

***When the Sky Falls* by Phil Earle**

Discussion Guide

Before Joseph Arrives

1. Why are children being evacuated from London during the war?
2. How do you think Joseph feels when he has to leave his home?
3. What might Joseph be worried about as he travels to a new place?

Arriving at Mrs F's House

1. What are your first impressions of Mrs F?
2. Why do you think Mrs F seems so strict and unfriendly?
3. How does Joseph react when he first arrives?
4. What can we learn about Joseph from the way he behaves towards adults?

Discovering the Zoo

1. What surprises Joseph about Mrs F's home?
2. What is unusual about the zoo?
3. Which animal interests Joseph first and why?
4. How does the setting of the zoo make the story more exciting?

Meeting Adonis

1. What are your first thoughts about Adonis the gorilla?
2. Why is Joseph both frightened and fascinated by Adonis?
3. What do you think Adonis represents in the story?
4. What similarities can you find between Joseph and Adonis?

Building Relationships

1. How does Joseph begin to change as he spends more time at the zoo?
2. What responsibilities is Joseph given?
3. How does caring for the animals help Joseph grow as a person?
4. At what point do Joseph and Mrs F begin to understand each other better?
5. What does Joseph learn about Mrs F's past that changes his opinion of her?

Life During Wartime

1. How is the war affecting the people in the town?
2. What dangers do the characters face because of the war?
3. Why are some people concerned about keeping zoo animals during wartime?

4. How do the difficulties of wartime bring some characters closer together?

Rising Tension

1. Why does Joseph become so protective of Adonis?
2. What difficult choices do Mrs F and the other adults face?
3. Which character shows the greatest courage as tensions increase? Explain your answer.

The Climax

1. How do the bombing raids change everything for the zoo and its animals?
2. What emotions did you experience during the story's most dramatic moments?

Looking Back

1. By the end of the story, what has Joseph learned about friendship, family, courage, loss, and hope?

Questions for Deeper Thinking

- Why do you think the author chose a gorilla as such an important character?
- What does the title *When the Sky Falls* mean both literally and symbolically?
- Which character changes the most during the story?
- Which scene from the graphic novel was the most memorable and why?
- What lessons from Joseph's journey could help people today?