CHAPTER SUMMARIES FOR *OLD SCHOOL* BY GORDON KORMAN

Chapters 1&2 Truancy Officer Sergeant Kurtz interrupts a bingo game at The Pines Retirement Village to inform twelve-year-old Dexter Foreman and his grandmother that he must attend public school. On the school bus, ambitious student reporter Gianna Greco spots Dexter wearing a retro suit and carrying a vintage briefcase, immediately marking him as her next major newspaper story.
Chapters 3&4 Guidance counselor Ms. Napier notices Dexter's odd behavior on his first day at Wolf's Eye Middle School when he uses a quarter to quiet a banging radiator. Tensions rise as school bully Ronny Greco shoots paper clips at Dexter; Dexter defends himself using rigid posture and reflexes, causing Ronny to injure his hand when punching the bus.
Chapters 5&6 Struggling to adapt to public school, Dexter relies on advice from his elderly mentors. In the cafeteria, Dexter gets quiet revenge when Ronny steals a piece of his extra-spicy candy. Meanwhile, star student and athlete Jackson Sharpe begins to feel threatened by Dexter's superior academic ability.
Chapters 7&8 Dexter joins the math team and scores a perfect paper, securing a win for the school while fueling Jackson's intense jealousy. To sabotage Dexter, Jackson forges a letter from school board chair J. Enoch Dunwoody inviting Dexter to complete an advanced "special project" to prove he is too advanced for middle school.
Chapters 9&10 Believing the letter is real, Dexter collaborates with his 99-year-old best friend and former World War II codebreaker, Leo Preminger, to build an unbreakable coding system. Gianna follows Dexter back to The Pines for her article and discovers how deeply beloved he is by the senior community.
Chapters 11&12 Dexter becomes a handyman around the deteriorating school building, using the multi-tool attachments on his Swiss Army knife to repair broken lockers, jammed doors, and faulty equipment.
Chapters 13&14 Jackson continues pushing Dexter deeper into the trap regarding the fake project. Gianna notices inconsistencies in Jackson's behavior and begins suspecting that he set Dexter up.
Chapter 15 When Ronny's snack gets stuck in a jammed vending machine, Dexter uses his Swiss Army knife to fix the mechanism. Principal Dunwoody catches him and strictly enforces a zero-tolerance policy, ignoring Dexter's helpful intentions and suspending him on a weapons charge.
Chapter 16 Gianna learns her newspaper editor rewrote her story to paint Dexter as a delinquent. In

protest, Gianna quits the paper and distributes her own flyers explaining the truth, turning Dexter into an overnight folk hero across campus.
Chapter 17 A "Justice for Dexter" movement sweeps through the school as students protest in the hallways and cafeteria, demanding that Principal Dunwoody cancel the suspension.
Chapter 18 Dexter returns to his quiet routine at The Pines, but his classmates begin visiting the retirement village to seek his help and show support, organizing formal efforts to get him reinstated.
Chapter 19 Middle schoolers and retirees bond over shared activities, establishing strong intergenerational friendships as the students embrace Dexter's old-fashioned lifestyle.
Chapter 20 Although anxious about returning to public school, Dexter feels reassured when his classmates welcome him back warmly, validating his positive influence on the student body.
Chapter 21 Ongoing student advocacy pushes the school board to reconsider strict disciplinary rules. Students and senior citizens collaborate to turn an unused school basement into a joint community space.
Chapter 22 In the school basement, Dexter discovers a hidden room containing vintage World War II radio equipment and a table carved with "WELCOME TO THE BUNKER" alongside Leo's initials, revealing a secret historical codebreaking facility.
Chapter 23 Gianna verifies the bunker's authenticity through historical archives. Jackson’s forgery is exposed, forcing Principal Dunwoody to face the consequences of ignoring student concerns.
Chapter 24 Federal agents raid the school board meeting after intercepting the coded radio signals sent during Dexter and Leo's project. Impressed by the historical discovery, the board cancels plans to demolish the building and votes to renovate it instead.
Chapter 25 Dexter is officially vindicated and celebrated at a school assembly, marking a victory for the student body and establishing mutual respect across generations.
Chapter 26 The community gathers to commemorate Leo after he passes away, celebrating his wartime service. Dexter gains personal closure, rejects shallow popularity, and recognizes Gianna as a true friend as the board unanimously votes to preserve the bunker.
Chapter 27&28 Jackson is held accountable for forging the letter, revealing his jealousy. The community organizes efforts to preserve the historical bunker, while Dexter successfully reconciles his

old-fashioned life at The Pines with his public school identity.
Chapters 29&30 Jackson attempts redemption by assisting with the renovation project. The school year ends with the establishment of an ongoing partnership between Wolf's Eye Middle School and The Pines, ensuring lasting connections between the students and retirees.