

NAVIGATING EARLY QUESTIONS

(1) Explain what Jack means when he says, “You get what you get and you are what you are.” (p. 2) (1a.) Later Jack says, “Somehow Early maintained a sense of direction. He knew who he was and where he was going. I did not.” (p. 101) What is Jack’s greatest obstacle? (1b.) What is Jack’s direction by the end of the novel?

(2) Jack often refers to being lonely. What is his first twinge of loneliness? (2a.) Discuss what he could have done upon arrival at Morton Hill to help his situation. (2b.) How might he interact differently when he arrives back at school after his adventure with Early? (2c.) Do you think Early is lonely?

(3) Discuss how the faculty and students at Morton Hill dismiss Early. (3a.) Why do you think the school lets him stay? (3b) How are students like Early served in schools today?

(4) Jack ditches Early at the Regatta. Why does he think Early doesn’t feel disappointment or pain or being left out? (4a.) At what point does Jack realize that Early does have these feelings?

(5) Morton Hill’s motto is “Always Faithful.” Discuss how Early understands these words better than Jack? (5a) How is Jack dealing with a personal disappointment? Do you think this excuses his actions. (5b) How might Jack live up to the school motto the remainder of his days at Morton Hill?

(6) Early says that the stars are “connected in unexpected ways, just like people.” (p. 36). Discuss the unexpected connections between the following characters: Jack, Early, MacScott, Martin, Gunnar, Emmaline, Eustasia Johannsen, Fisher, and Captain Baker. (6a.) How does each of their stories contribute to the overall quest in the novel?

(7) Jack says, “You can tell a lot about people by what they enshrine.” (p. 163) Why does it take Jack so long to learn about Early from what is enshrined in his room? (7a.) What does Jack learn about Gunnar? (7b) Discuss what the trophy case at Morton Hill reveals about Fisher. (7c) Describe Jack based on what he enshrines. (7d) What might Jack enshrine by the end of his journey?

(8) Gunnar tells the boys that sometimes people think they are looking for something, but are really running away from something instead. At what point does Jack realize that Gunnar is running away? (8a) What about Fisher and MacScott? (8b) Discuss what Jack is looking for and what he is running away from?

(9) Jack ponders whether “seeking” or “finding” is more important. Why does he believe that his mother would think “seeking” is more important? (9a) What might his father believe? (9b) Discuss why a person must be willing to “seek” before he can “find.” (9c) At what point does Jack realize what he is “seeking”?

(10) Explain the parallel story of PI and discuss how the story belongs to both Early and Jack. (10a) Which boy is more capable of dealing with the conclusion? (10b) How do the boys encounter a role reversal at the end of the adventure?