

The Peppermint Pig
Nina Bawden

Looking at the front cover – what time period do you think this story is set in? Why do you say this? Draw evidence from what you see.

Chapter One

1. Why did Granny not blame the butcher for chopping off her finger? Do you think she should have? Explain fully.
2. Do you think Granny did really say this? Why?
3. 'As innocent as a baby angel' – why do you think the author has used a simile for this description? What does it help to show?
4. Why had George been pretending not to listen? Page 4
5. Page 6. Why did Poll and Theo enjoy the 'dreadful tales'?
6. Page 8. Why did Poll feel jealous?
7. Page 10. Why was Poll 'startled' by father talking?
8. Why did father have to go to America?
9. How can you tell mother was not happy with what father was saying to her? Copy out some direct evidence from the text.
10. Page 20: 'sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me'. What does this mean?
11. Page 22: How did Theo try to make Poll feel better? Copy out two pieces of direct evidence from the text.

Chapter Two

1. Which station did they change trains at to get to Norfolk?
2. Page 25. How much did Saul want to marry mother? How do you know this?
3. The way mother handled Saul – what does this suggest about her character? (2 marks)
4. Page 26 ‘ a whiskery gentleman’. What do you this phrase means?
5. Page 27 ‘ neat brick cottages’ – what does this make the reader visualise about the row of houses? Try to build up your description in three lines.
6. Page 29 – what do you think of Poll’s bedroom? Copy phrases from the text to support your opinion. 3 marks (you will need to give three opinions)
7. Page 29. Poll has to wash her face with ‘not just a lick’- what do you think this means?
8. Page 31- what do you think the ‘workhouse’ might be?
9. Why did the maid not travel with the family?
10. What is the ‘trap’ in this chapter?
11. Why does mother not want anyone to cry?

Chapter Three

1. Page 50. Why did the bear look as if he was dancing?
2. Page 50. Why was the seat like having a 'permanent seat at the theatre?'
3. Page 53. Why did Poll think Old Rowland asked a silly question? What was the silly question?
4. Page 58. What do you think 'eavesdropping' means?
5. What do you think of Poll's character so far? Think of three ways to describe her and use evidence from the text to back up your opinion.
6. Why does Poll fight with Noah?
7. What kind of fight did Poll and Noah have? How does the author ensure we know what it was like? Copy out phrases that describe what happens in the fight.
8. Page 64 – why is Theo not grateful to Poll?
9. Why did Aunt Sarah not get married?

Chapter Four

1. Why do you think the pink vest was a worse thing to happen?
2. Page 74 'the humiliating garment' – what do you think 'humiliating' means?
3. What is a peppermint pig?
4. Page 76 – why do you think the pig was scared?
5. Page 77- why do you think Poll thought of the pig so much?
6. Page 78- why does Theo say to the pig 'there are two of us in the family?'
7. Page 81 – what does it mean for something to 'smell fishy?'
8. Page 86 – why does Miss Mantripp not work with the lace herself?
9. Page 91 – why do you think the baker gave Poll a sticky bun for free?
Reads what happens just before he gives the bun away.
10. What did the dairy stall sell?
11. Why do you think Theo took the egg?

Chapter Five

1. Page 101- how did the people watching the elephant get wet?
2. Why did Poll like Annie Dowsett? Page 102.
3. Page 104- how is the description written at the top of the page so the reader realizes how loud the sound is?
4. Why had Poll not seen the pig eat the buns?
5. Page 107. Why is Poll not happy with mother?
6. Why do you think Poll does not see her mother's point of view at that time?
7. Page 113- why did Annie end up staying for tea when she had not meant to?
8. Page 114. Why did Poll 'beam proudly'?
9. Page 119. Why did Poll feel so frightened?
10. Page 121- why do you think mother looked so 'sick and exhausted'?
11. Why do you think Poll has run upstairs crying?

Chapter Six

1. Page 123- how do we know Poll is not feeling well? Find three pieces of evidence.
2. Why does Lily not pay any attention to Poll?

3. Why should Lily have not visited Poll when she was sick in bed?
4. Page 131. Why was Poll not bored as she lay in bed unwell?
5. Page 131. Why did mother not tell Poll a story?
6. Why was the pig shut in the hen house?
7. Page 135. The way the pig reacts to Poll shows he is fond of her. Find the phrases that show this. 2 marks.
8. Page 136. Why do you think Poll's 'head spun' when she went outside? Her head did not actually spin so what does this really mean?
9. Why couldn't Poll collect snails on day one of being out?
10. How did Poll know the people in the town had known she was unwell?

Chapter Seven

1. Why did Poll start off going to school just in the mornings?
2. Page 151. Why did mother say she did not know what 'we'll do' with Poll?
3. Page 153. Copy out the evidence that shows Noah and Theo seemed like friends? How do we know then that they are not?
4. Page 160. Why do you think Poll says 'this was the best day of my life'? Copy three pieces of evidence and say what this shows about the day.
5. Page 162 – bottom of the page. Why did Poll run into the garden?

6. Why did Poll think the man in the summer house was a tramp?
7. Where had Poll got the mushrooms from?
8. Page 169. Why did Theo feel that grandpa did not want to talk to them?
9. Where do you think the gold has gone?

Chapter Eight

1. Why had Poll though the gold shavings were worth something?
2. How did Theo convince Noah that the gold was valuable?
3. How did George stop the pig from running?
4. Page 182. Why is mother so cross with Poll?
5. Page 183. Johnnie the pig is now 'docile' compared to before. What do you think 'docile' may mean?
6. List the verbs used to describe how Noah and Theo had their fight.
7. Why do you think Poll wants them to stop fighting?

Chapter Nine

1. Page 192. Why do you think Poll hesitated at the door?
2. Page 194. 'Poll was enchanted'. What do you think this means? Was Poll under a magic spell?

3. Page 196. Why could Poll not believe that she had been given one of the puppies?
4. Page 197. Why was Poll worried about mother ('what about mother?')
5. Page 199 – 200. The puppy is described as 'dancing around him'. Why do you think this phrase was used? What impression does it create?
6. Page 203. Why do you think mother did not talk to Poll about Johnnie needing to go to the butcher's?
7. Page 206. Why do you think the cake tasted like 'ashes'? Think about how Poll is feeling and how this must have made food taste.
8. Page 212 – 213. What was wrong with Poll? Why do you think she felt like this?
9. Imagine you are Poll's best friend. What would you say to make her feel better about her future? Use evidence from the text to tell Poll what her character is like and what she could end up achieving (3 marks).
10. Why did father seem like a stranger?