

# My Life as a Potato:

## End-of-chapter Discussion Questions

### Chapter 1:

-Ben has recently moved from California to Idaho. Have you ever moved houses or started at a new school? What was difficult about the change?

-Why does Ben decide to throw the hotdog?

-What words would you use to describe Ben? Hunter? Ellie? Share examples from the book to support your answers.

### Chapter 2:

-Do you think Ben deserves to be punished for tripping the mascot? Why or why not?

-Would you have accepted suspension or agreed to be the mascot? Why?

-What does Ben fear will happen if people find out he's the mascot? Do you think his fears would really come true?

### Chapter 3:

-How does Ben act differently around Duke than around Hunter and Ellie?

-Why does Ben want to be on Duke's good side? What is it about Duke that makes Ben want to please him?

-Ben doesn't tell Hunter or Ellie he's the mascot. Is it ever okay to hide things about yourself from your friends? What kinds of secrets should you share, and what should you keep private?

### Chapter 4:

-Coach believes that mascots can affect the outcome of a game. Why does he believe this? Do you agree? Why or why not?

-Have you ever seen a mascot perform? What was the mascot? What did they do?

-Coach said his signature move as Chester the Chipmunk was nibbling on the other team's mascot. If you were a mascot, what would you be? What would your signature move be?

### Chapter 5:

-On a scale from one to ten, how would you rate Ben's performance as a mascot in this chapter? What would you do differently if you were in his position?

-Do you think it's good to have school pride? Why or why not? Is there such a thing as too much school pride? When? How do you show your school pride?

-What do you think the clop was that Ben heard on the back of his suit?

### Chapter 6:

-Ben feels he is to blame for his team losing. Do you think he is to blame? Who else might be to blame?

-How does Ben's perspective of Coach change in this chapter? Why do you think Coach acts differently in this chapter than he has in previous chapters?

-Ben got knocked down by the Jackrabbit and laughed at by the other team. Have you ever witnessed someone getting bullied or teased? How did it make you feel? What can you do when you witness someone getting made fun of?

### Chapter 7:

-Do you think Ben can trust Mitch with his secret? Why or why not? How can you tell if someone is trustworthy?

-Ben's family likes to watch movies together, and Hunter's family has a family game night. What activities does your family enjoy doing together?

-Ben watches videos of mascots performing on Youtube. What else could Ben do to prepare?

### Chapter 8:

-Ben sometimes feels uncomfortable when Jayla is around. Why do people often act differently when their crush is around?

-Why do you think Ben insulted Cole?

-What do you think would be a fun way for Ben to answer Jayla to the dance?

## Chapter 9:

-Ben says that at his old school, the phrase, "Find a partner" used to send him into a panic. What are the pros and cons of teachers letting students pick their own groups to work in? How do you feel about students choosing their own groups?

-What do you think would have happened if Mitch had asked to join Ben's group? What do you think Ben would have done?

-If Ben acted nice to Mitch, do you think this would change the way Duke treated Mitch? Do you think this would change the way Duke treated Ben?

## Chapter 10:

-Do you agree with the phrase "Practice makes perfect"? Why or why not? When is this phrase true? When might it not be true?

-Ben says "A puppy can soften nearly all of life's problems." Why do you think animals are so good at making us feel better when we are sad or stressed?

-How do you predict the game will go for Ben tomorrow?

## Chapter 11:

-Ben says, "Maybe it wouldn't be so bad to be known as Spudboy after all." Do you think it would be smart for Ben to start telling people he is the Spud? Why or why not?

-Were you surprised when Jayla called Ben a "stupid potato"? Do you think this will affect how Ben thinks about Jayla? Why or why not?

-Ben starts to enjoy being a mascot in this chapter. Would you enjoy being a mascot? Why or why not?

## Chapter 12:

-How does Ben treat Mitch differently in this chapter than he did after the last game? Why do you think Ben is warming up to Mitch?

-Mitch says, "It's easier to be mean to someone when you don't know who's behind the mask." What do you think he means by this? Do you believe it's easier or harder to be mean to someone you don't know well? Why?

-Mitch doesn't consider Jayla a very nice person, but he doesn't know her very well. Is this fair? Why do you think he believes she's not nice?

## Chapter 13:

-Ben has a hard time focusing in math class because he's thinking about Jayla. What makes it difficult for you to focus during class at times? What helps you snap back into focus?

-What do you think Ben's secret super stunt might be?

-Ben says, "Everyone decides who's who at the beginning of the year. Who's gonna be the quiet kid. Who's gonna be the funny kid. Who's gonna be the teacher's pet...If you try to break out of your label, it just feels weird." Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

## Chapter 14:

-Do you think Ben is getting more or less comfortable around Jayla? Why? What might they have in common?

-What do you think Ellie would have done if she had seen Ben at the ice cream shop with Jayla?

-What kind of revenge do you think Duke and Paris are planning for the Spud?

## Chapter 15:

-Ben thinks he has a chance to win a student council election because Duke and Jayla have been befriending him. Do you think being friends with popular people helps you get elected?

-What are the qualities of a good leader?

-Do you think Ben would have a chance at student council if people found out he was the Spud? Why or why not?

## Chapter 16:

-A lot of people are disappointed in this chapter. Ben, Duke, Coach, the crowd. Who do you think feels the worst right now? Why?

-Ben tried his best, but when his potato rolled onto the court, he accidentally caused the team to lose. When have you practiced hard for something, but it didn't turn out the way you expected?

-When Ben was spying on Mitch and Ellie in the stands, he said it looked like they were in the middle of a serious conversation. What do you think they might be talking about?

## Chapter 17:

- Were the fans justified in their anger toward Ben? What might have happened if they pulled off Ben's mask?
- If you were in Ben's position, would you continue to be the Spud for the final game? Why or why not?
- What are some of the emotions Coach is feeling during this scene? If Coach had yelled at Ben, do you think that would make Ben more or less likely to go through with the last game? Why?

## Chapter 18:

- Why is Ben afraid to speak up and defend the Spud?
- Jayla and Ellie both notice people around school are upset with the Spud. How does each girl respond to the situation differently?
- If people at school knew Ben was the mascot, how do you think they would treat him? How long would this treatment last?

## Chapter 19:

- Ben's dad gets an email from his teacher and comes into his room to see why Ben has been acting strangely. What does Ben's dad do well during the conversation? What could he have done better?
- Do you think it was a good thing or a bad thing that Ms. Wu emailed Ben's parents? What does this tell you about Ms. Wu?
- Ellie is upset when she finds out Ben is not actually grounded. She tells Ben that he would rather be hanging out with cool people like Jayla. Ben responds, "It's not like that." But is there some truth to Ellie's statement? How can you tell?

## Chapter 20:

- What do you think Hunter and Ellie are thinking when Ben sits at the other lunch table?
- Why do you think Cole hasn't told anyone Ellie asked him to the dance?
- How do you think Ellie would respond if Ben told her he likes her? Would it ruin their friendship?

## Chapter 21:

- Dad tells Ben's Mom to give him some space instead of following him up the stairs. Do you think this was the right move? Why or why not?
- When Ben's in bed, he says that "there's only one place to escape" and turns on a game on his phone. Have you found that using a phone or playing an online game helps you relieve stress? Is this a healthy way to relieve stress? Why or why not?
- When Ben's mom comes into his room to talk, he pretends to be asleep. If you were in Ben's situation, would you tell your parents what was going on? Why or why not?

## Chapter 22:

- When Ben sees the picture of Mitch with his new quadcopter, he almost starts crying. Why is this such a big deal to him?
- Why does Ben end up going back to school? List some of the reasons.
- Ellie is willing to forgive Ben even before hearing the whole truth. Is she forgiving him too early? Why do you think she forgives him so quickly?

## Chapter 23:

- Ben remembers Coach saying, "If you set your mind on something, nothing will get in your way." What does this saying really mean?
- A couple fans are still upset with Ben for tripping Duke during the previous game. How does Ben handle the hecklers? Do you think he handles them well?
- Who do you think is in the Spud costume? What evidence do you have?

## Chapter 24:

- Why did Ben decide to cannon ball inside the pool?
- Do you think it was good for Ben to start the potato fight? Why or why not? What do you think his punishment is going to be from the school?
- How do you think Jayla feels after watching Ben come clean as the mascot? What do you think is going to happen between her and Ben?

## Chapter 25:

- How has Ben's attitude toward school spirit changed? Why do you think he has changed his attitude?
- Why do you think Duke isn't acting angry towards Ben? Is this realistic?
- If there were a sequel from another character's point of view, which character would you like to hear from? Why?