

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

The Pigman

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Chapters 1 and 2

1. John picks up the story of his life as a tenth grader. From what you know of him, describe how you see John as a 7th or 8th grader.
2. Imagine that you were a new 10th grader at Franklin High and got to know John from sitting next to him in English class and eating lunch with him. Write a letter describing him to a friend in your old school.
3. How do you envision Lorraine? What does she look like; how does she speak?
4. Is Lorraine someone you would have as a friend? If you are a female, is there anything about Lorraine you envy? If you are a male, is there anything about John you envy? Do either of them have any qualities you wish you had?
5. Having read chapters one and two, describe what you see are the differences between John and Lorraine.

Response Journal

6. When Lorraine moves into her new neighborhood, she feels depressed because no one will speak with her. At one time or another everyone has felt like the odd person, as Lorraine does. Drawing on your own experiences, pretend you're the new kid to whom no one is speaking. Describe how you would act at the bus stop, at school, or at home.

7. Lorraine tells us that she was feeling so paranoid that when John sat down next to her and started to laugh, she thought John was laughing at her. Put yourself in this situation; how would you have handled it? Did Lorraine handle it better or worse than you would have?

8. When we have a problem, like feeling we are an outsider, we generally assume that no one else has that same problem. This is an incorrect assumption because at some time everyone has felt like an outsider. Imagine that you have a friend who is feeling really depressed because he or she feels like an outsider and thinks that he or she is the only one with this problem. What would you say to convince the person that everyone has had this problem?

Chapters 3 and 4

9. Imagine that you are a member of John and Lorraine's group. It is your turn to speak to people on the telephone and try to keep them talking on the line as long as possible. You dial, and someone answers. Write the dialogue that takes place.

10. Lorraine says that they have to write down the strange things that happened before they mature and repress the whole thing. Are they feel compelled to write this down? If you get this feeling also, relate your thoughts on it.

11. Lorraine says that she doesn't want to write reports; she wants to write stories. "I want to make things up. In a way I guess that's lying too, except I think you can tell the real truth with that kind of lying." Write about a story you've read that was made up, but told the real truth.

12. Because of the way they lie and cheat, Lorraine doesn't want to be the kind of adult that John's parents are. What kind of adult do you *not* want to be? Is there any adult that you consider a good role model? What qualities does this person have?

Response Journal

13. Describe or draw a picture of the way you think Mr. Pignati looks based on what you know of him from the telephone conversation.

14. How do you feel about the author's use of alternating the narration between John and Lorraine. Would it change the story significantly if he had had only one or the other narrate it?

Chapter 5

15. John's parents compare him to his older brother Kenneth, and we infer that John doesn't like this. Do you know anyone who is compared to an older brother or sister? How does he or she feel about it?

16. Have you ever denied doing something that you had actually done? If not, do you know anyone who has? Did you or the other person handle the denial as John did? How did you or the other person feel after denying the act?

17. What were John's and Lorraine's feelings when they first walked into Mr. Pignati's house? If you can understand their feelings, explain them to someone who thinks the teenagers were being stupid.

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18. In this chapter, the author is making one of the points he wants to establish about Mr. Pignati. Relate your feelings about Mr. Pignati, and if you can, tell how the author got you to feel this way about Mr. Pignati.

19. Putting gender aside if you can, do you identify more with the values and attitudes of Lorraine or of John? Why?

20. There is a line from a song about people needing other people. What people in this story do you think need other people? How do you think the characters show this need?

21. John feels that his father is pressuring him to be something that he doesn't want to be. John's father would probably say that he is trying to guide John toward making wise career choices. In this situation, who do you think is right or wrong?