

Worth a Thousand Words Discussion Questions

1) Jake tells himself all kinds of stories about what could have happened to his dad. At the end of the book, he reveals that he held back information from Tillie about a fight between his parents. Do you think Jake knew what happened to his dad all along? Do you think he believed multiple things at once? What stories do we tell ourselves in order to feel better?

2) Jake tells Tillie that she's so afraid of being made fun of and left out that she doesn't let people care about her or be her friend. Do you agree with Jake, or do you think her fear of mockery is reasonable? Do you ever feel afraid of making new friends?

3) Tillie's parents react in opposite ways to the car accident. Her mom worries too much, and her dad disappears into himself. What do you think would have been the best way to deal with it? Is there anything Tillie's parents do *right*?

4) Photography famously keeps the photographer at a constant distance, watching and observing rather than getting involved in the moment. This can be true of Tillie, too. However, photography is also the way that Tillie joins the world. She begins to interact with other students through the lost things in their lives. Do you think that photography, by its very nature, keeps the photographer outside of the moment? Do you think it's possible to be an observer and a participant, or do you have to choose?

5) Tillie gets in trouble with her parents for taking pictures of them and others without consent. Do you think Tillie went too far? Do you think her dad was too hard on her? Where is the line between art, curiosity and privacy?

6) One of the themes of *Worth a Thousand Words* is forgiveness. We all make mistakes, and we're all human. Do you think Tillie truly had already forgiven her dad? Or did anything in the story prompt her to truly forgive him entirely?