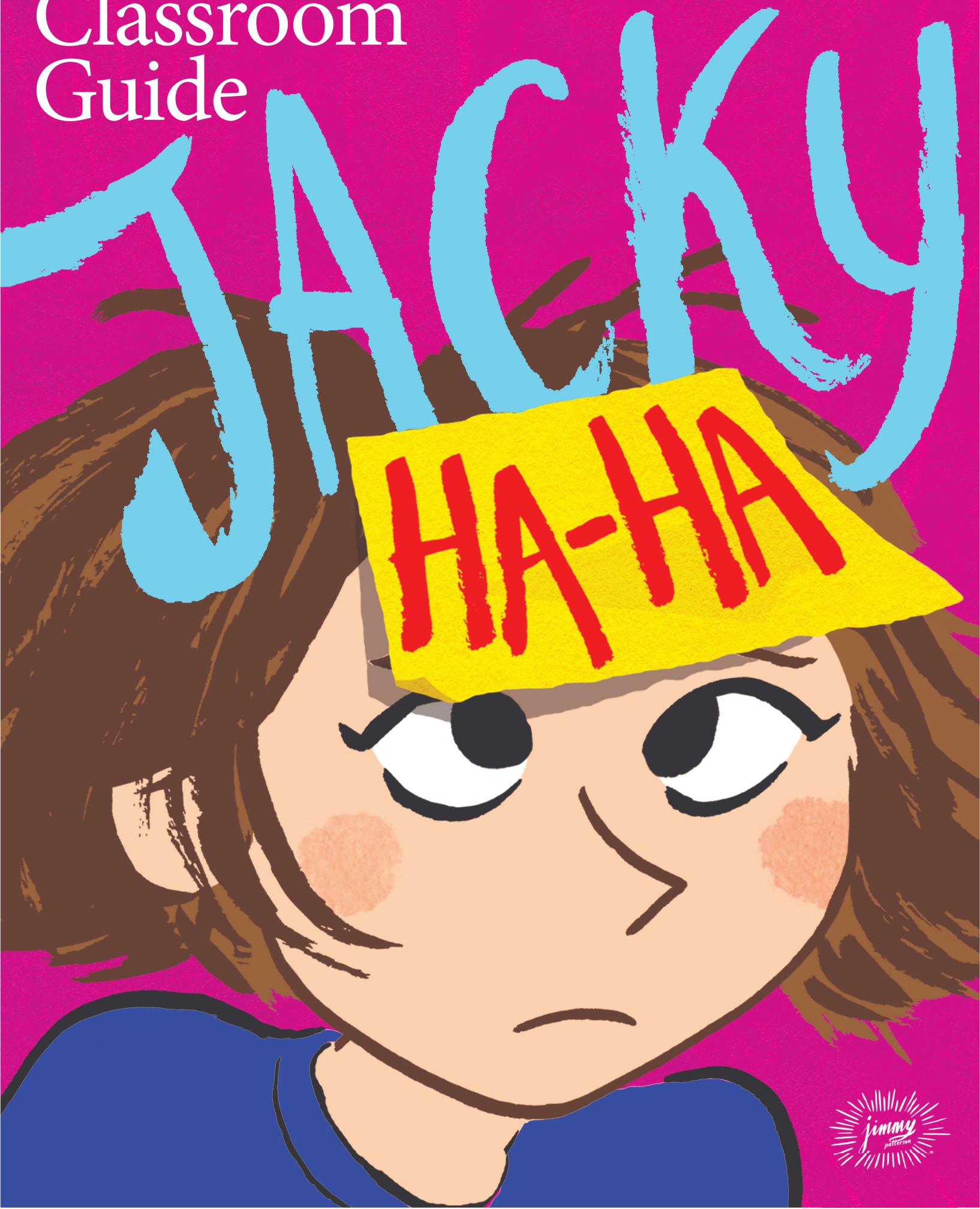


# Classroom Guide



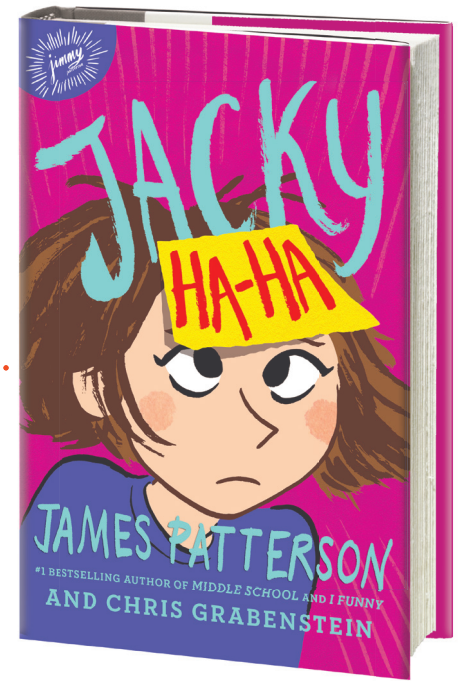
# JACKY HA-HA

## Classroom Guide

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### Introduction to the Guide

Dear Educators,



No one learns and laughs quite like Jacky! In this #1 *New York Times* bestseller, James Patterson introduces his hilarious new heroine, Jacky Ha-Ha, a class clown who makes people laugh with her so they can't laugh at her. This book will help your students realize their potential and look at the world in a new and funny way! Jacky is a twelve-year-old girl who fights the urge to tell a joke in every situation. Joking around helps distract her from the scary realities of the world, like her mom serving in a dangerous war and her dad, who is never home. Jacky struggles with who she is and what to do in sticky situations, as all children do growing up. This educator's guide gives students a walk through life in the eyes of Jacky while they are learning some important lessons along the way. The activities in this guide ask important questions and encourage students to think about how they can positively change their worlds while being creative and joyful. This book will entertain your students and leave them wanting more of Jacky and her jokes!

### About the Book

Jacky never lets an opportunity to tell a joke pass—even when not telling the joke would be the far better choice. But making people laugh brings joy to Jacky and helps distract her from her worries. Jacky's mother is not living at home much these days; she is busy putting her life on the line every day fighting a war in Kuwait, a country halfway around the world. The young girl misses her mom very much and worries about her safety. Meanwhile, Jacky notices that her father spends way too much time working late, and even more troubling and confusing, Jacky sees her dad with a beautiful, familiar woman all the time. Adding to her worries is her grandmother's sudden illness and the constant repercussions Jacky faces for joking around in class. The school counselor encourages Jacky to try out for the school play and to enter an oratory contest, in hopes that Jacky can channel her need to entertain and won't be in so much trouble. But Jacky is not sure anything can help her!



## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

✓ English / Language Arts

### Sister Act!



All of Jacky's sisters have unique personalities and make significant contributions to the family.

1. Ask students to select one of the sisters and to write a character analysis of her based on what the character says about herself, her reactions to situations that arise, and what other characters say about her.
2. Pair students with a partner who wrote about a different sister.
3. Ask students to write a poem for two voices using words and phrases from their character analysis.
4. Have the partners practice and perform their poems for the class.



✓ Writing

## Gratitude

Jacky is rescued by her counselor and a teacher who care about her and see her potential.

1. Ask students to write a letter to an adult who helped them make changes in their lives for the better. The letter should contain a summary of what the person did to help and an explanation of how that help altered the student's life and the choices they made.
2. If possible, ask the students to either mail the letter or to take it to the letter's recipient.

Alternatively, students may ask to write a letter to an adult who made their lives more difficult and caused them pain. Allow students the choice to write an authentic letter regarding their situations.





✓ Social Studies

## Make a difference!

After Jacky receives detention again, she reflects on her life and the problems she faces.

1. Ask students to reread Chapter 11 and to make a list of what Jacky perceives are the problems in her life.
2. Using the list, ask students if Jacky's problems are common among their peers.
3. Have the students split into small groups, and ask students to create a program to address these problems. There should be a way where students can receive help from people in their school or community with total confidentiality.
4. Have students present their plans to the class and then to the school administration, asking for a way to help implement their plans.



## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

### ✓ Theater/Drama

Jacky discovers she loves the theater, acting, and the people involved in theater production.

1. Ask students to research a famous comedian or actor.
2. Ask them to write about how that person became interested in their career path and note the steps that person took to become famous.
3. Have students create an illustration to accompany their papers.
4. Have students share their illustrations and papers with the class or in small groups.



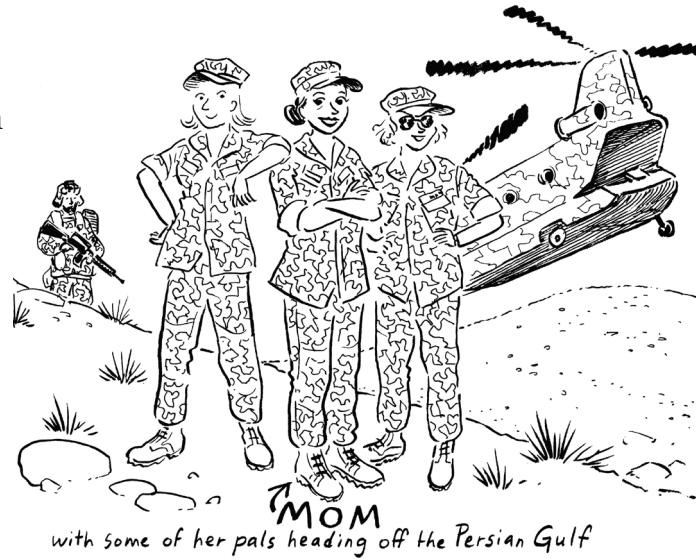


## THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

### ✓ Family Relationships

In spite of the fact that Jacky's mother is not home and her father works all the time, the family relationships stay intact, and the sisters are quite close.

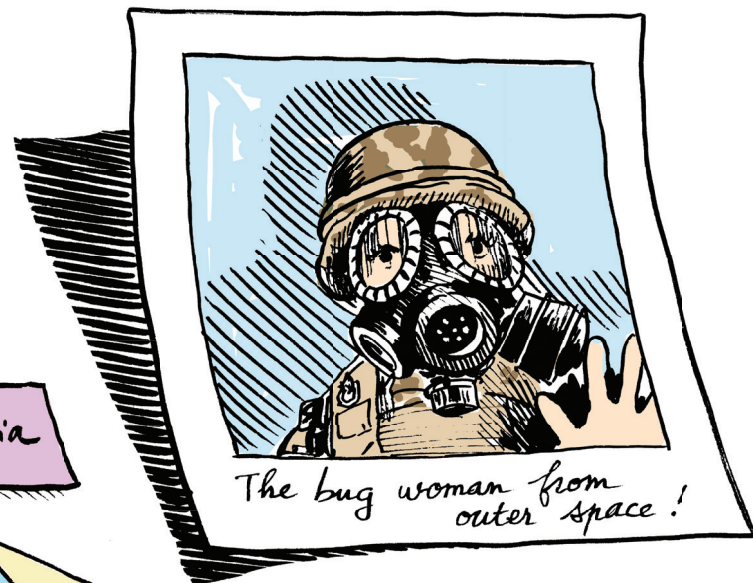
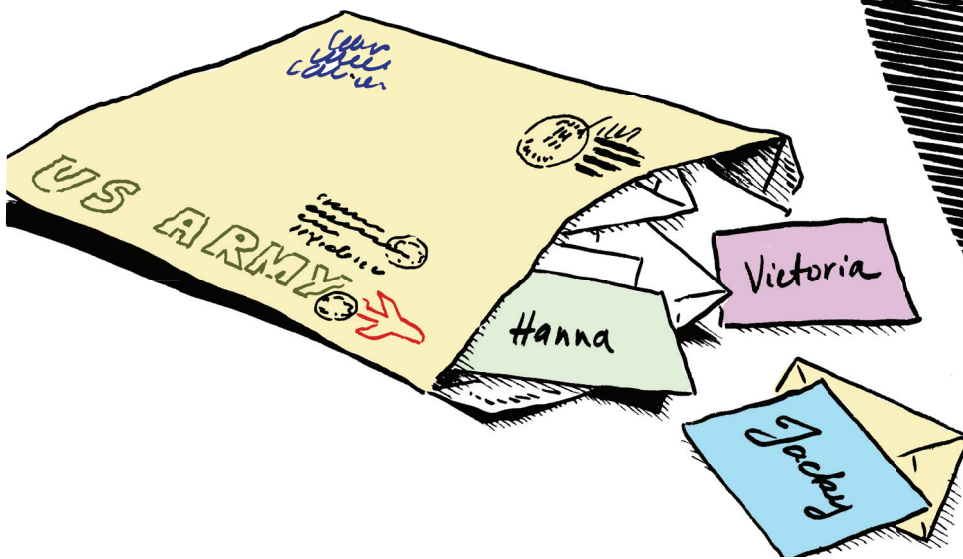
1. Why does Jacky feel so alone?
2. How do the sisters communicate with one another in a way that no one outside the family would understand?
3. Describe the relationship between Jacky's parents.
4. How does their relationship affect the family dynamics?
5. Why do Jacky and her father argue so much?



### ✓ Friendships

Until Jacky joins the cast of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, she does not have any friends.

1. Why doesn't Jacky have friends?
2. How do the cast members show their friendship to Jacky?
3. How does having friends and being a part of the cast affect Jacky's life?
4. How do Jacky's friends show their support for her when she gets in trouble with her father?



## THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

### ✓ Intergenerational Relationships

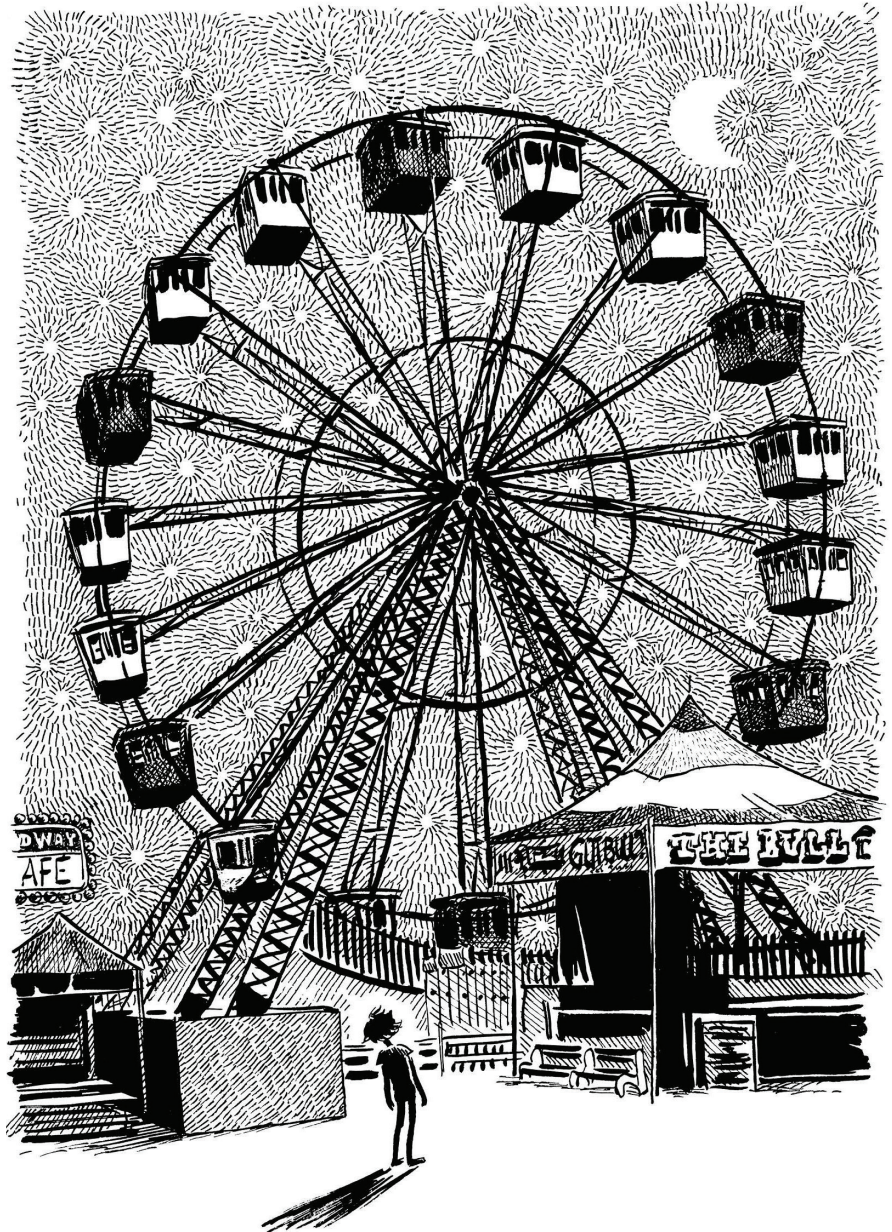
Jacky's relationship with her grandmother is special to them both.

1. What does Jacky's grandmother say to her that makes Jacky feel cherished?
2. How does Jacky show her grandmother love and respect?
3. What thought comforts Jacky after her grandmother dies?

### ✓ Coming of Age

Jacky changes and matures from the beginning of the book to the end.

1. Why does Jacky climb the Ferris wheel in Chapter 7?
2. What vow does she make?
3. What prompts Jacky to climb the Ferris wheel in Chapter 45?
4. What do the people on the ground think Jacky is going to do?
5. How could Jacky's parents have helped Jacky through her difficult time instead of being angry with her?
6. What does Jacky learn as a result of the difficulties she experiences?





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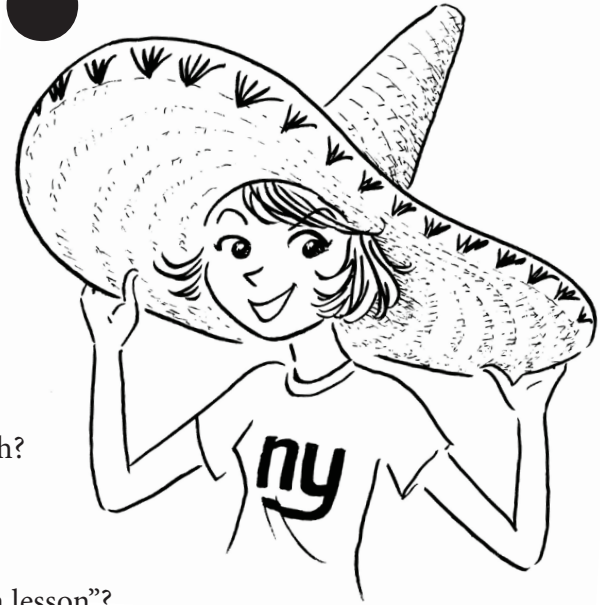
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## Discussion Questions

1. Why does Jacky become a class clown?
2. Why can't she stop making jokes, even though she tries?
3. Why is Jacky so impressed by Ms. O'Mara?
4. Why does Ms. O'Mara want to help Jacky?
5. Why is Jacky afraid of being in the play and giving a speech?
6. How does Jacky overcome her fear?
7. How does Ms. O'Mara convey a lesson without "teaching a lesson"?
8. What lesson does Ms. O'Mara teach Beth?
9. What does Jacky do to help her big sister Sydney?
10. How does Sydney respond to Jacky's help?
11. How does Jacky receive her nickname?
12. How does her nickname continue to shape her life?
13. When Jacky's mother explains to her why her father has been spending time with Jenny Cornwall, what is Jacky's reaction? How does this information change her relationship with her father?
14. Why is Jacky's speech more meaningful because her mother is present to hear it?



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