

Lyle tries, but he can't stop thinking about what David said. He wants to, but he can't.

*What did he say about Mrs. McGuire? What were his exact words? "I don't know what she has. But I know she's not going to make it."*

Lyle shakes his head, trying to force the thought to leave him alone.

*That was just crazy! People can't say stuff like that. He doesn't know. Nobody can know that! Not even doctors.*

Lyle sneaks a look at David, who is now deeply engrossed in the history book. Lyle squirms again, and the words he doesn't want to hear—or even think—come to mind despite his efforts to hold them down.

*"God told me." Ergghhhh! Well even if God did tell him, there's still gotta be a way to stop it!*

"Dang it!" Lyle blurts out, thumping his fist on his desk.

"Lyle!" Mrs. Stewart scolds in a forced whisper. "I warned you once."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Stewart."

"Do you need something?"

"No, thank you. I'm sorry, Mrs. Stewart."

Lyle forces himself to hold very still in his chair, but he can't keep his mind from racing.

**A**fter school, Lyle beelines for home. There are questions to be answered. Big questions!

At the crosswalk, a happy-looking yellow lab, panting with his tongue hanging out, sits across the street next to the fire hydrant, waiting patiently.

Lyle lets out a high-pitched whistle, giving the dog permission to bound across the street and jump on him. He showers Dino with a good scratching, not even slowing down to do it.

“Hey, boy. C’mon!”

When they reach the Hatcher house, they charge across the yard, leap onto the porch and burst through the door. Lyle’s mom is in the kitchen juggling the last minute dinner preparations. She doesn’t miss a beat.

“Hey! Slow down and put the dog back outside. I don’t like him begging. And then go wash your hands and help your brother set the table.” She sips from a spoon to taste-test the sauce she’s preparing.

“Mom, do you believe in God?” Lyle dives in.

Mrs. Hatcher chokes on the sauce, spilling some on the stove’s burner where it sizzles as she spins to face him.

“Lyle, what have you done!”

“Nothin’, Mom. That’s not what I meant. I just need to know ’cause this kid at school says God talks to him! I’m not makin’ this up. He really said that!”

Relieved, she quickly regains her composure and snaps back to her tasks.

“Well, honey, then I think you should ask your friend at school more about it. How would I know if God talks to him or not? I can tell you one thing I do know. It’s time for dinner, and I’m saying it for the last time. Wash your hands and help your brother set the table!”

“But Mom—”

Mr. Hatcher’s voice booms out from the next room.

“Lyle! You heard your mother!”

He shoots from the room, question unanswered.