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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

The Pistachio Prescription

Chapter 1

- 1. Cassie, when depressed, likes to eat pistachios. Why do you suppose some people like to eat when they are depressed? If you feel upset emotionally, what do you do?
- 2. Explain what "Cassandra's Curse" is to a classmate who may not understand the term and comment on Cassie's reaction to teachers who always mention it.
- 3. When Cassie says, "I try E.S.P. to get Greg to notice my inner beauty," what two things may you infer from that comment?
- 4. What prompted Cassie and a friend to come up with "Operation Overthrow"? Have you ever been in a school in which there was a similar situation? Why do you suppose schools are like that?
- 5. Having finished Chapter One, imagine that you had just met Cassie and spent the last several hours at her home. That evening, describe Cassie and her family to a friend or to your family.

The Pistachio Prescription

Chapter 2

- 11. Cassie is upset when a man invites her mother out to dinner while they shop. Is Cassie's anger justified? Suppose someone invited your mother to dinner. Write down the dialogue that would take place afterwards between you and your mother.
- 12. Cassie believes no guy would ever ask her out. Why do you think she has such low self-esteem? What advice would you give Cassie to help her have more pride in herself?
- 13. For what reason did Cassie's mom get married? Can you understand why she did? Can you understand why she regrets having done it? If you knew someone who was very young and was going to get married for the same reasons as Cassie's mom, what would you say to him or her?
- 14. As we end Chapter Two, in what ways has your opinion of any of the characters changed? Which character(s) and why?

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- 24. What was your opinion of the courses that people suggested should be offered at their school? What courses would you like to see in your school? What specific things would students learn in these courses? Is what would be learned important enough to justify the amount of tax dollars that would be spent?
- 25. Cassie feels guilty because she is feeling envious about Vicki's advantages. Knowing that feeling envious of a good friend's good fortune is not unnatural, what would you say to a good friend who made a cruel remark to you because she was envious of you. To answer this, you might try to imagine a good friend of yours making that kind of remark.
- 26. At the end of this chapter, Ginny Rogers says something to Cassie that at first bewilders her; Sara Baskin then says something that shocks Cassie. What was your reaction to this scene?

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- 49. The sisters think that their parents may get divorced. Are they overly dramatic, or do you think their fears may be justified?
- 50. What was your opinion of Stephanie's assessment of the problem at home between Cassie, herself, and their mother? Can you remember anything from Chapter One regarding her mother's behavior that supports Stephie's point of view?
- 51. Like Stephie, who finally speaks with Ms. Larson, most of us are reluctant to talk about our problems. At what point, if any, do you think it might be good to talk to someone about a problem?

Chapter 11

- 52. Referring to her parents' constant fighting, Cassie says, "Work it out, they say. So how come it's something for us to do and not them?" Cassie implies that the parents of children have a responsibility to try to settle problems sensibly. To what extent do you think she is right?
- 53. Was there anything in this chapter that struck you as being very true or not very true or impressed you in any other way?