

Discussion Questions for *Running Away (Maggie's Story)*

In the book:

1. Why does Maggie not tell right away? Maggie did not know about her mother's past before reading the journal. Do you think she would have told her mother about Richard's abuse if she'd known what had happened to her mom? Do you think Peg will tell the girls *everything* about her past now?
2. When Maggie first starts reading Peg's journal, she says the omelet reminds her more of her mother than the journal. Why? Maggie is reading what Peg wrote as a teenager. Peg tells Lizzie about some of the same things. What differences are there in the two versions of events? Why?
3. There are parallels between Maggie's story and what she reads in Peg's diary. Peg, like many sexually abused people, went on to be sexually exploited. Can Maggie learn from her mother's experience? Do you think Maggie will recover from her traumas more quickly than Peg recovered from hers?
4. Peg isn't sure at first whether Maggie's diary is true. Why would Maggie lie? Then Peg decides "Either way the answer is the same. Maggie needs our help." Why would Maggie need their help if she made it all up?
5. Peg wonders if Richard knew his job was in jeopardy. Financially, they'd have been better off if he had sold his house and moved in with Peg and the girls. What advantages are there for Richard in having them move into his house in the city? How has he manipulated each of them – Maggie, Peg, and Lizzie?
6. What circumstances made it possible for Peg to go look for Maggie? The novel takes place in just over a week. What would have happened if she had waited until the end of the school year?
7. What about Lizzie? How is Richard grooming her? By worrying about Maggie's influence? Will she benefit from counseling with Maggie and Peg? Or will it leave her shy of relationships?

Additional Questions for Book Clubs or English classes:

- Maggie and her mother tell the story in alternating chapters, and Peg's journal is her voice when she was young. How has the author made these voices different?
- Maggie gets a place to stay her first night in Harrisburg. Would it really be that easy? What details in the house description make it "real" for you? Would you stay there if you were in Maggie's position? What details should be warning Maggie to get out of there?
- Based on Peg's journal, what differences do you see between Peg as a teen and Maggie? Similarities?

- If Maggie had known her mother's story all along, how would that have changed things before and after Richard? Will knowing it now help her heal quickly?
- CJ's uncle was the boy who rescued Maggie's mother years ago. Does this kind of coincidence ever happen in real life?
- If there are scenes you thought should happen differently, write up skits changing them.
- Peg sold her home and moved into Richard's house. What did she do right (financially) that made it possible for her to drop everything and go look for Maggie?
- Why were the girls at high risk of making the "wrong" friends when they moved?
- The novel takes place in just over a week. What kinds of events can bring about such dramatic changes so quickly?

My [newsletter](http://sherimcguinn.substack.com) caters to readers and writers: sherimcguinn.substack.com

Review links for *Running Away: Maggie's Story*:

www.goodreads.com/book/show/95210207

www.amazon.com/dp/1942069049

Every review helps – thank you.

Thanks for reading!