YOUR FRIEND IN FASHION,

ABBY SHAPIRO

by Amy Axelrod

“Funny, lively, sensitive—a real winner.” —Kirkus Reviews

Deeply affecting and laugh-out-loud funny, this coming-of-age novel chronicles a year in the life of eleven-year-old Abby Shapiro, aspiring fashion designer, who writes letters to Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, the Possible Future First Lady of the United States.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Abby was embarrassed by the way her mother looked in public, and she was angry at what her friend Susie said about Abby’s mom. Have you ever had a similar situation involving a family member whom you had to defend even though you were embarrassed about it? How did you handle it?

There are often jealousies between family members. Abby felt that her mother was jealous of Abby’s Aunt Rina. Do you think Abby handled the situation well? If not, what could she have done instead? Have you had similar situations in your own family? How have you handled them?

Abby, who was inspired by Jackie Kennedy, began writing letters and sending fashion sketches to Jackie before she became First Lady. Who inspires you? Talk about why and then write a letter to that person.

Abby did something terrible on Halloween because of peer pressure. Have you had a similar experience when you allowed peer pressure to force you to do something you really didn’t want to do? Why do people succumb to peer pressure? What, if anything, can they do to avoid it? Is it ever justifiable to do something bad for a good reason? When? How?

Abby lost her favorite good-luck doll, Mei. What favorite objects do you have? Why are they important? How would you feel if you lost one of them?

Abby’s mother intercepted Abby’s letters to Jackie Kennedy and never sent them. Do you think it is ever a good idea for parents to invade their kids’ privacy like this? Why or why not?

Secrets and lies play a big part in Abby’s story. When is it good to keep secrets? How does it make you feel when you are keeping a secret? Is it ever a good idea to lie to someone—even if you think you are protecting that person? Why or why not?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Axelrod is the author of the best-selling Pigs Will Be Pigs math series. She lives in the Hudson Valley in New York State. Your Friend in Fashion, Abby Shapiro, her first novel, is based in part on her own childhood and is illustrated with paper dolls she made when she was Abby’s age. Visit Amy online at www.amyaxelrod.com.

WEB LINKS

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
http://bit.ly/okE4CS
Provides a wealth of classroom resources and activities related to the 1960 election of John F. Kennedy as the thirty-fifth president of the United States.

The Great Idea Finder
www.ideafinder.com/history/inventions/barbiedoll.htm
Presents the history of the Barbie doll and biographies of the people who created her, along with a survey of how she and her fashions have changed over time.

New World Encyclopedia—The History of Pogroms
www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Pogrom
Provides a definition and a history of anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia and eastern Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century and beyond.

Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years
www.thecityreview.com/jackieo.html
Discusses Jackie Kennedy’s fashions and favorite designers. (Taken from the catalog of an exhibit of her clothing that was mounted in 2001 and 2002 in New York, Boston, and Washington DC.)

The Library of Congress
http://1.usa.gov/oWkoZN
Provides information on “Dedication,” the poem that Robert Frost did not read because the sun was in his eyes. And http://1.usa.gov/oSLPFJ provides a replica of “The Gift Outright,” the poem he recited from memory.

Check out http://yourfriendinfashionabbyshapiro.com for interactive activities, the history of Abby’s dolls, and lots more!