



Discussion Questions

The Sideways Life of Denny Voss

by Holly Kennedy

1. How do family dynamics shape Denny's self-perception and sense of belonging? Which family relationship influences Denny the most?
2. The book encourages us to look at our own preconceived opinions of others. What did you notice about yourself and the assumptions you make of people? Did you change your mind about any characters in the book?
3. What role does George play in Denny's life? What does he represent?
4. How do you feel about Lida's choice not to raise Denny? After learning the reason for her decision, did it change your mind?
5. How did Nana-jo influence Denny? What, specifically, did she give him besides caring for him?
6. Angus is a central figure in Denny's life. How did your opinion of him change over time? What struggles was he facing?
7. How does the book address gun violence? What characters were most affected?
8. Many people made decisions for Denny based on their own assumptions about his limitations. Who do you think understood Denny best, and what was he capable of? What are some examples of Denny surpassing expectations?
9. The book points out that everyone is carrying something. Which character surprised you the most once you knew what they were struggling with?
10. Denny's family dynamics are flawed, but there is a lot of love between them. What do you think the author is saying about what makes a family?