

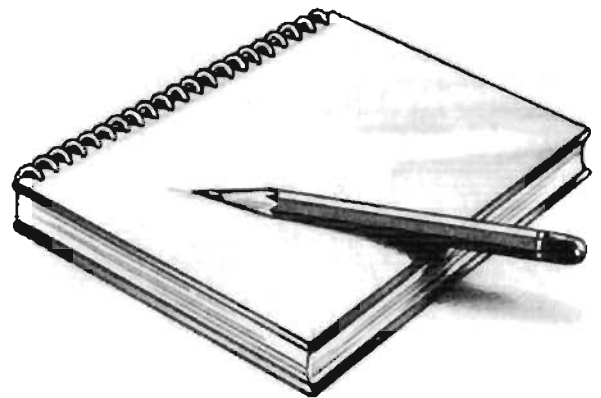
Take My Word For It

A JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF WORDS

Exploring the Text

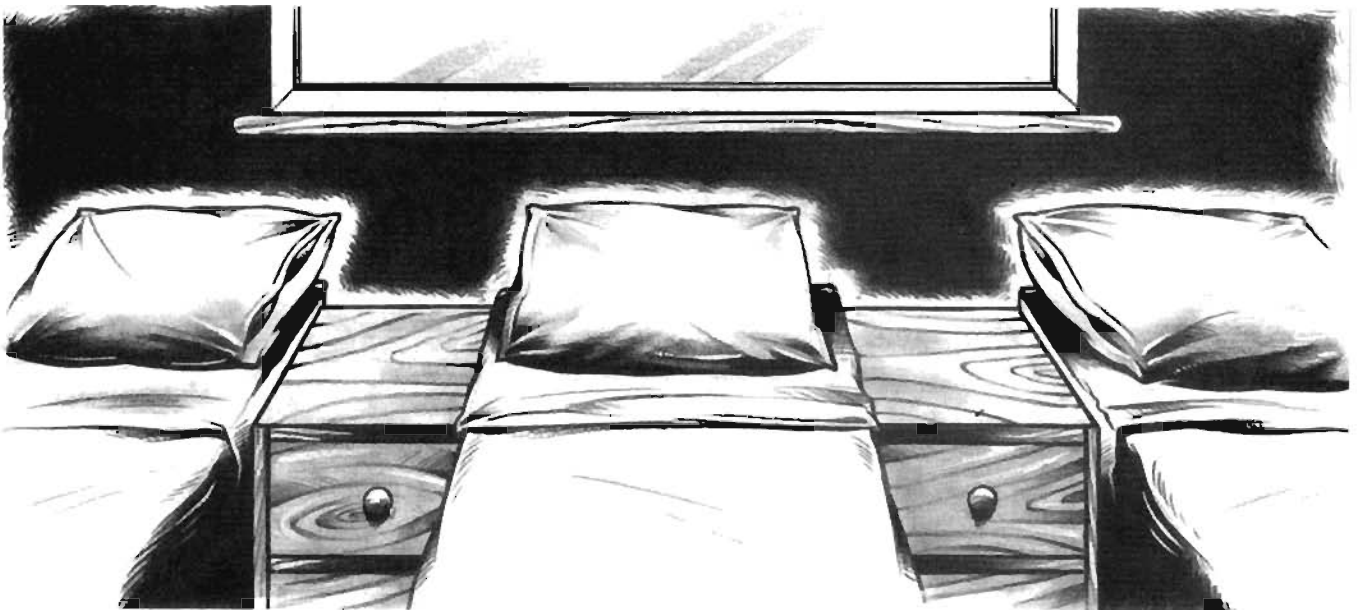
Check with your teacher about which questions to try.

- ① What do Lisa's ideas about journal writing tell us about her attitude to school work? (pp. 1–2).
- ② What do you think prompts girls like Ann Maltin to be a 'suck'? (p. 5).
- ③ Do you think Lisa is being reasonable wanting Marina to **'show a bit of guts'**? (p. 8). Explain.
- ④ Why do other people want to know your problems? (p. 13).
- ⑤ **'Sometimes I feel like doing terrible things. The last time haunts me. I don't want to remember it, but it sneaks back into my mind'** (p. 15). Why is it that if you know you have done something that, perhaps, hurt somebody or yourself, it keeps **'sneaking into your mind'**? How can you stop it sneaking?
- ⑥ What might have prompted Lisa to try to **'be nicer to people'**? (p. 24).
- ⑦ Lisa **'believed in everything'** while she was at 'Connewarre' (p. 27). Do you have a place where you believe in everything? What is it about such a place that has this effect? Does it have to be a physical place or could it be inside you?

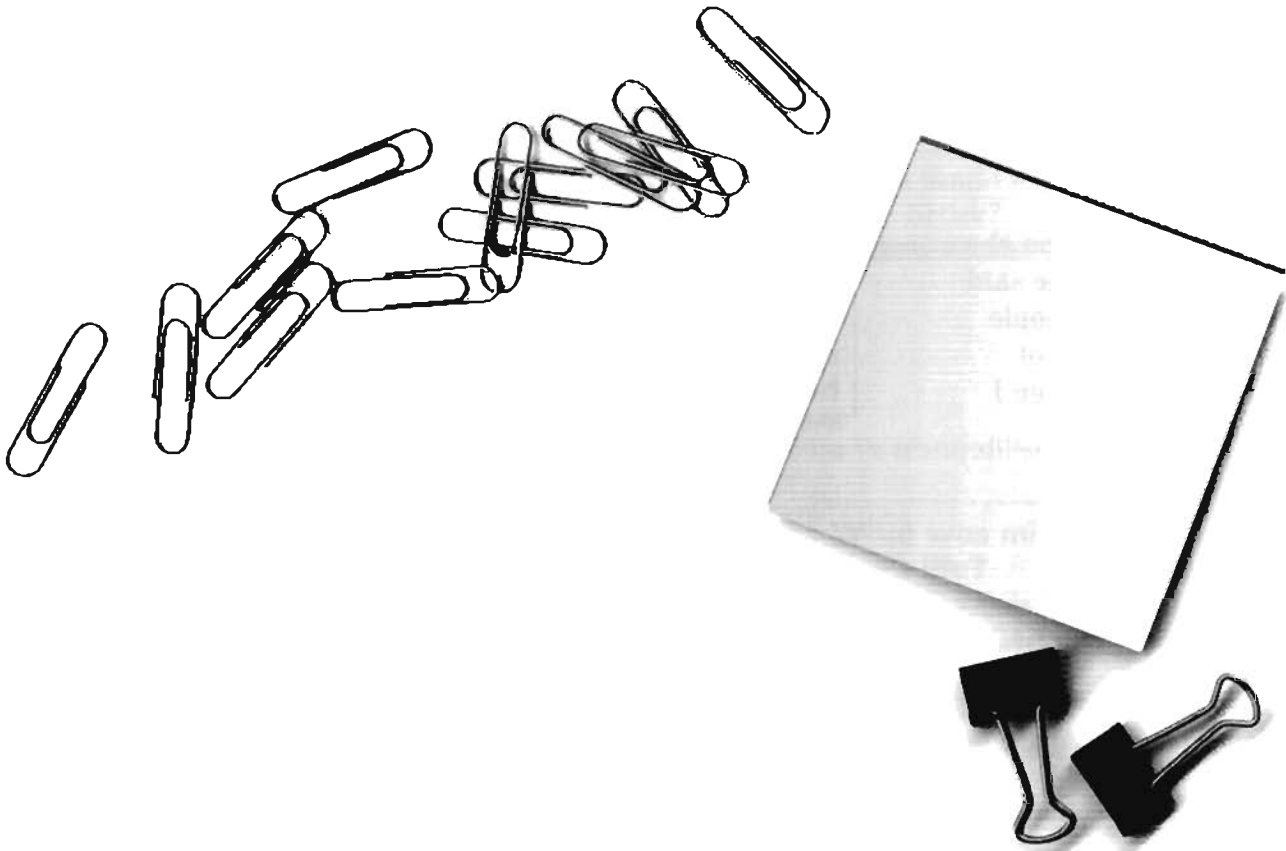


Page references are to the Pan 1993 paperback edition of *Take My Word For It*.

- 8 'I don't think I'm going to be the kind of adult I dreamed of being when I was a kid' (p. 34). What kind of adult do you dream of being? What obstacles do you think you might have to overcome?
- 9 'Sometimes I'd love to have a really good friend, someone I could talk to about anything, and trust with a secret' (p. 48). Do you have such a friend? How does such a friendship develop? Are friendships between girls different from friendships between boys? Explain.
- 10 'I started thinking that my family would have been better off if I had never been born' (p. 64). What do these thoughts suggest about Lisa?
- 11 Lisa had a fight with her mother and felt she should apologise for the 'off thing' she said. She writes that she is not good at apologising, and definitely does not like doing it (p. 57). How good are you at apologising? Is it easier to apologise to some people than others? Why? Give examples.
- 12 Chloe rings Lisa and is very upset because she thinks their father might marry Lynette. Neither of the sisters likes Lynette. The family is breaking up further. Meanwhile, Lisa is meant to be preparing for a debate on the topic 'Life is Bliss?' (p. 70). What is bliss for you? Is your list anything like Lisa's?
- 13 Lisa writes about Sophie complaining about her 'det' (p. 82). What do you most like about school? What do you most complain about?
- 14 Cathy writes in Lisa's journal, 'If only you let people ... read this journal' (p. 84). Many people think Lisa a bit hard to approach. Do you think reserved people are misunderstood? Why do you think some people are reserved? How would you try to become friendly with such a person?
- 15 What are your impressions of Kate? Do you have a friend who is 'biologically unable to whisper'? (p. 83). How do you get close to someone like Kate?



- 16 Marina wrote in Lisa's journal (p. 85). How much courage, loneliness or desperation did it take for Marina to write in Lisa's diary? What do you think were the risks Marina took in doing so?
- 17 **'Funny, a year ago it would have been Issy and Kizzy ... Friendships change so much' (p. 90).** Do you find the same thing happening? List as many reasons as you can for why this happens. Are friendships in primary school different from those in secondary school? Explain.
- 18 **'The only cure is to care about as many things as you can' (p. 92).** Do you agree with Lisa's mother? In what way does caring about things and people help you to grow? What do you care about? Why?
- 19 **'I wish I wouldn't keep noticing things like that ... It makes relationships so complicated' (p. 94).** Can you explain Lisa's idea?
- 20 **'Sometimes I think Marina and I have a lot in common' (p. 98).** List all the things you think Lisa and Marina have in common. What do you have in common with them?
- 21 **'Kate lives her life on the outside' (p. 99).** Marina and Lisa live theirs on the inside. Where do you live yours? Explain.
- 22 Are you a 'waver' or do you need to wave more? (p. 113).
- 23 In what ways might journal writing help you and your friends?



Think it through talk it over

In groups or as a class, discuss one or more of these topics.

1 Asking

When and why do you feel the need to ask for help?

Would you give help if you were asked? Give examples of when you would and when you wouldn't help if asked.

How could you help people who do not ask for help?

If you do not ask for help, do you resent it when it is offered, or do you welcome it? Explain.

2 Winning

Do you have trouble with coming second? Explain.

If you play only to win, what happens when you lose?

Is there any satisfaction in the effort, even if you don't win?

Does the fact that you don't win make you a loser?

3 Leadership

Lisa is very surprised when she reads Cathy's journal. 'She said I'm a sort of a leader – people expect me to take charge of things, and they listen when I give an opinion' (p. 33).

Do you see yourself as a leader? Why? Why not?

What qualities in a person stamp them as a leader?

Which of these qualities do you have?

How do you get people to listen when you give an opinion?

What is most expected of a leader?

4 Making yourself heard

'There are things I want to talk about but can't. It gives me a big lump inside' (p. 48).

What is the 'big lump' inside Lisa?

How do you think Lisa's lump got there?

What should she do to get rid of her lump?

Why does it stop her from sharing her troubles with others?

What stops you from talking about yourself to others?

5 Risks

Lisa's mum said, 'The greatest risk is to take no risk' (p. 59).

What do you think Lisa's mother meant?

Are there some risks not worth taking? Why?

What would make something too risky to try?

What risk would you most like to take? Explain.

What risk would you never take? Explain.

Does risking safety or life show courage or stupidity? Explain.

Is taking risks with relationships easier or more difficult than taking physical risks?

6 First impressions

'A lot of people have got the wrong idea about her – they go on their first impressions and don't look any closer' (p. 65).

How reliable are first impressions? Discuss what you look for.

How closely do you look when you meet someone new?

Are there some people that you feel you know immediately? Why do you think this happens?

What kind of first impression would make you want to get to know someone better?

7 How much is enough?

'Finally, without really thinking about it, I swallowed Dad's tranquillisers' (p. 110).

Is it possible to attempt suicide without really thinking? Explain.

How difficult is it to fight if you have nothing to fight for?

What is more important: how you live or why you live?

Can you live without a 'why'?

What was missing in Lisa's life?

Do people give up too easily? Explain.

Do they give up because they think they are strong and won't ask for help? Explain.

Do you have to be strong to ask for help? Why or why not?



ANYTHING GOES

Although Lisa's life is a very busy one and she is great at sport, she is a very private girl. Let's see what we can do to bring her, and her friends, alive. Try one or more of the following activities.

Who am I? Select three of the characters and write a WHO AM I? on each.



overheads Make overhead transparencies and use them to illustrate points you would like to make about the novel or the characters. The illustrations do not necessarily have to be realistic; they can be symbolic or abstract. Maybe you would like to think of a flower, an animal or a colour to represent each character. Be prepared to give reasons for your choice.



quiz Write a series of quiz questions on the characters and events in the novel. Select three panel members and a chairperson. You could provide buzzers or bells (or any other quick means of making a noise) and turn it into a contest.

dance In groups of three or four, prepare a dance to communicate feelings of the characters – happiness – loneliness – elation (winning the rowing) – despair (the overdose scene).

