

THE DOLLAR KIDS

JENNIFER RICHARD JACOBSON

illustrated by RYAN ANDREWS

discussion questions

>

11. The Grovers' fate is dependent on the success of the Cornish Eatery, which faces resistance from the Busy Bee at every turn. What does their rivalry teach you about how competitive it can be to run a business? How much of the competition seems reasonable, and how much was due to jealousy and unkindness on the part of Mrs. Corbeau?
12. Lowen doesn't want to befriend Sami or anyone else, believing he's a "dangerous friend" to have (page 125). What would Sami say if she knew that?
13. Suppose Lowen were to bury his regrets like he saw Ms. Duffey doing. How would the regrets he might bury in the middle of the book be different from the regrets he would bury at the end?
14. It seems to Lowen that Clem adjusts to life in Millville more easily than the rest of the Grovers. Why do the brothers have so much trouble connecting after their move?
15. How does Lowen's anxiety—about soccer, about school, about the shop—make his first year in Millville more difficult? Would the year have been different if he had been able to talk to someone about his worries?
16. As the year goes on, the Dollar Families get to know the citizens of Millville better. Did any of them surprise you?
17. On Thanksgiving, Sami talks about how strange it is that in a country of immigrants, everyone is expected to celebrate by eating the exact same thing. How does food represent a culture? How might it feel to be told that the type of food you eat is wrong or un-American?
18. What does their project on the mill's history help Sami and Lowen better understand about the people of Millville?
19. Lowen's not sure what happens when someone dies, and his comics show how his ideas about heaven change over the course of the book. Do you think Lowen was conscious of the way his perspective was changing?
20. At first, Lowen finds Dylan so similar to Abe that it's painful to consider befriending him. In what ways is Dylan actually a lot more like Lowen?
21. The Dollar Kids come up with the crowdfunding project to help Mr. Avery, even though he made life so difficult for them. Think about the difference between helping people you like and helping people you dislike: it's much easier to help out people you get along with. But does that mean that others—people who disagree with you, or come from somewhere else, or don't look like you—don't deserve your help?
22. Helping raise money for Mr. Avery is what finally makes the Dollar Families feel like they're part of the community in Millville. Have you ever done a service project in your community, or started one by yourself? How did it make you feel? If not, can you think of any way, big or small, that you could make a difference in your community?
23. Lowen doesn't send Mrs. Siskin a letter until more than a year after Abe's death, and even then he's still certain she won't forgive him for what happened. Did her response surprise you the way it surprised Lowen?
24. If you were to make a comic of an important moment in your life, what would you draw? Why?
25. If, at the end of the book, Lowen were to go back in time and give himself one piece of advice before his family moves, what do you think he would say?



CANDLEWICK PRESS
www.candlewick.com