

Ann Drew Jackson

Book Study Questions

Prologue

1. What do you know about Asperger Syndrome both from reading the prologue and from anything else you may have learned about it?
2. For some reason, Jackson stays in Tyler's mind. What is that reason?

Chapter 1- Partners

1. Hillary uses poor English- for example, saying 'ain't' a lot. Why?
2. Do you like Hillary? What is it that makes her likeable or unlikeable?
3. Hillary says her teacher thinks she has an "attitude" problem. Would you think that if you were her teacher? Why or why not?
4. How do you think Hillary's life is different from the other kids in her class?
5. Hillary's mom makes her stay home alone all night after school each day. Do you think she is too old for daycare? Do you think her mom loves and takes good care of her? Justify your thoughts and ideas.

Chapter 2- The New Kid

1. Hillary and Jenny form opinions about Jackson when they see him in the hallway. What are they, and are their thoughts reasonable?
2. Why does the class laugh at Jackson?
3. What is unusual about Jackson's responses to his classmate's questions?
4. What is it about Pamela that Hillary really dislikes?
5. Hillary is disappointed to have Jackson as a partner for the science project. Why?

Chapter 3- The Science Project

1. What do you think about Mrs. White, the lunchroom lady? Why?
2. When Jackson sits down to eat lunch with Jenny and Hillary, is he unfriendly, or would you describe him differently?
3. Why does Hillary think she's luckier than Jenny with their science partner assignments?
4. Hillary thinks Jackson set up and made a joke, asking if "eating lunch" is a science project. Do you think he was making a joke? Why or why not?

5. Hillary thinks Jackson is strange. Why?

Chapter 4-The Definition of “Healthy”

1. What makes Hillary feel so mad at Jackson?
2. Do you think Jackson understands what a compliment is? Why or why not?
3. Is Jackson, Pamela or anyone else intentionally cruel to Jenny?
4. Do you see some good qualities in Hillary in this chapter? What are they?
5. Why won't Hillary's mom help her? Is she right to stay out of it?

Chapter 5- “P” is for Perfect

1. Who is Mrs. Lorrey and how does she help Hillary?
2. Does Jackson listen well in school? How can you tell?
3. What joke does Hillary play and why?
4. There's a difference between a joke and a lie. Do you think Hillary understands that difference the way you do? Why or why not?
5. What does Jackson do to practically ruin Hillary's joke? How does that make her feel?

Chapter 6- The Spy

1. Why did Hillary want to spy on Jackson and his family?
2. Jackson believes exactly what people say, and that sometimes gets him in trouble. What examples of this did you see in this chapter?
3. Jackson and his sister Liz observe and think about things differently. How are they different in their thoughts and ideas?
4. Who would be easier for you to be friends with, Liz or Jackson? Why?
5. What do you think Hillary learned about Jackson that she didn't know at the beginning of the chapter?

Chapter 7- Jokes, Lies, and Tempers

1. When Hillary told Jackson the teacher liked “P” words better, was that a lie or a joke? (Remember it was a joke to her because she assumed he “got it”)
2. Did Jackson apologize in a way that most kids his age would apologize? If not, how was it different? How would you have apologized?

3. Hillary seems angry and sort of mean during much of this chapter. Why does Jenny say she is probably one of the nicest people in the class?
4. Do you think either Jenny or Hillary did the right thing when Pamela was saying cruel things about Jenny? What would you have done?
5. Why do you think Mrs. Lorrey believes Jackson and Hillary would be good in a group together?

Chapter 8- The Rambler

1. Is Jackson aware of Hillary's thoughts and feelings about him? What does he do to make you believe he knows (or doesn't know) what they are?
2. Hillary doesn't want people to know she is poor. Why?
3. Sometimes Jackson talks too much, and Hillary has to almost be rude to get his attention. Is she wrong to do that? Or is he wrong to not listen to her? Or is nobody wrong?
4. Hillary and Jackson have some problems communicating. Find a few examples. As the reader, were you confused or amused by Jackson?
5. Jackson is very intelligent with math skills and a lot of knowledge, but Hillary is smart in a way that he is not. What way is that? Knowing this, who has a bigger advantage at school? Why?

Chapter 9- The Bus Seat

1. Why do you think Jackson is so insistent about sitting in the front seat?
2. What is an idiom? Which idiom does Jackson not understand? What does that idiom mean and how did it fit with the story?
3. How might the bus have been different if Mr. Bill knew about Jackson before he got on the bus?
4. Since he really didn't know anything about Jackson, do you think Mr. Bill made the right choice? Why or why not?
5. Jackson's temper tantrum sort of bothers Hillary, but in a way it helps her. How does it help her?

Chapter 10- Promises, Promises

1. Hillary thinks Jackson is odd, but interesting. What do you think she told her mom about him on the phone?
2. What does Liz tell Hillary that explains some of the things Jackson has been doing and saying since he arrived in Hillary's classroom?

3. Liz says there's a reason Jackson is weird, but is not allowed to tell what it is. Do you think her family should be more open about Jackson having Asperger Syndrome? Why or why not?
4. Does Liz have good reasons to feel mad at her mom and Jackson? Why do you think she does (or doesn't) have good reasons?
5. What new insight did you learn about Hillary's mom and their relationship with each other?

Chapter 11- On Base

1. Why do you think Hillary is such a poor sport about losing to Pamela?
2. What are some reasons you think Jackson chose to be all by himself on the playground instead of with other kids?
3. Hillary calls her classmate "Perfect Paul." Do you think there is good reason for that name? What did he do to justify a title like that?
4. What makes Jackson's conversation with Hillary so confusing?
5. Hillary decides maybe she'll try to be nice to Jackson. What is it about Jackson that is making her change her mind a little?

Chapter 12- Off, A Little

1. Why does Jackson always like to be last in line?
2. Jackson doesn't get the hints about when to be quiet. What are some of hints he missed in his class and with Hillary?
3. How do Hillary's lies start to be a problem for her?
4. Hillary learns something about how to communicate with Jackson better. What does she learn?
5. What does Jackson do at the end of the chapter that makes Hillary see him in a different light?

Chapter 13- Too Many Lies

1. Hillary is very happy when the chapter opens. Why?
2. Liz becomes very angry with Hillary when she figures out who Hillary is. Why? Is she right to feel this way?
3. Hillary doesn't really apologize to Liz for what she did. What does she do to help Liz forgive her?
4. What does Hillary learn about Jackson from his sister Liz?

5. Hillary says, "Everyone knows I ain't that good. It's easy to be bad when people expect it from you." That's how she justifies her plans to cheat. What does she need to learn?

Chapter 14- The Plan

1. What is Hillary's idea of rich? Is it similar to yours, and if not, how and why is it different?
2. It is difficult for Hillary to have a conversation with Jackson. Why? Is someone at fault? If so, who is and why do you think that?
3. Jackson seems so smart in some ways and so easy to fool in others. Can you point out examples of this?
4. Hillary came to Jackson's house to cheat on their report. How do you feel about her? Would you be her friend?
5. Hillary pulled off her plan perfectly. Why do you think she feels sort of bad when she leaves Jackson's apartment?

Chapter 15- Hotheads and Pencil Geeks

1. There are bullies in this classroom. Who are they and what do they do that people would consider bullying?
2. Bullies are not nice, and everyone knows it's wrong to be a bully. Do you think bullies know they are bullies? Why do you think they act that way?
3. How does Hillary know when she is getting mad? What sensations do you feel when you are starting to feel upset?
4. Hillary is impressed with Paul. Why?
5. Hillary begins to grow a conscience, a sort of sense of right and wrong. What does she think that lets you know that, and how will that help her?

Chapter 16- More to the Story

1. Why was Hillary nervous when she was getting ready to knock on Jackson's door?
2. Who do you think told Jackson's mom that there was more to the story and why do you think they did that?

3. Jackson doesn't seem to understand some people. How does that contribute to the problem on the playground?
4. Why does Jackson get mad when Hillary tries to explain that the other girls were actually being mean to him?
5. Was Hillary's punishment fair? Why or why not?

Chapter 17- Seeing the Good

1. Why does Hillary think she is bad and why does her mom think she is falling apart?
2. What was Hillary worried about when her mom left to go talk to the principal at her school?
3. What are some things that Hillary admired about Jackson?
4. What did Jackson do that really helped Hillary?
5. At the end of the chapter, Hillary's mom says she is a "good kid. Real good." Why was that an important message for Hillary? Do you agree with her mom? Why or why not?

Chapter 18- Ann Drew Jackson

1. Hillary's two day suspension from school helped her. How?
2. Jackson's picture hurts Hillary's feelings, yet she doesn't seem to blame him for making his eye black. Why? What has she learned about him?
3. Jackson was sitting by himself, but the lunchroom lady makes him move so he can be with the rest of the kids. Do you think she was being pushy (forcing her will on him and the group) or sensitive? Why?
4. Sometimes laughter can hurt and sometimes laughter can heal. How can laughter serve such different purposes? What was it like during this lunch?
5. Hillary decides that she's brave enough to do what she needs to do. What happened that made her gain this strength? Try to think of several things.

Chapter 19- The Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth

1. Why did Hillary spend so much time drawing the pictures? What did she learn about the value of good, strong effort?

2. Why was telling the truth harder for Hillary than she thought it was going to be?
3. Hillary was really surprised by Jackson's reaction. Why? What did she think he was going to do? Were you surprised by his reaction? Why or why not?
4. What does Mrs. Price think about Hillary's honest confession?
5. What did Hillary learn about being honest and confessing to her mistakes?

Chapter 20- Feeling Fine

1. Jackson teaches Pamela and her friends a sort of lesson about how the rest of the class feels about her. What is it?
2. Hillary was surprised to hear about what happened to Pamela and her friends. What did Hillary learn about what other kids in her class think? Why do you think she never knew this before?
3. Hillary and Jackson both have talents that come together in this report. What talents do they each bring to their project?
4. What did Jackson do that helped Hillary?
5. Hillary has really been helped by Jackson, and she appreciates him. How can you tell she is thankful that he came into her life?

Chapter 21- Jackson, Through and Through

1. What did Hillary do that helped Jackson? Do you think she understands her value to Jackson? Why or why not?
2. The poem "Sometimes" describes Jackson. Can you name different incidents that happened in the story to which this poem alludes?