

Fish in a Tree

Discussion questions

CHAPTER 1

List three character traits to describe Ally.

CHAPTER 2

Predict: Why do you think Ally might have given her teacher a sympathy card?

CHAPTER 3

What does Ally mean when, on page 15 she says, “even I’m tired of me”?

CHAPTER 4

Was your chapter 2 prediction correct? What clues could have led you to believe that?

Has there ever been a time YOU have felt humiliated or embarrassed like Ally? What does it feel like?

CHAPTER 5

What do you think a silver dollar day is as compared to a wooden nickel day?

What does Ally mean by explaining to a whale what it’s like to live in the forest? How does this relate to how Ally feels?

CHAPTER 6

What can you compare the idea of a damaged coin being more valuable than a regular one to? (Think about Ally and her value)

What does Travis mean when he tells Ally to have high expectations of herself?

CHAPTER 7

What does Ally mean when she says “if *trying* to read helped, I’d be a genius”?

CHAPTER 8

Why does Ally look at going to the office with Mrs. Silver as a “get out of jail free card”?

What do you predict Mr. Daniels and Ally’s relationship will be like?

CHAPTER 9

What does Ally’s coin really represent?

Discuss with someone what 1 item would be in your about me bag? What does it mean to you?

CHAPTER 10

Ally draws a “dark room” in her notebook so she cannot be seen. How do you think she feels on a daily basis, and what will she or someone else perhaps do to change that? Make a prediction.

CHAPTER 11

Discuss with someone your thoughts on Albert? What type of person is he as compared to Ally? How are they the same or different?

CHAPTER 12

How does Ally feel about going along with making fun of Albert? Have you ever felt this way?

CHAPTER 13

Why might Shay be trying to bring Albert down? What type of person is Keisha in interjecting? Who should we aspire to be like? What would you call the moment when Ally tries to give Keisha her flowers?

CHAPTER 14

Why did Mr. Daniels do the “guess what’s in the box” activity with the class? What kind of skills does it promote?

CHAPTER 15

What makes Oliver unique? What positive qualities can you attribute to him?

What do you think Mr. Daniels supposes about Ally and her trouble with reading and writing?

CHAPTER 16

Is what Ally did with her arm wrong or justifiable (understandable)?

CHAPTER 17

How do Ally, Keisha and Albert respond differently to being bullied? How do or would you respond?

CHAPTER 18

What would be the pros and cons of retreating to a planet without any other forms of life?

CHAPTER 19

What do you think is the best route for Albert to take with his bullying problem?

CHAPTER 20

When someone is trying to “get a rise out of you” like Shay does with Ally, how do you respond? Is ignoring someone like At’s mom advises, or walking away like Mr. Daniels suggests easy or difficult?

CHAPTER 21

What do you believe was Ally’s wish? What wish would you make with the butterfly?

CHAPTER 22

How has the friendship between Ally and Albert grown up to this point? *look up the word uncouth :)

CHAPTER 23

What does Ally mean when she says “If I were a coin, I’d be a wooden nickel?”

CHAPTER 24

How has Ally been lucky all along but didn’t see it?

CHAPTER 25

What do you think about the reasoning behind the poetry award? Was it worth it?

CHAPTER 26

Think about what Keisha says: “I’m only different to people who see with the wrong eyes.” Discuss the meaning of this powerful statement with someone at home.

CHAPTER 27

What is Ally’s overall attitude regarding herself and self worth throughout the book. Look at the last line in most of the chapters. I for clues.

CHAPTER 28

Why do you think Ally get headaches while reading and the words on the page seem to move? Why does Mr. Daniels ask her to join his chess club?

CHAPTER 29

Look up the word dyslexia and tell someone at home the definition in your own words.
What is the importance of the analogy of a fish climbing a tree?

CHAPTER 30

Why do you think Ally is good at chess?

CHAPTER 31

What types of other learning “differences” do you know about? Does Mr. Daniels’ explanation to Ally make sense?

CHAPTER 32

What have we learned about Travis and his abilities?

CHAPTER 33

Why does Mr. Daniels make Ally tip the paper? What is his message to her? To all of us?

CHAPTER 34

What does it truly mean to be yourself? What does Albert mean when he talks about the future?

CHAPTER 35

Why does Ally feel like Mr. Daniels betrayed her trust by allowing her to draw a picture rather than write? What do you think?

CHAPTER 36

Who would you attribute the roles of king, queen, bishop and knight to in your life?
What does it mean to be invincible?

CHAPTER 37

What traits did Ally have that allowed her to solve the puzzle/problem?

CHAPTER 38

What would make Ally a good choice for their class president?

CHAPTER 39

Why do you think Ally was chosen as class president? What do her classmates see in her that they don’t in Shay?

CHAPTER 40

Why does Shay act differently towards her mother and seem ashamed about losing the election?

CHAPTER 41

What really happened with the “love note”?

If you had one suggestion for a positive change at West Road what would it be?

CHAPTER 42

What makes each character unique? What’s something that makes you unique?

CHAPTER 43

How have Keisha, Ally and Albert been allies to one another throughout the book?

CHAPTER 44

Why are Shay and Oliver “wide-eyed but for different reasons” (pg. 226) at Ally’s response?

CHAPTER 45

What do you think sparked Travis' curiosity in Ally's sessions with Mr. Daniels? Use earlier clues to help you.

CHAPTER 46

What does it mean to be a "pachyderm" or to have thick skin? Do you have thick skin? Cite an example from your own life of a time when you did.

CHAPTER 47

What is Mr. Daniel's underlying message to his class about the famous people? What can we learn from this? And about Ally?

CHAPTER 48

What does Ally mean when she says, "Everyone has their own blocks to drag around. And they all feel heavy." (pg. 245)?

How is Jessica a little different from Shay and what type of person has she been up to this point?

Bonus: Look up the word catalyst. How is Ally a catalyst?

CHAPTER 49

Do you think you could have done what Ally did and be kind to someone who had been so cruel to you? What kind of person is Ally for doing that?

CHAPTER 50

How was this chapter a turning point for Albert?

CHAPTER 51

Why is this book called fish in a tree? :)

P.S. Did you cry!?

ACTIVITY IDEAS

coin stack

Guess what's in the box

Couragenius activity - make up a new word

Butterflies

ROY G BIV

Tie with trophies on it (pg 133)

Fish in a tree game