



DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Tris introduces his sister Jeanine by saying “she’s always sure there’s a right answer. So when there is no right or wrong, when it’s just red or blue, plain or sesame, she totally falls apart” (2). What does this tell us about Jeanine? How are she and Tris similar to and different from each other?
2. *The Doughnut Fix* is full of descriptions of food, eating, cooking, and baking from start to finish. What role does food play in the Levin family?
3. How does the Levin family’s move from New York City to Petersville impact their social lives, including friendships and other relationships?
4. Tris says, “Usually, I’m not into stuff about the universe speaking to you and all that, but sometimes when things happen in a certain way, it makes you think about why and what it means” (31). Do you believe in signs from the universe? What experiences in your own life have impacted your belief?
5. Jeanine tells Tris that she’s rereading *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* because “it makes me feel better” (34). Why would reading a book she’s read before make her feel better? Do

you have any favorite books, songs, movies, etc. that you like to revisit? How do they make you feel?

6. On their first night in the new house, Tris tells Jeanine that their parents might move back to New York City if the family is unhappy in Petersville, even though he doesn't really believe this is true (37). Why does he say it? What does that tell us about Tris and his relationship with Jeanine?
7. What does Tris see and experience during his first walk through downtown Petersville (41-44)? What hints are there about what will happen later in the book?
8. Tris is surprised and suspicious when Jim offers him a ride home during the flash flood (50). Why does Tris react the way he does? How does this episode illustrate some key differences between Petersville and New York City?
9. What are the dynamics between Tris and his sisters? How does the move to Petersville impact his relationships with them?
10. The members of the Levin family have diverse passions, skills, and talents. How does each character follow their passion to make unique contributions in the family and/or in the town?
11. *The Doughnut Fix* features a lively cast of local characters. Which Petersville characters stick out to you and why? What do you know about them? How do they play a role in the novel?
12. What role do books and reading play for different characters in *The Doughnut Fix*?
13. How does Tris's interest in doughnuts become the project his parents hoped he'd develop? What does he learn through the process of starting his doughnut business?
14. Charlie Kramer (and his dad) think kids can't start businesses. What do you think? How does Tris prove them wrong? What kind of business would you like to start (if you haven't done so already)?
15. The Levin family's first Thanksgiving in Petersville is notably different from what they were used to in New York City (126-128). Does their relationship to food and eating change as a result of their move?
16. Tris has to use math he's learned at school to write his budget. When he runs into trouble, he says, "I knew I was making mistakes, like always. The thing is, all those other times I'd messed up some math problem, it had been in school, and those mistakes hadn't really mattered since those questions were all made-up. But *this* problem, the doughnut problem, wasn't made-up, and if I messed up this time, I'd be messing up something real" (133). What does Tris mean by this distinction between "made-up" and "real" problems? What does that distinction tell you about how Tris feels about school? How does the doughnut project allow Tris to use what he learned in school in ways that he hasn't before? Does his distinction between school problems and "real" problems resonate with you?
17. How does Tris deal with his frustration, such as when he's having trouble with the math for his budget (135-136)? What do you do when you feel frustrated, overwhelmed, or anxious?

18. Why doesn't Tris want Jeanine to help him with the math for his budget (136-140)? Why is it important to him that he figure things out for himself?
19. How is Tris's doughnut business a team effort? What contributions do his family members, friends, and other Petersville residents make to its launch?
20. Many of the adult characters in *The Doughnut Fix* experience career changes or follow unique professional pathways, including Tris's parents, Dr. Charney, and Riley from Stinky Cheese Farm. How did the adults in your life find their career paths? To what extent are they still figuring out what they want to do in life? How do you envision your own future career and professional life?
21. Tris's parents intend for his project to serve as a temporary substitute for school. How does the doughnut project function as a learning experience that's similar to and different from traditional school?
22. How does each member of the Levin family cope with the transition of moving to Petersville? Whose strategies seem to be most effective in helping them adapt to their new environment and how do you know?
23. What are Charlie and Josh like as friends to Tris? How do Tris's relationships with each of them change throughout the novel? What causes those changes?
24. When Tris's dad asks Jeanine why the Solve-a-thon is so important to her, she says it's because "I don't have anything here" (195). What does she mean by that? Why does she believe that Tris is "good at Petersville" and she isn't (196-197)? How would you explain the Solve-a-thon's importance to Jeanine?
25. Tris's mother advises him, "The whole is always bigger than the parts when you're talking food. The magic happens when you put them together" (207). How does this idea connect to other aspects of *The Doughnut Fix*? Does this idea ring true to you with respect to food and other aspects of your own life?
26. When Tris learns that Zoe's imaginary friends have gone "home home," he concludes, "I guess Zoe was still waking up in the wrong place too" (209). What does he mean by that? What do Zoe's imaginary friends reveal about her experience of moving to Petersville?
27. When Tris finally finishes making his first batch of doughnuts, he hesitates to take the first bite because they might not be "great": "if it *was* just a good doughnut, I didn't want to know" (213). Have you ever felt this kind of hesitation after anticipating something for a long time? What did you do?
28. Tris's first taste of chocolate cream doughnut is full of sensory details (212-213). Have you ever eaten something that you would describe as "life changing"? What was it like?
29. Tris and Josh decide that they have an obligation to tell Winnie that they tweaked her doughnut recipe (224), but when they try to tell her the truth, she doesn't believe them (248). Why do they believe that they have to tell her? Why don't they try to force the issue with her? What would you do if you were in their position?
30. After Jim offers to let Tris and Josh advertise their doughnut business on his truck, Tris says, "I'd never met a 'why not?' person before. In the city, there's generally more of a 'why should I?' kind of vibe" (233). What's the difference between these two kinds of people? Which type are you and how do you think you developed that perspective?

31. Tris says that while his parents had lots of rules for him in New York City, in Petersville they have only one (243). Why are the rules different? What are the “rules” where you live?
32. Jeanine continues to think of New York City as home even after she’s been living in Petersville for several months. How does her idea of home affect her life in Petersville?
33. Why does Jeanine hug Tris after he helps her climb down from the tree (255)? How is this moment significant in their relationship?
34. Why does Tris decide to give the doughnuts away instead of selling them (281)? What do you think of his decision? What would you do?
35. How does Tris change and grow throughout the book? What experiences prompt that growth?
36. *The Doughnut Fix* is the first book in a series. What do you think will happen next?
37. What does the title *The Doughnut Fix* mean? What gets “fixed” by doughnuts in the novel?

Activity ideas:

- Draw a web to visually represent the relationships—positive, negative, or something in between—that the characters in *The Doughnut Fix* have with each other.
- Use “The Cheat Sheet” in the back of the book to conceptualize your own business. For Start-Your-Own activities, including downloadable ad and budget worksheets, please visit jessiejanowitz.com.