Belle Prater’s Boy Socratic Seminar Questions

1) Why does Woodrow tell his outrageous stories? Some of them are true and some of them are clearly made up. Why? In which situations does he tell them? How do the other characters react to his stories?

2) How would you define family? How would you describe Gypsy’s and Woodrow’s family? Why does Belle run away from this?

3) Woodrow tells Gypsy about how his mother could relate to both the man in the straight jacket in prison and the man trapped in the cave. Why do you think Belle felt so trapped?

4) Gypsy and Woodrow almost instantly become best friends. Why do you think this is? In which ways are Gypsy and Woodrow similar? In which ways aren’t they similar? Woodrow quickly becomes very popular. Why is this? Would you want him for a friend? Would you want Gypsy for a friend?

5) Appearances are very important in this book. To which characters is this most true? What are some examples where appearances play an important role? Do you think that appearances are important why or why not?

6) Grandpa tells Gypsy it’s what’s in the heart that counts (p. 114). What kind of impression does this make on Gypsy?

7) How would Amos and Love’s lives been different had they not placed so much importance on appearances? How would Belle’s?

8) Why does Gypsy cut off all of her hair?

9) Gypsy comes to understand her truth. She thinks,” Aunt Belle had left Woodrow on purpose just like my daddy left me. Not because they didn’t love us. They did. But their pain was bigger than their love” (p.195). What do you think she means by this? How do you think she is able to come to this conclusion and to be so forgiving about their situations?

10) Why does Gypsy treat her step-father the way that she does? By the end of the book do you think her attitude toward him is changing? How does this happen?

11) What is the theme of *Belle Prater’s Boy* ? Use at least 3 examples to support your claim.