



The Last Great Adventure of the PB&J Society

Discussion Questions

1. Mrs. Schuster's nickname is Mrs. Meany. Do you think she deserves this nickname? Why or why not? Have you ever been given a mean nickname or one you didn't like? How did it make you feel?
2. Annie compares her friendship with Jason to Peanut Butter and Jelly. Is this a good comparison? Why or why not? How would you describe your friendship with your best friend?
3. Annie and Jason often disagree about what to do, but it is Jason who gives in to Annie most often. Have you ever given in to a friend? Why? Why might it be good to give in to a friend? Why might it be bad to give in to a friend? Find examples of each from the book.
4. Jason's family is under a lot of stress because Jason's dad has been out of work for a long time. How does Jason's dad deal with the stress? How about his mom? Jason? How do you deal with stressful situations?
5. How would this story have been different if told from Jason's point of view? Mrs. Schuster's? Lila's? (Bonus Activity: Write a scene from a different character's point of view.)
6. Why does Mrs. Schuster say she created the treasure hunt for Annie and Jason? (see page 229) Does her explanation justify the lies she told? How would you feel in Annie's place?
7. When Annie is feeling frustrated with the challenges in her life, Mrs. Schuster uses stories about Black Marge to cheer her up. How do stories help us face our personal struggles? Discuss.
8. Annie's biggest fear is turkeys. What helped her face her fears? What can help you face your biggest fears?
9. Why do you think the SPB&J burial ceremony is so important to Annie? Would you add any new rules? Explain. What song would you want to use to replace "Mary Had a Little Lamb"?
10. Even though Jason's family struggles to take care of their basic needs, they keep it a secret. Why is it sometimes difficult to tell others about your struggles?
11. Annie wants to help Jason's family by earning enough money so they can stay in their house. In the end, how does she help them?
12. Compare and contrast Annie and Jason's strengths and weaknesses. Who would you rather have as your friend? Why?

Extension Activities

1. Have your students write a persuasive paper from Annie's point of view about why her family should go to Disneyland this summer.

2. Annie and Jason use a map created by Cap'n Black Marge which is supposed to reveal the location of the hidden treasure—but Annie and Jason struggle to follow it, as it comes with no directions or instructions. Divide the class into groups of 4-5. Have them create a map to an item in the classroom. Have them include a key and directions for finding the item. If time permits, have the groups swap maps and follow the directions to see if they were clear.
3. Annie holds a bake sale that is not successful. As a class, discuss the reasons it wasn't successful and what she could have done better. Have the students create a plan for their own bake sale (individually, in small groups, or as a class). They should consider the following ideas:
 - a. What will they sell? (for the purposes of this activity, choosing only one item would be best).
 - b. How much will they charge for their baked goods?
 - c. How much do they estimate ingredients/supplies will cost? (give a detailed list and a total)
 - d. How many items would they need to sell to pay for the supplies?
 - e. When/where will it be held? (have them explain their choices)
 - f. How will it be advertised?
4. Annie and Jason have an on-going Slurpee drinking contest where they lose points for getting brain freeze. Brainstorm as a class as to what causes brain freeze and graph the ideas. Take a class poll about which answer they think is correct. Assign your students to research what really causes brain-freeze and have them explain it in a paragraph. How close were their ideas from the brainstorming activity? Was the right answer among their hypotheses?

(The following are links to websites with explanations of what causes brain freeze if you prefer to research together as a class:

<http://chemistry.about.com/od/howthingsworkfaqs/f/how-brain-freeze-works.htm>,
<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/244458.php>,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ice-cream_headache,
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/05/130522095335.htm>)
5. Annie's least favorite food in the whole world is Broccoli Casserole. She even "pretends" to go to bed early to avoid it. Think about your least favorite food. Pretend your mom is serving it for dinner. Write a story about how you creatively avoid having to eat it.
6. Mrs. Schuster tells Annie a story about how Black Marge invented Peanut Butter. Research the real history of peanut butter and have the students show what they learned using one of the following methods:
 - a. Writing a paper;
 - b. Giving a class presentation; or
 - c. Preparing a presentation board/poster.

