

from Garvey's Choice

by Nikki Grimes

IT FIGURES

- 1 When I was seven
and crazy for **Mr. Spock**,
a Star Trek lunch box
was all I craved. Instead, Dad
- 5 bought one blaring the logo
of some football team
I'd never even heard of.
I shoved that thing in
the coal black of my closet,
- 10 then celebrated with cake.

UNIQUE

- How good is different?
I search stories for someone
who resembles me.
If it weren't for books and Joe,
- 15 "different" would just be lonely.

Mr. Spock = a character in the science-fiction series *Star Trek*

JOE

- Joe caught me dancing
in first grade, during recess,
out back by the slide,
alone—or so I thought, till
- 20 Joe showed up and joined right in.
Seems funny now, 'cause
there was no music playing
and neither of us
minded or needed any.
- 25 We were our own melody.
We went back to class,
each waiting for the other
to spill his secret
for a laugh. But we didn't.
- 30 That's how we knew we'd be friends.



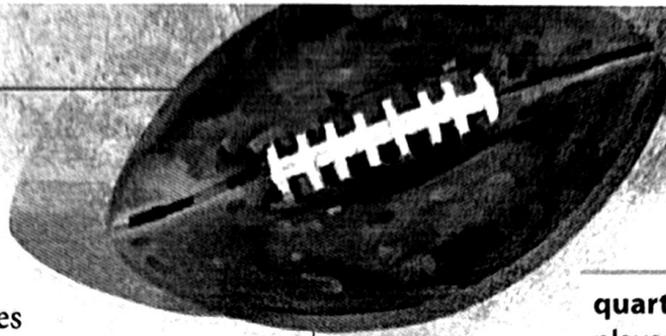


PHOTO ALBUM

I flip through pictures
of Dad when he was my age,
laughing while Grandpa
held him in a loose headlock,

35 close as I wish we could be.

“What was Grandpa like?”

I ask Dad after dinner.

He shrugs. “Strong. Silent.”

“Like you then. Never talking.”

40 “He talked some,” says Dad. “Football

Pigskin, the grid iron,
throws, passes, tackles, touchdowns—

I guess you could say
football’s the way Dad and me

45 knew how to be together.”

Here, I’ve been thinking

Dad pushed me to play football

‘cause he thought I was
weird, or some kind of weakling.

50 I had it wrong, all along.

MORNING CLASSES

Blue notes, sad as me,
wail their way from a classroom
I’ve never been in.

“Chorus,” says Joe when I ask.

55 “It’s a new club. You should join.

quarterback = the lead
player on an American
football team

You’re always singing,

or at least humming out loud.”

“Yeah, but I don’t know.”

“Look,” says Joe, “your voice is choice.

60 You should let others hear it.”

HIGH SCHOOL

HALF DAY

[My sister] Angela crashes
chorus practice, hears me sing.

After my solo,

her eyes are wet pools of pride.

65 “Dad needs to hear you, Garvey.

You. Have. To. Tell. Him.”

Angela insists. Her words

grind my doubt to dust.

She’s right. This isn’t football,

70 but here, I’m the **quarterback**.

ANNOUNCEMENT

That night, I announce

that I sing in the chorus,

have my own solo,

say it like it’s no big deal,

75 then leap inside when Dad smiles.



Respond to Text

Reread/Think

Reread *Garvey's Choice*. Choose the best response to each question about the text.

1. PART A

What is the conflict that Garvey faces?

- Ⓐ He is embarrassed that Joe will see his new lunchbox.
- Ⓑ He is sorry that he does not know how to talk to Grandpa.
- Ⓒ He is not interested in the things that Dad wants him to like.
- Ⓓ He is worried that Angela heard him singing in the chorus.

PART B

How does Garvey respond to the conflict?

- Ⓐ He listens to his feelings and joins the chorus.
- Ⓑ He decides to make a new friend.
- Ⓒ He shows courage and asks Dad to teach him about football.
- Ⓓ He looks at photos to learn about his family.

2. What does Garvey realize about Dad in the section titled "Photo Album"?

- Ⓐ Dad has a collection of pictures from football games with Grandpa.
- Ⓑ Grandpa had encouraged Dad to push Garvey into playing football.
- Ⓒ Dad and Grandpa had used football as a way to bond with each other.
- Ⓓ Dad used to be an excellent football player when he was Garvey's age.

3. What does Joe mean when he tells Garvey "your voice is choice"? (line 59)

- Ⓐ Garvey should speak louder.
- Ⓑ Garvey is an excellent singer.
- Ⓒ Garvey picks very good songs.
- Ⓓ Garvey has to make a decision.



Reread/Think

4. Which detail from the text supports the inference that Garvey has gained confidence?
- Ⓐ "I shoved that thing in / the coal black of my closet, / then celebrated with cake." (lines 8–10)
 - Ⓑ "We went back to class, / each waiting for the other / to spill his secret / for a laugh." (lines 26–29)
 - Ⓒ "'You're always singing, / or at least humming out loud.'" (lines 56 and 57)
 - Ⓓ "This isn't football, / but here, I'm the quarterback." (lines 69 and 70)
5. In line 75, why does Garvey "leap inside" when Dad smiles?
- Ⓐ He wants to dance.
 - Ⓑ He feels proud and accepted.
 - Ⓒ He is going to play football with his dad.
 - Ⓓ He is glad he is like his dad and grandpa.

Write

What is one theme of *Garvey's Choice*? Explain how the theme develops in the story. Use details from the story to support your response.

WRITING CHECKLIST

- I stated a theme.
- I explained the development of the theme.
- I used details from the text to support my ideas.
- I used complete sentences.
- I used correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.