

Good Night, Archie

by RV staff author

Mournful howls woke me just past midnight. Clenching my eyes tightly shut, I rolled over and willed the eerie lament of loneliness into nonexistence as I drifted back to sleep. My dreams were interrupted by thin warbles rising through the floorboards at 1:30 a.m. and then once more by sharp yips at 2:15.

My mother stumbled into my bedroom at 2:30 a.m., clutching her flannel robe closed near her throat. Her eyebrows and mouth were both set in straight lines, and I could feel the reprimand before I heard it. “Jake, no one in this house has slept in three nights. You either do something about that dog, or I will personally escort him back to the Selsdon's house myself.”

Grimacing, I wrapped my comforter around my shoulders and sluggishly made my way downstairs to the large metal crate tucked in the alcove off the kitchen. Deep black eyes stared back at me, pleading for release. I unlatched the crate, and twelve pounds of rambunctious golden retriever sprang forward to wage war on my socks. I managed to stuff my feet into a pair of snow boots before any sharp little teeth claimed my toes and then ushered Archie into the breathtakingly cold February morning.

At ten weeks old, Archie was both obstreperous and mostly insane. He raced around the backyard with a doggy grin of glee lighting up his short-snouted face, and despite the freezing temperature, he refused to come inside. I cornered him at the far end of the fence, my arms holding out the comforter like a low-rent superhero, and leapt. Archie darted away, and I hit the ground so hard my teeth shook.

It was then, lying in the mud at 2:47 a.m. clad only in pajamas, snow boots, and a comforter, that I decided my mom was right. Archie had to go. Yes, it was my persistent lobbying and wheedling that brought him into our lives, and along the way I may have vowed to be responsible for him no matter the consequences, but my optimism, along with my retainer, was now buried somewhere between the tulip bulbs and the elm tree.

I staggered back into the house, wincing as the warmth of the kitchen pinched my frozen fingers and ears back to life. I peeked into the alcove to look for Archie's leash— I'd need it to wrangle him back into his crate.

And there he was, snuggled into his overstuffed puppy bed and snoring like a freight train. His giant paws twitched as he galloped through his dreams, and a soft whimper escaped his throat. I tiptoed into the kitchen, gently shut the back door, and then grabbed a pillow from the family room before heading back into the alcove.

Archie was wild and awful and completely exhausting, but his sweet slumbering face seemed to make up for all the headaches. I stretched out on the cold linoleum, covered myself in my ruined comforter, and reached out my hand to stroke a muddy paw. "Good night, Archie."

Questions

1. Explain what type of narration is used in “Good Night, Archie.” Cite examples from the text that support your answer.
2. In paragraph 4, how does the author explain the sentence, “At ten weeks old, Archie was both obstreperous and mostly insane”? How do you know what the word *obstreperous* means?
3. How do Jake’s feelings about Archie change over the course of the story?
4. Many literary texts have an overall lesson or theme. What is the lesson or theme of this story? Use details from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. mournful
2. lament
3. reprimand
4. alcove
5. rambunctious
6. obstreperous
7. lobbying
8. wheedling
9. wrangle
10. slumbering

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1) " **Mournful** howls woke me just past midnight."

- a. early hours; morning b. sad; full of sorrow c. loud and screeching d. hopeful

2) "the eerie **lament** of loneliness"

- a. quiet or stillness b. atmosphere c. whistling d. howl or cry

3) "Her eyebrows and mouth were both set in straight lines, and I could feel the **reprimand** before I heard it."

- a. scolding; strong correction b. questions; inquiry c. slap or blow d. shriek

4) "the large metal crate tucked in the **alcove** off the kitchen"

- a. stairs b. window c. porch or patio d. recessed part of a room

5) "twelve pounds of **rambunctious** golden retriever sprang forward"

- a. unruly or disorderly b. beautiful; well-formed c. overweight; fat d. frightening

6) "At ten weeks old, Archie was both **obstreperous** and mostly insane."

- a. obedient b. stupid; unintelligent c. resisting authority; defiant d. adorable; cute

7) "Yes, it was my persistent **lobbying** and wheedling that brought him into our lives"

- a. screaming b. sickness; illness c. throwing or pitching d. persuading or requesting

8) "Yes, it was my persistent lobbying and **wheedling** that brought him into our lives"

- a. weeping; crying b. misbehavior c. flattering or sweet-talking d. bragging; gloating

9) "I peeked into the alcove to look for Archie's leash — I'd need it to **wrangle** him back"

- a. wrestle to physically move b. beg or plea c. walk; escort d. tie up; restrain

10) "his sweet **slumbering** face seemed to make up for all the headaches"

- a. slobbering; drooling b. smiling gently c. very large d. peacefully sleeping