

Questions for discussion

Evel Knievel Jumps the Snake River Canyon

1. The story is told from the point of view of a ten-year-old boy. Do you think Pick is a reliable narrator? Why or why not?
2. Pick describes Grandma Grace as being bossy and possessing a let's-get-things-done attitude. Do you believe this is an accurate description? Are there other traits revealed through her interaction with other characters in the story?
3. Pick sees Evel Knievel as a true American hero, not fake like Superman, yet Evel appears in the story only through what Buddy tells Pick and through what Pick overhears. Do you believe the real Evel is ever presented in the story?
4. By the end of the story do you believe Pick's idea of a true hero has changed? Do you think there are any true heroes in the story? Who would you describe as the hero of the story?
5. Pick often admits to lying to his grandmother or withholding details about his and Buddy's activities. How much of what Pick does that summer do you think Grandma Grace is aware of? What can you point out in the story that reveals a deeper awareness?
6. When Buddy asks Pick why he jumped, he replies that he doesn't know. Do you believe this is the truth? Why do you think he jumped?
7. When Buddy refers to Evel doing what he does for attention, Pick questions if this is his own true intention. Do you think there are scenes in the story when Pick is trying to get attention?
8. Early in the story Pick sees Twin Falls as a place filled with hicks. Does this change over the course of the summer? How does the big event on September 8 affect the people of Twin Falls and specifically Pick?
9. Are there events in your own childhood that you look back on with a different perspective than you had as a child. Is the town where you grew up anything like Twin Falls, Idaho?
10. How do you interpret the last line of the story?