



Name _____

Unsinkable Cayenne by Jessica Vitalis

Discussion Questions

Gather 3 or more people who have read *Unsinkable Cayenne* to discuss the book. Briefly summarize the book to remind everyone of the details (some of you may have read it a while ago!) Use the questions below to help keep the discussion going:

1. Who was your favourite character in the book? Why?
2. What are the main themes or messages in *Unsinkable Cayenne*? Discuss as a group, if you agree or disagree, and why.
3. One of the main themes of this book is resilience. How do the main characters exhibit resilience? Share a time when you were resilient or witnessed someone else being resilient.
4. Cayenne has moved around all her life but always dreamed of settling in one place. When she got her wish the reality wasn't exactly like she pictured it would be. Discuss some ways Cayenne's real situation was better/worse than her expectation.
5. If it's comfortable for you, discuss a time when you either moved or went someplace where your expectations didn't match the true experience. How did you and your family handle it?



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6. A motif is something that appears over and over in a story to help the author explore the story's themes. Birds are an important motif in *Unsinkable Cayenne*. Identify at least 3 places the author uses birds to explore the story's theme. Can you identify any other motifs in the story?
7. *Unsinkable Cayenne* uses the Titanic disaster to show economic disparity (how people in different classes get treated differently) both then and now. Because Cayenne's family doesn't have a lot of material wealth, she relates to the second- and third-class passengers and thinks of her new friends as part of the first-class. How did Cayenne's perceptions change as the story unfolded?
8. In the poem "The Thing I Don't Understand", Cayenne says "...the amount of money someone has determines how much they are worth." Is she right? Why or why not?
9. In the poem "The Secret to Surviving Middle School," Cayenne says "Fitting in is overrated. The key to surviving middle school is to be okay standing out." Do you agree? Why or why not?
10. The book ends with Cayenne back on the road with her family. Do you like the ending? Why or why not? What do you think will happen next in their story?



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