticket for Lewis when he was late. What do you think this says about their friendship? Why? • Lewis was a victim of bullying. How do you feel about bullying? How do you stop it or prevent it? • George got caught trying to sneak out and see his girlfriend Stacey. Do you think he was wrong for that? Do you think his father's response was correct? Explain. • How do you think Lewis felt about George not telling him that he didn't have a ticket for him when he asked him to go to the concert? How would you have felt? • George offered Lewis a chance to view Venus and Mars from his backyard. Do you think that was important for Lewis? Why? • What excuse did Lewis give to George as to why George couldn't spend the night at his house? Lewis realizes this excuse was demeaning toward his mom, how so? Do you think it was okay for Lewis to lie about this? Why or why not? • Uncle Albert offered Lewis ten dollars for his trip to the movies. Why do you think his uncle offered him that? • Lewis saw Carson at the movies. How did Carson treat Lewis? Why do you think he treated him this way? Why is there tension between Carson and Lewis?
Possible Extension Activity	Watch video about author Eric Gansworth •  Book Talk with a Twist: If I Ever Get Out of Here by Eric Gansworth • Questions

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Where did Eric Gansworth grow up?○ What college is Eric Gansworth a professor at?○ Why do Lewis and George's backgrounds threaten their friendship?○ Every chapter in the book is a song titled by the Beatles. Why do you think the author did that? |
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Chapters 13-15

Summary	In chapter thirteen, George and his father attend the picnic and Fireball game with Lewis. Lewis introduces them to some Indian food and both of them seem to enjoy it, which makes Lewis happy. Carson sees Lewis with George and comes to talk to them, but is curt and disapproving. Lewis also notices that George's father is very interested and pays close attention to all the activities, studying them like White people don't normally do. When George's dad asks George if he found a present to buy for Stacey, George says she wouldn't want a present from the picnic. George's father gets defensive and asks a lot of questions before George finally says that she wouldn't want a present from a time when he was with Lewis, because Stacey thinks George spends too much time with Lewis. His dad nods in understanding, but still shows some concern as if he doesn't like Stacey not appreciating Native American culture. Their exchange makes Lewis feel uncomfortable and he almost wishes he never invited them. In chapter fourteen, school has begun again and Lewis finds out he is in music class because the boys choir was shut down due to lack of funding. Unfortunately, Evan and some other kids were put into Music as well. Lewis recounts several instances where Evan is acting like a bully and being disrespectful to the teacher, but he notices everyone either ignores him or cowers to him. During a fire drill, Evan punches Lewis. After, Lewis doesn't tell George or Stacey what happens because he doesn't think they'll understand, and Carson distances himself from Lewis because he doesn't want Evan to associate him with Lewis. Carson tells Lewis he should have taken Evan's punches and not fought back, which upsets Lewis. Throughout chapter fifteen, Evan continues to bully Lewis. He punches him in the hallway, steals his pens, calls him names, and constantly hits and kicks him throughout class. George and Stacey learn about this and they do their best to help protect Lewis by walking with him in the hallways and to the bus, but George is also trying to watch his step because he knows that if he gets into a fight with Evan, his dad will punish him. At the lunch table, when Lewis says that the only reason Evan is picking on him is because he's Indian, another student says that's just an easy excuse for Lewis to use. Teachers and school staff seem to ignore the obvious signs of bullying as well.
Discussion Questions	• Why do you think George's dad seemed upset when George said Stacey wouldn't want a present from the picnic? • What's your prediction: do you think George's grandparents worked at a boarding school or not? Why? • What did you think about the exchange between Evan and Nancy in music class? Why do you think Nancy tends to cower to Evan? What would you do if in her shoes? • After Evan punches Lewis during the fire drill, Stacey and George notice something is wrong and ask him what happened. Lewis says he didn't say anything because they wouldn't understand. Do you think that is true? How do you think George and Stacey would have reacted? • In music class, do you think it was okay for Miss Ward to call out Lewis as being American Indian? Why or why not? • Why does Lewis prefer to shower at school after gym? Were you surprised by the showering process at his house? • Lewis wonders how no teacher ever saw Evan beating him up. Why do you think that happened? • How do they define who is Indian and who is not Indian on the reservation (if a Native man marries a White woman, what are the kids considered? Vice-versa?)

	What do you think about this?
Extension Activity	Learn about the Tuscarora Field Days Picnic and Fireball ● Read a short article about the picnic and the Fireball game that closes out the event ○ Article ○ More on Fireball and its significance ■ One of the biggest draws over the weekend is the traditional Fireball ceremony on Saturday night. At dusk, worriers volunteer to honor their sick or ailing loved ones. Although the ceremony can, at times, appear to be similar to soccer (with a flaming ball), it is an event steeped in tradition. According to Tribal Chairman Cedric Cromwell, Fireball is a medicine ceremony and a healing ceremony. “It is the light of life... As these warriors come out onto the playing field, they are actually grabbing this fire” (which was at one time a ball made of leather strips soaked for days in whale oil and wound tightly around each other). Today, they use a ball soaked in kerosene. The lit ball is kicked, tossed, thrown and carried by these warriors on the playing field. ■ Cedric Cromwell goes on to explain why they are willing to endure the bruises and burns: “What they do is carry the pain of somebody that is either sick or who has passed to release that pain from them, as a warrior, and heal them, as well as heal themselves and their families. That is a rite of passage. That is so important.” ○ Share this Fireball video so students can see the game in action ○ More on the picnic

Chapters 16-18

Summary	In chapter sixteen, Evan continues his bullying and pranks on teachers. He ruins the Music teacher's keyboard by spilling coffee on it, which causes the teacher to run out of the room and the vice-principal to come and give a stern talk to the class. After class, Lewis tries to talk to the vice-principal, but he says he doesn't have time to listen to Lewis and that Lewis should write him a letter. Lewis writes the letter and explains what's been happening with Evan. The next day at school, the vice-principal calls Lewis into the office to learn more, and then brings in Evan, despite Lewis begging him not to. The principal simply says everything has been a misunderstanding and claims they will become good friends. After, Evan punches Lewis again. Lewis learns that Evan's father donates a lot of money to the school, which makes the administration turn a blind eye to everything he does. Lewis ditches the rest of school that day. In chapter seventeen, Lewis has continued to skip school for the rest of the week. At first he hides it from his family, but then tells them what happened. Every morning, he calls the schools and tells them that the administration is not creating a safe environment for him, despite his complaints about a bully, and tells them he will not be coming back to school until he can be safe. When Lewis talks to Uncle Albert about Evan, Albert tells him that Evan is probably getting beat up at home, which makes him pick on Lewis. Lewis gets frustrated and walks out of the house, grabs a bat, and heads to the school in order to have a "conversation" with Evan "in his own language." In chapter eighteen, Lewis goes to school prepared to confront Evan, but George finds him and pulls him into the bathroom and takes the bat away. The vice-principal walks in and takes Lewis to the office to meet with the counselor. The counselor tells Lewis that he's been advocating for Lewis for a long time (to be in the top class even though he would be the only kid from the rez) and gives him some background on Evan (Evan's parents split and his mom is dating a guy from the rez who doesn't treat Evan or his brother very nicely). A few weeks later, the counselor goes to Lewis' house and tells him he can come back because Evan was put into vocational school after jumping another student. Lewis agrees to return to school.
Discussion Questions	• Why do you think everyone Lewis talks to Evan about, responds by asking if he's fought back? Is that how you would respond? • Why do you think Lewis' mom didn't force him to go back to school even after learning that he's been skipping? • George told Lewis, "the phone goes both ways." Why don't you think George called Lewis after he had missed school for three days? • After learning about Evan's home life, did that change the way you view him? Do you understand him more? • What reason did Lewis give the school for his absences? Do you think the school cared that he was absent? Do you think Lewis was brave for taking this stand against the school? • What do you think about the reasoning behind the school finally doing something about Evan's behavior? Do you think it is fair? Do you have any thoughts about him beating up another student? • Do you think the guidance counselor, Mr. Groffini truly cares about Lewis? Why or why not?

Extension Activity	Discuss and Explore Bullying ● What is bullying? As a class discuss the following questions ○ What is bullying? ○ What is cyberbullying? ○ Why do students bully? ○ Why are students targeted by bullying? ○ For additional information, view handout/slides from Teens Against Bullying ● What Can You Do? As a class, review the information on PACERTeens Against Bullying ○ What can students do to help? ○ What can adults in the school do to help? ○ What can parents to do help? ○ Make sure that each student is allowed the opportunity to respond. ● Know Your Rights. As a class, talk about what it means to have legal protections. ○ Explore different laws and protections established in different states by reviewing this resource as a class or in groups *Lesson taken from PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center
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Chapters 19-21

Summary	In chapter 19, Lewis returns to school. Many of the students in his grade ignore him or give him dirty looks and several teachers seem to feel negatively toward him as well. At one point, his old shop teacher tells Lewis that it's his fault for making another student disappear. Lewis decides to talk back to the shop teacher to defend himself and say he wasn't in the wrong. Lewis also starts to realize that people are avoiding George as well, and he learns that George was the kid Evan beat up on and whose father called the school to get Evan removed. Chapter 20 begins with it being Christmas day and Lewis is gifted a guitar from his family. It turns out that the money he earned over the summer, that he gave to his mother, wasn't needed for bills and food so the family saved it and purchased the guitar for him. Lewis doesn't tell George about the guitar, though, because he doesn't want George to ask to come over and see it. Later, a blizzard comes through and the school lets out early. George and his father stop by to pick up Lewis so they can get tickets to the Queen concert (George's Christmas present) before the roads are too bad. When they get to the store though, the blizzard is in full-swing. In Chapter 21, Lewis, George, and George's dad try to drive back from the store, but the blizzard gets so bad that the roads are shut down and they are forced to go to the emergency site--the fire hall-- to wait out the storm. As Lewis is waiting in line to use the phones and call his mom, a man cuts in front of him and takes the phone. George's dad tries to tell the man to back down, but the man won't budge. Later, it turns out the man is Evan's father and he's there with Evan and his older son, also waiting out the storm.
Discussion Questions	• Mr. Groffini says "discretion is the better part of valor." What do you think he means by that? Do you agree? • Were you surprised to learn that George was the other boy Evan beat up on? Why or why not? • What did you think of the exchange between Lewis and the shop teacher? Do you think Lewis should have engaged in the conversation or ignored it? Why? • Lewis talks about how he has a tendency to talk a lot (by talking back to people or being smart) but at the same time, he doesn't talk at all (for example, he doesn't share about his home life with George). Why do you think there's this tension in his life (of talking about some things and not about others)? • Why do you think the guitar his family gave him for Christmas meant so much to Lewis? • When trying to get back from the store in the blizzard, Lewis and George's dad note that the roads in town are likely better than the roads on the reservation. Why is that? What did you think about this? • Lewis is stuck waiting out the blizzard in the fire hall with Evan and Evan's family... What do you think might happen?
Extension Activity	Look Closer at Queen Song, White Man • Read or listen to the lyrics of Queen's White Man • Discussion Questions ○ What do you think is the purpose behind the song? ○ What do you think the writer meant with the lyrics "A man who learned how to teach/ Then forgot how to learn?" ○ Given that the band Queen didn't have any Native American members, do you think it was okay for them to sing this song? Why or why not?

	○ Why do you think the author of our book decided to mention this song?
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Chapters 22-24

Summary	In chapter twenty-two, Lewis sees his cousin Innis in the fire hall and they both go to the restroom. There, Evan and his brother come in and start a fight. This time, Lewis fights back and successfully lands a few hits on Evan, which makes Evan retreat out of the bathroom. George walks in and asks what happened. After Lewis explains, George then finally tells Lewis the story of him getting punched by Evan: while Lewis was out from school, George started to realize how nobody appreciated what Lewis was going through and kept talking as if it was Lewis' fault; George decided that if Evan beat him up, people may finally see what Lewis was dealing with, so he provoked Evan and Evan punched him; at first the vice-principal suspended George, but when George's father said he'd got the newspaper, the school removed Evan from school. As the two boys talk in the bathroom, Evan's father comes in and threatens them, but Geogre's dad finds them and deals with Evan's dad. In Chapter twenty-three, George's dad partners up with some people from the reservation and they plan to make a go at getting to the reservation using snow plows. Very slowly, they make it to Lewis' house and drop him off along with several bags of groceries that George's dad bought for them. Inside, Lewis argues with his mother when she asks him how George's dad knew all of his favorite foods. Lewis lashes out at his mom and tells her he'd move in with George's family if they invited him, but he knows he'll never get out of the reservation. Lewis feels guilty about what he said and Uncle Albert says he shouldn't have said what he did. Later, Lewis finds his mom crying and when he asks why, he realizes George and his father are at his front door, the road back to their home was closed and now they need a place to stay. In chapter twenty-four, Lewis' home and homelife are finally exposed to George and his father—they see the run-down and exposed kitchen, they learn about Lewis' mom's job, and they see how dilapidated the house is. At first George's dad is surprised, but he quickly makes Lewis' mom feel more comfortable. Lewis and his family learn that George's dad grew up on a reservation as the only White kid, and he tells them that he spent a lot of time in homes just like theirs. Lewis also learned that the school George's grandparents worked at on the reservation was not a boarding school, but prior to working there they had been at a boarding school and left after learning about corruption. At first George is hurt by Lewis' lies, but over the course of the night, they work it out.
Discussion Questions	• What do you think of George's scheme to get people to notice how terrible Evan was, by allowing himself to get beat up by Evan? Do you think he accomplished what he intended to? • Do you think Evan learned to behave the way he does? Or do he think it's part of his nature? Explain. • What do you think happened between George's dad and Evan's dad? • Do you think Lewis felt guilty for having lashed out at his mother? What do you think he felt the worst about saying? • Lewis says he feels trapped between two worlds. What are those worlds? Do you think there's a way for him to exist in both of them? Or for the worlds to come together? Or do you agree with Uncle Albert, that there's no rocket that can take him from one to the other? • After seeing the run-down kitchen, George's dad talks to Lewis' mom about the house. He asks if the reason the house is run down is because there's no mortgages (p. 318). What does he mean by this? Why do you think this rule

	exists? • How do George and Mr. Haddonfield react to Lewis' house? Do they have the impression that Lewis expected? • How do you think George felt after discovering Lewis' lies? Do you think he had a right to be upset? Do you think Lewis should have told him the truth all along? • What do you think about the story of George's father's parents? What do you think Lewis thinks about it?
Extension Activity	Learn about Lending and Mortgages on Reservations In the book, Lewis lives in a severely dilapidated house, which is a source of embarrassment for him. Later, we learn that this is not only a result of his family being poor, but it's also because of the difficulty in receiving loans when living on a reservation. From George's father, we learn that Lewis' mom can't get a mortgage on her house, and therefore can't receive a loan to make home improvements... Why is this? • Read a short article that explains why mortgages are difficult to come by on reservations • Discussion Questions ○ Why can't people get mortgages on their houses on the reservation? ○ How does this make things difficult for those living on reservations? ○ The goal behind the government holding the land in trust for the Native American Tribes, is to protect the land for the tribes...but is it actually hurting the people? ■ How might it be a good thing? ■ How might it be a bad thing?

Chapters 25-26

Summary	In chapter twenty-five, George and his father spend another three days at Lewis' house. Finally, the storm slows down and they are able to leave. When they return to school, all the students share stories of the storm, but George doesn't divulge any details about Lewis' home. One day when returning home from school, Lewis sees that the stove has been moved into the living room, the gas pipes reorganized, and a new counter with a sink has been installed. George's dad arranged for this to be done as a thank-you for Lewis' family taking care of them during the storm. Lewis then learns that George and his family have been reassigned and are leaving to move to Texas in a week. At first, Lewis is upset George didn't tell him sooner, but realizes he kept a lot of secrets from George, too. In chapter twenty-six, George and his family come over for their last dinner before leaving. Lewis' mom makes pork chops along with sausage and sauerkraut for George's mom. Uncle Albert brings a roasted rabbit prepared by a German family he does farm work for. Lewis and George say goodbye and embrace for a real hug. As George leaves from school the next day, he gives Lewis a box, which Lewis later opens to find Papa Smurf. Several months go by and Lewis never hears from George again, but one day he comes home to find a package with a new Beatles album inside. He doesn't know if George or George's father sent it to him. The book ends with Lewis listening to the album and realizing that he can listen to the songs over and over for the rest of his life and they will always bring him back to the memories he made with his friend.
Discussion Questions	• Why do you think George didn't tell Lewis he was leaving? Do you think Lewis had a right to be frustrated with George about this? • What do you think of George's dad arranging for the kitchen upgrades in Lewis' home? Do you think Lewis' mom should have accepted the offer? • What did you think of the routine for having to use the outhouse? Do you think you could live like that? Why or why not? • Were you surprised that Lewis' mom knows how to beadwork? Why do you think she kept this a secret from Lewis? • Who do you think sent the album to Lewis? Why? • Do you think George should have stayed in touch with Lewis after moving? • The last lines of the book are, "the tougher, truer chords I'd learned from the haddonfields." Do you think Lewis is just talking about the guitar chords he's playing? Or could they symbolize something bigger? • Do you think Lewis will ever "get out" of the reservation? What makes you believe that?
Extension Activity	November: National Native American Heritage Month As November is National Native American Heritage Month, help students to understand the different causes behind supporting the Native American population. • As a class review Native American Activism from the 1960' to present ○ Remind students that this book takes place in the 1970s... what activism was happening then?