



## **Something Girl**

Beth Goobie

Reading level: 2.8

978-1-55143-347-9 PB

978-1-55143-560-2 LIB

AR Quiz # 87402

### **Book Summary**

Sophie suffers her father's physical abuse and her mother's possible neglect in silence and shame until her father goes too far, and she ends up in the hospital with a serious back injury. Sophie's friends and her probation officer finally convince her to tell them about her father, helping her escape from what could become a deadly situation. Placed in a group home, Sophie can finally find peace and help and begin to heal.

### **Prereading Idea**

Ask students to find a newspaper article in the local paper about an abused teen and to share it with the other students. Then discuss with students the ramifications for all involved: the parents, the teen, other family members and the people who risk helping the abused teen.

### Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- Sophie's fear of living in a group home prevents her from being able to move forward with her life and from telling someone about the abuse she suffers at the hands of her father. Ask students to contact their local child protective service agency to investigate how group homes operate: their policies and procedures, staff requirements and funding. What guidelines are in place to help the teens that live there? What, if any, types of counseling programs exist to assist the teens? What types of situations do the teens that live in the homes originate from? Students can interview an agency representative or complete their research on the Internet to answer these questions. Ask students to compile their findings into a class video presentation to assist school counselors in the district.
- Ask students to investigate the laws in their state concerning child abuse and the programs that are available to help teens in abusive situations. Then, ask students to convey the information they gather in a brochure and presentation to be shared with other classes as part of a school project to stop child abuse.

### Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel

#### *Theme*

Friedrich Nietzsche, a German philosopher who lived in the late 1800s, said, "What does not destroy me, makes me stronger." As Sophie, ask students to write a paragraph justifying this statement as the theme of *Something Girl* and to use situations in the books for support. Have students practice reading their paragraph assuming the voice of Sophie. In a large circle, share the paragraphs as a read-around.

#### *Conflict*

Sophie's conflicts, both internal and external, drive the plot forward. The external conflict is obvious, but her internal conflicts are not as clear-cut. In small groups, ask students to brainstorm a list of Sophie's internal conflicts. They will notice that some of them were resolved by the end of the book and others were not. Ask students to prepare a collage using pictures and text from magazines to depict Sophie's internal conflicts. Discuss and post collages around the room.

#### *Point of View*

The author chooses not to reveal any of the father's history, and very little about him as a person. Ask small groups of students to make a list of Sophie's father's characteristics and specifics about his life. Based on what they discover about him, and what they know about child abusers in general, ask each group to write a defense of his actions from his point of view. Each group can read their defense to the class. After each presentation, discuss why the father's defense of his actions, in actuality, is not defensible.

**Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions**

1. Froggy believes she is a “stupid, no good, nothing girl” because she has been repeatedly told that by her father. What impact does this have on her life? What decisions does she make that are influenced by her believing what her father has said?
2. Desperate to escape the abuse of her father and the silent neglect of her mother, Sophie escapes to her hideout in the woods and dreams of better times to maintain her sanity. Mr. Taylor, Ms. Lee, and Jujube’s mother all suspect Sophie is being abused and encourage her to reveal how she receives her bumps and bruises. How could she have handled her situation differently? What does Sophie want from her father?
3. Froggy wrongly assumes that all dads hit their children and that she deserves to be hit because she, not her father, is the problem (ch. 4). Why does she believe this to be true? How do her abusive father’s instructions to be tough, not cry and lie to teachers contribute to her shame?
4. Child abuse comes in many forms, and while it is apparent how Froggy’s dad is abusing her, how can her mother’s attitude also be considered abuse? Given the situation, how could Sophie’s mother have helped her?
5. Jujube plays an integral role in Sophie’s life. She knows about the abuse, and she knows how Sophie suffers because of it. Why is Jujube fearful of revealing the abuse to her mother? Why does she finally come forward with the truth?
6. Once the truth comes out about Froggy’s abuse, no one calls Sophie by that nickname anymore. What is the significance of the change in her name? How does leaving behind the name Froggy help Sophie begin to heal?
7. When Sophie arrives at the group home, she is pleasantly surprised by the other teens and the staff. Why did she think the group home was only for weirdoes and freaks? What showed her that her assumptions were wrong?

**Writer’s Craft*****Imagery***

Beth Goobie uses imagery to help the reader experience Sophie’s feelings and emotions. Divide the class into two groups and ask one group to reread chapter one and the other group to reread chapter seven. As they read, ask them to write down words and phrases that express what Sophie’s fear feels and looks like. Then using what they have written, ask them to compose an original poem about Sophie’s fear. The finished poems should be read aloud to the class.

### **Author Biography**

In high school, **Beth Goobie** wrote stories and received many academic and citizenship awards. After high school, she moved to Holland and became a nanny, and then moved to Winnipeg where she studied English literature at the University of Winnipeg. Her concern for physically and sexually abused children led her to work with them for a number of years, and her writing reflects the issues surrounding the anger and powerlessness of those too young to defend themselves.