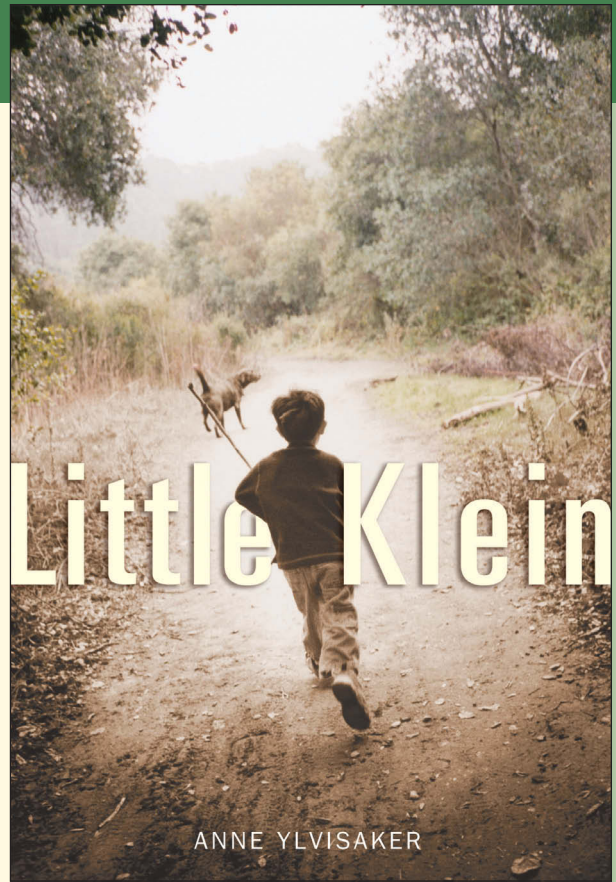




# Little Klein

BY ANNE YLVISAKER



1. As a baby, Harold Sylvester George Klein gets the nickname “Little Klein,” and it sticks. How does this nickname affect Harold? Do you have a nickname? How did you get it? Do you like your nickname, or would you rather be called by your given name?

2. Not only is Harold Klein the youngest child in the family, but he is also by far the smallest. In what ways do people treat Harold differently because of his size? In what instances does Little Klein’s size give him an advantage over the Bigs? On pages 30–31, Little Klein wonders if he is even a real Klein because he is so different from his brothers. Are there ways in which Little Klein is *like* his brothers? Is there something that sets you apart from the other members of your family or friends? How does it affect you and your relationships?

3. LeRoy stumbles upon the Klein boys in the third chapter. By page 15, LeRoy feels the urge to finally add a family to his life. What changes does LeRoy go through in the story? In what ways are LeRoy and Little Klein alike?

4. Transformation is a theme in *Little Klein*. In the chapter titled *Doghouse* (pages 37–48), an oak is turned into a trunk, then a doghouse. What other transformations does this tree go through? When the doghouse is wrecked, Little Klein wants to build a tree house. How might the story have turned out differently if the boys had built a tree house instead of a raft? What other transformations take place in the story?

5. In the chapter titled *Missing* (pages 148–156), Little Klein and LeRoy are bumping along in the back of Nora Nettle’s truck after the rafting

accident when Little Klein is referred to as “Harold.” (For example, on page 149 we read: *Harold braced his feet against LeRoy’s side and pushed.*) For the rest of the story, Little Klein is referred to as Harold. Why does this happen? Do you think Little Klein’s family will also start calling him Harold now?

6. Emma Brown first enters the story as a cautionary figure, a warning to Little Klein when Luke makes him walk home alone (page 29). Do you think this character deserves her title of “Mean” Emma Brown? Why or why not?

7. When Little Klein finds himself alone with Emma Brown (pages 138–139), he considers all the futures he hopes to have, as an air hero, a farmer, and a boxer. In what other instances does Little Klein fantasize about things he will do? What do you dream about for your own life?

8. Little Klein is nine years old in the novel, which the flap copy describes as taking place “circa 1949.” How is his life in 1949 similar to your own childhood? How is it different?

