

A Month of Mondays – Discussion Questions

1. Mr. Baker thinks Suze's lack of interest in academics is because school's not challenging enough and no one really cares how she does. Have you ever been bored in a class because you knew the material already? What did you do? If there's no one at home who has high expectations for you, do you still have them for yourself, or does it affect how hard you try?
2. When Caroline comes back to town, Suze's sister Tracie tries to keep her away from their mom. Is Tracie justified in her actions? Is it realistic to expect Suze to stick to a pact she signed as a little girl? Does Tracie take it too far, or should Suze's loyalty be to her sister who's always been there for her?
3. Like so many families, Suze's is non-traditional with members stepping in to fill vacant roles as needed. Tracie is a sister, but also a mother figure. Suze's aunt, AJ also fills the mother role at times, but more importantly, she's the disciplinarian. Her Uncle Bill is more of a confidential friend, while her father is the one who earns the money. What roles do the adults in your life play that go beyond what might traditionally be expected of them? Are there any other adults in your life who also help? What roles do you play in your family?
4. Suze absolutely refuses to believe she and Amanda will lose the fight for the janitors' jobs, but Amanda claims to be much more realistic. While she believes it's a worthy fight, she also believes the adults are right and it's probably a lost cause. Is it better to throw yourself into things with your heart the way Suze does and potentially create more problems for yourself, or is it better to accept defeat with grace?
5. Amanda makes it fairly clear she thinks she's smarter than Suze. Do you have friends who think they're smarter or better than you in some way? How does that make you feel? What might you say to them about it? What about the other way around? Have you ever unintentionally acted superior the way Amanda sometimes does? What might you do differently in the future after reading about Suze's feelings?
6. Caroline (Suze's mom) left the family when Suze was three years old without any explanation. Does she have a right to come back into their lives now? At first she appears strong and confident, but we find out later she's broken and by trying to repair her relationships, she's hoping to fix herself, too. How can Suze help Caroline? Or is it all Caroline's responsibility since she's the one who left?
7. Suze gets into trouble for skipping class to do research for their project. How might she have gone about that differently? Or was she right to take the risk? Should she have spoken up and explained what she was doing when she got caught? Why do you think she didn't?
8. Suze wants to save the janitors' jobs. If you were given the same assignment Baker gives his students, to give a speech about something important that affects your life either now or in the future, what topic would you choose? If you could raise your grade the way Suze and Amanda can by doing something extra, what might that be?