Literature Circle Questions

Use these questions and activities that follow to get more out of the experience of reading *Hope Was Here* by Joan Bauer.

1. Why do Addie and Hope leave Brooklyn? Describe what happens at their former job that forces them to look for other work.

2. Why is Hope so reluctant, at first, to spend more time with Braverman?

3. Explain the scandal that forces Millstone to resign as Mulhoney mayor and allows G.T. to take over.

4. Discuss the reasons Hope takes up boxing and then suddenly decides to give it up.

5. The big Real Fresh dairy plant employs most citizens in Mulhoney. However, a lot of the people in town don’t like the fact that the plant is there at all. Why not? Why are some of them scared to criticize the dairy plant?

6. Why does Hope wear the clown nose in the restaurant while her mother is visiting?

7. At the beginning of the book, Hope is reluctant to leave Brooklyn — where she is comfortable and has good friends — to come to a strange, small town in Wisconsin. Describe a time you had to enter a new, unfamiliar situation, such as a new grade, school, or even a new town.

8. Hope fantasizes about meeting her father and wonders what she would say to him if they did meet. If you could meet anyone in the world, who would it be? What would you say if you saw them randomly, while walking down the street?

9. Writing seems to be very important to Hope — she writes poems, keeps a diary, and writes letters, even ones she doesn’t send. Explain why you think writing is so important to her. When you write about an event, what does the act of writing compel you to do?

10. Even though G.T. eventually adopts Hope, in what ways does he act like a father to her long before that?

11. Describe Hope’s relationship with her mother? Does her attitude toward her mother change throughout the story? Show examples of the good things her mother does for her, as well as the things that frustrate Hope.

12. Toward the end of the book, G.T. and Hope cut a branch from one tree and graft it onto another, allowing the two to merge and grow together as one. How is this natural
process symbolic of the way that Hope’s life has merged with the friends she’s made in Mulhoney?

13. What kind of candidate do you think G.T. was? What kind of ideas did he have, and how did they differ from his opponent’s?

14. Explain why Hope is a more fitting name than Tulip. Summarize the ways in which Hope tries to live up to her name.

Note: These literature circle questions are keyed to Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge: 1-3; Comprehension: 4-5; Application: 6-7; Analysis: 8-10; Synthesis: 11-12; Evaluation: 13-14.

Activities

1. Pick a vivid passage from the book that stands out in your mind. Then, draw a picture of that scene with markers or other materials — making sure to use lots of color. Next, show the picture to a friend and ask them to describe what they see. How is what they describe different from what actually happened in the book?

2. Delicious, homemade food can lift someone’s spirits, make them feel better — just as it does at the Welcome Stairways Diner. Perhaps that’s why it’s called “comfort food.” Is there a favorite meal that always makes you feel better? Make a menu of some of your favorite foods, and describe whether that food has any special healing powers.

3. Write a letter to someone you see and talk to every day, someone who’s very important to you. Tell them why you’re thankful they are a part of your lives. Try to describe feelings and emotions that wouldn’t normally come up in conversation, or point out good qualities of theirs that you might often take for granted. You don’t have to send it, but you may want to.