

ABOUT THE GUIDE

Cassie Was Here is a middle grade novel about friendship, family and change. This guide includes discussion questions, vocabulary, individual writing exercises, computer skills, and group project suggestions.

For more information on the book, please visit <http://carolinehickey.com>. You'll find reviews, FAQs, and a podcast of the author reading the first chapter.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. When Bree's family moves to their new neighborhood, Bree's old imaginary friend, Joey, comes back. Why do you think this happens? Does Bree want her to return?
2. Actions tell us a lot about a character. Name something that Bree, Cassie, or Reid does that reveals his/her character.
3. Why is Reid so mad about his broken arm? Does he really blame Joey?
4. One of the main themes of this book is friendship. Is Cassie a good friend to Bree? Why or why not? Is Bree a good friend to Cassie?
5. Bree tells Cassie that she's upset with her mom. What is her mom doing that makes Bree upset? Is she right to feel this way?
6. Who do you think is Bree's ideal friend: Joey, Anna, Cassie or Reid? Why? Who would you pick to be *your* friend?
7. Bree and Cassie both change throughout the course of the novel. In what ways do they change? Who changes more?
8. Reid both picks on and defends Bree in different scenes in the book. Is he a good brother to her? Why or why not?
9. Do you think Cassie will stay in touch with Bree after she moves back with her father? Will she stay in touch with Reid?
10. Why does Joey say goodbye to Bree? Why isn't it the other way around?

VOCABULARY

In the book, Anna and Cassie use a lot of words that Bree does not. Ask students to write a paragraph that includes the following words:

- Naïve
- Exaggerate
- Irrational
- Vigorous
- Skittish

WRITING EXERCISES

Ask students to complete on one or more of the following:

1. Two of Bree's favorite things are her bike and her dollhouse. Write a short essay about some of your favorite things. Where did they come from? What makes them valuable to you?
2. Write a diary entry one of the characters might have written during the story.
3. Write letters that Cassie and Bree might send to one another after she's moved away.

COMPUTER SKILLS

Bree's real name is *Breagan*, which means toy or doll. Have students find out what their names mean by searching online. Ask them to discuss whether or not their name suits them.

GROUP PROJECTS

Students should work together in small groups, selecting one or more of these options to create and show to the class.

1. Anna and Cassie have a trivia contest. Create your own contest, writing questions about all different subjects, from math to science to geography. See if other students can answer the questions.
2. Write and perform an original skit based on the book. Or write a completely new scene using the book's characters.
3. Bree and Joey enjoy playing "Nancy Drew" and solving mysteries in their neighborhood. Invent a mystery in your classroom, writing clues and leaving evidence for other students to find. Then challenge them to solve the mystery.
4. Draw a timeline of the book, complete with illustrations and notes about each event on the timeline.
5. Make a collage that might be found in Cassie's bedroom, with a brief description of why each item was selected.
6. Draw a map of Bree's neighborhood. Add notes about which scenes occurred where.
7. Joey and Bree create a "magazine picture house." Create your own dream house using magazine pictures.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caroline Hickey was born and raised in Baltimore, MD, where *Cassie Was Here* takes place. After receiving her BA in English Literature at James Madison University, she moved to New York City. There she earned an MFA in Creative Writing from The New School and began writing novels for children and teens. She now lives in Washington, DC with her husband.

Although the story and characters in *Cassie Was Here* are fictional, many elements of the setting are from Caroline's real life, including Bree's swing that won't work properly, the tree she climbs down outside her window, the school that was once a mansion, and the road nicknamed Dog Doo Lane.

Caroline did not have an imaginary friend when she was eleven, but if she had, she would have wanted her to be just like Joey.