*The Pull of Gravity* – Discussion Questions

Chapter 1:   
• Within the first chapter, Nick tells us about his family background and leads into the story of “the craziest weekend” of his life.  What predictions can you make?  How did you visualize him and his family?

Chapter 2:   
• Describe Nick’s hallucination.  Recreate his hallucination by either drawing it, piecing it together with magazine pictures, painting it, etc.   
• Why did Nick’s dad leave his family?  Put yourself in Nick’s place. Explain how you would react to his dad’s email on page 9.

Chapter 3:  
 • Describe the Scoot.  What disease does he have?  Where is his dad?  What is life like for MaeLynn?   
• How has Nick and the Scoot’s friendship changed?

Chapter 4:   
• What is the Scoot’s real name?  Why is Nick upset when Jeremy uses his real name?   
• Describe the dynamics of Nick and Jeremy’s relationship.   
• “Mom doesn’t seem all that broken up about it.” Is Nick’s mom really okay with his dad leaving? Explain your thoughts.   
• What does Nick mean when he says “Not hanging out and not caring are two very different things” (18).   
• Prediction: Who is Jaycee Amato?  What part will she play in the story?   
• Why do you think Nick’s dad is sending him email updates?  Do you think he’s also sending them to Jeremy or the Scoot?  Explain your thoughts.

Chapter 5:   
• How would you characterize Nick’s mom at this point in the story?   
• Nick’s surprised by Jaycee’s interaction with the Scoot.  How do you think they know each other?  Could they be friends?  Explain.   
• Figurative Language Practice: Find examples of similes within the chapter.

Chapter 6:   
• Why does Nick become uncomfortable in front of his friends when Jaycee talks about his friendship with the Scoot?   
• Prediction: What do you think will happen on Nick’s “date” with Jaycee?

Chapter 7:   
• Nick and Jaycee discuss money and the benefits of living with the “Doofus.”  Does money buy happiness?  Is Jaycee happy?  Why or why not?   
• Why do you think Jaycee has the Scoot’s notebook and his copy of Of Mice and Men?

Chapter 8:   
• Would you help Jaycee and the Scoot? Explain.   
• From what we’ve read so far, what’s your opinion of the Scoot’s dad?  What do you think of the Scoot’s goal to find him?

Chapter 9:   
• As Nick and Jaycee get to know each other, Nick learns that Jaycee currently knows the Scoot better than he does.  During the conversation about how Jaycee and the Scoot met, Nick wonders why the Scoot didn’t tell him.  Jaycee responds “Well, I’m sure you didn’t ask” (70).  What does Jaycee mean by that?   
• What are your thoughts on how the Scoot is handling his declining health?

Chapter 10:   
• Jaycee says even though Of Mice and Men takes place pretty much over a weekend, you get to know George and Lennie pretty well.  Do you feel that way about Nick and Jaycee?  Do you think you feel that way by the end of the novel?  Explain.   
• How did you react when Nick tells us the Scoot died?  
 • How are MaeLynn and Nick’s dad similar?   
• Nick and Jaycee discuss the foreshadowing in Of Mice and Men.  Find examples of foreshadowing (so far) in The Pull of Gravity.

Chapter 11:   
• Nick really enjoys listening to Jaycee read to him.  Do you enjoy being read to?  Did anyone read to you as a child?  If so, who?   
• When have your plans gone awry?  Are you a planner like Jaycee, or are you more like Nick when it comes to making plans?

Chapter 12‐14:   
• Define foil character.  How is the Scoot’s dad (what we know about him) a foil to Nick’s dad?   
• On page 123 Nick says “To its right are cans of Cherry RC Cola.  Just like in the vending machine.  And that’s when it hits me.  The water tower.  The cherry cola.  And, now, the fever.  I should have seen it coming.”  What is he referring to?  Why is this important?   
• How are the dynamics of Nick and Jaycee’s relationship changing?

Chapter 15‐16:   
• Prediction: What do you think is the name of the luncheonette?   
• Should Nick tell Jaycee about the poster?  What do you think of the poster and its connection with the restaurant and possibly the Scoot? Explain.

Chapter 17‐18:     
• Much is uncovered and discovered in chapter 17 (i.e. Nick’s dad with MaeLynn).  Did you predict any of this happening?  Find examples of foreshadowing that lead us to this point in the novel.   
• What do you think of Nick’s response to his dad’s relationship with MaeLynn? To MaeLynn’s information about Guy Reyland?  How did you respond?   
• How has Nick’s attitude changed in chapter 18?  Why is he acting this way?      
• How do you think the conflicts in this novel will be resolved

Chapter 19‐20:   
• How could Nick or Jaycee be characterized as a hero?   
• Define comic relief.  What examples do we have in these two chapters?

Chapter 21‐22:   
• Do you think others would catch Jaycee’s reference to Of Mice and Men when she tells the new bus driver, “‘We were killing a dog and buying a ranch to tend bunnies!’”   
• What do you think the Scoot has written to Nick?   
• How would you feel about the Scoot’s letter?  Was the Scoot’s plan a good idea?   Explain.   
• What do you think Nick will do with the book?  What would you do with it?   
• How do you feel about the end of the story? What do you predict will happen with Nick and Jaycee? How about Nick’s family?