

HIDDEN POWERS by V R Janis

1. There is an accident and Papakoosigun leaves her home. Does she react the way you think you would in a similar situation? Do you find her actions troubling? Does her experiences cause her to grow? If so, how?
2. Native American culture plays a big part in the book. Were there any notable cultural or traditional factors at play in the book? If so, what? How did it affect the characters? Do you think they were realistically portrayed?
3. What scene was the most pivotal for the book? How do you think the story would have changed had that scene not taken place? What scene resonated most with you personally in either a positive or negative way? Why or why not? Has anything ever happened to you similar to what happened in the book? How did you react to it differently?
4. The author based the settings in locations that she found interesting and a connection to. Do the locations and environments of the book color the telling of the story or are they merely a backdrop? Does the location change during the book have any effect on the central characters? What details of the settings are your favorite? Why? Do you think it is important for an author of fantasy to pay close attention to a setting's detail? Why or why not?
5. Compare the humans to the elves. How are they similar? How are they different? For example, what do the humans do to the earth that upsets Papakoosigun, an elf? Do you think the author is making a point about cultural differences between all people? What can we learn from Papakoosigun's experience and apply to our own lives?
6. Discuss the need for the elves to hide themselves from the humans. Do you think the elves are assuming about the response they would receive? How does the way the characters see themselves, differ from how others see them? How do you see the various characters? Why do you think people make assumptions based solely on appearance?
7. What specific themes did the author emphasize throughout the novel? What do you think he or she is trying to get across to the reader? In what ways do the events in the books reveal evidence of the author's world view?
8. Discuss the relationship between Ishkode and Papakoosigun. How would Ishkode describe her? Why does their relationship stall? Are you surprised at Papakoosigun's reaction? How about Ishkode's?
9. Papakoosigun keeps trying to go back to the island. Do you believe that it is her guilt that may want her want to return? What do you think she is thinking as she struggles with herself on this issue?

10. What do you think Papakoosigun's brother would think about her saving the forest elves? Do you think he would regret how he treated her? What would her teacher, Biboon say? Whose approval do you think would be the most important to Papakoosigun? Why?
11. After Papakoosigun enters the town, she is lost. For the first time in her life she is in a foreign environment. What do you think would have happened if Bagosendam and Jean did not help her? Why do you think they helped her so readily?
12. Although Papakoosigun gains a new power, she doesn't understand it. How would her life be different if she grew up in the forest elf village and learned about it? How would her life be different if she did not have it? Have you ever known someone who had a gift, but didn't understand how to use it? Would you be comfortable sharing yours at all times?
13. Papakoosigun is forest clan and Mikwam is ice. How does that inform the readers of the characters and their relationships? Does it define who they are? Does it define their choices?
14. In traditional fantasies there are seven elements: magic, otherworlds, universal themes, heroism, special character types, talking animals and fantastic objects. Which elements did V R Janis decide to incorporate into *Hidden Powers*? Which ones did she omit? Why do you think so? What makes a fantasy different from other types of stories?
15. Were there any moments where you disagreed with the choices of any of the characters? What would you have done differently? What surprised you the most about the book? Were there any particular quotes that stood out to you? Why?
16. What is the significance of the title? Would you have given the book a different title? If yes, what is your title? What were the themes of the book? Do you feel they were adequately explored? Were they brought to life in a cliché or in a unique manner?
17. **How did the book affect you?** Do you feel 'changed' in anyway? Did it expand your range of experience or challenge your assumptions (for example did it take you to a place you haven't been before or help you see a place you know in a different light). Did reading it help you to understand a person better - perhaps a friend or relative, or even yourself? Did certain parts of the book make you uncomfortable? If so, why did you feel that way? Did this lead to a new understanding or awareness of some aspect of your life you might not have thought about before?
18. Discuss this quote from the author: "I was taught that our culture is used to bond us to our past, so that we would never forget where we come from. People need the stories to inspire that lesson of respect for all living things and the world around us. They remind us where we stand and what we stand for. These narrations help us give the

future a piece of the past. . . . The story chooses the storyteller and it is our job to create an unforgettable journey that sparks the imaginations of our readers and listeners." Do you agree with the author? What do you think she means by the phrase "unforgettable journey that sparks the imaginations"? How is this shown throughout the novel?

19. If you were a writer, what could you learn from this book?

20. If you were to produce a movie of *Hidden Powers*, whom would you cast in each role? Why would you pick these particular actors?