

Reader's Guide
For
The Gollywopper Games
by
Jody Feldman
A Debut Middle Grade Novel

About the Book

Gil Goodson has been preparing for months—even, perhaps, for his entire life—to compete in the Gollywopper Games. The preliminary rounds are competitive and littered with trick questions and puzzles. But Gil makes it through, meeting his future teammates and rivals along the way. The bar goes way higher, however, once the group reaches the finals, and enters the fantastical rooms, halls, and spaces of Golly Toy and Game Company. Brainteasers, obstacle courses, mazes, and increasingly difficult puzzles and decisions—not to mention temptation, ethical dilemmas, and new friendships—are all that separate Gil and ultimate victory. Will Gil win the Gollywopper Games? Readers will be racing through this inventive and interactive page-turner to find out.

About the Author

Jody Feldman holds a journalism degree from the University of Missouri, and she worked in advertising before becoming a full-time author. Her writing has appeared in newspaper and magazine ads, as well as on television and radio. *The Gollywopper Games* is her first children's book. She lives in St. Louis, Missouri.

Discussion Questions

1. Gil has put himself under a lot of pressure to succeed. Do you think moving out of town will solve his problems? How might he otherwise find happiness in Orchard Heights? Most people put pressure on themselves. When do you put the most pressure on yourself? How do you deal with it? How could you handle it better? How do you help your friends when they're feeling pressure?
2. Early in the competition, Gil realizes he has to contend with cheaters. Do you agree with the way he handled the cheating? Why or why not? What could he have done differently? What would you have done in the situation? Why do you think Thorn and Rocky felt the need to cheat? Can you think of any situations when cheating may be acceptable?
3. When Gil resolves the cheating issue, Bianca wants to elect him as their leader, but Gil says they don't need one. Even so, what leadership qualities did he show? How about his teammates? Why do you think Bert Golliwop might be a successful leader for the company? What leadership qualities do you possess? Without naming him or her, think of a peer who is a good leader? What qualities does he or she have? Which qualities would you like to develop for yourself? How do you think you might go about that?

4. Gil, Bianca, Lavinia, Rocky, and Thorn each have very different personalities, backgrounds, and abilities. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of each: Does one of them help the team the most? Does one of them hurt the team the most? Which two characters would you most want on your team? What strengths would they bring to balance yours?

5. If you could choose one character to be friends with in real life, who would that be and why? What do you think you'd have in common with him or her? If you were hanging out at your home, what are some things you'd show that person? If you were at their place, what might they show you? What types of activities would you do together? How would that character get along with your other friends?

Activity

Work in groups or individually to create additional puzzles or stunts for the contestants to solve as a team or as individuals. You may choose to describe or draw any setting or necessary props. You may also want base your challenge in math, social studies, communication arts, science or another specific subject.