



A Reader's Companion to **Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie**

by David Lubar

978-0-525-47311-4 (HC)

978-0-14-240780-6(PB)

Ages 12 up

•About the Book•

Starting high school is never easy. Seniors take your lunch money. Girls you've known forever are suddenly beautiful and unattainable. And you can never get enough sleep. Could there be a worse time for Scott's mother to announce she's pregnant? Scott decides high school would be a lot less overwhelming if it came with a survival manual, so he begins to write down tips for his new sibling. Meanwhile, he's trying his best to capture the attention of Julia, the freshman goddess. In the process, Scott manages to become involved in nearly everything the school has to offer. So while he tries to find his place in the confusing world of high school, win Julia's heart, and keep his sanity, Scott will be recording all the details for his sibling's—and your—enjoyment.

•Awards•

An ALA Best Book for Young Adults

A BCCB Blue Ribbon Book

A Michigan Thumbs Up! Award Winner

A Heartland Award for Excellence Honor Book

Blue Spruce Young Adult Book Award Master List selection for 2008-2009

Evergreen Book Award Master List selection for 2007-2008

Florida Teens Read! Award Master List selection for 2007-2008

Garden State Teen Book Award Master List selection for 2007-2008

Georgia Peach Book Award Master List selection for 2007-2008

Grand Canyon Reader Award Master List selection for 2007-2008

Maud Hart Lovelace Book Award Master List selection for 2008-2009

Nevada Young Readers Award Master List selection for 2008-2009

Rhode Island Teen Book Award Master List selection for 2007-2008

Sequoyah Book Award Master List selection for 2007-2008

Virginia Young Readers' Choice Award Master List selection for 2007-2008

Volunteer State Book Award Master List selection for 2007-2008

•About the Author•

David Lubar is the author of many popular novels, including the fantasy *Hidden Talents*, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults; *Wizards of the Game*; and *Dunk*. A former magazine editor, computer programmer, and video-game designer, Mr. Lubar is now a full-time writer. He lives in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, with his family. To learn more about David Lubar, please visit www.davidlubar.com.

•Discussion Questions•

- Describe the dynamic between Scott and his friends Mitch, Patrick, and Kyle. What role does each play in their group? What does each bring to the group? How does this dynamic change throughout the book? How does this affect Scott?
- What is Scott's first day of high school like? How does he feel at the end of it? Have you ever had a first day of school similar to Scott's? What news does Scott get later that evening? How does he react?
- Why does Scott begin writing to his sibling? What sorts of things does he write about as the story continues? Why does he insist that the notebook is not a diary? Do you agree with his reasoning? How do the notebook entries contribute to your reading experience? Do you like them? Why or why not?
- Discuss the relationship between Scott and Bobby. Is Bobby a role model for Scott? Why or why not? In what ways does their relationship grow throughout the book?
- Think about the reason Scott joins the school paper and the reaction he has after learning that Julia was only a guest. Is his disappointment valid? Why doesn't he quit the paper? What would you have done? Have you ever had to make the best of a "bad situation"? Did things turn out better than you expected?
- At the end of chapter 11, Scott tells the baby that "flux sux." What does he mean by this? Why do you think he is having difficulty adapting to the changes happening in his life? Predict some possible outcomes of these circumstances. Take a moment at the end of the book to review your predictions and see if any of them were right.
- Mr. Franka teaches the class the line "Take arms against a sea of troubles." What conclusions does the class draw about the meaning of the line? Why do you think Lubar places this phrase after the chapter about the dance and Patrick moving? Suggest some possible "arms" that Scott could take against his troubles.
- How do most of the students feel about the new girl, Lee? Discuss the interaction Lee and Scott have about S. Morganstern's book. What is the significance of the particular book she is holding?
- How does the episode with "A Football Feast" demonstrate both low and high points for Scott? Have you ever been in a situation where somebody heard you say something you didn't mean for them to hear? How did you remedy the situation? What lessons did you learn? What do you think Scott learned in this instance?
- How does Scott react when he hears about a fellow student's suicide attempt? Why does he suspect the student is Lee? How does the situation affect his thoughts and actions? Do you agree with Lee's assertion that it doesn't matter if Scott liked Mouth, as long as he was nice to him? What do you think she means by that?
- In chapter 28, Scott says that he "felt for the first time in ages that there were some things that weren't changing." Why does he have this feeling at this particular moment? Have things really stopped changing? Describe the ways Scott has adapted to his environment that have helped him to now feel content.

- Interpret Lee’s note to Scott about going to the dance. Why doesn’t he realize she is serious? Why doesn’t she tell him she is? Compare and contrast Lee and Julia. Which one is a better fit for Scott?
- Where does Scott find the courage to behave as he does at the dance? Think back to when Scott told Mouth that nobody really likes anybody. Is this true?
- At the end of the book, Scott remarks—conclusively—that “flux rox.” Why has his attitude changed? Reflect on the events of Scott’s freshmen year. Discuss the new experiences he had, lessons he learned, people he met, and skills he realized while trying to cope with high school. Were the changes ultimately good for him? How do you think he feels going into sophomore year?
- Think about the book’s title. What does it refer to when the word “lie” is construed to mean “lie down?” What about when “lie” means not telling the truth? Who has Scott lied to? How do both interpretations sum up his first year in high school? Do you think this is a good title for the book?

•Projects and Activities•

- Scott perks up when Mr. Franka teaches the class about Tom Swifties. Can you come up with ten Tom Swifties of your own? As a class, write down as many Tom Swifties as you can think of on a chalkboard or whiteboard. Next, learn about other ways to play with language such as oxymorons, palindromes, and idioms. Add examples of these categories to your class list as well. Then, write a short story using as many examples across the categories as possible. Share your story with a partner and discuss the different ways you were each able to have fun with the English language.
- Lubar includes various advisory lists that Scott makes, such as the **Guide to School-Bus Drivers** and the **Guide to Teacher Types**, throughout the text. How do these insertions add or detract from your reading of the novel? Mimic Scott’s observatory nature and create a list for your school that you wish you had had when you first entered. Then, compile all of your classmates’ lists into your own **Classroom Field Guide!**
- *Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie* references many other authors, poets, and novels, such as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Lord Byron, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Choose one reference and read either that title or a piece by that author. Discuss your opinions of the work with other classmates. What did it mean to you? Why do you think David Lubar chose to include this reference in the story? Think about what Scott, Lee, Mr. Franka and other characters might think about the work (if it isn’t already stated in the novel).
- Scott insists that his letters to the baby don’t count as diary entries, but is that really true? Keep a diary/journal of your own for a week. You could write letters or lists, as Scott does, use the stream-of-consciousness writing that is explained in the book, or simply jot down anything you think, feel, or do. At the end of the week, go back and read through your entries. Have you spotted any patterns or learned anything about yourself? Was keeping a journal interesting, or did it feel like a chore? Do you think you’ll continue writing?