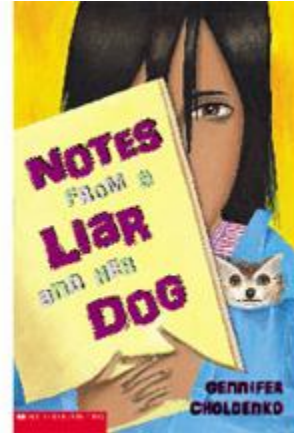


Notes from a Liar and Her Dog by Gennifer
Choldenko

(Putnam, 2001)

Eleven-year old Ant is stuck between two perfect sisters in a family that doesn't understand her. She takes comfort in her beloved dog Pistachio and pretends her "real" parents are coming to rescue her. She also tells a lot of lies.



1. Let's talk about Antonia who likes to be called "Ant" and her family. Can you describe them for me?
Why does she insist on being called Ant?
(Father changes jobs frequently, the family has moved 13 times, Mother wants everything neat and perfect, Ant calls her two sisters Your Highness Elizabeth, and Katherine the Great)
2. Ant's best friend is Harrison. He is short, walks his pet chicken on a leash, his clothes don't fit well, he is always scratching at something, and he is a lousy liar. He is good in art and Ant isn't – they seem to have nothing in common, so why are they friends?
3. Ant tells lies constantly, but she has trouble lying to Harrison's father. (P.21) "No matter how many times I lie to Mr. Emerson he'll still believe me. And because of this, I have trouble telling him anything but the truth. Why can't Ant lie to Mr. Emerson?
When Ant is called into Mr. Borgdorf, the Assistant Principal's office why does Mr. ask Ant if she knows the story of The Boy Who Cried Wolf
4. After the first incident in the zoo when Pistachio gets into the Lion's cage and Just Carol takes her home – Just Carol says, "Are you ever honest about anything? Ant says to herself – I don't make lies up for no reason, I just move the truth around a little when it gets in my way. What do you think Ant means by this?
5. Ant has constant conflict with her family members. She says she has been adopted and that her "real" family will come and rescue her. When her father comes home from a business trip and she is bracket in her room (grounded by her mother) her father tries to get her to join the family, but she refuses and he leaves. Why didn't she just come out with her father – the text leads us to believe she wanted to?
(Starved for affection aches for attention, Torn between wanting to be invisible & wanting to be noticed. Ant's defensiveness and lack of trust often leave her misunderstood)
6. Just Carol glimpses the hurt behind Ant's lying behavior, and she rescues Ant several times and intervenes with her mother. But after the last incident at the Zoo she says, "You're always a one man show, aren't you, ant? You're your own country. What do you think Just Carol meant by this?
7. Ant and her sister Elizabeth seem to really hate each other – they bicker constantly - when does Ant's relationship with her sister begin changing?
Elizabeth compares Ant to her father. (P 201) You never talk to anyone about anything. You just go off half-cocked. Just like Dad." In what ways is Ant similar to her father? Her mother?
8. Ant is convinced that her parents don't love her. On p.168 Dad says "It's pretty clear that the problems are yours Antonia, not your mothers." Ant's mother says, "You are a puzzling child." You fight me on everything. Everything I do is wrong. You lie, I can't trust you. So where does the fault lie – with Ant, or her parent?

9. On P 82 Ant says the trouble with the truth is that one true thing leads to another and pretty soon you have told everything. Why does Ant start telling the truth?
10. P. 212. Why does she ask her mother to call her Ant?
Why does Ant's mom convince her husband to stay in Northern California and not move to Connecticut?

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