

## *Looking for X – Who we are*

1. Many authors believe that it's very important to grab the reader's attention early into the story. Do you think Deborah Ellis has been successful? Explain.
2. Locate some information about the author, Deborah Ellis.
3. Describe how you might react if your mother told you she had once been a stripper?
4. Why does Tammy refer to stripping as exotic dancing?
5. Who is telling the story?
6. Why does Khyber nix the idea of becoming an exotic dancer?
7. In your own words, describe what an explorer does.
8. List some people who might qualify as present-day explorers.
9. Why do Khyber's twin brothers hardly ever talk?
10. Why does Khyber think that Regent Park is not an appropriate name for the section of Toronto in which she lives?

### **Vocabulary**

exotic, Inuit, rent, two-bit, taverns, career, frilly, jerks, explorer, atlas, lecture, pregnant, torture, magnifying glass, autism, regent, section, cape, pauper

### **Enrichment**

Who was Sherlock Holmes and name the author who created him?

Find some articles on autism using the internet or your local health clinic or nurses' station.

Using a map of Toronto locate Regent Park.

Design a bookmark for your novel. Make a cover page or title page for your student study guide.

# *Looking for X – The Stranger at the Table*

1. How is Khyber different from a lot of other students?
2. Describe Khyber's home.
3. Give evidence to indicate that Khyber feels very secure about her relationship with her mother.
4. How does Khyber help Tammy?
5. According to Khyber, why is she well suited to become an explorer?
6. Why does Khyber refer to her very special friend as "X"?
7. How does Khyber expect to be different as a teenager?
8. Why is "X" careful about what she eats?
9. How do we know that Khyber likes the twins?

## **Vocabulary**

deny, shuffled, gutter, ignore, grunt, collapse, flapping, briefcase, mumbled, trigonometry, fetched, livid, slug, mutter

## **Enrichment**

Research the Monkees and make a short presentation to your classmates. Make sure to include some music from the Monkees.

Introverts are often very quiet and reserved while extroverts are more outgoing and often prefer to interact with a group. Would you describe yourself as an introvert or an extrovert? Should career choices be determined by whether or not you are an introvert or an extrovert? Defend your position.

Khyber's description of her friend suggests that she is suffering from some form of paranoia. Find the definition of paranoia and discuss with your classmates whether or not "X" suffers from this condition.

# ***Looking for X – A Tree from Brazil and a Woman from Nowhere***

1. Locate Brazil in an atlas.
2. Provide proof from the story that “X” is older.
3. Are you surprised at “X”’s age? Explain.
4. How does the author trick you into thinking that she was younger?
5. Why is “X” like the twins?
6. Explain why Khyber is not too fond of social workers.
7. Explain how “X” and Khyber manage to be sitting under a tree from Brazil.
8. Why is Khyber always hungry?
9. What does Khyber do after reading the menu outside the Italian restaurant?
10. Explain why Khyber might have looked at the library atlas for over an hour.
11. Why does Khyber avoid the library when she is with her brothers?
12. Give some examples that indicate there is a warm family atmosphere in Tammy’s house.
13. Why does the last sentence in chapter three sound rather ominous?
14. Predict what will happen in chapter four.

## **Vocabulary**

trench coat, greenhouse, welfare, sneer, exaggerated, harness, menu, ravioli, smuggle, tureen, stoop, alcove, berth

## **Enrichment**

Do research into the causes of memory loss. Find information on such topics as dementia, Alzheimer’s and other afflictions that cause memory loss. Make a short presentation to your classmates.

# ***Looking for X* – The Conscience of the King**

1. Explain the title of this chapter. In this chapter Khyber acts in a school play and we discover something about her character in this dramatic production. (*Hamlet*)
2. Briefly describe the plot of the school play.
3. Why does Khyber believe that Miss Melon seldom disciplined Tiffany?
4. Why do the parents in the auditorium cast a disapproving glance at Tammy?
5. Explain why Khyber is angry.
6. What does Khyber hear when she wakes up in the middle of the night?

## **Vocabulary**

brats, peered, doomed, quoted, equilateral, chaos, restraining, jitters, scrawny, moronic, strutting, rehearsal, soothing

## **Enrichment**

Many of Shakespeare's plays have been made into movies. View a copy of *Hamlet* with your classmates and then explain the significance of the line, "The play's the thing, wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king".

Scholarly research indicates a tendency by teachers to pay more attention to more attractive students. Do you think this is valid? Discuss in small groups and then discuss with the entire class.

# *Looking for X* – A Woman in White Turns Red

1. Who is Valerie?
2. Why does the owner of the restaurant speak quietly when he talks about one of the waitresses that works for him?
3. Why does Valerie sometimes run out of the restaurant after a customer?
4. Whose plates does Valerie often load up with extras?
5. What is Valerie's one weakness?
6. Explain how Valerie and Tammy met.
7. Describe Khyber's job at the restaurant.
8. Should Khyber and David have moved off the bench to allow the wedding party to take their pictures? Defend your position.

## **Vocabulary**

Trojan, startled, fiery, stuns, grumpy, meekly, snarled, smothered, chores, assumed, gadget, sauntered, tuxedo, immensely, defective, splurged

## **Enrichment**

In this novel the Trojan Horse is a restaurant. What is a Trojan horse? Locate a story and read about the Trojan horse in Greek mythology.

## *Looking for X* – Troubled Waters

1. Explain what Khyber's statement, "I haven't decided about God."
2. Where does Tammy promise to take her family?
3. Why does Tammy forbid her daughter from going on Yonge Street?
4. What does Khyber want from the army surplus store?
5. Where does Khyber keep her wedding money?
6. How does Tammy's family travel to the island?

### **Vocabulary**

nursery, pleading, surplus, canvas, deck, season, trudged, dramatize, vile, spats, pattering, stomped, chattering

### **Enrichment**

An analogy attempts to explain by comparison. For example, in chapter six Khyber compares her brothers' minds to the amusement park. Explain what she meant and why it is a good analogy. Working with a small group come up with some of your own analogies to explain the boys' autism. Share them to your classmates.

# *Looking for X* – In the Middle of the Night

1. Why does Khyber slap her brother?
2. Why are they unable to call an ambulance?
3. Why does Khyber put her boots on the wrong feet?
4. Compare the waiting room at the hospital to your own experiences in a waiting room at a clinic or hospital.

## **Vocabulary**

drizzly, dozing, thud, gash, plopped, clammy, scalp, lousy, rare, tropical

## **Enrichment**

Using improv choose six or seven people from the class and have them act out a scene in the waiting room of a hospital.

## *Looking for X – Fight*

1. Explain why Daniel's hair has been partly shaved?
2. Why does Khyber insist on going to school that day even though she is exhausted?
3. Why is Khyber so reluctant to her mother the truth about her fight with Tiffany?
4. Is it fair that Khyber has been asked to apologise to Tiffany? Defend your position.
5. Explain Tammy's threat, "Whatever she gives you, I will double it".
6. What does Khyber's mother absolutely forbade her to do?

### **Vocabulary**

bleary-eyed, detention, solemn, stern, hysterics, Australian Outback, probation, chores

### **Enrichment:**

Explain how you would discipline your children. Describe the mistakes that you think some parents make when disciplining their children.

## *Looking for X – Exile*

1. List some of the things that Tammy instructs Khyber do as part of her suspension.
2. Explain why Khyber bumps her head on the ceiling when she sits up.
3. What is the main reason Khyber gives for knowing that she will never do drugs?
4. Why does Khyber finally get up from her bed to kiss her mother good-night?
5. Look up the word “exile”. What is one possible significance of the title of this chapter?

### **Vocabulary**

errands, tripled, arithmetic, grammar, whining, deserved, confined, decreed, stack, recited, haven, femininity, boas, alcove, hint, plotted, hesitated, grumbled, bunk

### **Enrichment**

Khyber mentions a lot of places from her atlas that she would like to explore. They include: Egypt, Siberia, the Mediterranean Sea, and Russia. Try and locate some of these in your atlas. Locate some places in the world that you might like to explore.

Khyber informs us that Lewis Carroll was her all time favourite poet. Locate some of the literary works of Lewis Carroll and make a list of his works. Memorize one of his poems and recite it orally to your classmates or in a small group.

# *Looking for X – Danger in the Dark*

1. Why does Khyber time her arrival at the school just before the bell rings?
2. Why does Khyber arrive home that afternoon to an empty apartment?
3. Why does Khyber unpack the boxes that her mother has packed?
4. Explain Khyber's hesitation as she prepares a sandwich for her friend "X".
5. What surprising revelation does "X" make to Khyber immediately after Khyber finishes singing the soup song?
6. Describe the contents of "X"'s suitcase.
7. Why does Khyber lie to her mother about her encounter with the skin-heads?

## **Vocabulary**

cribbage, china, boarding, slime, tittering, smirking, dignified, apology, lecture, obediently, raspy, jolted, reality, skinheads, gurgly, blubbery, sprawled, shrugged, lame, glared

## **Enrichment**

What is a boarding school? Would you like to attend one? Explain why. Locate some boarding schools on the internet and discover what it would be like to live there. For example, Upper Canada College is located in Toronto. After researching your topic make a short presentation to your classmates.

Research the game of cribbage and also find out about the origins of this pastime? Do some additional research into other card games in Canada and around the world. Make a short presentation to your classmates.

Khyber keeps some things a secret, not even telling her mother. Do you ever keep things secret from your parents? Is this wise? What problems could occur if you do this all the time? With a small group of your classmates draw up a list of guidelines to follow when keeping things secret from your parents.

Find the lyrics to the song, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone". Explain the song. Write your own song and put it to music.

## *Looking for X – Mud*

1. Why are all the windows in Mrs. Melon's class boarded up?
2. Who does Mrs. Melon and principal suspect had done it?
3. According to Tammy, why has Khyber invented an imaginary friend called "X"?
4. Describe Khyber's response when the principal informs her that she has been expelled.
5. Explain what Khyber means when she states that she feels as though she is walking with a stranger.
6. Do you think that Tammy is justified in believing that Khyber is responsible for the vandalism at the school? Explain your answer.
7. Was Mud a good choice for the title of this chapter? Explain your answer.

### **Vocabulary**

eerie, goofy, sour, minus, defend, ratted, horrified, budget, talents, expel, giddy, stern, gutters, pebbles

### **Enrichment**

Is there a time when your parents falsely accused you of something? How did you feel? How did you resolve the problem? What advice would you offer to someone dealing with a similar problem? What are some of the things that might make people mistrust us?

## *Looking for X* – Taking Leave

1. Why aren't Tammy and Khyber speaking to one another?
2. Where does Khyber think that Tammy has taken the boxes?
3. Why does Khyber need to find "X"?
4. Describe the note that Khyber left for her mother?

### **Vocabulary**

stashed, alcove, urge, cringing, persuade

### **Enrichment**

Pretend you are Khyber and write a note to Tammy explaining where you have gone and why. Make sure you provide lots of detail in your note.

Write out an imaginary dialogue between Tammy and police, as Tammy tells them about her daughter's disappearance.

## *Looking for X* – Tired Feet

1. What does Khyber think was a dumb idea?
2. What regrets does Khyber have about her pouch full of wedding money?
3. Describe the incident that causes Khyber to flee Allan Gardens.
4. Why is Khyber anxious to leave the donut shop?
5. Why is Khyber's choice of places to sleep rather unusual?

### **Vocabulary**

microfilm, propulsion, pouch, miserable, flopped, section, scrunching, fetch

### **Enrichment**

Research the history of Yonge Street. How far does Yonge Street extend? Is it really the longest street in Canada or the world? Present the results to your classmates.

Conduct a brainstorming session in class to determine how to deal with the homeless people. Remember that in a brainstorming session all suggestions are valid and not to be criticized.

## *Looking for X* – Win Some, Lose Some

1. Why does Khyber feel lousy when she wakes up?
2. Where does Khyber manage to locate a bathroom?
3. Describe the couple that Khyber meets in a doorway.
4. How is Khyber able to help them?
5. What reason does Carolyn give for wanting to become a veterinarian?
6. Why does Khyber refuse the Hammond's invitation to hang out with them?

### **Vocabulary**

lousy, vet, applauded, homesick

### **Enrichment**

What type of education is required to become a veterinarian? Do some research into becoming a veterinarian and related careers. Invite a veterinarian from your community into your classroom or make a brief presentation to your classmates yourself.

## *Looking for X* – Bench Sitting

1. How is Khyber's walk different from those she normally takes with Tammy and the boys?
2. Why does Khyber opt to remain in the mall?
3. In a few sentences, describe the woman that Khyber encounters on the bench.
4. Why does Khyber decide to continue her search from a rooftop?

### Vocabulary

jolt, hauled, staggered, plunked, script, equilateral, artistic, genius, pillars, persuade

### **Enrichment**

Research the origin of indoor shopping malls. Where were the first ones located and why where they built? Include some facts about the Eaton Centre as well as some of the largest malls in the world. With one or two of your classmates design the type of mall you would like to have in your community. Keep in mind the needs of your community when working on your design.

## *Looking for X* – Blue Suede Shoes

1. Why does Khyber feel dizzy when she gets to the bottom of the ladder?
2. Why is Khyber disappointed that nobody notices her wandering around the city?
3. Describe the monster that bumps into Khyber?
4. Explain why Church Street is suddenly filling up with strange creatures?
5. Who steps out of the van that pulls up beside Khyber?

### **Vocabulary**

plunked, pavement, dumpsters, rattle, surplus, exhaustion, stow, steamship, moustaches

### **Enrichment**

Who was Edgar Allan Poe? Locate some of his work on the internet or in your library. Why did Tammy sometimes read from Edgar Allan Poe at Hallowe'en?

Research the origins of Hallowe'en. Working in a small group plan some art ideas for a class.

Have every student in the class write a Hallowe'en story. Some students may prefer to write poetry. Compile the finished material into a book and share the materials with some younger students. Make sure to illustrate the stories and poems.

Write a scary story or poem and read it to your classmates.

## *Looking for X – Return*

1. How is Khyber surprised when she takes a closer look at Elvis?
2. Explain the acronym T.A.G.E.G.
3. What does Khyber think of the group's singing?
4. Describe what happens when Khyber is reunited with her mother.

### **Vocabulary**

autograph, fame, sob, bows, bunch, performance, anxious

### **Enrichment**

What are acronyms? Locate a web site or section in your dictionary that lists acronyms. Design a short quiz to give to your classmates that tests their knowledge of acronyms. Invent some of your own acronyms. You might design an acronym for an imaginary music company or even a band.

Locate some of Elvis Presley's music and play it in class. Research his career and make a report to the class. Interview some older people who would have been young when Elvis' music was even more popular. Elvis Presley also acted in numerous movies that are now available on DVD or VHS. Locate one and after watching it make a report to your classmates.

## *Looking for X* – Round-Up

1. What has really happened to Miss Melon's windows at school?
2. Describe Tammy's reaction when the principal tells her that he will be happy to take Khyber back at the school.
3. How does Khyber feel about the staff at the boys' group home?
4. Why does Tammy decide to move to a new home?
5. Who offers to help them move their things?

### **Vocabulary**

rolling pin, fangs, staff, enrol, exchange, compartment

### **Enrichment**

Give examples of Khyber's courage and confidence throughout the book. Do you think you had that much confidence when you were eleven years old? How do we gain confidence in ourselves?

With a small group of your classmates, make a list of the things that can help build your confidence. Design a workshop or course for young people that would help to instil self-confidence. Start with a brainstorming session and remember that all ideas are acceptable in a brainstorming session. Be creative!