

**“New Kid” by Jerry Craft (2019)
Book Discussion Guide:**

Chapter 4: Upper, Upper West Side Story
Designed for you by Kelly Hanley



Summary

In this chapter, Jordan begins by sharing his tips for taking the bus, explaining that he has to act less and less tough the further he moves from home, and the closer he gets to his new school. Several characters in the chapter are confused by a staff member or student for someone else. Jordan talks to Maury, another student of color about common interests and finds that him and Maury are quite different and seems discouraged by this discovery. Some students ask Jordan about his home life, and ask if he lives alone with his mother, which appears to upset Jordan. Liam intervenes and explains that Jordan lives with his mother and father, and then steers the conversation toward what sport Jordan is thinking of trying out for at school.

Questions:

What is the “theme” or central idea of this chapter?

Several characters in the chapter (Jordan, Mr. Garner, Drew) are confused by a staff member or student for someone else.

What do you notice about all of the characters in Chapter 4 who are called the wrong name in school (Jordan being called Maury, Mr. Garner being confused for Coach Rick, Drew being called Deandre)?

- A) Have you ever been confused for someone who looks similar to you? How did that make you feel?

Why do you think Jordan felt so disappointed after discovering him and Maury didn't have much in common?

When Jordan meets Ashley and Ruby in the cafeteria, Ashley asks who he lives with, and Ruby adds, "just your mom?"

- A) Do you see any problems with asking a question like that?
- B) How would you feel if you were Jordan?
- C) If you were Liam, would you have said something different? If so, what?

After this chapter, what might the author want us to know about Jordan or the overall story?

- A) How does the author develop the point of view of the narrator (Jordan) throughout the story?

Activity:

Pretend that you are introducing a new student at Riverdale Middle School. After reflecting on Ashley and Ruby's questions to Jordan, what are some better questions you could ask your new classmate to get to know them while also making them feel welcome? After writing 3 solid questions, share 2 things about yourself that you would want a new student to know about you when starting their year at Riverdale Middle.

OR

Draw a comic strip describing a time you either had a positive or negative experience when asking/being asked a question about yourself, or a time you felt similar to Jordan in this chapter (Hint: think of a time you felt you had to change who you are depending on where you are, like Jordan on his way to school)

Option 1 Example!

What's something you're excited to see or learn more about at Riverdale Middle?
Do you have a favorite teacher yet?
What's something from home/your old school that is familiar? What's something that's new?

I would share that I enjoy playing sports and spending time outside. I would also share that I enjoy meeting new people!