

School House Candy
by Anne Finger

Discussion Questions

1. The author doesn't tell us many specifics about her disability. Did it surprise you that she didn't? Why do you think she made this decision?
2. What does the phrase "reasonable accommodation" mean? How does it apply to people with disabilities? Could it also be applied to people without disabilities?
3. Why was it so important to the writer to have a "real" job?
4. Have you ever been excused from a responsibility that other people had to undertake? How did it feel?
5. Why does the author bring in the experiences of other people with disabilities, such as Randolph Bourne, Hugh Gallagher, and Robert Huse?
6. The author links her personal experiences with historical events, such as organizing by workers with disabilities to demand employment during the Great Depression and to expand employment opportunities during World War II. Why does she do this?
7. Were you aware that President Franklin Roosevelt had a disability? Have you ever seen a picture of him in his wheelchair? Do you know of other historical figures who had a disability?
8. Why do you think Robert Huse was haunted by the image of his former co-worker selling pencils on the street corner? Why did the author include this negative image of disability?
9. At several points in the piece, the author talks about people not speaking directly about disability—her friend's mother, who refers to Finger as "...your friend who's—uh..."; the man who takes her application at School House

Candy; the author's own inability to name what she is experiencing. How do these examples support the overarching theme of "School House Candy?"

Writing Activities

- Write about a time when you thought someone was avoiding telling you the truth. What did they do that made you sense this? How did you respond?
- The author speaks of changes in access to employment people with disabilities experienced during World War II, and also of organizing by people with disabilities during the Depression to obtain jobs. What kinds of social changes have you observed in your life? Have you played any part in bringing these about?

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