

Discussion Guide #2: Delving Deeper Into Themes

Empathy

1. Define what empathy means. What does it mean to have empathy?
2. What is the difference between empathy and sympathy?
3. What are ways you show others you care for them?
4. Why does Tako become worried for Allie?
5. How does Tako feel when he finds Allie's room in the attic? What does he learn about her? Why does he then want to find her?
6. The first problem in the book is that there is a thief in the house. What caused that problem?
7. What is a first impression? Are first impressions always true?
8. Did you ever think something about someone that turned out not to be true?
9. After Allie is made to leave the Lee house, Ricky tells Tako to "forget about her". But he couldn't forget about her. Why not?
10. Why is Tako still mad at Allie after she is made to leave the house?
11. Describe Tako and Ricky's friendship. Describe Tako and Allie's friendship. What's the difference?
12. When Ricky and his friends find Tako in the hole, they begin laughing. Why?
13. If you found a thief in your house, what would you do?
14. What is an enemy? Are Tako and Allie enemies?
15. Why did Allie steal?
16. How do Tako's feelings toward Allie change from the beginning of the story to the end?
17. How does each character in the story feel about Allie? How do their feelings change from the beginning of the story to the end?



Empathy

18. What does Allie think of Tako? Do her feelings toward him change from the beginning of the story to the end?
19. What could Allie have done differently to stay in the Lee home?
20. On one night in the story, Tako sleeps well; on another he does not sleep well. Why? Do you ever have trouble falling asleep?
21. Have you ever had anything stolen from you? If so, how did it make you feel?
22. Was Allie afraid of Tako? Was Tako afraid of Allie?

Good & Bad Behavior

1. After reading the story, would you say that Allie is a good cat or a bad cat? What are some of her actions that would be considered “good” or “bad”?
2. Why did Allie steal Mia and Lia’s things?
3. What is a villain? Is there a villain in this story?
4. Is Allie a bad cat?
5. If Allie could speak, what would she say about her behavior?
6. How does Allie change by the end of the story?
7. Was Tako good or bad to bark at Grandpa Lee? Why was Grandpa Lee surprised?

Heroism / Fear

1. Tako risked his safety to save Allie. Why did he do that? Is he a hero? What kinds of actions are heroic?
2. Why does Tako bark at Grandpa Lee?
3. Mimi Lee says Tako is a “protector dog”. Have you ever stood up for someone else?
4. Was Allie afraid of the river rats? Have you ever been afraid of something?
5. Are the rats dangerous? What are dangerous things in your life?
6. When Tako first meets the river rats he runs away from them. Can you still be a hero even if you run away?



Trust

1. Since Allie stole from the Lee family, should they trust her again? Why or why not?
2. Who do you think is Tako's best friend? Allie or Ricky? Why?
3. What does it mean to be a friend?
4. Do you think Allie will be good from now on? Will she ever steal again?
5. Do you think Tako and Allie will ever be mad at each other again?
6. Why does the Lee family let Allie stay?
7. Are Tako and Allie friends by the end of the story? If so, how do they become friends?
8. Why is Tako afraid of the rats? What are you afraid of?
9. Do you think Allie would help Tako if he were in trouble?
10. What is Tako's ultimate goal in the story? What is Allie's ultimate goal? What is the Lee family's ultimate goal? How do these goals intersect or create conflict?

