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Teacher  
Resources

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# CHAPTER QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR READING JOURNALS:

## Chapter 1:

Describe Mattie and her family. What are Mattie's goals? What are her mom's? Are they being realistic? What problems do you think would make it difficult for Mattie and her mom to reach their goals?

## Chapter 2:

Mattie's mom has had fights with Darren before, but this time she leaves him, even though the fight happens in the middle of the night? Why?

How does Mattie feel about spending the night sleeping in the car? How would you feel in the same situation?

## Chapter 3:

Mattie worries that people can tell she spent the night sleeping in her jeans. Are clothes as important in high school as Mattie seems to think?

Why isn't Mattie interested in Jack even though he is very handsome?

## Chapter 4:

Why does Mattie's mom take Meg and Mattie to the Eugene City Library after school?

If you were in a similar situation, where would be a safe place for you to stay while your parent worked?

## Chapter 5:

Explain the English assignment Mattie is given and why she is so worried about it. What kind of technology do you need in order to do your homework? What would you do if you didn't have access to the tools you needed?

## Chapter 6:

Mattie is angry with her mom for not finding them an apartment. What are some of the reasons that make it hard to find housing?

## Chapter 7:

Does your city or state have a large homeless population? Why or why not?

What do you think the police should do when they find people living in their car? What about when people sleep on the sidewalk, or pitch a tent in the park? What if your home was next to the park where people were camping?

## Chapter 8:

Explain why Mattie is worried about falling for Jack. How do you think Jack feels when she keeps pushing him away?

## Chapter 9:

Mattie doesn't want anyone to notice that she and Meg spend every night in the library, but she also wants her mom to park Ruby in the same place every night. Explain her reasons.

## Chapter 10:

People don't want Mattie and her family parking in their neighborhood. Where should they go? What should they do?

## Chapter 11:

What scares Mattie about the young man she meets in the magazine section in the library?

Do you think she was smart to pack up and leave so quickly, or was she being paranoid? Why?

## Chapter 12:

Mattie continues to fear a relationship with Jack. What are some of the problems with high school relationships? How will those issues change when she and Jack get older?

## Chapter 13:

Mattie and her family go through a terrifying experience in the office parking lot. Compare the problems with parking Ruby in a neighborhood with those of parking in the deserted parking lot.

## Chapter 14:

Mattie and Meg get sad at the shopping mall. What does Mattie do to help chase away their depression?

Explain what people mean when they talk about the 'Haves' and the 'Have Nots.'

## Chapter 15:

What does the word *feral* mean? Why does Mattie use it to describe the teenagers?

Do you think Mattie should call Jack or the police, or try to find her mom by herself? Justify your answer.

## Chapter 16:

Do you admire Mattie for trying to find her mom on her own? Why or why not?

## Chapter 17:

Mattie is easily noticed in Eugene, Oregon because of her race. Would she be spotted so quickly if she were in another city in Oregon? What about another city in a different state? Explain.

## Chapter 18:

What does *panhandling* mean? Have you seen adults panhandle? Teens? How do you feel about people who do it?

## Chapter 19:

Hunger drives Mattie to grab a half-eaten Whopper out of a garbage can. Do you think this is a realistic scene? Have you ever seen people dig in garbage cans for things?

Do we have a problem with hunger in Oregon? How should we help people who do not have enough to eat?

## Chapter 20:

How do you think Jack feels about Mattie being homeless? What makes you think that? How would you feel if your friend was homeless? What would you do for them?

## Chapter 21:

Considering all you know about Mattie, what is it about Jack's family that she envies?

Do you think it is possible to envy other kids' family situations, yet love your own parents and siblings? Explain.

## Chapter 22:

Mattie takes a terrible risk by going to the garage. Compare and contrast how the mechanic's appearance differs from her stereotype of him.

Have you ever been fooled by a first impression, either positively or negatively? Explain if you feel comfortable.

## Chapter 23:

### **(For older students)**

Explain the difference between a pimp and a human trafficker, and how they relate to modern day slavery.

The mechanic describes himself as a businessman. What does he mean by that? Do you agree?

### **(For younger students)**

As Mattie fights for her life, she clings to a ray of hope. Describe the safety precautions she puts into place.

## Chapter 24:

What does it mean to be a hero/heroine? What does it mean to be brave?

Would you describe Mattie's quest to find her mom as heroic or brave? Why or why not?

## Chapter 25:

Why do real world issues seem scarier than bad things in a fantasy story? List real world issues that scare or threaten you or other kids your age.

## Chapter 26:

Again, Mattie insists on keeping her independence from Jack and won't take his offers of money or help. Is she too stubborn? Is keeping her independence the right thing to do? Explain.

## MIND MAP:

Write "Mattie's Search" in the middle of a sheet of paper. Starting in the upper right corner and working clockwise, map Sunday's events as Mattie searches for her mom.

At each point on the mind map, critique Mattie's choices. Did she make the right decisions? Why or why not?

# IDEAS AND QUESTIONS:

- Make a comparison chart of Mattie’s strengths and weaknesses. Do the same for Jack.
- Looking back on the story, which incident was the scariest and what were you afraid was going to happen?
- Family is an important theme in this story. Draw and label your family members. What is the biggest difference between your family and Mattie’s?
- The cover of a book should give us an idea of the story. What do you like about the cover of *Sleeping in my Jeans*? Design a new cover for the novel, with hints about the story and colors you think will be noticeable on a bookstore shelf.
- Do you like the ending of *Sleeping in my Jeans*? Why or why not? Write a new ending for the story.
- Pretend you are Jack, Meg, or Mom and rewrite an episode from their point of view.
- What do you think will happen to Mattie at the end of the story? Why? What about Jack, Mom, or Meg?
- Could this story have really happened? Why or why not?
- Draw a scene from one of the events in *Sleeping in my Jeans*.
- Write a letter to Mattie. Use all of the conventions for a personal letter.
- Do you have a story in your head that you would like to turn into a novel? Write a synopsis of your book idea.

# RESEARCH AND GRAPH:

The number of students in your state who do not have a safe place to call home. Use statistics from the last five to ten years.

The homeless population in your city or state compared to others.

The rise in the homeless population in your city or state over the last five to ten years.

The rise in the cost of a two-bedroom apartments over the last five to ten years.

# RESEARCH AND WRITE:

What does it cost to rent an average two-bedroom apartment in your area? Include first and last month's rent as well as a cleaning deposit. What are other costs of renting an apartment that may need to be paid? Are there restrictions on any of the units?

What is the minimum wage in your area? How much of that income needs to be used for an apartment? In your area, is it possible to work for minimum wage and afford housing?

Many people feel we should use the word houseless instead of homeless to describe people without an adequate living situation. What is their reasoning for this change? What do you think about the new terminology?



## SURVEY:

Ask a cross section of people, such as students, parents, and other adults, the following questions:

Who are the homeless?

How did they end up without a place to live?

What should be done to help?

Compare your answers with other students' findings.