

The Secret Life of Ms. Finkleman by Ben H. Winters

Discussion Questions:

1. Bethesda enjoys stories of important people and important things they have done. Is there an important person you admire?
2. The author listed a variety of student reactions to Mr. Melville's announcement of a special project. How would *you* react if your social studies teacher announced a special project?
3. Did anything in the story make you laugh?
4. The author gives us a list of the special project topics that students are considering. Pretend you are in this class. What mystery would you like to solve?
5. How would you describe the work relationship between Principal Van Vreeland and Assistant Principal Ferrars?
6. If you were there when Mr. Melville called the Internet "the first refuge of the lazy," what would you say to him?
7. When you met Bethesda's father on pages 39 and 40, what did you think of him? Did you change your mind about him later?
8. Bethesda's dad calls her "cheese potato" and "Dr. Octagon." What did you think of his nicknames for her? Would you be willing to share *your* nickname with us?
9. Please read aloud or choose someone else to read aloud the last full paragraph on page 47. Are Brighton students similar to this description in any way?
10. What did you think of Bethesda's presentation in Mr. Melville's class? Did you wonder what Ms. Finkleman would think of it?
11. By page 134, you knew that Ms. Finkleman had to protect herself from rock music by feeling no emotion. At this point in the story, what did you think the reason might be?
12. Could you be Pamela's friend? Why or why not? Did your feelings about her change at any point?
13. Please re-read the last paragraph on page 151 about how Tenny thinks about the rock show. Will you please help us understand what he means? Has anything like that ever happened to you?
14. Did the author teach you something in this book? If so, what did you learn?