

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

## Freaky Friday

by

### Mary Rodgers

### Book Information

Mary Rodgers, Freaky Friday  
Quiz Number: 5067  
Harper & Row, 1972  
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145 Pages  
Book Level: 4.4  
Interest Level: MG

A day of revelations and fresh insights as Annabel Andrews, thirteen, wakes up to discover she has turned into her mother.

**Topics:** Family Life, Daughters; Family Life, Mothers; READNOW - Demco Media  
Turtleback Books, Demco Media - Read Now Grades 6-8; Series, Freaky Friday

### Main Characters

Annabel Andrews the thirteen-year-old narrator of the story, who wakes up one morning in her mother's body

Ben (Ape Face) Andrews Annabel's six-year-old brother, who is attractive, well-behaved and initially hated by Annabel

Boris Harris (Morris) a fourteen-year-old neighbor on whom Annabel had a crush, but who found her unattractive and difficult until after the switch

Ellen Jean Benjamin Andrews (Ma) Annabel's mother, whom she admires and who engineered the switch to teach Annabel about herself

Miss McGuirk Annabel's English teacher who tried very hard to inspire Annabel, whom she perceives as very bright but unmotivated

Mrs. Schmauss the housekeeper, who exhibits racial prejudice and a tendency to drink

William Waring Andrews (Bill) Annabel's father, who is an account executive

### Vocabulary

**abducted** kidnapped, carried off  
**maloccluded** abnormal coming together of teeth  
**prejudice** a bias, preconception or undeserved negative attitude toward a person or group  
**premonition** forewarning, foreboding

### Synopsis

Annabel Andrews is a thirteen-year-old girl who wakes up in her mother's body and spends a day dealing with her mother's problems. During the course of the day, she discusses herself with her father Bill, her brother Ben, the housekeeper, Mrs. Schmauss, her fifteen-year-old neighbor Boris, the principal, guidance counselor and her English teacher.

She discovers in these discussions that she is loved by her parents, brother and teacher, while her behavior is difficult for all of them. Dr. Artunian, the school counselor, suggests that she is jealous of her brother, which appears to be the case. When she is in a position to see herself as others see her, she learns to treat others with more kindness and respect.

Meanwhile, Annabel's mother, occupying Annabel's body, spends the day improving Annabel's appearance. She has her hair cut, buys new clothes and, most importantly, has her braces removed.

The author suggests in this story that seeing yourself from other people's points of view can greatly improve your attitude and behavior toward them. Annabel's attitude and self-esteem are further enhanced by the physical transformations accomplished by her mother, which allow Annabel to see herself as a "beautiful chick."

### Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

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#### Initial Understanding

Mrs. Andrews recognized several physical attributes Annabel had that were not apparent to Annabel. What were they, and what did Mrs. Andrews do about them?

*Annabel had a nice smile, a pretty face and a nice figure. Mrs. Andrews had Annabel's braces removed, her hair cut away from her face and bought new, more flattering clothes.*

#### Literary Analysis

At what point in the story did Annabel begin to change her attitude about those around her and herself? Identify other moments when she seemed to change, and describe those events and changes.

*When her father brought up problems caused by Annabel's carelessness and her demand to go to camp, Annabel began to see things from another point of view. As she fed Ben his lunch, she discovered how much he liked and understood her. She developed new respect for him. She felt sorry for Miss McGuirk when the teacher blamed herself for not inspiring Annabel. When Ben was lost, she began to understand how difficult parenting was.*

#### Inferential Comprehension

Dr. Artunian suggested that Annabel's behavioral changes were caused by a "heretofore suppressed sibling rivalry." What does that mean? Do you agree or disagree? Support your answer with references to the story.

*Much of Annabel's anger in the early part of her story is directed toward Ben because he is sweet and neat. He is never late, always polite and constantly neat and orderly. In contrast, Annabel is sloppy, often late and inconsiderate. She seems to feel her faults are made more obvious by Ben's behavior. On the other hand, she is irritated by any attempt to control her behavior by anyone in authority: parents, teachers and even the local police officer. This suggests that sibling rivalry is not a sufficient explanation for all of Annabel's problems.*

#### Constructing Meaning

Boris, Annabel and Annabel's friends represent various stages of adolescence. Identify stereotypic adolescent characteristics in each and discuss the relevance of these labels to your own experience.

*Annabel and her friends behave as if adults come from another planet and act as if talking to them should be avoided. Boris expresses surprise when Mrs. Andrews (Annabel) is easy to talk to. Annabel and her friends are selfish and inconsiderate, although the friends try to help Mrs. Andrews deal with Annabel's school absence. Boris shows that adolescents can be very thoughtful at times.*

### Teachable Skills

**Understanding Literary Features** While Annabel is in her mother's body pretending to be her mother, she learns a few things she didn't know about herself and how others see her. Imagine yourself as someone you know (parent, teacher, friend) and write a paragraph about how their impression of you is different from your own. Write another paragraph describing them in your body. What would they learn about themselves?

**Understanding the Author's Craft** The author created a situation that could not happen in real life by exchanging the bodies of Annabel and Mrs. Andrews. Discuss other ways she might have written a story to help Annabel learn to see how others felt about her.

**Comparing and Contrasting** How does Annabel act differently toward Ben, Boris, Mrs. McGuirk and her parents toward the end of this story? Refer to specific passages in the book where these changes begin to occur. Perhaps students can develop a skit acting out Annabel's before and after character.

**Differentiating Fact and Opinion** Annabel had opinions about her teachers, her brother, her parents and herself that she learned were not correct. Have students make a chart in which they identify the opinions which later turned out to be false.