

Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie

By: Jordan Sonnenblick



Reading Response Journal

Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie

Preview the Book

1. Read the back of the book. Analyze the author's writing style. In your opinion, which word best describes the author's tone? Use a text reference to support your opinion.

Jovial malicious soft-spoken solemn droll sincere

2. Read the reviews. Based on the back cover summary and the reviews, predict the plot of the novel.

3. Read the Acknowledgements. This is the place where authors thank people who have supported them in writing their books. Pretend you are Jordan Sonnenblick.

Write a list of the top 3 things you are grateful for based on the information in this section.

4. Look at the Table of Contents. Which title stands out the most to you? Why?
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Reading Response Journal- "Dangerous Pie"

5. This chapter begins as the main character reflects back to the past year. Use the information on the first page of this chapter to **infer** what the special occasion is. Use a text reference to support your answer.

6. **HIGH-LEVEL THINKING:** Reflect upon what you know about this type of occasion. Why would it lead the character to recollect about the last year?

7. How does the journal entry writing lead to Steven writing about his little brother Jeffrey?

8. Based on this chapter, complete the list for Stephen.

Likes:

Dislikes:

9. Explain what each excerpt from the story means.

“How would you like to be King of the Planet for 8 glorious years, and then be demoted to Vice-King?”

“And while he’s being much too cute and following me around, he also destroys all my stuff, including my self-esteem and my sanity.”

“As this was such a grand occasion, I decided to take the special sticks down from their sacred perch and use them for my practice-pad warm-up.”

10. All of the other members of the band have nicknames that relate to royalty (King, Duke, Princess, Count). **What is Steven’s nickname and why is it significant?**

11. **FORESHADOWING** is when an author gives clues or hints about what might happen later in the story. The last sentence in this chapter is, “Looking back at those days now, I’d have *eaten* the Dangerous Pie if I could have stopped October from coming. Based on your book preview and information in this chapter, **predict what will happen in October.**

12. What is the genre for this book?

13. How do you know?

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Reading Log- “Jeffrey’s Moatmeal Accident”

14. What are ‘rents?
15. Analyze Jeffrey’s speech style. What are some unique words or phrases he uses?
16. How does Jeffrey’s speech style form a picture in your head about the kind of character he is?
17. **ONOMATOPOEIA** is a type of figurative language in which the words mimic the sound they represent. (pop, slam, etc..) Look on page 16 to find a sentence that shows onomatopoeia and then write the sentence.
18. Why does the author write some parts of this chapter in regular print and other parts in slanted print called *italics*?
19. What does Steven mean when he says everyone in his family talks in
“CAPITAL LETTERS”?
20. **SARCASM** is a type of figurative language in which what is said is the exact opposite of what is meant in order to be funny. This excerpt shows an example of sarcasm:

“You know what, Mom? I body-slammed him, OK? I decided it would be really fun to set a five-year-old on a bar stool at 6:42 a.m., take a running leap, and knock him down like we were trying out for the WWF. It worked great, too.”

What does Steven really mean?

21. **SYMBOLISM** is when an author uses another object or idea to represent a deeper meaning. While Steven’s mom is carrying Jeffrey to the car, Steven explains that “I had this weird feeling that my brother was getting smaller and smaller.”

What does this symbolize?

22. How does Steven feel about his place in his family? Use information from the text and your own ideas to support your answer.

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Reading Log- “Anxiety with Tic Tacs”

23. What is Steven nervous about?
 24. Compare Renee and Annette using a Venn Diagram. Put at least 3 ideas from the story in each part of the diagram.
 25. Make a prediction. What do you think will happen with Steven and Renne in the story?
 26. What do you think will happen with Steven and Annette?
 27. Which type of figurative language is represented by this excerpt:
“Oh, I don’t know Mr. W. I was really hoping to play cowbell on it. Or... maybe... I don’t know... the triangle?”
 28. What does Steven really mean?
 29. Why is Steven’s first feeling relief when his mom tells him that JeffRy has leukemia?
 30. Use these words to write a summary of the chapter:
Tic Tacs math anxiety playing drums spring concert leukemia
 31. Which point-of-view is this story written in?
 32. How do you know?
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Reading Log- “The Fat Cat Sat”

33. What kind of figurative language is represented by the sentence
“I’m going to be like Robin Hood”?
34. How does Steven feel about Jeffry having cancer? Use information from the text to support your answer.

35. How will the Alper's life change?

36. What will each character do and where will they go?

Mom-

Dad-

Steven-

Jeffrey-

37. On the last page of the chapter, Steven explains that:

"If I had known that this would basically be the last time I'd have both parents paying attention to me at once, I probably would have taken the hug.

What kind of literary device is this?

38. What do you predict will happen to this family?

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Reading Log- "Jeffrey's Vacation"

39. Why does Steven tell Jeffrey his explanation about raccoons?

40. Why do you think Steven didn't tell anyone at school about Jeffrey's leukemia?

41. How does Steven's dad react to Jeffrey's illness?

42. Why do you think he reacts this way?

Complete the sentences by filling in phrases to help the paragraph make sense.

While I was watching Renee in math class, Jeffrey was ____43.____. When Annette was smacking my arm, ____44.____. When I was laughing at a teacher's joke, ____45.____. It was ridiculous that everyone but me was ____46.____.

Steven talks about different roles “guys” have in a group.

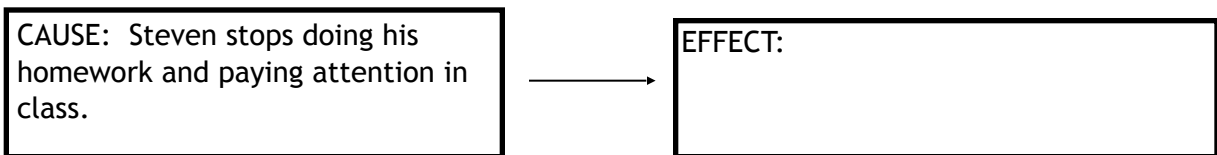
47. What roles does he think he represents? _____ and _____.

48. How does this affect how people view him during the time period when he is waiting to hear news about Jeffrey?

49. What does Steven mean by the expression, “who died and left you Sherlock Holmes”?

CAUSE and EFFECT: Sometimes events in a story are connected. The first event CAUSES the second event to happen which is the EFFECT.

50. Finish the CAUSE and EFFECT diagram with what you predict will happen.



51. Draw a picture of Steven playing drums, Renee walks in while “in the Zone”.

52. Draw a picture of Steven after the music room.

53. Why do you think Renee affect Steven in this way?

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Reading Log- “No More Vacation”

An **ANECDOTE** is a short, amusing story. Steven tells an anecdote about Jeffrey in this excerpt:

“Once we drove to the Outer Banks for a vacation when Jeffrey was three, and he stayed up until after midnight on the way down. At about 10 p.m., while he was giving me a lecture on the various Rescue Heroes, and why a Voice-Tech Rescue Hero is completely different from a Body Force Rescue Hero, my parents pulled off the highway into a Cracker Barrel restaurant and rented a Charlotte’s Web book on tape to shut him up. But even then, he made my mom stop the tape every fifteen minutes so he could ask long strings of questions.”

54. Why does Steven share this anecdote?

55. What is the connection to the story?

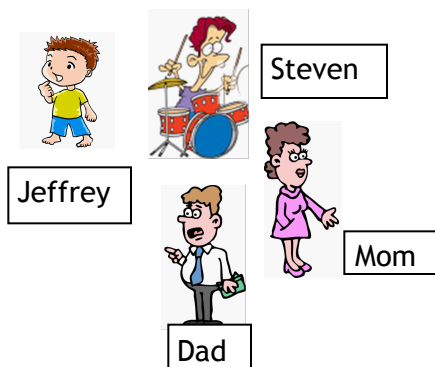
Think about how the characters in the Alper family interacted with each other when Jeffrey and Mom return from Philadelphia. **Write 2 or 3 words explaining the relationship between:**

56. **Steven and Jeffrey** :Steven feels annoyed by Jeffrey but also like his protector. Jeffrey feels_____ about Steven but also_____.

57. **Steven and Mom**

58. **Jeffrey and Dad**

59. **Dad and Mom**



60. Why does Steven tell Jeffrey to throw up on his dress shoes next time?

61. What is Jeffrey’s diagnosis?

62. What is Jeffrey's prognosis (chance of getting better)?

63. Why do you think Steven doesn't want his parents to tell the school about Jeffrey's cancer?

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Reading Log- "Take Me"

64. How does bargaining relate to Steven in this part of the story?

65. How does Steven seeing Annette play the piano change his perception of her?

66. Explain the "frowny"/"smily" rating system used by Stephen and Jeffrey when visitors dropped by the house.

67. What 4 adjectives best describe how Steven felt about the school dance.

68. Do you think Steven's mom should have had the DJ announce that she was there to pick him up?

69. Why do you think she did this?

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Reading Log- "Fever"

70. Steven's mom tells him that Jeffrey's fever could be serious, but what other clues show Steven there might really be something to worry about? Name three.

71. What are some of the medical terms from the chapter? Try to name at least 10.

Put a circle ○ around any words you know what they mean. Put a star ☆ next to

words you have heard before. Put an "X" by any words you have never heard before.

72. What role does Stephen play with Jeffrey in the hospital?

73. What problem, other than Jeffrey's cancer, does Steven learn is plaguing his family?

74. When Steven's mom says, "Should I storm into your graduation wearing sweatpants?" What type of figure of speech is this?

75. What does she really mean?

76. What is the significance of this toy to the story?



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Reading Log- "Trouble"

77. What figure of speech is represented in the following excerpt?:

"It was a really stupid and pointless defense, like when a turtle tucks into its shell because a locomotive is barreling down on it."

78. What does this mean?

79. Think about how Annette and Renee react to Steven. What is the difference?

80. Write one example of how Steven uses sarcasm in this chapter.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER means the order in which events occur. Put these events into correct chronological order. (1-5)

81. ____ Steven tells his teachers his brother has cancer.

82. ____ Steven is called down to the office.

83. ____ Steven meets with his teachers.

84. ____ Steven talks with Mrs. Galley.

85. ____ Annette asks Steven if he got in trouble for skipping math class.

86. Who told Miss Palma about Jeffrey's cancer?

87. What do you think Steven means by "Holy cow. Renee Albert knew I was alive. But I wished I were dead."

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Reading Log- “Starving in Siberia”

88. Find Siberia on a map. What do you think the temperature is like in Siberia?

HYPERBOLE is a literary term for exaggeration. In this excerpt, Steven uses hyperbole to make a point.

“I seriously think I could have sat in the middle of the kitchen floor rubbing two sticks together over a pile of dynamite blocks and gasoline cans, and my parents would have been oblivious, as long as I was keeping myself occupied.”

89. What is his point?

Put these events in chronological order:

90. _____ Annette tells Steven Renee was curious about him.

91. _____ Steven and mom get in a fight.

92. _____ Miss Palma and Mr. Waltra call Steven.

93. _____ Steven gets the flu.

94. _____ Steven finishes his assigned work.

95. _____ Steven finds dad at the kitchen table crying.

96. _____ Steven is sent to “Siberia” (Where is he really sent?)

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Reading Log- “Pointlessness and Boy Perfume”

97. Why was dad crying?
98. What is Steven’s ‘What’s the Point?’ stage?
99. How does Steven feel about Renee’s sudden interest in him? Compare this to how he feels about Annette’s interest in him.
100. What is Jeffrey’s synonym for cologne?
101. What was the significance of Steven not letting Renee come into his house for the math tutoring session? Use text from the book to support your answer.
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Reading Log- “The Silver Lining”

An **IDIOM** is a saying or expression. “Every cloud has a silver lining” is an idiom.

102. What does this mean?
103. Why does Steven’s social status change?
- Steven and his parents come to some surprising realizations about each other and themselves. Write and finish each phrases so that it makes sense.
104. Dad realizes that
105. Mom realizes that
106. Steven realizes that

107. Draw a picture showing 3 ways the Alper family's life changed in this chapter. Label each idea.

108. Explain what Steven means in this excerpt:

“But just because you get distracted by the silver lining for a little while, that doesn't mean there's not a huge dark cloud behind it.”

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Reading Log- “Fear, Gum, Candy”

109. Some people believe dreams hold messages about our subconscious thinking. Summarize Steven's dream.

110. What do you think the dream tells about Steven's subconscious thinking?

111. How does Steven patch up his relationship with Renee?

112. Why do you think Annette is upset with Steven?

113. What is Mrs. Galley's advice?

114. Think about something you have/are worried about. What is the situation and how could you apply Mrs. Galley's advice to it?

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Reading Log- “Good News, Bad News”

115. How does Steven try to help his family save money?
116. Why do you think he tried to give Mr. Stoll the Special Sticks?
117. What do you notice about how Steven’s reactions to Renee and Annette are changing?
118. What is the “good news” in this chapter?
119. What is the “bad news” in this chapter?
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Reading Log- “Close Shaves in an Unfair World”

120. If you could pick one word in the English language to describe the universe, what would it be? (your ideas.... Not Steven’s). Explain your answer using 2 or 3 examples from your life or the world.
121. What does Steven do to help Jeffrey feel better?
122. Think about Steven’s personality and the way he has acted in the past. Are you surprised he did this? Explain your answer.
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Reading Log- “The Quadruple Uh-Oh”

123. Pretend you are Steven. Make a list of Pros and Cons about turning the All-City band concert into a fundraiser for the Alper family. Do you have more pros or cons?

124. Read the biographical information on Bill Gates. Why do you think Steven compares Renee and Annette to Bill Gates?

125. What were the 4 “uh, ohs” the result of? Steven thinks uh-oh after....

B ILL G ATES

Born: October 28, 1955

Seattle, Washington

American businessman, chief executive officer, and software developer

Microsoft cofounder and chief executive officer Bill Gates has become the wealthiest man in America and one of the most influential personalities in the ever-evolving computer industry.

Love of computer technology

William H. Gates III was born on October 28, 1955, in Seattle, Washington. He was the second child and only son of William Henry Gates Jr., a successful Seattle attorney, and Mary Maxwell, a former schoolteacher. Kristi, his older sister, later became his tax accountant and Libby, his younger sister, lives in Seattle raising her two children. Gates enjoyed a normal, active childhood and participated in sports, joined the Cub Scouts, and spent summers with his family in Bremerton, Washington.

Although Gates's parents had a law career in mind for their son, he developed an early interest in computer science and began studying computers in the seventh grade at Seattle's Lakeside School. Lakeside was a private school chosen by Gates's parents in the hopes that it would be more challenging for their son's intellectual drive and curiosity. At Lakeside, Gates came to know Paul Allen, a classmate with similar interests in technology who would eventually become his business partner. Immediately, Gates and Allen realized the potential of the young computer industry.

Early experience

Gates's early experiences with computers included debugging (eliminating errors from) programs for the Computer Center Corporation's PDP-10, helping to computerize electric power grids for the Bonneville Power Administration, and founding with Allen a firm called Traf-O-Data while still in high school. Their small company earned them twenty thousand dollars in fees for analyzing local traffic patterns.

While working with the Computer Center's PDP-10, Gates was responsible for what was probably the first computer virus, a program that copies itself into other programs and ruins data. Discovering that the machine was connected to a national network of

computers called Cybernet, Gates invaded the network and installed a program on the main computer that sent itself to the rest of the network's computers, making it crash (became damaged). When Gates was found out, he was severely punished, and he kept away from computers for his entire junior year at Lakeside. Without the lure of computers, Gates made plans for college and law school in 1970. But by 1971 he was back helping Allen write a class scheduling program for their school's computer.

The article that started it all

Gates entered Harvard University in 1973 and pursued his studies for the next year and a half. His life changed in January of 1975, however, when *Popular Mechanics* carried a cover story on a \$350 microcomputer, the Altair, made by a firm called MITS in New Mexico. When Allen excitedly showed him the story, Gates knew where he wanted to be: at the forefront of computer software (a program of instructions for a computer) design. Gates dropped out of Harvard in 1975, ending his academic life and beginning his career as a software designer. At this time, Gates and Allen cofounded Microsoft. They wrote programs for the early Apple and Commodore machines. One of Gates's most significant opportunities arrived in 1980, when IBM approached him to help with their personal computer project, code name Project Chess. Gates developed the Microsoft Disk Operating System, or MS-DOS. (An operating system is a type of software that controls the way a computer runs.) Not only did he sell IBM on the new operating system, but he also convinced the computer giant to allow others to write software for the machine. The result was the rapid growth of licenses for MS-DOS, as software developers quickly moved to become compatible with (able to work with) IBM. By the early 1990s Microsoft had sold more than one hundred million copies of MS-DOS, making the operating system the all-time leader in software sales. For his achievements in science and technology, Gates received the Howard Vollum Award in 1984 from Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

Gates's competitive drive and fierce desire to win has made him a powerful force in business, but it has also consumed much of his personal life. In the six years between 1978 and 1984, he took a total of only two weeks vacation. But on New Year's Day 1994 Gates married Melinda French, a Microsoft manager, on the Hawaiian island of Lanai. The ceremony was held on the island's Challenge golf course, and Gates kept it private by buying out the unused rooms at the local hotel and by hiring all of the helicopters in

the area to keep photographers from using them. His fortune at the time of his marriage was estimated at close to seven billion dollars. By 1997 his worth was estimated at approximately \$37 billion, earning him the title of "richest man in America."

The future for Microsoft

Many criticize Gates not just for his success, but because they feel he tries to unfairly—and maybe even illegally—dominate the market. As a result of Microsoft's market control, the U.S. Department of Justice brought an antitrust lawsuit (a lawsuit that is the result of a company being accused of using unfair business practices) against the company in 1998, saying the company had an illegal stronghold on the software industry.



Bill Gates.

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AP/Wide World Photos

Gates maintained Microsoft's success over rivals such as Oracle and IBM was simply the result of smart, strategic decision making. U.S. District Judge Thomas P. Jackson did not agree, and in November 1999, he found Microsoft to be a monopoly (a company with exclusive control) that used its market power to harm competing companies. Because of the ruling, Gates faced the prospect of breaking up Microsoft.

On January 13, 2000, Gates handed off day-to-day management of Microsoft to friend and right-hand man Steve Ballmer, adding chief executive officer to his existing title of president. Gates held on to his position as chairman in the reshuffle, and added the title of chief software architect.

In the spring of 2002 Gates himself was scheduled to testify on behalf of Microsoft. The final ruling on the fate of Microsoft has the potential to be a landmark decision on the future of the computer industry.

Gates as philanthropist

Aside from being the most famous businessman of the late 1990s, Gates also has distinguished himself as a philanthropist (someone working for charity). He and wife Melinda established the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which focuses on helping to improve health care and education for children around the world. The foundation has donated \$4 billion since its start in 1996. Recent pledges include \$1 billion over twenty years to fund college scholarships for about one thousand minority students; \$750 million over five years to help launch the Global Fund for Children's Vaccines; \$50 million to help the World Health Organization's efforts to eradicate polio, a crippling disease that usually attacks children; and \$3 million to help prevent the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS; an incurable disease that destroys the body's immune system) among young people in South Africa. In November 1998 Gates and his wife also gave the largest single gift to a U.S. public library, when they donated \$20 million to the Seattle Public Library. Another of Gates's charitable donations was \$20 million given to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to build a new home for its Laboratory for Computer Science.

In July 2000 the foundation gave John Hopkins University a five-year, \$20 million grant to study whether or not inexpensive vitamin and mineral pills can help save lives in poor countries. On November 13, 2000, Harvard University's School of Public Health announced it had received \$25 million from the foundation to study AIDS prevention in Nigeria. The grant was the largest single private grant in the school's history. It was announced on February 1, 2001, that the foundation would donate \$20 million to speed up the global eradication (to completely erase) of the disease commonly known as elephantiasis, a disease that causes disfigurement. In 2002 Gates, along with rock singer

Bono, announced plans for DATA Agenda, a \$24 billion fund (partially supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) that seeks to improve health care in Africa.

Although many describe Gates as cold and distant, his friends find him friendlier since his marriage and since the birth of his daughter, Jennifer, in April 1996. Further, he recognizes his overall contribution to both the world of technology and his efforts in philanthropy. In *Forbes* magazine's 2002 list of the two hundred richest people in the world, Gates was number one for the eighth straight year, coming in with a net worth of \$52.8 billion.

Taken from <http://www.notablebiographies.com/Fi-Gi/Gates-Bill.html>, June 28, 2010.

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Reading Log- “A Men’s Journey”

126. “The day had started with a bang” is an _____.

127. It means?

128. In Steven’s case, his day started with a “bang and a whimper” because_____.

129. Give an example of onomatopoeia from the story.

130. How does Jeffrey feel about the Men’s Journey to Philadelphia?

IRONY is a literary device used to contrast, or show the difference, between 2 situations- it can be for humorous or saddening effect. This excerpt shows an example of irony:

“And I thought how weird it was for Jeffrey to be driving past all these carefree people who had it made, on his way to fight the twenty-seventh installment of a life-and-death battle against cancer.”

131. What are the 2 situations that are being contrasted?

132. What is the effect? (humorous or saddening)

133. Who does Steven meet while playing the drums in the laundry room?

134. Why is Maddie in the hospital?

135. What advice does Maddie give Steven?

136. What does Steven give Maddie?

137. Jeffrey and Steven have very different reactions to the cancer ward. Write 3 substantial sentences that each one might be thinking. Make sure you use information from the text to develop your answers.



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Reading Log- "I'm a Man Now"

138. Analyze dad's behavior. Why do you think he might not go to the concert?
139. What is the hidden meaning behind his evasive behavior?
140. Write the name of 4 different characters that are supporting Steven in this chapter and what they did to support Steven.

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Reading Log- "Rock Star"

141. Find a simile in this chapter. Write the simile and the page number where you found the simile.
142. Think about Steven's behavior before the concert.
Create a metaphor that describes Steven and his behavior.
143. Why do the All-City band members shave their heads?
Think about what this symbolizes.
144. What lesson does Steven's dad learn in this chapter?
145. Determine the 3 most important events in this chapter. Explain the event and why you think it is important to the story's development. Write each event and why it was important to the story's development like the following:

Event #1

This event was important in the story development because

Epilogue

The epilogue of a story is a paragraph, chapter, or poem at the end of the story. It is used to provide some insight or closure into what happened to the characters after the story.

146. What is ironic about Steven receiving the Outstanding Musical Achievement Award?

147. Steven is afflicted with a mysterious vision issue. This is a fancy explanation for the fact that Steven:

148. Infer how Steven will finish the phrase at the end of the story: “Jeffrey, I....”

149. What is one main theme from the story? Explain.

150. Evaluate: Give your overall opinion of the book. Be specific and thorough in your answer.