**By the Grace of Lurvy—At War with This Whole World**

**Summary**

Christmas is approaching, and the Land family realizes it will be a meager holiday with little to hope for aside from each other’s company. Jeremiah works odd jobs to keep money coming in, but he falls ill and is unable to work at all. Reuben finds work ripping down a corncrib, and instead of using the money on a canoe he wants, he buys groceries for the family. When Jeremiah begins to feel better, the children notice that he is now thin and weak, and they continue to help run the house even though he is no longer bedridden. A man named Martin Andreeson arrives and introduces himself as the federal agent searching for Davy. He maintains a cocky attitude, and Jeremiah tells him the family has nothing to say to him and in fact will never speak to him again. At Christmas, the family discovers that their friend Tin Lurvy has died, leaving the Lands his Airstream trailer. The Lands decide to leave Roofing when they receive a letter from their close friend August Shultz hinting that Davy was there. Seeing the gift of the Airstream as a miracle, the Lands take the trailer first to the Shultz home and then west in search of Davy. They encounter Mr. Andreeson again, who is following them in the hopes that they will lead him to Davy.

**Vocabulary:**

1. Dissipated
2. Chagrin
3. Effluent
4. Exsiccated
5. Sagacious
6. Portent
7. Benediction
8. ruinous
9. Torpid
10. Prodigious
11. Maudlin
12. Allusion
13. Shyster
14. wheedling

**Questions**

1. What do Swede and Reuben want for Christmas, and what do you think these desires say about their personalities?
2. To where does Jeremiah suggest the family move, and how do Reuben and Swede react?
3. What job does Reuben find during his father’s illness, and what effect does this job have on Reuben?
4. According to Reuben, what is the “defining trait of his family” (p. 124)? How does the family deal with this “trait”?
5. Skip 5
6. Explain Reuben’s statement: “The good thing about our reduced circumstances…was that our expectations changed. They lowered themselves to a worthy place” (p. 126). What do you think Reuben means by this?
7. Why do Mr. and Mrs. DeCuellar visit the family on Christmas? How does Tin Lurvy’s gift affect the Land family?
8. Why do the Lands visit August and Birdie Shultz? What news do August and Birdie provide upon their arrival?
9. Why is Reuben’s ride with August Shultz important to him? What do they see on their ride, and how is this symbolic for Reuben?
10. Who is following the Land family, and why? What do they see every time they attempt to pull off the road for gasoline?