



# No More Dead Dogs

by Gordon Korman

## Teacher's Guide

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# CLASSROOM FAVORITES

A Perma-Bound Production

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## Synopsis

### Enter... Wallace Wallace

Wallace Wallace, an 8th grade boy, explains that he is compulsively honest because his father is a liar, which eventually caused his parents' marriage to break apart. When Mr. Fogelman, Wallace's English teacher, assigns the class a book report on a novel called *Old Shep, My Pal*, Wallace writes the truth: he detests the novel and thinks it's dreadful. Mr. Fogelman assigns Wallace to detention as a result of the negative review. Later, readers learn that Wallace is the school hero for having made the winning touchdown in the football team's championship game the previous year. Wallace knows that his play was a fluke—he is far from the best player on the team— but nonetheless, he has become a legend in the school and the community.

### Enter... Rachel Turner

Rachel, another 8th grader, is writing a letter to the actress Julia Roberts about the upcoming school play. Wallace must sit through play practice as his detention, only to learn that Mr. Fogelman has adapted *Old Shep, My Pal* for the school play. Mr. Fogelman tells Wallace that he can attend football practice once he has written a proper review of *Old Shep, My Pal*. Wallace writes a review, but it is still not laudatory so Mr. Fogelman refuses to release him. After practice, Rachel meets her younger brother Dylan, who worships Wallace for his skill at football.

### Enter... Wallace Wallace

Wallace's teammates often help him with his chores and today is no exception: eleven football players come to help him paint the garage doors. The next day, Wallace shows up for football practice, but the coach can't let him play because he's still on detention. Wallace sees

Dylan Turner, who is crushed that his favorite athlete can't play. Wallace then runs into his former best friend, Steve Cavanaugh, who combs his perfect hair and teases Wallace about his detention. Parker Schmidt, the editor of the school newspaper, attempts to interview Wallace about the ongoing detention.

### The Bedford Middle School Weekly Standard

Parker twists Wallace's story into the lie that Wallace won't play **unless** Mr. Fogelman gives him an A.

### Enter... Rachel Turner

Someone has spray-painted *Old Shep, Dead Mutt* on the scenery. The vandalism makes Rachel, the president of the drama club, sick. Many people think that Wallace is responsible for the crime, but he denies it. Wallace starts making suggestions for small improvements to the script, which the kids eagerly accept.

### Enter... Trudi Davis

Trudi, Rachel's friend, has a crush on Wallace. The second act of vandalism occurs: every stage cable is knotted together. Again, people think Wallace is responsible.

### Enter... Wallace Wallace

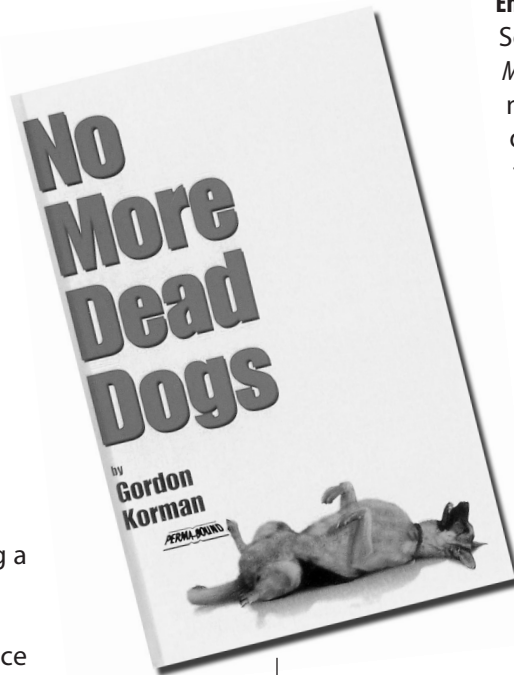
Wallace's friend Rick tries to get Wallace to accept the laudatory book review that he wrote, but Wallace refuses. Wallace continues to improve the play and finds that he enjoys helping with the lines.

### Enter... Rachel Turner

Rachel writes another letter to Julia Roberts, this time describing Wallace. Wallace suggests making some huge changes to the play, including having the dog killed in view of the audience. This involves a motorized car and a stuffed animal.

### Enter... Mr. Fogelman

Mr. Fogelman lists what he must do to retain control of the play, because now the kids are following Wallace



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rather than him. He realizes that he must go along with Wallace's suggestions or the kids will desert. Wallace has become the de facto director/writer.

### **Enter... Wallace Wallace**

The Giants' game is a disaster, and the entire team is angry with Wallace and Mr. Fogelman about Wallace's detention. Wallace talks to Parker again.

### ***The Bedford Middle School Weekly Standard***

Parker twists Wallace's story into of the principal's interest in events surrounding the play and Wallace having become the principal's spy.

### **Enter... Wallace Wallace**

Only two of Wallace's fellow football players show up to help him with his chores, showing their anger at what they perceive to be his stubbornness and their suspicion of his help with the play.

### **Enter... Rachel Turner**

Rachel writes another letter to Julia Roberts, thanking her for the autographed picture and drawing parallels between Julia's life and her own. Wallace adds Rory Piper to the play as a rollerblading dogcatcher. Soon, the entire cast wants to rollerblade. In another act of vandalism, someone pours syrup into the files of Mr. Fogelman.

### **Enter... Mr. Fogelman**

In a panic, Mr. Fogelman realizes how little control he has over the play: his original vision and script have all but vanished.

### **Enter... Wallace Wallace**

Wallace adds Joey Quick's band, the Dead Mangoes, to the play.

### **Enter... Trudi Davis**

Trudi foolishly tells Parker that she and Wallace are boyfriend and girlfriend.

### ***The Bedford Middle School Weekly Standard***

This time, Parker twists the truth to claim that Wallace has dropped off the team to have a romance with Trudi Parker.

### **Enter... Rachel Turner**

Rachel writes another letter to Julia Roberts, describing the problems with the play. Rather than attending the big Bedford fall fair, the cast of the drama club plans to help Wallace with his chores.

### **Enter... Wallace Wallace**

Wallace is shocked that most of the cast and crew have come to help him rake leaves. Furious that Wallace is no longer on the football team, Rick returns everything that Wallace has ever given him.

### **Enter... Mr. Fogelman**

To his wife's astonishment, Fogelman has joined the band, the Dead Mangoes. It's more than "If you can't beat them, join them": Fogelman is really enjoying being part of the band. He has become mellow, allowing Wallace and the kids to run the show. As a result, he is happier.

### **Enter... Rachel Turner**

Someone has shredded all the scripts! Wallace's football jersey is under the pile, which the kids take as proof that he is the vandal. Before he quits the play, Wallace makes one last suggestion: Old Shep shouldn't die. Rachel believes that Wallace is innocent, even though no one else does. She visits Wallace at home to tell him so. She goes to football practice to get some clues, and gets a big clue when Cavanaugh tells her that Wallace is compulsively honest. Rachel expresses her feelings in another letter to Julia Roberts.

### **Enter... Trudi Davis**

Trudi sends Parker six emails to state that she is not and never has been Wallace's girlfriend. Trudi is shocked when Rachel defends Wallace because previously, Rachel had resented Wallace very much for changing the play. The kids decide to take Wallace's last suggestion, the most drastic one of all: Old Shep will not die.

### **Enter... Wallace Wallace**

It is the day of the performance. Wallace realizes that whoever has been committing the acts of vandalism is certain to destroy the performance. Wallace dashes to the school, tells Rachel of his suspicions, and enlists her help. Wallace is elated when the cast uses his dialogue and suggestions. He sees his old friend Rick acting in a suspicious manner, tackles him, and then discovers that Rick has been hiding nothing but a camera so that he could take some pictures of the play to share with Wallace—who is not supposed to be at the performance. Wallace is sure that one of the Giants is responsible for the sabotage, so he and Rick watch the tape of the winning game, seeking clues from their teammates' actions. They spot the culprit stealing Wallace's shirt—Dylan Turner! They catch Dylan, who reveals that he put a cherry bomb on Old Shep. In desperation, Wallace hurls himself on the moving stuffed dog, muffling the

explosion. The audience and Mr. Fogelman are stunned into silence, but Rachel forces the actors to continue. When the show ends, Rachel is horrified at the disaster, so Wallace takes the blame for the sabotage to make her feel better. After fourteen years of honesty, it is his first lie.

**Enter...Rachel Turner**

The truth comes out and the Turners punish Dylan. Rachel receives a personal letter from Julia Roberts, in which Julia says that Rachel is clearly in love with Wallace. Rachel and Wallace do get together and Trudi and Cavanaugh become a couple. Cavanaugh and Wallace become friends again and Wallace rejoins the football team.

**Timeline of Education**

- 1635** The Roxbury Latin School is established. As with all Latin Schools, it is designed for only sons of the upper classes who are destined for leadership positions in church, state, or the courts. The first "free school" in Virginia opens.
- 1636** Harvard College, the first higher education institution in the colonies, is established in Cambridge, MA.
- 1642** The Massachusetts Bay School Law is passed, requiring that parents make sure their children know the principles of religion and the major laws of the commonwealth.
- 1647** The Massachusetts Law passed, requiring that every town of at least 50 families establish a school.
- 1690** The first *New England Primer* is published.
- 1779** Jefferson proposes a two-track educational system, with different tracks for "the laboring and the learned."
- 1783-85** Webster's *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*: a spelling book, a grammar book, and a reader is written.
- 1791** Education becomes a function of the state rather than the federal government.
- 1817** The Connecticut Asylum at Hartford for the Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons opens. It

is the first permanent school for the deaf in the U.S.

- 1821** First public high school opens
- 1827** Massachusetts law requires towns of more than 500 families to have a public high school open to all students.
- 1829** The New England Asylum for the Blind, now the Perkins School for the Blind, opens in Massachusetts, becoming the first school in the U.S. for children with visual disabilities.
- 1837** Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, first college for women in the U.S.
- 1839** The first state funded school specifically for teacher education in Lexington, Massachusetts.
- 1848** Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feebleminded Youth, the first school of its kind in the U.S.
- 1851** The New York State Asylum for Idiots opens.
- 1875** The Civil Rights Act is passed, banning segregation in all public accommodations. The Supreme Court rules it unconstitutional in 1883.
- 1881** Tuskegee Institue in Alabama, now Tuskegee University, opens.
- 1916** American version of the Binet-Simon Scale. It becomes a widely-used individual intelligence test and the concept of the intelligence quotient (or IQ) is born.
- 1917** Army Alpha and Beta tests lay the groundwork for future standardized tests.
- 1922** The International Council for Exceptional Children is founded at Columbia University Teachers College.
- 1926** The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is first administered. It is based on the Army Alpha test.
- 1963** Samuel A. Kirk uses the term "learning disability" at a Chicago conference on children with perceptual disorders. The term sticks, and in 1964, the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, now the Learning Disabilities Association of America, is formed. Today, more

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than one-half of all students in the U.S. who receive special education have been diagnosed as having learning disabilities.

**1964** The Civil Rights Act becomes law. It prohibits discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

**1971** Federal court rules that students with mental retardation are entitled to a free public education.

**1972** *Mills v. the Board of Education of Washington, D.C.* extends the *PARC v. Pennsylvania* ruling to other students with disabilities and requires the provision of "adequate alternative educational services suited to the child's needs, which may include special education . . ."

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 becomes law, prohibiting discrimination based on sex in all aspects of education.

**1975** The Education of All Handicapped Children Act becomes federal law. It requires that a free, appropriate public education, suited to the student's individual needs, and offered in the least restrictive setting, be provided for all handicapped children.

**1990** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), renames and amends Public Law 94-142. It mandates transition services and adds autism and traumatic brain injury to the eligibility list.

**2001** No Child Left Behind Act is implemented to assess student achievement, institute teacher accountability and sanction underperforming schools and districts.

**2004** The Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act reauthorizes and modifies IDEA.



### Author Sketch

Gordon (Richard) Korman was born in 1963 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. His father was an accountant; his mother, a writer. Korman showed his interest and talent in writing early, producing his first novel when he was only twelve years old. The novel

began as an assignment to write a story in his seventh-grade English class.

"The big movies at the time were *Jaws* and *Airplane*, and everyone decided they were going to write action stories," he told the *New York Times*. "It was my mother who brought me down to Earth. She told me to write about something a little closer to home." As a result, Korman created Boots and Bruno, roommates in a private boarding school who get into madcap adventures. Students read their stories aloud and Korman's classmates were lavish in their praise of his story. "I suppose anyone who writes 120 pages for class is going to attract a certain amount of attention anyway—and I just got the idea of seeing if I could get the book published," Korman said. He sent his manuscript to Scholastic, which published the novel as *This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall!* two years later. The novel sold extremely well and Korman's career as a writer was launched. Korman has used Boots and Bruno in other novels, including *Beware the Fish!*, *The War with Mr. Wizzle*, and *Go Jump in the Pool*.

After the publication of *This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall!* in 1977, Korman published a book a year, writing them during summer vacations. At eighteen, he was voted the "most promising writer under thirty-five" by the Canadian Authors' Association, and was a popular speaker on reading tours across Canada and the United States.

Not surprisingly for someone who began a writing career not yet a teenager, Korman's works changed in perspective and tone as he matured. His earlier books rely more heavily on slapstick and farce. They feature caricatures rather than characters and wild, unrealistic plots. But as Korman matured and earned his B.F.A. in dramatic and visual writing from New York University in 1985, so did his characters. He began to develop their personalities and relationships with one another more fully. His stories became more realistic, too, featuring authentic emotions.

Korman believes that his books are popular because he describes kids who gain power and success in an adult world—something a highly successful author who began his career at the age of twelve knows about firsthand.

### Critic's Corner

Korman has won several impressive awards, most from



his native Canada. These include the Air Canada Award, Canadian Authors' Association, 1981, as "most promising writer under thirty-five" and the Ontario Youth Award, International Year of the Youth Committee of the Ontario Government in 1985 for contributions to children's literature.

Critics generally admired *No More Dead Dogs*. Reviewer John Peters, writing in *Booklist*, was typical in his assessment. Peters wrote: "Briskly stirring in complications and snappy dialog, Korman adds mystery to the fun with an unknown saboteur, caps the wildly popular play with an explosive (literally) climax, and finishes with Rachel and Wallace Wallace finally realizing that they were made for each other. Except for Old Shep, everyone, even the teacher, comes out a winner."

## Other Publications by Gordon Korman

*This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall!* (1977)  
*Go Jump in the Pool!* (1979)  
*Beware the Fish!* (1980)  
*Who Is Bugs Potter?* (1980)  
*I Want to Go Home!* (1981)  
*Our Man Weston* (1982)  
*The War with Mr. Wizzle* (1982)  
*Bugs Potter: Live at Nickaninny* (1983)  
*No Coins, Please* (1984)  
*Don't Care High* (1985)  
*Son of Interflux* (1986)  
*A Semester in the Life of a Garbage Bag* (1987)  
*The Zucchini Warriors* (1988)  
*Radio Fifth Grade* (1989)  
*Losing Joe's Place* (1990)  
*Macdonald Hall Goes Hollywood* (1991)  
 (With mother, Bernice Korman) *The D-Minus Poems of Jeremy Bloom: A Collection of Poems about School, Homework, and Life (Sort of)* (1992)  
*The Twinkie Squad* (1992)  
*The Toilet Paper Tigers* (1993)  
*Why Did the Underwear Cross the Road?* (1994)  
*Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall* (1995)  
*The Chicken Doesn't Skate* (1996)  
 (With Bernice Korman) *The Last-Place Sports Poems of Jeremy Bloom* (1996)  
*Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire* (1997)  
*Quarterback Exchange: I Was John Elway* (1997)  
*Running Back Conversion: I Was Barry Sanders* (1997)  
*Super Bowl Switch: I Was Dan Marino* (1997)  
*Heavy Artillery: I Was Junior Seau* (1998)

*Ultimate Scoring Machine: I Was Jerry Rice* (1998)  
 (With James Buckley and Brian Peterson) *NFL Rules!: Bloopers, Pranks, Upsets, and Touchdowns* (1998)  
*The Sixth-Grade Nickname Game* (1998)  
*Nose Pickers from Outer Space* (1999)  
*All-Mars All-Stars* (1999)  
*Planet of the Nose Pickers* (2000)  
*Your Mummy Is a Nose Picker* (2000)  
*The Face-Off Phony* (2000)  
*Cup Crazy* (2000)  
*Survival, Scholastic* (2001)  
*Invasion of the Nose Pickers* (2001)  
*Escape* (2001)  
*The Summit* (2002)  
*Son of the Mob* (2002)  
*The Contest* (2002)  
*The Climb* (2002)  
*Mazz Comedy: The Funniest Kid in America* (2003)  
*Jake Reinvented* (2003)  
*Dive, Book One: The Discovery* (2003)  
*Dive, Book Two: The Deep* (2003)  
*Dive, Book Three: The Danger* (2003)  
*Son of the Mob: Hollywood Hustle* (2004)  
*Island Trilogy, (contains Shipwreck, Survival, and Escape)* (2005)  
*The Ultimate Nose Picker Collection* (2006)  
*Born to Rock* (2006)

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### Periodicals

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*Booklist*, August, 1995, p. 1946; February 1, 1998, Stephanie Zvirin, review of *From One Experience to Another: Stories about Turning Points*, p. 911.  
*Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, November, 1985; December, 1985; November, 1986; November, 1992, p. 77.  
*Canadian Children's Literature*, number 38, 1985, pp. 54-65; number 52, 1988, pp. 63-64; spring, 1995, p. 70; winter, 1995, p. 82.  
*Canadian Statesman*, January 23, 1980.  
*Catholic Register*, March 14, 1981.  
*Chatelaine*, December, 1996, Kathleen McDonnell, review of *Why Did the Underwear Cross the Road?*, p. 24.  
*Chicago Tribune*, Kidnews, fall, 1997.  
*En Route*, April, 1983.  
*Globe and Mail* (Toronto), June 28, 1980; November 18,

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1980; October 19, 1985; December 2, 1989.  
*Horn Book*, March-April, 1986; November-December, 1987.  
*Jam*, spring, 1981.  
*Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, February, 1982.  
*Kirkus Reviews*, December 15, 1994, p. 1566.  
*Minneapolis Star Tribune*, March 23, 1997, p. F15.  
*National Enquirer*, March 20, 1979.  
*New York Times*, July 24, 1985, section 3, p. 17.  
*Ottawa Citizen*, July 21, 1978.  
*Publishers Weekly*, June 30, 1989, p. 106; March 15, 1991,  
Diane Roback and Richard Donahue, review of  
*Macdonald Hall Goes Hollywood*, p. 59; August 24, 1992,  
review of *The Twinkie Squad*, p. 80; July 26, 1993, p. 73;  
October 13, 1997, p. 28; August 2, 1999, review of *Nose  
Pickers from Outer Space*, p. 85.  
*Quill and Quire*, June, 1981; May, 1982; January, 1983;  
November, 1983, p. 24; August, 1995, p. 34.  
*The Regina Leader Post*, March 13, 1997.  
*Saturday Night*, November, 1979; May, 1986.  
*School Library Journal*, October, 1987; September, 1988;  
September, 1989, p. 252; May, 1990, p. 124;  
September, 1993, p. 233; January, 1995, p. 108;  
September, 1995, p. 202; November, 1996, p. 107;  
April, 1997, p. 112; September, 1997, p. 185.  
*Today*, June 6, 1981.  
*Toronto Star*, July 29, 1978; December 14, 1982.  
*Voice of Youth Advocates*, December, 1986; August-  
September, 1987; October, 1988, pp. 182-83; June,  
1990, p. 106; December, 1992, p. 281.

## General Objectives

1. To evaluate when it is permissible or even preferable to lie
2. To understand the role of sports in American culture
3. To evaluate the changes that Wallace makes the school play
4. To trace the main events in the story
5. To appreciate the novel's suspense
6. To grasp the novel's humor
7. To recognize the themes of integrity and honesty
8. To understand the novel's title
9. To describe the novel's mood or atmosphere
10. To appreciate the happy ending

## Specific Objectives

1. To understand Wallace's insistence on always telling the truth
2. To understand why Mr. Fogelman gives Wallace

detention

3. To analyze why Wallace's football teammates are so angry at him
4. To see why Wallace begins to attend play practice
5. To appreciate the value of Wallace's suggestions to improve the play
6. To understand why Dylan Turner would sabotage the play
7. To analyze the relationship between Wallace and Rachel
8. To compare and contrast Steve and Wallace
9. To analyze the reasons why Rachel writes to Julia Roberts
10. To use the clues to solve the mystery

## Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Gordon Korman's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

**Humor:** parts of a story that are funny. *No More Dead Dogs* has many humorous scenes, most created through sheer silliness. For instance, Rachel walks onto the football field to talk to a player and inadvertently makes a great interception. The team is annoyed to discover that it is Rachel, the president of the drama club, who made the catch. "Aw, man!" cries Rick. "How come they get all the best players?" Korman also uses many silly names to create humor. Sometimes, the names are humorous because of repetition, such as "Wallace Wallace." Others are silly, teenage plays on words, such as "Porker Zit" for "Parker Schmidt."

**Figurative Language:** words and expressions not meant to be taken literally. Figurative language uses words in fresh, new ways to appeal to the imagination. Figures of speech include similes, metaphors, extended metaphors, hyperbole, and personification. *No More Dead Dogs* has a special type of figurative language called a mixed metaphor, two incongruous images placed together. In the novel, the mixed metaphors are created by Rick and are thus called "Rick-isms." For example, Rick says, "It's the icing on the gravy." The metaphor is supposed to be "the icing in the cake," but Rick gets mixed up with the idea that something extra can be described as gravy. The novel's dedication also contains a mixed metaphor: "For M. Jerry Weiss, who has been encouraging me to write about Rick-ism since the eternal equinox."

**Point of View:** is the vantage point from which a story is told. *No More Dead Dogs* is unusual because it is told from the first-person point of view of different characters. These include Rachel, Wallace, Trudi, and Mr. Fogelman. Relating the story through the eyes of different characters enables readers to see how each one relates to the events. This gives the story a freshness and immediacy. It also helps Korman build suspense by revealing only what each character knows. This makes the mystery of the saboteur more exciting.

## The Importance of Setting

*No More Dead Dogs* is set in the fictional Bedford Middle School, a stereotypical suburban junior high. The suburban community is never named, but readers can assume that it is the fictional Bedford. The setting is intentionally kept vague and ill-defined to give the novel a universality that a definite setting would restrict. As a result, readers can assume that the story could easily have taken place in their own communities, no matter where they are located.

Thus, the setting has no significant impact on the story, serving merely as a backdrop to the frantic action.

## Cross-Curricular Sources

### Novels

Avi, *Romeo and Juliet Together (and Alive!) at Last*  
 M.T. Anderson, *Burger Wuss*  
 Joan Bauer, *Squashed*  
 Francesca Block, *Weetzie Bat*  
 Ellen Conford, *A Royal Pain*  
 Jean Ferris, *Love Among the Walnuts: Or, How I Saved My Family from Being Poisoned*  
 Jack Gantos, *Jack's Black Book*  
 Carl Hiaasen, *Hoot*  
 Barbara Robinson, *The Worst School Year Ever*  
 Dyan Sheldon, *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen*  
 Stephanie Tolan, *Surviving the Applewhites*  
 Wendelin Van Draanen, *Flipped*

### AudioCassettes

*Born to Rock*  
*Jake, Reinvented*  
*No More Dead Dogs*  
*Son of the Mob*

### Videos/Films

*James and the Giant Peach* (1996)  
*Matilda* (1996)  
*The Muppet Movie* (1979)  
*The Last Unicorn* (1982)

*My Neighbor Totoro* (1993)  
*The Parent Trap* (1961)  
*The Princess Bride* (1987)  
*The Red Balloon* (1956)  
*Simon Birch* (1998)  
*The Wizard of Oz* (1939)

### Internet

Official Gordon Korman Web Site  
[gordonkorman.com/](http://gordonkorman.com/)  
 Gordon Korman  
[www.edu.pe.ca/elmstreet/GORDKORM.HTM](http://www.edu.pe.ca/elmstreet/GORDKORM.HTM)  
 Scholastic.com  
[books.scholastic.com/.../authorsandbooks/authorstudies/authorhome.jsp?authorID=138&displayName=Biography](http://books.scholastic.com/.../authorsandbooks/authorstudies/authorhome.jsp?authorID=138&displayName=Biography)  
 Writers Union of Canada: Gordon Korman  
[www.writersunion.ca/k/korman.htm](http://www.writersunion.ca/k/korman.htm)  
 Gordon Korman Teacher Resource File  
[falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/korman.htm](http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/korman.htm)  
 Gordon Korman  
[www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/2562/gkinfo.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/2562/gkinfo.htm)

## Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Gordon Korman's *No More Dead Dogs* should include these aspects:

### Themes

- book reports
- detention
- dogs
- football
- fun
- humor
- love
- misunderstandings
- music
- school plays

### Motifs

- having to write a laudatory review of a book you do not like
- learning to be honest from a parent's dishonesty
- serving detention for being honest
- being lionized for your prowess at football
- falling in love
- laughing at funny scenes
- seeking guidance from a movie star
- joining a rock band
- sabotaging a play
- solving a mystery

## Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. I gave Fogelman what I give everybody—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. (p. 4)  
*(Wallace's father is a compulsive liar, a shortcoming that cost him his marriage and the respect of his former wife and son. As a result of his father's dishonesty, Wallace is compulsively honest. The play turns on this fact: when Wallace says that he did not commit the pranks, he is telling the truth. Rachel realizes this only when Steve points it out to her.)*
2. I shrugged. "Because the dog always dies. Go to the library and pick out a book with an award sticker and a dog on the cover. Trust me, that dog is going down." (p. 5)  
*(Wallace makes the humorous but nonetheless trenchant observation that young adult books that center on dying or dead dogs tend to win major awards. Readers can assume that Wallace is speaking here for Korman, who doesn't especially admire such maudlin tales.)*
3. I didn't give in. "Why does that make me the hero?" (p. 7)  
*(Wallace made the winning recovery that enabled the Giants' football team to win the championship. Wallace understands that he was far more lucky than skilled, but his friends refuse to see this. He gets all the credit for being the best player, despite his efforts to convince everyone of the truth.)*
4. And so on, and so on, blah, blah, blah. Mr. Fogelman just couldn't see that he'd never get Wallace to write that paper. (p. 42)  
*(In addition to his honesty, Wallace is an admirable character because he stands up to injustice. Trudi is smart enough to realize this and admire Wallace for his integrity as much as his attractiveness.)*
5. Why was I helping the actors with their lines? (p. 52)  
*(On one level, Wallace is bored sitting in detention and so he gets involved in the play. In addition, he finds it easy to rewrite the turgid script into something more interesting, which shows his intelligence. Gordon Korman is no doubt speaking through his fictional creation: as with Wallace, Korman finds it easy to write realistic, believable, and catchy prose.)*
6. As it fell, it tipped over, releasing a dense cloud of black pepper right onto my actors' heads. (p. 67)  
*(This is one of the pranks designed to sabotage the play. The pranks are all sophomoric and silly. They combine to create the mystery and compel the plot forward.)*
7. And the Dead Mangoes played great rock-and-roll—raw-edged, but with a really funky beat. They were every bit as good as a professional adult band. (p. 101)  
*(Being part of a rock band is a very common adolescent fantasy for girls as well as boys. By working the band into his story, Korman appeals to readers even more. Ironically, Mr. Fogelman is neither old—around 30—nor especially mature, and so he ends up joining the band. This helps keep the rocker dream alive for teachers assigning No More Dead Dogs to their classes as well.)*
8. "So I'm quitting the team to go back and work on *Old Shep, My Pal*." (p. 107)  
*(To his astonishment, Wallace finds that he enjoys working on the school play more than he enjoys being on the football team. Wallace is as shocked as anyone else when he makes this admission. Given the rigid pecking order of junior high and high school life—in which football greatly outranks drama clubs—Wallace's decision is shocking and brave indeed.)*
9. His grin became wild. "I put a cherry bomb on Old Shep." (p. 168)  
*(Wallace's most drastic change to the script is having Shep live, not die. As the title states, there will be "no more dead dogs." However, Dylan torpedoed that idea by planting a bomb on the stuffed animal. This builds the novel to its climax.)*
10. "It was me," I blurted. (p. 173)  
*(Wallace, the boy who cannot tell a lie, does indeed lie when he takes the blame for blowing up Shep. He does so to save Rachel from the pain of knowing that her brother was the saboteur. This selfless act shows that Wallace is maturing: he realizes that there are often times when you must lie to save someone's feelings. This is not one of those times, but the lesson is crucial nonetheless.)*



## Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

### Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. Why does Wallace Wallace get detention?  
*(His English teacher Mr. Fogelman doesn't like the book review that Wallace wrote as a class assignment. Wallace detested the book that Mr. Fogelman greatly admires, Old Shep, My Pal.)*
2. What is the first act of vandalism on the set?  
*(Someone has spray-painted "Old Shep, Dead Mutt" on the scenery.)*
3. Why does Mr. Fogelman finally cancel Wallace's detention?  
*(Mr. Fogelman wants to get rid of Wallace because he is annoyed with all the changes that Wallace is making to his play.)*
4. Who is committing all the acts of vandalism?  
*(Dylan is responsible.)*
5. Who writes a letter to Rachel at the end of the novel? What does the letter say?  
*(Julia Roberts writes a letter to Rachel, telling her that Rachel is crazy about Wallace and she shouldn't let him get away.)*

### Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. Why does the author call the chapters "Enter..." rather than using conventional chapter titles?  
*(The author uses the format of a play direction. This makes the book's format similar to a play's format and so creates a play-within-a-play.)*
7. Why does Mr. Fogelman join the band, the Dead Mangoes?  
*(It's more than "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em": Fogelman really enjoys being part of the band. He is getting to relive his youth.)*
8. What purpose do Rachel's letters to Julia Roberts serve?  
*(As a plot device, the letters enable Korman to show Rachel's feelings. The letters also help him vary the style of the novel and thus make it even more interesting.)*

### Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. Which parts of this book did you find the most amusing? Why?  
*(Students may have laughed at the "Rick-isms" or found the silly pranks especially funny.)*
10. Which character did you like the most? Why?  
*(Students are likely to admire Wallace for his honesty and maturity or Rachel for her determination.)*

### Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)

11. Create a new title for the novel. Explain how it fits the action.
12. Choose any one chapter and retell it from another character's point of view.

## Across the Curriculum

### Art/Music

1. Write and perform a song in the style of the Dead Mangoes.
2. Create a children's book about dogs.
3. Create a poster for the performance of *Old Shep, Our Pal*.
4. Using scenes from the novel, create a mural that shows its main events.
5. Create a board game based on the characters and events in *No More Dead Dogs*.
6. Make the playbill for the performance of *Old Shep, Our Pal*.

### Language Arts

1. Mr. Fogelman seems to believe that for a novel to be good, it must be tragic – or at least sad. Is he correct? Find a great "classic" novel that isn't sad. Read the book and share its plot with the class.
2. Read one of the novels Wallace mentions that describes the death of a dog, such as *Old Yeller* or *Souder*. In a review, explain whether or not you enjoyed the book, and why.
3. Rick creates what Wallace Wallace calls "Rick-isms"—mixed metaphors. Isolate at least six Rick-isms and rewrite them as conventional metaphors. Then make up two new Rick-isms of your own.

## No More Dead Dogs Gordon Korman

4. Korman makes it easy for readers to keep his cast of characters straight by giving each one a special trait: Steve Cavanaugh, for instance, always combs his hair. List five characters and each one's defining trait.
5. Rachel writes letters to Julia Roberts, but she is really writing to herself because the letters serve as a journal. Write a letter to a movie star whom you admire. In your letter, describe some important events in your life.

### History/Social Studies

1. Make a display tracing the history of football.
2. Wallace says: "I gave Fogelman what I give everybody—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Find the source of this famous saying.
3. Research the history of dogs. When were they first domesticated, where, and why?
4. In a group, prepare a report on the history of ancient theater. Select one of the ancient plays you find and perform an excerpt of it for the class.
5. Locate an organization that trains dogs to help with handicapped people. Interview someone from the organization and share your findings with the class.

### Speech/Drama

1. Design a meaningful detention for Wallace. In a brief speech, explain how it fits his "crime."
2. Wallace can't tell a lie. Is this a good trait or a harmful one? Debate this issue with a group of classmates. When might it be desirable, even preferable, to lie?
3. In a roundtable discussion, explore the role that professional sports play in American life. Are sports over-emphasized or are they a healthy outlet for aggression, for instance?
4. Working with a partner, act out a scene between Rachel and Wallace in which they express their feelings for each other.
5. As a class, perform the play *Old Shep, My Pal*, taking great liberties with the script as the kids in the novel did.

6. Debate this issue: who is more stubborn, Wallace Wallace or Mr. Fogelman?

### Science/Math

1. Make a chart showing the top ten dog breeds in America and the approximate number of each dog kept as pets.
2. Wallace and his friends rake leaves. Explain what makes the leaves turn color and drop from the trees in autumn.
3. Create a budget for a performance of *Old Shep, Our Pal*. Use the same number of actors, props, and so on described in *No More Dead Dogs*.
4. Which is a more popular pet: dogs or cats? Poll at least 50 people to find out their preference. Show your results on a chart.
5. Football is a very dangerous sport, and many players are injured every year. Describe how football players – and by extension, all athletes who play contact sports—can protect themselves from injury.

### Alternate Assessment

1. Draw or paint a scene from the novel. Glue the picture to some cardboard and then cut it apart to make a *No More Dead Dogs* jigsaw puzzle.
2. Read another book by Gordon Korman and compare and contrast it to *No More Dead Dogs*.
3. Explain the rules of football to a friend.
4. Write a character sketch for Wallace Wallace.
5. Make a poster for a movie version of *No More Dead Dogs*.

## Vocabulary

Match each word from *No More Dead Dogs* in the left column with its definition in the right column. Write the letter of your answer in the space provided.

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| _____ 1. cringe      | A. alarming        |
| _____ 2. aggravation | B. commotion       |
| _____ 3. queasy      | C. comfort         |
| _____ 4. mediocre    | D. cower, grovel   |
| _____ 5. grueling    | E. dream           |
| _____ 6. console     | F. exhausting      |
| _____ 7. slouch      | G. merriment       |
| _____ 8. sequel      | H. nauseous        |
| _____ 9. culprit     | I. follow-up       |
| _____ 10. ruckus     | J. logical         |
| _____ 11. reverie    | K. irritation      |
| _____ 12. chortle    | L. lawbreaker      |
| _____ 13. valid      | M. laugh           |
| _____ 14. traumatic  | N. average, common |
| _____ 15. mirth      | O. slump           |

## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided.

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| A. Feather Wrigley | F. Rachel Turner   |
| B. Steve Cavanaugh | G. Wallace Wallace |
| C. Trudi Davis     | H. Dylan           |
| D. Mr. Fogelman    | I. Rick Falconi    |
| E. Parker Schmidt  | J. Rory Piper      |

- \_\_\_ 1. Drama Club president
- \_\_\_ 2. Rachel's closest friend; she has a crush on Wallace
- \_\_\_ 3. student newspaper reporter
- \_\_\_ 4. football player who eats a lot of celery
- \_\_\_ 5. Wallace's English teacher
- \_\_\_ 6. Wallace's former best friend
- \_\_\_ 7. boy who writes a negative review of *Old Shep, My Pal*
- \_\_\_ 8. quarterback who mangles comparisons
- \_\_\_ 9. Rachel's younger brother
- \_\_\_ 10. chief rollerblader

### Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- \_\_\_ 1. Wallace Wallace is compulsively honest because his father was a liar.
- \_\_\_ 2. Wallace is unquestionably the best player on the football team, which is why he is the star quarterback.
- \_\_\_ 3. Trudi writes many letters to the actress Julia Roberts about her life. At the end of the novel, Trudi is shocked when Julia Roberts writes back!
- \_\_\_ 4. Wallace's teammates often help him with his chores; at the beginning of the novel, a group of football players come to help him paint the garage doors.
- \_\_\_ 5. The *Bedford Middle School Weekly Standard* twists Wallace's story into the lie that Wallace won't play unless Mr. Fogelman gives him an A.
- \_\_\_ 6. Wallace does not like being part of the play, but he has no choice because that is part of his punishment for not writing a positive book report.
- \_\_\_ 7. In an act of vandalism against the school play, someone ties all the cords and cables in knots.
- \_\_\_ 8. Mr. Fogelman gets more and more angry at Wallace, even trying to get him expelled from school. In a fury, Mr. Fogelman quits the school play.
- \_\_\_ 9. In another act of vandalism, someone shreds all the scripts.
- \_\_\_ 10. Dylan committed the acts of vandalism.



## Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

### Part III: Quote Identification (30 points)

Briefly explain why each quote is important in the novel.

1. So I gave up, and eventually, so did Mom. I was in fifth grade when they got their divorce. By then, I wouldn't have told a lie at gunpoint.
2. In a way, I couldn't blame him. I was getting all this credit for being the best player, which Cavanaugh really was.
3. He looked up at me. "Somebody poured pancake syrup in my filing cabinet!"
4. His grin became wild. "I put a cherry bomb on Old Shep."
5. "It was me," I blurted.

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. "Many of Mr. Korman's plots revolve around the frustrations of rambunctious boys forced to submit to stuffy academic authorities," said critic Leslie Bennetts in the *New York Times*. Show how this statement is true in *No More Dead Dogs*.
2. *No More Dead Dogs* is a very amusing novel. Give three humorous details to prove this statement.
3. Analyze how Wallace is similar to and different from the other boys in his school.
4. What function do Trudi and Steve serve in the novel?

## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

Choose the word or phrase that best completes each of the following statements.

1. Steve says that Wallace Wallace is the most **(honest, intelligent)** person he knows.
2. Wallace plays football for the junior high team, which is called the **(Hawks, Giants)**.
3. Over the course of the novel, **(Trudi, Rachel)** writes many letters to an actress about life at Bedford Junior High School.
4. Mr. Fogelman has adapted the book *(Old Shep, My Pal; Old Yeller)* for the school play.
5. Wallace's football teammates help him **(wash the family's cars, paint the garage doors)**.
6. In an act of vandalism against the school play, **(the cables are knotted together, the set is burned down)**.
7. In another act of vandalism, someone pours **(gasoline, pancake syrup)** into the files.
8. To his wife's astonishment, Fogelman joins the band, the **(Garage Lemons, Dead Mangoes)**.
9. In another act of vandalism, someone shreds all the play **(scripts, tickets)**.
10. At the end of the novel, readers discover that **(Dylan, Rick)** was sabotaging the play to get Wallace to rejoin the football team.

### Part II: Matching (30 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the list that follows. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided.

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Porker Zit      | A. president of the Drama Club                 |
| ___ 2. Rory Piper      | B. boy who drives the moped                    |
| ___ 3. Rick Falconi    | C. rollerblader                                |
| ___ 4. Rachel Turner   | D. Wallace's English teacher                   |
| ___ 5. Mr. Fogelman    | E. author of <i>No More Dead Dogs</i>          |
| ___ 6. Laszlo Tamas    | F. football player who mangles language        |
| ___ 7. Steve Cavanaugh | G. often combs his beautiful blond hair        |
| ___ 8. Trudi Davis     | H. hero of the novel                           |
| ___ 9. Wallace Wallace | I. first has a crush on Wallace and then Steve |
| ___ 10. Gordon Korman  | J. annoying newspaper reporter                 |

## Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

### Part III: Identification (20 points)

Explain why each is important in the story.

1. Old Shep
2. Wallace's football jersey
3. Julia Roberts
4. the Dead Mangoes
5. videotape of the championship football game

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. What makes Wallace such an admirable character? Isolate and analyze at least three of his best traits.
2. Trace the novel's plot. Include the rising action, climax, and resolution.
3. Compare and contrast Rachel and Trudi. Show how they are the same and different.
4. Would you recommend this novel to a friend? Why or why not? Provide at least two specific reasons.

# Answer Key

## VOCABULARY

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. C  | 11. E |
| 2. K | 7. O  | 12. M |
| 3. H | 8. I  | 13. J |
| 4. N | 9. L  | 14. A |
| 5. F | 10. B | 15. G |

## COMPREHENSION TEST A

### Part I: Matching (20 points)

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. F | 2. C | 3. E | 4. A | 5. D  |
| 6. B | 7. G | 8. I | 9. H | 10. J |

### Part II: True/False (20 points)

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. T | 2. F | 3. F | 4. T | 5. T  |
| 6. F | 7. T | 8. F | 9. T | 10. T |

### Part III: Quote Identification (30 points)

- Wallace's father is a compulsive liar, a shortcoming that cost him his marriage and the respect of his former wife and son. As a result of his father's dishonesty, Wallace is compulsively honest. The story turns on this fact: when Wallace says that he did not commit the pranks, he is telling the truth. Rachel realizes this only when Steve points it out to her.
- Wallace made the winning catch that enabled the Giants to win the football championship. Wallace understands that he was far more lucky than skilled, but his friends refuse to see this. He gets all the credit for being the best player, despite his efforts to convince everyone of the truth. His friend Steve Cavanaugh is jealous and this event has destroyed their friendship.
- This is one of the pranks designed to sabotage the play. The pranks are all sophomoric and silly. They create the mystery and compel the plot forward.
- Wallace's most drastic change to the script is having Shep live, not die. As the title states, there will be "no more dead dogs." However, Dylan torpedoes that idea by planting a bomb on the stuffed animal. This builds the novel to its climax.
- Wallace, the boy who cannot tell a lie, does indeed lie when he takes the blame for blowing up Shep. He does so to save Rachel from the pain of knowing that her brother was the saboteur. This selfless act shows that Wallace is maturing: he realizes that there are often times when you should lie to save someone's feelings. This is not one of those times, but the lesson is crucial nonetheless.

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

## COMPREHENSION TEST B

### Part I: Sentence Completion (20 points)

- |                            |                                    |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. honest                  | 6. the cables are knotted together |
| 2. Giants                  | 7. pancake syrup                   |
| 3. Rachel                  | 8. Dead Mangoes                    |
| 4. <i>Old Shep, My Pal</i> | 9. scripts                         |
| 5. paint the garage doors  | 10. Dylan                          |

### Part II: Matching (30 points)

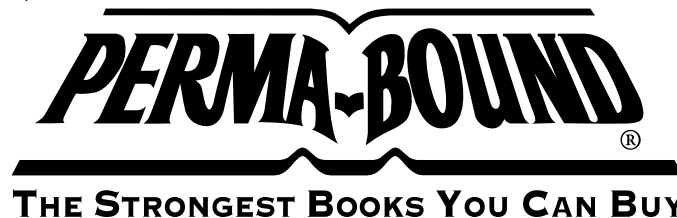
- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. J | 6. B  |
| 2. C | 7. G  |
| 3. F | 8. I  |
| 4. A | 9. H  |
| 5. D | 10. E |

### Part III: Identification (20 points)

- Old Shep is the fictional dog in the novel and play *Old Shep, Our Pal*. He is the stereotypical loyal dog who must die to make a statement about the main character's sensitivity and maturity.
- Dylan plants Wallace's football jersey in the pile of shredded play scripts to make it appear that Wallace is the saboteur.
- Julia Roberts is the famous movie actress to whom Rachel writes numerous letters. Rachel does not expect Roberts to write back, other than to send an auto-graphed photograph. Therefore, she is shocked when Roberts does write back, offering advice on Rachel's love life.
- The Dead Mangoes is the rock band that Wallace invites to join the play. Mr. Fogelman joins the band, to his great delight.
- The videotape of the championship football game proves that Dylan is the one trying to destroy the play so Wallace will return to the football team. Rick and Wallace see Dylan on the tape stealing Wallace's jersey.

### Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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