

Swindle

By: Gordon Korman

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Library of Congress Summary: After unscrupulous collector S. Wendell Palomino cons him out of a valuable baseball card, sixth-grader Griffin Bing puts together a band of misfits to break into Palomino's heavily guarded store and steal the card back, planning to use the money to finance his father's failing invention, the Smart Pick fruit picker.

Book Information:

Time Period: Contemporary Fiction

Booktalk:

<http://www.mackinbooktalk.com/viewbook.aspx?BookId=1477>

Author Information

<http://www.gordonkorman.com/>

This website gives details of when Gordon Korman's new books are coming out and tells of different books he has written. There are also different links that you can click on to view information on books, quizzes and have conversations with others about his books.

Pre-reading Activities

The teacher will have students think of something that is very valuable to them. Have students imagine that something is taken from them. Students will then write a paragraph about stealing. The paragraph should include what they think of stealing, how they would feel if their valuables were stolen from them and what would they do if they saw someone stealing something.

Students should look up vocabulary words. Students should then use these words in their own sentences and become familiar with the material.

Chapter 1

Questions:

1. Would you ever stay in a house like this?
2. Do you know of any houses in your neighborhood that has a story like this old house?
3. Was it right for the boys to sneak into the house?

Journal Topic: Come up with a scary story that would happen in this haunted house to Ben and Griffin.

Vocabulary:

Agonized (2): Undergo great mental anguish through worrying about something.

Speculation (9): a message expressing an opinion based on incomplete evidence

Chapter 2

Questions:

1. What do you think Griffin's plan is going to be?
2. How would you take a stand to save the house?
3. What would be something you would hope to find in the drawer?

Journal Topic: In one paragraph, write a plan that you would make that would help save the old house.

Vocabulary:

Rankled (11): Cause annoyance or resentment that persists

Assailant (12): A person who physically attacks another.

Blotter (14): A sheet or pad of blotting paper inserted into a frame and kept on a desk.

Chapter 3

Questions:

1. Describe how Griffin would feel while he is stuck in the opening as the house is being ruined?
2. Would you be angry if you were Ben?
3. Do you think it is a smart idea to sell the card that Griffin found?

Journal Topic: Write a letter to Griffin trying to persuade him to not sell the card.

Vocabulary:

Dilapidated (17): In a state of disrepair or ruin as a result of age or neglect.

Vintage (22): Something brought back from the past.

Sympathetic (27): Feeling, showing, or expressing sympathy

Chapter 4

Questions:

1. Why do you think the author tells about Griffin's dad and his experiments?
2. How would you feel if you saw the baseball card on TV?
3. Would people believe you if you told them that someone had swindled you? Why or why not?

Journal Topic: Become Griffin Bing; write a dairy entry of what he would say when he saw his baseball card on TV.

Vocabulary:

Prototype (29): A first or preliminary model of something from which other forms are developed or copied.

Circulation (33): Movement to and fro or around something, esp. that of fluid in a closed system.

Chapter 5

Questions:

1. Do you think it is right of them to steal the card back?
2. If you were Ben, would you have gone along with the plan?
3. Why do you think the author named the antagonist swindle?

Journal Topic: Is stealing right or wrong? Was the group right to steal back the baseball card? Explain your thinking.

Vocabulary:

Snoop (43): Investigate or look around furtively in an attempt to find out something

Disapprovingly (44): To have an unfavorable opinion

Chapter 6

Questions:

1. How would you handle being in an ex-relationship?
2. At Griffin's core his character is driven by a sole purpose, describes Ben, What would you say about your character?
3. Do you believe they are going to be able to pull off the heist?

Journal Topic: Explain your core characteristics; give three examples of times you have shown this.

Vocabulary:

Reputation (52): The beliefs or opinions that are generally held about someone or something.

Real Estate Agent (56): a person who is authorized to act as an agent for the sale of land

Misgivings (57): A feeling of doubt, distrust, or apprehension.

Chapter 7

Questions:

1. Would you be scared to be spying?
2. Who is Luthor?

3. How do you suspect they will handle Luthor?

Journal Topic: When Luthor was first introduced to the story the boys were very afraid of him. Write a time that has been very scary for you.

Vocabulary:

Emerged (60): move out of or away from something and come into view

Mesh (61): lock together or be engaged with another

Chapter 8

Questions:

1. Would you be brave enough to face the dog like Savannah did?
2. What would be your guess to what the password would be for the safe?
3. Why do you think Griffin is so set on getting back his card?

Journal Topic: Make a journal entry that tells about a time that you have had a goal in mind and achieved it.

Vocabulary:

Elaborate (64): Planned or executed with painstaking attention to numerous parts or details.

Aggressive (65): Ready or likely to attack or confront

Chapter 9

Questions:

1. Griffin is really good at coming up with plans, what is something that you are good at doing?
2. How would you convince Savannah not to quit?
3. Would you have expected her anger to change the dog?

Journal Topic: Write a letter to Savannah asking her not to quit. Explain why you need her in the group and why it would be beneficial for her to stay.

Vocabulary:

Indicated (75): to point out; sign or symptom of.

Morphed (75): Change smoothly from one image to another by small gradual steps
Rabies (77): A contagious and fatal viral disease of dogs and other mammals.

Chapter 10

Questions:

1. How does Ben being dropped off in a box relate to the Trojan War?
2. At this point in the plan, would you still be able to go with it?
3. Would you risk your morals to keep your best friend living by you?

Journal Topic: The author compares Ben being dropped off in the box to the Trojan War. If you were to explain this to someone what would you say?

Vocabulary:

Furtive (81): Attempting to avoid notice or attention

Marshaled (83): Arrange or assemble

Chapter 11

Questions:

1. Why do you think Luthor was not around?
2. If you were Ben as the alarm was going off, how would you have felt?
3. Even though Ben and Griffin are standing in the middle of the store, Griffin says he is not a thief. Explain how this could make sense to him?

Journal Topic: Explain the thought process of Griffin when he says they are not thieves, yet they are stealing from another person.

Vocabulary:

Unnerving (88): lose courage or confidence.

Blade (89): The flat cutting edge of a knife, saw, or other tool or weapon.

Blowfish (92): Any of a number of fishes that is able to inflate their bodies when alarmed.

Chapter 12

Questions:

1. How would you feel if you were one of the members of this group and the mission did not work?
2. Would you feel the same way as Ben about the heist?
3. Can you predict what their ultimate plan is going to be?

Journal Topic: Pick one character of the group that is stealing the card back at this point. Write out how they would feel after the first mission failed.

Vocabulary:

Schemes (95): a plan, design, or program of action to be followed

Dismal (96): Causing gloom or depression

Chapter 13

Questions:

1. If a teacher overheard a conversation that they were not supposed to hear about this heist, would you have confessed?
2. Think of a different way you could explain the heist to a teacher?
3. How does the author use the word paralyzed in the story?

Journal Topic: Griffin and Ben explain to their teacher that what they were talking about was for a project. Come up with a different way to explain their conversation.

Vocabulary:

Wrought-Iron (101): A tough, malleable form of iron suitable for forging or rolling rather than casting

Paralyzed (108): to be unable to move.

Chapter 14

Questions:

1. How did the two boys come about getting blueprints of the house?
2. How did Ben get hurt in this chapter?

3. What is the boys' new plan in getting into the house?

Journal Topic: The boys have had a few obstacles so far in their plans to steal back the baseball card. Come up with your own plan of getting it back.

Vocabulary:

Blueprints (110): A design plan or other technical drawing.

Chapter 15

Questions:

1. What do you think "pitch's" skills will be used for?
2. What do you think Logan's skills will be used for?
3. Would you have included Darren?

Journal Topic: The person sitting next to you is now asked to join the group. Write out what their skills would be used for.

Vocabulary:

Narrow (117): A narrow channel connecting two larger areas.

Fondly (124): Having a strong liking, inclination, or affection

Chapter 16

Questions:

1. What is something you would add to this plan?
2. How do you feel about the plan having so many people involved?
3. At this point in time, do you think they will get away with it?

Journal Topic: What are your thoughts on the group getting away with the heist? Explain whether or not they will get away with it.

Vocabulary:

Earsplitting (127): Loud and shrill enough to hurt the ears.

Intently (128): with an aim or purpose

Seethed (131): Bubble up as a result of being boiled

Chapter 17

Questions:

1. If you were Logan, what would you talk to Eli Mulroney about to keep him distracted?
2. According to the text, what do you think Whiz means?
3. Which character do you relate to the most in this scheme?

Journal Topic: Come up with new dialogue between Logan and Mr. Mulroney. How would you have had them meet?

Vocabulary:

Bewildered (134): to become perplexed and confused

Cultivated (135): prepare and use for crops or gardening

Chapter 18

Questions:

1. Do you think that the owner has any idea that he is about to get the card stolen from him?
2. How do you think he will react?
3. What is something you think could go wrong with the heist?

Journal Topic: In a paragraph, write how Swindle is going to react when his baseball card is stolen.

Vocabulary:

Consolation (145): Comfort received by a person after a loss or disappointment.

Con man (147): A person who cheats or tricks someone by means of a confidence game.

Chapter 19

Questions:

1. The plan has now another obstacle, how do you think Griffin will plan around it?
2. How do you think Logan felt as he watched his friends plan for this night while he played backgammon?
3. Predict what you think is going to happen with the heist?

Journal Topic: With everything that has gone wrong with the plan so far, write out how you think the heist will happen.

Vocabulary:

Operation (149): The fact or condition of functioning or being active.

Monitoring (150): Observe and check the progress or quality of something over a period of time

Procedure (155): An established or official way of doing something.

Chapter 20

Questions:

1. How do you feel about the speech that Griffin gave before they were to take the card?
2. What was the news that Ben had to tell Griffin?
3. What would you be thinking if you were waiting for your part of the heist?

Journal Topic: The group members did not enjoy Griffin's speech; write out your own speech that you would have said to them before the heist.

Vocabulary:

Beneath (156): to be below or under an object.

Disappointment (157): to be sad or let down.

Narcolepsy (159): A condition characterized by an extreme tendency to fall asleep whenever in relaxing surroundings.

Chastened (160): To correct by punishment or reproof

Chapter 21

Questions:

1. How did Pitch hurt herself?
2. Knowing that two of their members are out of the picture; do you think that the heist is still going to work out?
3. What do you think Luthor was trying to signal to Savannah?

Journal Topic: In the book the author tells the readers that Luthor is scared; come up with your own idea of what the dog could be afraid of.

Vocabulary:

Bonded (164): Joined securely to another thing, esp. by an adhesive, a heat process, or pressure

Stoically (166): One who is seemingly indifferent to or unaffected by joy, grief, pleasure, or pain

Canine (169): resembling a dog or dogs

Chapter 22

Questions:

1. How would you feel if you were Melissa trying to take off the sensors?
2. Will the large dog get out of the office? If so, what do you think will happen?
3. Would you regret being one of the team members at this point?

Journal Topic: Write out what you think will happen if the larger dog gets out of the office.

Vocabulary:

Component (173): A part or element of a larger whole.

Whiz (173): referring to someone smart

Whimpers (179): Make a series of low, feeble sounds expressive of fear, pain, or discontent

Chapter 23

Questions:

1. What effect do you think there being two dogs will have on their plan?

2. How do you think they will handle the delivery man?
3. How do you think Ben feels about falling asleep on the heist?

Journal Topic: Write from Ben's perspective of how he feels about falling asleep while the heist was going on.

Vocabulary:

Perspiration (182): The process of sweating.

Tumbled (182): to fall down

Admiration (183): to look up to someone

Chapter 24

Questions:

1. Did it come in handy that there were two dogs in the house now?
2. Will the meat help the two dogs from fighting?
3. Will all of the members get out of the house safely?

Journal Topic: Knowing that the larger dog took care of the delivery man problem, do you still think it is bad for him to be in the house still? Why or why not?

Vocabulary:

Enormous (189): large or huge

Especially (191): certainly or specifically

Chapter 25

Questions:

1. Logan was left by himself while he knew his friends were going to get in trouble, what would you have done to help your friends?
2. Would you have taken your dad's invention to get the card?
3. What do you think happened to Darren when he asked for help up in the tree?

Journal Topic: Before reading the rest of the story about Darren in the tree, write out how you think it is going to play out. Use examples to explain your reasoning.

Vocabulary:

Stealthily (196): Sneaky or in a spy like manner

Jarred (197): Strike against something with an unpleasant vibration or jolt.

Gingerly (197): with great care or delicacy.

Shuffled (199): to move slowly without picking up your feet.

Chapter 26

Questions:

1. What would be your plan to get out of the house after everything has gone wrong?
2. Who do you think Griffin is mailing the million dollar card to?
3. What do you think will happen now that the police are behind Griffin?

Journal Topic: Who do you think Griffin is mailing the card to? And why?

Vocabulary:

Abandoned (203): be left behind or neglected.

Retraced (204): to go back and look again.

Chapter 27

Questions:

1. How do you think Griffin will explain having the smartpicker with him?
2. What do you think swindle did when he found out that his baseball card was missing?
3. Do you think the delivery man will get the group in trouble?

Journal Topic: As the story unfolds of the police already following Griffin, how do you think he will explain himself?

Vocabulary:

Fugitive (209): a person who has escaped from a place or is in hiding

Apologize (211): saying sorry to someone

Demonstration (212): an example or modeling.

Chapter 28

Questions:

1. How would you split up the money, even though Darren tried to rip the students off?
2. At this point once you have gotten away with taking the card, how would you feel?
3. Do you think that Griffin will have a plan now that he has been ratted out?

Journal Topic: The group in this chapter is arguing on how to divide the money. In a paragraph tell how you would divide the money up fairly.

Vocabulary:

Smugly (217): Exhibiting or feeling great or offensive satisfaction with oneself or with one's situation

Betrayal (218): be disloyal

Agony (219): to be in pain

Chapter 29

Questions:

1. How do you think Griffin feels now that he has confessed to his crime?
2. How do you think Griffin's parents feel when he admits he did it for the money to help his parents?

Journal Topic: Write about how Griffin now feels that he has confessed. Explain the different emotions he could be having and what you think is going to happen to him.

Vocabulary:

Interrogation (225): to be questioned

Denying (226): to state that something declared or believed to be true is not true

Invaded (228): To enter by force in order to conquer.

Chapter 30

Questions:

1. Where do you guess the card has ended up?
2. How long do you think the kids should wait to get the card back?
3. Are they going to get the card back?

Journal Topic: No one but Griffin knows where the card is. Write about where you think it is, who is keeping it, and when/if they will ever get the card back.

Vocabulary:

Whir (234): A sound of such a type.

Invention (236): The action of creating something, typically a process or device.

Patio (240): A paved outdoor area adjoining a house.

Conviction (243): A formal declaration that someone is guilty of a criminal offense, made by the verdict of a jury or the decision of a judge in a court of law.

Chapter 31

Questions:

1. Who do you think has entered into the Bing's house?
2. How do you think Griffin felt when he heard "you are arrested"?
3. What do you think will happen with the rest of the group?

Journal Topic: Someone has ratted out the group; who do you think it is, and what will happen to the group?

Vocabulary:

Backgammon (248): A board game in which two players move their pieces around twenty-four triangular points

Chapter 32

Questions:

1. If you were Logan, would you have gone back to Mr. Mulroney's house?
2. Would you have guessed that Darren would have ended up with the card?
3. How would you change the end of the story?

Journal Topic: How would you have changed the ending? How do you feel about Darren getting the card in the end?

Vocabulary:

Eccentric (249): A person of unconventional and slightly strange views or behavior.

Donate (250): to give of something

Interdisciplinary activities

Math

Students will get into groups of 6 and divide the million dollars among them. Students will then be asked to “spend” their portion of the money and keep track of how they would spend it. Requirements for this activity would include they have to spend some of the money on others, on the future, and calculate the math as they go.

Science

Students will come up with their own invention of how to get the card out of the tree. It cannot be anything similar to what Griffin’s dad came up with but has to be able to work. Students will make a small replica of their invention.

Social studies

Students will pick a famous baseball player and come up with three interesting things that they have done in their career and share it with the class.

Art

Students will draw out each player on the “team” highlighting their main characteristics.

Other Works by Gordon Korman:

Swindle series: *Swindle* (2008) *Zoobreak* (2009) *Framed!* (2010)

Non-series books

Who is Bugs Potter? (1980)
I Want to Go Home (1981)
Our man Weston (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)
Radio 5th Grade (1989)
Losing Joe's Place (1990)
The D- Poems of Jeremy Bloom (1992)
The Twinkie Squad (1992)
The Toilet Paper Tigers (1993)
Why Did the Underwear Cross the Road (1994)
The Chicken Doesn't Skate (1996)
Liar, Liar Pants on Fire (1997)
The Sixth Grade Nickname Game (1998)
Hollywood Hustle (2001)
Son of the Mob (2002)
No More Dead Dogs (2002)
Maxx Comedy: The Funniest Kid in America (2003)
Jake, Reinvented (2003)
Born To Rock (2006)
Schooled (2007)
The Juvie Three (2008)
Pop (2009)
Bruno and Boots/Macdonald Hall series
This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall (1978, retitled as *This Can't Be Happening!* with the re-release of the books in 2003)
Go Jump in the Pool (1979)
Beware the Fish (1980)
The War With Mr. Wizzle (1982, retitled *The Wizzle War*)
The Zucchini Warriors (1988)
Macdonald Hall Goes Hollywood (1991, retitled *Lights, Camera, Disaster!*)
Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall (1995, retitled *The Joke's On Us*)
Super Bowl Switch (1997)
Heavy Artillery (1997)
Ultimate Scoring Machine (1998)

NFL Rules! Bloopers, Pranks, Upsets, and Touchdowns (1998)

Slapshots series

The Stars From Mars (1999)
All-Mars All-Stars/The Dream Team (1999)
The Face-off Phony (2000)
Cup Crazy (2000)
Slapshots The Complete Collection (2008)

Monday Night Football

The Quarterback Exchange (1997)
Running Back Conversion (1997)

Nose Pickers series

Nose Pickers from Outer Space! (1999)
Planet of the Nose Pickers (2000)
Your Mummy Is a Nose Picker (2000)
Invasion of the Nose Pickers (2001)
The Ultimate Nose-Picker Collection (2006)

Island series

Shipwreck (2000)
Survival (2001)
Escape (2001)
Island Trilogy Bind-Up Book (2006)

Everest series

Everest, The Contest (2002)
Everest, The Climb (2002)
Everest, The Summit (2002)

Dive series

The Discovery (2003)
The Deep (2003)
The Danger (2003)

On the Run series

Chasing the Falconers (2005)
The Fugitive Factor (2005)
Now You See Them, Now You Don't (2005)
The Stowaway Solution (2005)
Public Enemies (2005)
Hunting the Hunter (2006)

Kidnapped series

The Abduction (2006)

The Search (2006)

The Rescue (2006)

The 39 Clues series

One False Note (2008)

The Emperor's Code (2010)

Vespers Rising (2011)

<http://www.paperbackswap.com/Gordon-Korman/author/>

Activities

Students will be given a 4 by 6 note card. This will be for the students to make their own baseball cards of the characters of the book. Have a discussion with students about what are the different traits of each character and how are they different. The teacher could also talk about the different aspects that are on a baseball card. Tell students that on the card there should be a picture of the “player,” the things they are best at, and a slogan for the players.

Students will choose a famous baseball player to research. They will be required to find the different highlights from his career in baseball and design a creative way to present it to the classroom. In this presentation along with the information they found they must add in three things that they would like to ask this person.

<http://www2.uwstout.edu/content/profdev/rubrics/elemresearchrubric.html>

This is a website that could be the rubric for this project. It has a sound structure that can be followed.

Related websites

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collection.jsp?id=134>

This website tells its viewers about the author and the different details of his life. There is also a little video that is Gordon Korman himself talking about his book. He goes through and tells about the different characters.

<http://www.scholastic.com/titles/island/>

This website gives a few different books that are written by Gordon Korman. There are different links that you can click on to go explore each book. The viewer can also take a quiz about what they know of the book and has Q and A from Gordon himself.