

The Penderwicks by Jeanne Birdsall

Discussion Questions:

1. The author asks, "What is a summer without a trip to somewhere special?" In which season do you like to travel? Any special memories you'd like to share with us?
2. Was there anything in the story that made you laugh?
3. If you lived near the Penderwicks, which of the girls might you make friends with first? Why?
4. If your family moved in next to Arundel Hall, would you become friends with Jeffrey? Why or why not?
5. Why did Batty give her wings to Jeffrey?
6. Mr. Penderwick says speaking in Latin exercises his brain. What does he mean? How do you exercise your brain?
7. How did Skye feel when she learned that the woman she had just called "snooty" and "a real pain" was Jeffrey's mother? What should she do?
8. What did you think about MOOPS (Meeting of older Penderwick Sisters), MOPS, and Hound Draw for Order? Do real families or groups of friends have similar rituals?
9. To Jane a plant was just one more thing that needed feeding and coddling. Why would Jane think that? Is she more likely to feel that way than the other girls?
10. The author describes Mrs. Tifton as "snooty." Mrs. Churchill is "comfortable." If the author were introducing us, I wonder what one word description she would use. What about if we were 10 years older?
11. Which of the Penderwick sisters are you most like and why? Or are you a little bit like several of them?
12. Is there a character you admire? Why do you admire him/her?
13. Did any of the characters change during the story?
14. Jane thinks that what makes a book great is that you can read it over and over and never get tired of it? Do you agree? Any examples to share?

15. Which part of the book was most interesting or exciting?
16. Was there any part of the story that frustrated you?
17. Was there any part of the story that was just too unbelievable?
18. Was this book a quick read or hard to get into?
19. Was there anything in the story that seemed like it might happen in real life?
20. If you could change just one thing about Mrs. Tifton, what would it be?
21. If you could change just one thing about Dexter, what would it be?
22. Did any part of the book make you sad?
23. What do you think the author was trying to accomplish by writing this book?
Was she trying to entertain us or teach us something?
24. If you were the editor and Mrs. Birdsall gave you her story and asked for your help in improving it, what would you tell her?