

Teacher's Guide
for

If You Live Like Me
by
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Comprehension Questions
Discussion Questions
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Essay Questions

Reading Comprehension Questions

Chapter One

1. Why is Cheryl's family moving to Newfoundland?
2. What famous landmark does Cheryl see from the taxi?
3. Why does Cheryl like Marilyn Manson?

Chapter Two

1. Why did Jim move to St. John's?
2. How does Cheryl feel about the sight of the ocean that she sees from the top of Signal Hill?
3. What are some details about Jim's family?

Chapter Three

1. Why does Cheryl make fun of the name of her new school?
2. Who do Jim and Cheryl encounter at the Village Mall?
3. Why doesn't Cheryl take Jim's hand when he offers it at Quidi Vidi Village?

Chapter Four

1. Why is Cheryl angry that Jim is coming with her family to Middle Cove?
2. Who were Plinius Moody and Mary Anning?
3. What does Jim come over to share with Cheryl later that evening?

Chapter Five

1. What does Cheryl learn about Nanny's background?
2. What is special about the location of Cape Spear?
3. How does Jim rescue the girl on the rock?

Chapter Six

1. Why does Cheryl want to be the one to greet Nanny at the door instead of the police officer?
2. What is the extent of Jim's injuries?
3. Why does Cheryl laugh at her parents' confusion over seal sausages?

Chapter Seven

1. Where have Cheryl's parents gone to so early the next morning?
2. What big decision does Cheryl's mother need to make?
3. Why doesn't Cheryl enter Jim's room at the hospital?

Chapter Eight

1. Who does Cheryl feel threatened by at the harbour?
2. Who are Candy and Joannie?
3. Why does Jim's mother seem hostile about the province of Alberta?

Chapter Nine

1. What do Cheryl and Joannie do to prepare for Jim's homecoming?
2. How does the traditional meal bring the family together?
3. What does Cheryl's father bring up at the meal that totally embarrasses her?

Chapter Ten

1. What does Cheryl see in Jim's room that impresses her?
2. Why is Jim in such a bad mood?
3. What cure for rheumatism does Nanny suggest to Cheryl?

Chapter Eleven

1. What does Cheryl bring her mom to help her feel better?
2. What does Jim's mother give Cheryl as a goodbye gift?
3. What does Jim accuse Cheryl of that really hurts her?

Chapter Twelve

1. Where does Cheryl decide to take Jim and why?
2. What is Jim's reaction to the whales?
3. Why is Cheryl's family angry at her when she gets home?

Chapter Thirteen

1. Why does Jim take Cheryl to Holy Heart High School?
2. What important revelation does Cheryl have about her parents?
3. What does Cheryl's father tell Jim about changing cultures?

Chapter Fourteen

1. Why is Cheryl's mother looking at her quilting supplies?
2. What does Cheryl realize about her old neighbourhood in Montreal?
3. What does Jim find out while eating pie and ice cream at Cheryl's?

Chapter Fifteen

1. How does the weather suit the mood when the family is driving to the airport?
2. What does Cheryl's father make her mother promise to do when she gets home?
3. What gesture does Cheryl make to her mother on the plane?

Discussion Questions: Whole Novel

1. Is Cheryl justified in being so angry at her parents for taking her to Newfoundland? Would you feel the same way, or would you be excited to live in so many places? What could Cheryl have done differently, to make her experiences easier? What sort of personality traits would be more suited to someone who has to move a lot? What traits would make it harder?

2. Do you think Cheryl's parents handled the situation of moving so much in the best possible way? What could they have done differently to make the experience easier for Cheryl? Is it fair that parents get to decide where children or teens have to live? Should children have more of a say?

3. At one point in the book, Jim accuses Cheryl of being spoiled and privileged. Do you think it is possible to fully understand someone else's situation if you haven't lived it yourself? Could someone like Cheryl, who comes from an upper middle class background, really understand Jim's more working class situation? At the same time, could Jim ever really understand what Cheryl has been through?

4. How does our environment play an important role in our lives? In other words, how does where we live shape who we are? Would Cheryl have been able to learn the same things about life if she had stayed in Montreal? How much of Jim's personality can be accounted for by where he grew up and the situation of his fishing family? How do you think your own location affects who you are and your life experiences?

5. Does Cheryl make the right decision at the end or should she have done something differently? What causes her to make that decision? Would you have done the same thing?

Journal Entries

1. Write about an experience where you had to move to a new place. If you have never moved, write about someone you know (family or friend) who has. Was it an easy or hard experience? How did you or that person adjust to the new location?
2. Write about someone you know who has gone through hard times because of a job loss. How did it affect the family? What changed? How did they get through it?
3. Write about an experience in your life where you were surprised by the outcome of an event. In other words, have you ever had an experience where you were expecting to either love or hate something and then the opposite happened?
4. Write about a situation where you had to make an important choice between doing two (or more) things. Why did you choose the option you did in the end? What would have been different if you had chosen something else?
5. Write about an experience where you had to choose between making a friend happy, or making a family member happy. Was it a hard choice to make? Why did you make the decision you did in the end? Was the other person upset? How did you handle it?
6. Write about the importance of feeling like you belong to a group in your life. The group could be a family, a group of friends, a sports team, a music group. What do you get from being part of that group? How does it help you, or, how does it sometimes hold you back?
7. Write about an experience where you helped a perfect stranger, like Jim does. If you haven't had this experience, imagine one. What would you do if you saw someone being hurt? Would you jump right in? What might stop you?
8. If you could move to another province for a year, which one would you choose and why? Write about what you think the experience would be like.
9. If you had to pack a suitcase full of things to decorate a temporary room so that it reflected your own unique personality, what would you bring and why? How would it show the new people in your life who you are?

Working With Literary Elements

Setting

1. Find a quotation in the book that describes each of the places Cheryl used to live in. What was her attitude to these places? Can the reader see that attitude in the description? How did Cheryl's attitude differ from her parents' attitude? What does her mother do to help her connect to all her new settings?

2. Make a list of all the locations in Newfoundland that Cheryl and Jim visit together. Find a quotation that captures how Cheryl feels about each one. Do you see a shift in her attitude toward being in Newfoundland as the novel progresses? Can we say that the setting plays a big role in Cheryl's experience?

3. Look closely at the way both Cheryl and Jim set up their bedrooms. What articles are important to them? How do they display them? How do their rooms reflect their personalities and even their hopes and dreams?

Symbolism

Find references in the book to the following four symbols. How is each one important to the story? What does each one come to symbolize or represent for Cheryl, or for Jim?

- a) whales
- b) quilts
- c) fossils
- d) rocks
- e) animals

Character

1. Develop a character profile of Cheryl, focusing on how she changes throughout the book. What is she like at the beginning, middle, and end. How does the way she treats Jim change? How does her attitude to her parents shift? Does she ever do things for others; if so, when and why? How does her attitude toward going "home" change in the book?

2. Develop a character profile of Jim. What are his main characteristics and where do we see them in the book? At what point does he seem to change and why? What helps him recover? How does the way he treats Nanny show us who he is? How is he different from the "goon squad" kids who mock him? What are his academic goals and what tells us that he'll reach them?

3. Secondary Characters: What role do the following characters play in the book? How are they important to the story? How would either Cheryl or Jim be different if they were not in it?

- a) Nanny
- b) Joannie
- c) Candy
- d) Davy
- e) Jim's mother
- f) Cheryl's mother
- g) Cheryl's father
- h) the "goon squad"

Point of View

The story is told from Cheryl's point of view. Do you think this was the best choice for the narrative perspective? How does it limit the telling of the story? How does it make the story more personal? Would third person narrative have made the story different?

Choose one of the scenes where Cheryl and Jim are together and rewrite it from Jim's perspective. How would he see things? What thoughts and opinions would he share? How would he see Cheryl? Do the same for a scene where Cheryl and her parents are interacting.

Theme

Discuss or write about the following themes:

- a) home
- b) family
- c) friendship
- d) change

Oral Presentations/Research Projects

Research and present the following topics:

- a) Joey Smallwood and Newfoundland joining Canada
- b) The battle of Beaumont Hamel in World War One
- c) The Collapse of the Ocean Ranger
- d) Hibernia and other oil projects off the coast of Newfoundland
- e) The collapse of the cod fishery in eastern Canada
- f) The history of the fishery in Newfoundland
- g) Fossils in Canada: famous finds and places
- h) Pangaea
- i) Seal hunting: history of/controversies about

Creative Activities

1. Take any scene in the book and turn it into a skit. You can use the dialogue that is already in the book and add your own. Make every character speak. Act it out!
2. Take any scene in the book and change how it ends. For example, what if Cheryl had taken Jim's hand at Quidi Vidi? What if he hadn't managed to rescue the little girl? What if Cheryl had not managed to get away from the good squad at the harbour? What if Cheryl had not gotten on the plane with her mother?
3. Redesign the cover. What picture would you choose to put on the cover if you were the art designer? Be sure you can say why? How do you think it better represents the book?

Essay Topics

1. Write an essay that explores the theme of home. What is home? How does Cheryl's view of what home is change from the beginning to the end of the book?
2. Write an essay on how symbolism is important to our understanding of a book. What are the important symbols in this book and how do they help us understand some of the ideas in the book?
3. Write an essay about Cheryl's emotional growth. How do her experiences in Newfoundland help her grow and change?