Discussion Questions for Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie

1. What are some ways that Steven reacts to Jeffrey’s diagnosis? How does his mother react, and how is that different from how his father reacts?

2. In your opinion, what does it take for a family to survive the illness of one of its members?

3. Describe or read aloud your favorite scene. What strikes you about it?

4. What role does humor play in Steven’s life? What role does music play? How about in your life?

5. What does Steven learn about Renee and Annette?

6. What does Steven learn from Samantha?

7. How does the 1st person point of view perspective impact the tone and mood of the novel? Support your reasoning with text evidence.

8. What adjective describes Steven at the beginning of the novel? Provide an example from the text to support your response.

9. What adjective describes Steven at the end of the novel? Provide text support to explain your answer.

10. What life lesson is presented in the novel? Provide support for your response.

11. Steven has certain relationships with the members of his family. Pick one and describe the connection with that person, including supporting examples.

12. At school Steven has several friends and teachers with whom he interacts. Select one person, describe the relationship and provide text evidence.

13. What events and character traits support the fact the novel is realistic fiction?

14. The setting and cultural references were carefully chosen by Jordan Sonnenblick. How do they exemplify the realistic fiction genre? Explain.

Journal prompts (inspired by the novel):

If you were to “throw off the weight of this particular day,” what day would that be? Describe a day from your past (or one you imagine in your future) which you would like to erase. (p. 13)

“I remember when I was eight ….” (p. 37)

“It made a statement.” What clothing of yours makes a statement about you? (p. 51) Describe what it actually looks like, as well as the statement it makes.

“If I could say anything I wanted to, to anyone in the world right now, I would be all over _____ (name of person). “ (p. 57) Decide who you would talk with, and write what you would say.

Reread and then analyze Steven’s journal entry on pages 57-60. What is Steve really saying? Was this an effective way for him to “say” it? Why or why not?

Steve notices similarities between dodgeball and dances and calls them the “two Ds of my middle school nightmares.” (p. 95) Write your own comparison of some kind, “the two __s of my ___________ nightmares.”

Steve decides that the “old rules no longer apply.” Can you think of a time in your life when you would say that the “old rules” needed to be replaced? Describe what happened and what the “new rules” were. (p. 171)

Mrs. Galley encourages Steve to “try working on the things you CAN change.” (p. 184) Is this solid advice? Why or why not?

Matt Medic keeps Jeffrey brave. (p. 221) What keeps you brave?