

## ***Give a Boy a Gun***

### Journals

Entry One: Picked On (prior to page 1)

Since you have been in school for the past 11 years or so, what has your relationship with other students and teachers in your schools been like? Did you or have you made more friends or enemies? Have you belonged to a group of people in school? If so, what was/is this like? If not, are you a person who does not want to be considered part of a “clique”? Overall in your educational experience, have you felt safe with your peers and teachers? Why or why not?

Entry Two: Divorce (pages 11 to 16)

Gary’s parents’ divorce is described, what is Gary’s reaction to this split up of his parents and family? Refer to specifics from the text. Have your parents or friends or other relatives been through a divorce? How did this split-up affect you? How did it affect others? Explain.

Entry Three: Brendan (pages 17 to 28)

How is Brendan described in these pages? What is he like? What is his relationship with his parents like? How does he cope with the adjustment from the move?

Entry Four: Jocks vs Everybody Else (pages 37 to 52)

In Middletown High School, how are sports players preferred over everyone else? How do students describe this situation? How and why do teachers ignore inappropriate situations between athletes and other students in the hallway? Could the students who are being “picked-on” just be over reacting? Why or why not? Do you feel this situation occurs at TFS? Why or why not?

Entry Five: Lack of Parents (page 65)

Allen Curry comments that since “two parents [are] working and spending less time at home, the responsibility for raising children and instilling them with values rests more and more on the shoulders of the schools,” (65). Do you agree with his statement? Think about your home life and school life; are your parents around? Or do you see your teachers more often than mom and dad? Explain your opinion with specifics from your life.

Entry Six: Changes (pages 72 and 73)

Both Ryan and Allison notice changes in Brendan. What are these changes that they have observed? Should they have told someone about these changes to get Brendan help? Should they have spoken to Brendan himself? Why or why not? Are they responsible for the actions Brendan makes? Why or why not?

Entry Seven: A Walkie-Talkie vs a Gun (pages 74 and 75)

Beth Bender comments on the authority figures at Middletown wearing their walkie-talkies on their hips. How effective are these figures at gaining authority and respect

from the students and staff of this high school? Once a situation involves an individual with a gun and one of these figures with his/her walkie-talkie, is there a shift in authority and power? Explain this situation. How does one gain respect, power, and authority without the use of these or any other tools?

Entry Eight: Help with Violence (page 80 and article)

F. Douglass Ellin makes the connection between media's influence on violence. After reading the article for this journal, what is your opinion? Does media help people become more violent? Why or why not?

Entry Nine: School Spirit? (pages 88 to 89)

There are two points raised on these two pages: one by Sam Flach and one by Dick Flanagan. Is the issue of some students receiving preferred treatment really as simple as school spirit? Or does this treatment surround the activity, sport, or club a student is involved in? Explain this debate by selecting one side but also include a counterargument in your response.

Entry Ten: Battle Lines (page 96)

Think back to your sophomore year. Were "battle lines" drawn among the different groups of students? Why or why not? What are these "battle lines" for Middletown? Could these lines ever be erased? Why or why not?

Entry Eleven: The Big Announcement (pages 104 to 107)

What is the announcement Brendan and Gary share with Ryan and Allison? After this announcement is shown, what do their actions mean about how serious Brendan and Gary are about revenge? What should Ryan and Allison do to stop their friends? Do you think they should intervene at all? Why or why not?

Entry Twelve: Teen Deaths (pages 111 and 112)

Since Americans are given the Second Amendment and have the privilege to drive, which one is worse for Americans? Look at the statistic box on page 112. What could be done to lower the rate of deaths for both of these causes? Develop at least one realistic solution for one cause or the other. Fully explain how your solution could be implemented.

Entry Thirteen: Point of No Return (pages 113 to 117)

What happened to Brendan that made him decide on follow through with his revenge plan? What do you think was the situation between Sam and Brendan that caused this event in the first place? Is Sam to blame for Brendan's actions or is it Brendan's fault for not having self-control? Explain.

Entry Fourteen: Dance Night (pages 118 to 175)

What happens the night Brendan and Gary go through with their revenge plan? What is going on at Middletown? Who is there? What does each student do during this time?

Who has authority of the situation? You may create a timeline of specific events instead of writing in sentence format.

Entry Fifteen: Reaction of the Crowd (pages 168 to 174)

Why does Gary commit suicide? What happens as to why he pulls the trigger? As a result, what happens to Brendan? Who has authority of the situation now? Are the actions of the crowd justified? Why or why not?

Entry Sixteen: Solution and an Explanation (pages 176 to 184)

What are several solutions raised to prevent student violence at schools? What are several explanations given to help others understand Brendan's and Gary's actions at Middletown? What are your ideas as to what could be a solution to student violence? Could this event been prevented? How?

Entries Seventeen and Eighteen: Statistic 1 and Statistic 2 (the entire novel)

For each journal, select one quote or statistic found at the bottom of the pages throughout the novel. Explain why you selected it, what it means in relation to the novel, and what it means in relation to society as a whole. Please include page number.

Entry Nineteen: More Shooting (pages 198 to 208)

Looking at the shootings mentioned in these pages and the suggested reading materials. Conduct a little research (one Internet article) on any of the shootings OR find one of the reading materials Strasser suggested. Give a report about your findings in the entry covering the basic information of what happened, who was involved, etc. and also your opinion. Attach the research found.