1.) What are you afraid of? What things are you afraid of that Alvin is also afraid of?

2.) Do you feel sorry for Alvin? How does his family seem to feel about his fears?

3.) How do you think Alvin’s classmates and teachers should respond to his silence at school?

4.) How does Alvin’s dad try to set an example for Alvin? How does Alvin feel about his dad?

5.) Alvin says he is “as silent as a side of roast beef” and his brother Calvin says Alvin is like a “piece of frozen sausage fallen off the truck.” What are other similes you can think of to end the phrase “as a silent as...”?

6.) Alvin wants help learning how to make friends. What do you think of his brother, Calvin’s, plans to make friends? How does someone make friends?

7.) This book is set in Concord, Massachusetts. Have you ever been there? If not, tell your parents to take you there when we can travel again!

8.) Alvin often says, “Crying is really great. It makes everything better afterwards.” In your experience, is this true?

9.) Alvin is a Chinese-American boy. How does his family participate in Chinese culture?

10.) Why do you think Alvin’s dad decided Alvin needed piano lessons?

11.) How did Alvin disappoint his dad and how did his dad respond?

12.) One of Alvin’s biggest challenges at school is that he freezes and can’t make friends. Why does he choose to try to be friends with Pinky and what does he learn?

13.) In what ways does Flea demonstrate throughout the book that she wants to be Alvin’s friend?

14.) What is Flea’s attitude toward life? Does she feel sorry for herself? Why do you think she likes Alvin?