

**A Reader's Theater adaptation of Barbara O'Connor's *How to Steal a Dog*  
By Aundrea Wright-Young & Dorcas Hand  
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©*How To Steal a Dog* by Barbara O'Connor, published by Francis Foster Books, an imprint of Farrar, Straus and Giroux Publishers.

Approximately 7 minutes

**Readers:**

Narrator 1	Narrator 5
Narrator 2	Georgina
Narrator 3	Luanne
Narrator 4	Momma

**Narrator 5:** These scenes are taken from Chapter One of *How to Steal a Dog* by Barbara O'Connor.

**Narrator 1:** The day Georgina decided to steal a dog was the same day her best friend Luanne Godfrey found out that Georgina lived in a car.

**Narrator 2:** Georgina had told her Momma that Luanne would find out sooner or later, seeing as how she's so nosy and all. But Momma had just rolled her eyes.

**Momma:** Just get on up there to the bus stop, Georgina, and quit your whining.

**Narrator 3:** ...so that's what Georgina did. She stood up there at the bus stop pretending like she still lived in Apartment 3B.

**Narrator 4:** She pretended like she didn't have mustard on her shirt from the day before.

**Narrator 5:** She pretended like she hadn't washed her hair in the bathroom at the Texaco station that very morning.

**Narrator 1:** And she pretended like her daddy hadn't just waltzed off and left them with nothing but three rolls of quarters and a mayonnaise jar full of wadded up dollar bills.

**Georgina:** I guess I'm pretty good at pretending.

**Narrator 2:** Her brother Toby is not so good at pretending. When Momma told him to get on up to the bus stop and quit his whining, he cried and carried on like the baby that he is.

**Luanne:** What's wrong with Toby?

**Georgina:** He has an earache.

**Narrator 4:** Georgina saw Luanne's eyes narrow and her lips squeeze together. She knew Luanne's nosiness was about to irritate her.

**Luanne:** Then how come your mama is making him go to school?

**Narrator 1:** Luanne kept looking at Georgina squinty eyed. Georgina hoped she would just hush up about Toby.

**Narrator 3:** She did.

**Georgina:** But then she went and turned her nosy self loose on me.

**Luanne:** No offense, Georgina, but you're starting to look kind of unkempt.

**Narrator 5:** *Unkempt?* That was Luanne's mama talking if Georgina'd ever heard it. Luanne would never have said that word "unkempt" if she hadn't heard her mama say it first.

**Georgina:** What if she wants to come over? Or what if she looks in the window or something and finds out we don't live there anymore.

**Narrator 4:** Mama just flapped her hand at Georgina and closed her eyes to let her know how tired she was from working two jobs.

**Narrator 2:** So every day Georgina imagines Luanne peeking in the kitchen window of Apartment 3B.

**Narrator 1:** And then one day, when they got off the schoolbus, Luanne went and did the nosiest thing I could imagine. She followed Georgina.

**Narrator 5:** Georgina was trying to catch up with Toby 'cause he had grabbed the car key and run on ahead of her so she didn't even notice Luanne sneaking along behind.

**Narrator 2:** She followed all the way past Apartment 3B, across the street and clear on around the back of Eckerd Drugstore where their car was parked with laundry hanging out the windows and Toby sitting on a milk crate waiting for Georgina.

**Narrator 3:** If there ever was a time when Georgina wished the earth would open up and swallow her whole, it was when she turned around and saw Luanne looking at her and Toby and that car and everything.

**Georgina:** It's just temporary. When Mama gets paid, we're moving into our new apartment.

**Narrator 2:** They both just stood there, looking at their feet. Georgina could feel the distance between them grow and grow until it seemed like Luanne Godfrey, who had been my friend forever, was standing clear on the other side of the universe.

**Luanne:** I better go.

**Georgina:** Promise you won't tell? I mean not even your mama.

**Luanne:** I promise.

**Narrator 5:** Georgina crooked her pinkie finger in the air and waited for Luanne to give her the pinkie promise, but Luanne hesitated.

**Narrator 3:** Georgina stamped her foot and jabbed her pinkie at Luanne. Finally Luanne crooked her pinkie around Georgina's and they shook.

**Narrator 4:** Luanne left.

**Narrator 1:** It was way past dark when Georgina heard her Mama's shoes click-clacking on the asphalt as she made her way toward the car.

**Narrator 2:** Georgina sat up and looked out the window. Even in the dim glow of the streetlights, she could see her Mama's tired, sad look.

**Narrator 3:** Part of Georgina wanted to stay put and just go on back to sleep and leave her be; but another part of her wanted to get out and have her say, which is what she did.

**Georgina:** I hate this! I don't want to do this anymore.

**Narrator 5:** Georgina pushes the car door shut softly as not to wake her brother.

**Georgina:** You got to do something. You got to find us a place to live. A *real* place. Not a car.

**Momma:** I'm trying.

**Georgina:** How are you trying?

**Narrator 3:** Georgina's mother tosses her purse through the car window into the front seat.

**Momma:** I just am, okay, Georgina.

**Georgina:** But how?

**Momma:** I'm working two jobs. What else do you want me to do?

**Georgina:** Find us a place to live. This is all your fault.

**Narrators All:** Mama stormed over and grabbed Georgina by the shoulders.

**Momma:** It takes money to get a place (shaking Georgina a little). I'm trying to save up, okay.

**Georgina:** How much money do we need?

**Narrator 1:** She looked up at the sky like the answer was written up there in the stars.

**Momma:** I don't know, Georgina. A lot, okay.

**Georgina:** Like how much.

**Momma:** More than we got.

**Narrator 4:** They both stood there in the dark and listened to the crickets from a vacant lot.

**Momma:** We got to go.

**Narrator 1:** Georgina's mother pulled the car into an alley beside Bill's Auto Parts. When she shut the engine off, they were swallowed up in quiet.

**Narrators 2 & 3:** Georgina shifted in her seat turning every which way to get comfortable. She settled on her back with feet propped against the car door and stared out at the starry sky.

**Narrator 5:** On a telephone pole right outside the car window was a faded old sign.

**Narrators All:** The sign said: Reward. \$500.00. Under that was a picture of a bug-eyed little dog with its tongue hanging out.

**Narrator 1:** And then under that it said: Have you seen me? My name is Mitsy.

**Narrators All:** Five hundred dollars! Who in the world would pay five hundred dollars for that little ole dog.

**Narrator 2:** Georgina stared out the window at the sign, thinking about Mitsy and wondering if there were other folks out there who would pay money for their lost dogs.

**Georgina:** I got a plan.

**Narrator 4:** She closed her eyes and smiled to herself.

**Narrators All:** She was gonna steal a dog.

**Narrator 3:** Find out more about Georgina's plan in *How to Steal a Dog* by Barbara O'Connor.