

Questions to help you understand *I'm Thinking of Ending Things*

Page 1

1. "Sometimes a thought is closer to the truth, to reality, than an action. you can't fake a thought." Do you agree with this?

Pages 2-11

1. Where are Jake and his girlfriend (the narrator) going? Why?
2. "People just aren't very funny... funny is rare." (page 10) Have you found this to be true in your life?
3. How did they end up exchanging phone numbers? (pages 10-11)

Pages 13

1. Why is this page written in italic (a slanted font, like *italic*). Who is talking?
2. What do you understand from this page? What has happened; what are they talking about? How would you describe their emotions?

Pages 15-26

1. How has Jake and the narrator's (his girlfriend's) relationship progressed?
2. Who is the Caller? Is there a connection between the Caller and the man at the window?
3. Do you think the man at the window is dangerous or friendly? Is he real?
4. How is it possible that the Caller's phone number is also the narrator's phone number?
5. What do you think about the message the Caller leaves on the narrator's phone? (page 23) Is the Caller dangerous? Is he mentally stable? Is he lonely? Is he.... ?
6. Is the narrator scared by the calls? Would you call the police?
7. Does the added message change your view of the Caller (page 26)? What action should the narrator take, if any?

Page 27

1. Is this conversation about the same event that the people on page 1 are describing?
2. How does this conversation differ? Is it the same people talking?

Pages 29-32

1. Do you agree with Jake or the narrator about secrets in relationships (page 30)?
2. Are the narrator's thoughts about Jake's eating normal or obsessive?

Pages 33-36

1. The narrator says on page 35, "I'm glad we don't know everything." She then adds, "Questions are good. They're better than answers." Do you agree? Why does she feel this way?

Page 37

1. Again, is this the same event? Who is talking this time? Who do you think wrote the graffiti (writing) on the walls?

Pages 39-52

1. Consider this statement by Jake, "Pretty much all memory is fiction and heavily edited." (Page 40) Do you agree? Has this been your experience?
2. Much of this chapter is a story about the narrator's experience with a driver's education instructor. Why is the story so detailed? What parts of the story strike you as unusual?
3. On page 46, the narrator tells the driver that kissing "is an act that requires two." By this, she means that no one single person can, alone, be the best kisser, since kissing requires two people. Do you agree?
4. Later, on pages 49-51, they debate whether anyone can be the smartest person on earth. Why are these two discussions important to the story? What do we learn about each of them, if anything? Why did the author choose to include these debates?
5. What are your thoughts about being "the best" at something? Is it ever possible to be the "best?" Why or why not?

Page 53

1. What new information about the event have you learned from this page? Where do you think the event takes place?

Pages 55-73

1. Why does Jake want to age (get older)?
2. Consider these statements from page 57: "The idea that we are better off with one person for the rest of our lives is not an innate truth of existence. It's a belief we want to be true?" Do you agree?
3. Is the narrator putting too much emphasis on the two pills Jake wrapped up for her? Or does she appropriately appreciate his gesture?
4. What kind of a child was Jake? How did his parents handle his anxiety (as much as you can tell)?
5. How do you understand the green plant story (page 66)? What is this story meant to illustrate?
6. Also on page 66, Jake says, "The more we tell ourselves that we should always be happy... the worse it gets." First, is this an example like the plant story? Second, do you agree?
7. Who do you think the Caller is? Do we have any clues?
8. On page 69, Jake says "Dependency equates to seriousness [in a relationship]."

9. On page 71, the narrator says that we know when a relationship is real “When someone else previously unconnected to us knows us in a way we never thought or believed possible.”
10. On page 71 at the bottom, the narrator says, “... isn’t being alone closer to the truest version of ourselves ...” Can these three statements (questions #8, #9, and #10) all be true? Do you agree with all of them?

Page 75

1. What was found in the closet? Do you have an idea what the “event” in the future was?

Pages 77-88

1. Why does Jake take the narrator out to the barn on such a cold night? Why not go straight into the house?
2. Are there any living animals on Jake’s family’s farm?
3. What do you learn about Jake’s family, his parents? Are they wealthy? Friendly? Loving?
4. What’s up with the photo??? Why does the narrator think it looks like her? Or does it?

Page 89

1. What are they feeling guilty about? (The people talking in this conversation.)
2. “This isn’t about us. We’re the normal ones.” Does being “normal” make everything okay? Does being “normal” absolve them of (remove) guilt?

Pages 91-110

1. What do you think of Jake’s parents? Is there anything unusual about them or their conversation?
2. How does Jake behave during dinner?
3. Is the impersonation game fun? Is it kind? Cruel? Boring?
4. Who do you think was painting in the basement? Is that why the fan is running?
5. Is Jake still working at the lab he described to the narrator? If not, why did he lie? Is there another explanation?

Page 111

- No questions

Pages 113-127

1. What things seem normal to you about Jake’s bedroom, and what things seem abnormal?
2. Does it strike you as unusual for Jake’s dad to invite the narrator (and Jake) to spend the night?
3. Are you surprised that Jake has a brother? Is his story about his brother believable?
4. Describe Jake’s behavior in the car. Why does the narrator feel closer to him during the car ride?

Pages 129-130

1. Why didn’t anyone ask about the man’s health problems? What could they have done?
2. Why hasn’t anyone read the man’s notebooks yet? (In your opinion.)

Page 131-145 (top)

1. Why are the girls at Dairy Queen laughing at Jake and the narrator? Or are they?
2. What was the third girl at Dairy Queen trying to warn Jake and the narrator of? Did this conversation really take place?
3. Is it reasonable to drive off the highway in the middle of a snow storm and then out to a school to throw away two empty cups?

Pages 145-187

1. Who do you think the black truck belongs to? (page 149) Do you agree with Jake or the narrator?
2. Why does Jake turn off the car? Is Jake's demeanor (attitude/behavior) changing? Should the narrator be worried?
3. Why is Jake suddenly angry? Who is he angry at?
4. What is making the loud clanging sound that the narrator hears (pages 158-159)?
5. Would you leave the car and go looking for Jake?
6. Who is saying/thinking this (page 162): "Thought is reality. Actions can be faked." Do you agree?
7. What is the narrator seeing on page 163 – is it someone sinister (dangerous) or normal (just doing his job)?
8. Why does the room (page 164) look familiar to the narrator? Or is she imagining this?
9. What is the narrator looking at on the TV (page 167)? Do you think Jake is in the truck?
10. Who is chasing the narrator through the school?
11. What is it that disturbs (scares) the narrator about Mrs. Veal? (pages 172-173)
12. Based on her experience with Mrs. Veal, the narrator concludes on page 175 "We just never really know anyone." Is this a reasonable thing to conclude based on the interaction she describes with Mrs. Veal?
13. On page 177, why does the narrator say "I've been down these same halls so many times?" Has she?
14. On page 186 the narrator describes her room. What do you notice about her description? Has this room been described before? Where? Does her description raise any questions for you?

Pages 189-190

1. Who are they talking about? What do you learn about him?

Pages 191-197

1. Why does the narrator begin using the word "we" instead of "I"? How many people do you think are in the school?
2. What is the meaning of almost four pages of "What are you waiting for?"

Pages 199-207

1. Why does Jake go back to the custodian's room?
2. What does Jake mean when he says (on page 199) "In the end we can't deny who we are, who we were, where we've been. Who we want to be doesn't matter when there's no way to get there."

3. What does he mean by “He’s not here anymore. He’s already gone.” (bottom of Page 199)
Who is Jake talking about?
4. What happened at the pub? (pages 201-202)
5. On Page 202, Jake asks, “Would anything be different if she had had his number” (and, presumably, called Jake)? Would anything have changed? If yes, how and what?
6. “We hear the steps again, the boots.” (page 203) Is someone coming? Are the steps real?
What is Jake hearing, if anything?
7. Jake thinks, “What can we do when there’s no one else?...” Read this paragraph on page 203.
How would you answer Jake’s many questions about being alone?
8. Top of page 205: “He’s at the door. He’s just standing there. He did this. He brought us here.”
Who is Jake talking about? Who does he think he sees? Is there really someone at the door?
9. On page 206, Jake describes bending a (clothes) hanger. What does he do with it?
10. Why is Jake alone at the end?

Pages 209-210

1. What writing are they talking about?
2. Are the two people in these italic sections men or women or one of each? What makes you think so?