

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

PIPPA PARK CRUSH AT FIRST SIGHT

ABOUT THE BOOK

Pippa Park is starting to fit in as a scholarship student and basketball star at Lakeview Private. Eliot, her math tutor—and the cutest boy at school—is finally paying attention to her, and Marvel—her childhood friend—is making volunteering a lot more fun. The only thing she hasn't conquered is being completely accepted by the Royals, the popular girls that rule the school.

Now Pippa is faced with a challenge—planning and hosting the annual Christmas Eve party—that could make or break her social life with the Royals. When her family won't allow her to have the party due to expenses and when Pippa doesn't have the courage to tell the Royals because of a bully in their group, her life begins to spiral out of control. How will she host the party, find the perfect dress, and pick the right boy to invite?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erin Yun grew up in Frisco, Texas. She received her BA in English from New York University and is currently pursuing her Masters in Creative Writing at Cambridge. She developed the Pippa Park Author Program, an interactive writing workshop, which she has conducted in person and virtually at schools, libraries, and bookstores.



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Common Core State Standards addressed by the discussion questions and activities in this guide are noted throughout. For more information on the Common Core, corestandards.org.

★ PRE-READING ACTIVITY

■ Pippa says, "After coming clean about the real me and helping my team secure a major win in our first basketball game, I was finally settling in" (p. 3). Write a one-page paper that describes "the real Pippa." Have students write a concluding paragraph that discusses whether Pippa has truly settled in at Lakeview Private.

CCSS: Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-7.2; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 4-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 4-7.3

★ CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

■ Discuss Pippa and Mina's relationship. Explain what Pippa means by "Mina could make sunshine seem tragic" (p. 1). Mina always seems worried, and it affects her relationship with Pippa. What is the source of Mina's stress? How does she expect Pippa to be understanding of the family's financial situation? Debate whether she expects too much of Pippa. What is Jung-Hwa's role in the family dynamics? Cite scenes where Pippa confides in Jung-Hwa rather than Mina.

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■ How does Omma still maintain control over Pippa's life even though she lives in South Korea? Debate whether Omma would be sympathetic toward Pippa's desire to "fit in" at Lakeview School. What advice might Omma give Pippa? At the beginning of the novel, Pippa learns that Omma isn't coming for Christmas. How does this news disappoint Pippa? What is Omma's traditional role in the family's Christmas celebration?

■ Conflict in a novel is the problem to be solved, and it helps to establish the plot. Pippi is the main character, so the conflict must involve her. Two of the most common conflicts are man vs. man and man vs. self. Make the case that these two conflicts are prevalent in this novel. Cite evidence. At what point in the novel are both conflicts revealed?

■ Theme is the big idea or message of a novel. The need to belong, or acceptance, is an underlying theme in this novel. Cite specific scenes that reveal Pippa's strong need to belong. How does she feel caught between two worlds? Describe the two worlds in which she lives. Explain how these two worlds create conflict within Pippa. How does Pippa's need for acceptance affect everything she does in school and outside of school?

■ Pippa is struggling to achieve academically in school. What is Eliot's role in helping Pippa achieve in math? Explain why she would rather be tutored by Eliot at school than at his house. Discuss the crush she has on Eliot. At what point does Eliot finally express his feelings for Pippa? What conflict does this present?

■ Define *clique*. Consider what you know about the Royals and discuss whether they are a clique. Explain their reluctance to allow new girls in their group. Even though Pippa eats lunch with the Royals, she realizes



she's not one of them. At what point does she start believing that she is "inching closer to the inner circle"? Why is this so important to her?

■ Which of the Royals is the nicest to Pippa? Caroline and Bianca are the ones who have been slow to accept Pippa. What causes Bianca to change? Describe Caroline. Why does she get so much pleasure in insulting Pippa? What does this reveal about her character? Debate whether she is jealous of Pippa's athletic ability or prejudiced against Pippa's culture and her socioeconomic standing. The other Royals know that Caroline is the "mean girl." Why don't they do more to defend Pippa? How do they eventually come to Pippa's rescue?

■ Each year, the Royals have a Christmas Eve party. They wear fancy dresses, serve expensive food, and use extravagant decorations. Why do they think this is the most important social event of the year? How does Pippa become the hostess for this year's party? Why is it so important to Pippa that this party be a success? Explain how Pippa plans to pay for the party. Why didn't Caroline tell her that everyone chips in for the food? How is this another attempt to make Pippa fail?



■ Caroline says that every aspect of the Christmas party must meet the Royal standard. How might she define the Royal standard? Why is she so sure that Pippa's apartment can't make the cut? Pippa responds: "It's not about the space, it's about how you use it. That's the secret to the best parties" (p. 49). How does this obligate Pippa to throw the best party? Discuss how Pippa's statement proves to be very true. How might the Royals' idea of a great party change after Pippa's party?

■ A simile is a type of figurative language that compares two unlike things using “like” or “as.” Explain the following simile: “I felt like a lowly moth being drawn toward their irresistible warmth” (p. 51). Pippa says, “I knew I was headed toward danger, but I couldn’t turn away from their mesmerizing light” (p. 51). What is the danger? What is the mesmerizing light?

■ Mrs. Lee is learning to read tarot cards and offers to read Pippa’s and Buddy’s cards. A three-card reading includes a person’s past, present, and future. Pippa draws a card that clearly represents her past and present. Why isn’t Pippa sure she wants to know her future? Explain the meaning of the Tower card. Why does this card continue to haunt Pippa? Explain why Mrs. Lee always asks, “Does this card mean anything to you?” What is Mina’s attitude toward the tarot cards? What does Jung-Hwa mean when he says the readings are all about “perspective”?

■ Helen is dating Buddy, Pippa’s best friend from Victoria Middle School. Why does their relationship make Pippa feel odd? Explain Buddy’s reaction when he draws “The Lovers” card. Why does this card make Pippa feel “anxious”? Explain what Pippa means when she says: “I felt like I was losing him (Buddy). That he didn’t need me anymore now that he had upgraded to Helen” (p. 148). Why does Pippa think that Helen is an “upgrade”? Why does Pippa leave Buddy’s Hanukkah party? Explain what happens when Pippa reveals her feelings to Buddy and Helen.

■ Pippa needs to tell someone that the party is in jeopardy. Why is she confident that she can tell her troubles to Mrs. Lee? How does she blame Mrs. Lee for her problems? Discuss how Mrs. Lee helps Pippa accept responsibility for her own fate. Mrs. Lee offers Pippa the key to her apartment. Discuss what Pippa means when she says, “Mrs. Lee had given me much

more than her key” (p. 225). What is Jung-Hwa’s role in the success of the party? How does the party help everyone, including Mina, have a merry Christmas?

■ The Korean Baptist Church is having a Christmas pageant, and Mina suggests that Pippa offer to help. What is Pippa’s reaction to this suggestion? What does Mina gain from Pippa’s participation? Explain what Pippa means when she says that Mina was “guilt-tripping” her (p. 34). Why does Pippa finally agree to the arrangement?

■ Pastor Oh calls Pippa a natural leader. Discuss how she handles the children at rehearsal. What are the leadership skills that she displays? Debate whether she developed these skills on the basketball court. How do Pippa and Mina take pride in Pastor Oh’s compliment?

■ Pippa meets Marvel Moon at the first pageant rehearsal. How do they like one another at first sight? Marvel saw a text that Pippa received from Buddy and misinterprets it. How does this threaten Pippa and Marvel’s relationship? Explain how Pippa’s budding relationship with Eliot complicates matters with Marvel. Discuss the courage it takes to tell Marvel everything with 100% honesty. How does being honest and open about things give her a feeling of relief?

■ Explain the symbolism of the gold scrunchie that Helen and Bianca give Pippa the day after the party.

CCSS: Reading Literature: Key Ideas & Details RL. 4-7.1, 4-7.3; Craft & Structure RL. 4-7.4, 4-7.6; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 4-7.1, 4-7.3; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 4-7.1; Knowledge of Language L. 4-7.3; Vocabulary Acquisition & Use L. 4-7.5



★ CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

■ Each chapter in the book has a title and counts the number of days to Christmas. Assign students one of the chapters to summarize in a rap verse. Each verse should begin with a countdown to Christmas. For example, the first verse should begin with "25 days to Christmas"; the last verse should begin with "0 days until Christmas." Then have students perform the entire book as a rap.

CCSS: Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-7.1; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2

■ Metaphor is a type of figurative language that creates a certain image in the reader's mind by directly comparing two things. Write a paper that explains the following metaphor: "If Eliot was a solar eclipse overtaking the sky, Marvel was a pink-tinged sunset casting a warm glow over the horizons" (p. 127).

CCSS: Language: Vocabulary Acquisition & Uses. L. 5-8.5; Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-7.1; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2

■ Pippa says that her life is like a fairy tale. Which familiar fairy tale might she think her life most resembles? Who is her fairy godmother? Who might Pippa name as her stepsisters? Which character is Pippa's prince charming? What is the element of magic? Where is her ballroom? How does her story end happily ever after? Consider these points and write a fairy tale titled "Pippa."



CCSS: Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 5-7.1; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2

■ Study the meaning of the tarot cards on the following website: <https://www.tarot.com/tarot/cards>. Assign each student a member of the Royals. Instruct them to select a tarot card that best represents the character's "present." Write a paper

that explains the card and how it applies to the character. Cite specific scenes or quotes from the book to support the choice.

CCSS: Writing: Production & Distribution of Writing W. 5-7.4, W. 5-7.6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge W. 5-7.7, W. 5-8.9; Language: Conventions of Standard English L. 5-7.1, 4-7.2; Knowledge of Language L. 5-7.3

★ VOCABULARY/USE OF LANGUAGE

■ Ask students to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them by taking clues from context. Such words may include: *disgruntled* (p. 1), *indignation* (p.5), *neutral* (p. 24), *contortionist* (p. 40), *inadvertently* (p. 45), *bane* (p. 55), *cloyingly* (p. 97), *mutinous* (p. 100), *meticulous* (p. 113), *vengeance* (p. 119), *subtle* (p. 141), *imperious* (p. 152), *procrastinating* (p. 216), *carnage* (p. 218), *trepidation* (p. 228), *wary* (p. 162), and *salivate* (p. 247).

CCSS: Language: Vocabulary Acquisition & Use L. 4-7.4



The discussion questions and activities in this guide were written by Pat Scales, children's literature consultant and retired school librarian.