

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

Rules of the Road

Joan Bauer

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RULES OF THE ROAD

by
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Teacher Guide

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Note

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Please note: Please assess the appropriateness of this novel for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Compare/contrast, identifying attributes, predicting, evaluating, supporting opinions

Literary Elements

Plot development, setting, characterization, tone, theme, alliteration, assonance, consonance, irony, point of view

Vocabulary

Synonyms, antonyms, using context clues, using a thesaurus/dictionary

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, debate, acting, oral presentation

Writing

Essay, creative writing, newspaper article

Thinking

Brainstorming, analysis, inferring, decision making, problem solving

Across the Curriculum

Art—drawing, collage; Drama—script; History—research; Social Studies—geography, map use; Math—trip planning; Law—labor laws

Chapters 6–9

Jenna visits her grandmother in the nursing home and says goodbye to her mother, Faith, and Opal. Jenna and Mrs. Gladstone set out on their trip together, driving to stores in Peoria and Springfield. As the two get to know each other, Mrs. Gladstone opens up about her preacher father, her unwillingness to retire, her need for hip replacement surgery, and her son's plot to take over the company and sell it to Shoe Warehouse, a rival shoe store that does not value quality the way Mrs. Gladstone does. Jenna thinks a lot about her history with her alcoholic father and the lessons she learned from him. Jenna shows her knowledge of shoes and customer service as she becomes Mrs. Gladstone's "shoe snob" reporting on the sorry state of the Peoria Gladstone's and the Springfield Shoe Warehouse.

Vocabulary

antique
 infernal
 metaphorically
 prejudicial
 guidance
 infernal
 enthusiasm
 hurling
 deceitful
 intersect
 implicitly
 distinctly
 insistence
 immediate
 combination
 concoctions
 grit
 theoretically
 insight
 exhausted
 illuminating
 perception
 contortionist

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does Jenna take on an infernal role in Chapter 6? Why might this role come naturally to Jenna? (*Jenna looks after her grandmother, who has become wheelchair-like, and then imparts advice and instruction to Faith. Students may note that being the older daughter in her family, the absence of her mother, who works long hours, and the seriousness of her father's problems have forced Jenna to grow up fast.*)

2. How is Jenna treated in the Peoria store? Explain whether you can relate to her experience in the store. (*Jenna is initially ignored by the salesperson in favor of an older customer, and when he does pay attention to her, he is dishonest with her and dismissive of her needs. Answers will vary.*)

3. How would you describe the rapport between Mrs. Gladstone and Jenna as they get to know each other? Point out examples from the text. (*There is much room for misreaders. At first, and their interaction is somewhat awkward. Mrs. Gladstone is not very communicative or friendly. Jenna must strive to figure her out and is fearful of saying the wrong thing. A good example of this would be when Jenna apologizes for being in the Peoria store. She thinks Mrs. Gladstone does not approve of her actions, but Mrs. Gladstone actually appreciates Jenna's insights.*)

4. How are Jenna and Mrs. Gladstone similar? How do their fathers influence them? (*Both were influenced to become the people they are by their fathers. Jenna's father was a salesman and used to ask her to work with him. She looked up to her father when he was*

not drinking heavily, and from him she learned the basics of good customer service. Mrs. Gladstone's father was a righteous man, a charismatic Baptist preacher who used shoes metaphorically in his sermons. He seems to have inspired Mrs. Gladstone's appreciation of quality products and good service.)

5. Discuss the dream that Jenna describes to Mrs. Gladstone. What does this dream mean? What does Jenna's dream have in common with Mrs. Gladstone's? (*Answers will vary, but since Jenna is unable to regulate the flow of bourbon coming out of the shower, it seems that Jenna is feeling overwhelmed by the fear that either she will become an alcoholic like her father or she will be unable to stop her father from barging into her life. Both Jenna's and Mrs. Gladstone's dreams stem from a fear of losing control.*)

- How are the situations between Jenna and her father and between Mrs. Gladstone and Elden similar? *(Answers will vary, but in both situations a loved one has proven himself untrustworthy. In the case of Jenna and her father, it is her father's alcoholism that caused the breach of trust and now threatens to eventually destroy the relationship. In the case of Mrs. Gladstone and Elden, it is Elden's ruthlessness and misguided ambition that are to blame for his bad relationship with his mother.)*
- Prediction:** Explain whether you think Mrs. Gladstone will try to retain control of her company.

Supplementary Activities

- History:** Research Abraham Lincoln's life in Springfield, Illinois, and the historical landmarks pertaining to Lincoln that one could visit in or around Springfield. Create a "guided tour" of Lincoln's life making use of the visual aid of your choice (pamphlet, PowerPoint, poster board, banner, etc.).
- Health:** Research Alzheimer's disease, including statistics as well as information and advice available for families caring for a loved one with the disease. Write an informative essay based on your research.
- Writing: Character Analysis:** Jenna implies that Mrs. Gladstone is "hard to imagine" as a child. Based on what Mrs. Gladstone has shared about her past and the person she is now, write a paragraph about Mrs. Gladstone as a child.

Chapter 10-5

Mrs. Gladstone wakes in the Springfield hotel unable to get out of bed. Mrs. Gladstone is hospitalized, and a doctor recommends she have hip surgery as soon as possible. The next day Jenna and Mrs. Gladstone resume their journey. The stress of the trip, Mrs. Gladstone's health problems, and homesickness overwhelm Jenna, and she cries. However, by the time the two arrive in St. Louis, Jenna is feeling significantly better and speaks to Herb Bender, who hopes to help Mrs. Gladstone save the company. Jenna faces Mrs. Gladstone's son, Elden, by herself at the hotel. Later Jenna, Mrs. Gladstone's friend Alice, and a wheelchair-bound Mrs. Gladstone confront Elden in the hotel lobby. The trio head to Kansas City, navigating it. The trio continues traveling and assessing numerous Gladstone's Shoe Stores from Topeka to Shreveport, where Mrs. Gladstone has a fiery conversation with a manager who welcomes Elden's changes to the company. Elden repeatedly calls Mrs. Gladstone, but she refuses to discuss any business matters with him until she has gathered more information and support.

Discussion Questions

- Why does Mrs. Gladstone insist that Jenna lift her out of the bed when the ambulance arrives? What does this indicate about their relationship? Does Jenna feel the same about Mrs. Gladstone at this point? *(Answers will vary. Mrs. Gladstone states that she does not want to be assisted by strangers. That she attempts to lift her shows that she trusts Jenna and considers her a friend. Jenna's concern for an ambulance to help Mrs. Gladstone indicate that she respects Mrs. Gladstone.)*
- Why does Jenna wish for "signs of the highway of life" (p. 89)? *(Jenna's life has been somewhat chaotic due to her father's alcoholism and her parents' divorce. Jenna realizes that life is not perfect, and she does not expect it to be. She simply wants some warning of impending pitfalls and guidance to make life's challenges easier to deal with.)*

Be a Detective!

Directions: Check out the novel by looking at the cover and thumbing through the pages. Then, ask yourself who, what, where, when, why, and how. Write your questions in the spaces below. Exchange papers with a partner, and answer each other's questions.

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

How?



Character Growth

Directions: Characters often “grow” throughout a novel as they learn and change. In the rings surrounding Jenna’s name below, write either examples of Jenna’s growth or events that cause the growth. Write the examples or events in the order they occurred in the novel.



Cause/Effect

Directions: To plot cause and effect in a story, first list the sequence of events. Then use a checkmark to categorize each event as a cause or effect.

Events in the story	Cause	Effect
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Another way to map cause and effect is to look for an effect and then back track to the single or multiple causes.

