

Insignificant Events in the Life of Cactus

By Dusti Bowling

1. What is unique about Aven? She doesn't have arms.
2. What did Connor unintentionally do to get Aven's attention when he first met her? He barked at her.
3. What disability/disorder does Connor have? Tourette's Syndrome
4. What instrument does Aven play? (pg 66) She plays the guitar.
5. Who is Zion? (pg 90) He was a student eating alone in the hallway who got picked on by other kids for being fat.
6. How is Zion similar to Aven? (pg 92) He ate lunch alone because he was afraid of being judged. Zion got teased for being fat and Aven was judged for having no arms.
7. What was the reason Aven kept losing to Connor while they played the racing video game at her house? (pg102) He was ticcing a lot and it distracted her.
8. What was the (first and last) name Henry called Aven when she was mashing the potatoes for Thanksgiving? (pg 166) Aven Cavanaugh
9. Name Aven's two best friends that she met in Arizona? Zion and Connor
10. True or False: Aven is good at playing soccer.
True

Slightly harder

11. Why did Aven think that the government took over her dad's brain at the beginning of the story? (Ch 2) He wanted to move to Arizona and work at an amusement park as general manager when he has never done this before.
Acceptable answer: He is also moving her away from her friends.

12. Describe Spaghetti the llama. (pg 27) He is an extremely old mutant llama with a giant tumor growing out of its heard.
Additional info: tumor cannot be removed
13. What happened when a group of *stylish* girls first approached Aven at her new school? (pg 42) They asked her what happened to her arms and if it was contagious. They never asked her what her name was.
14. What were the two reasons why Connor thinks his dad left, which caused his parents to divorce? (pg 67-68) His dad thought that he could control his tics and his therapy bills were too expensive. His dad did not want to pay for them anymore.
15. Why can't Connor hold his tics in? (pg 68-69) It's uncomfortable and painful feeling in his chest which builds up inside his chest. He compares it to a cough that you try to hold in.
16. Why does Connor prefer to eat alone? (pg104)He spits while he eats.
17. Why wouldn't Aven play the guitar at the art festival at Stagecoach Pass? (pg 178) She didn't want people looking at her as she played the guitar with her feet.
Acceptable: She didn't want people watching the freak (her).
18. Why did Aven think that her playing soccer was like cheating? (Pg222) because she uses her feet like her hands and you're not allowed to play soccer with your hands
19. What did Aven learn about Josephine while trying to solve the mystery? She is Joe Cavanaugh, the owner and she is Aven's birth grandmother.
Additional info: Josephine gave her up for adoption when Aven's mom died.
20. Connor was so upset about going to the movies with his friends and Aven's mom. What did they do to make him feel

comfortable about going? (pg 188) They rented out the entire movie theater for all four of them.

Harder

21. Name all 5 of the different type of animals at the petting zoo at Stage Coach Pass Amusement Park. (pg 27) Goats, sheep, rabbits, chickens, and a llama (named Spaghetti)
22. What is Aven's nickname and how did she get it? (pg112) Her nickname is Sheebs because when her parents first adopted her she didn't know how to do anything. Although Aven was two, she was use to everyone doing everything for her while she sat and waited to be taken care of like the Queen of Sheeba.
23. What did Aven realize about Connor and his mom's relationship when she first met his mom? (pg 152-54) That his mom does care about him and loves him. It's Connor who blames himself for the divorce of their parents and that she knows nothing about what's going on with him and he won't tell her. He doesn't tell her anything because he feels like he will stress her out.
24. Why did Aven feel like dancing at the end of Chapter 34? She made a new friend on the soccer team named Jessica.
25. What is the full name of Aven's online blog? (Don't leave any words out- pg 258) The Unarmed Middle Schooler's Guide to Survival

Stumper

26. List the first 10 of the fantastic things about not having arms that Aven discussed in her blog post. Chapter 16
 - 26.1. No fistfighting,
 - 26.2. no rough elbows
 - 26.3. No need to clean my fingernails

- 26.4. No leaving fingerprints behind at a crime scene
 - 26.5. No getting caught picking my nose
 - 26.6. No arm wrestling
 - 26.7. No golf
 - 26.8. No cheesy high fives
 - 26.9. No making that silly ok circle shape with my hands
 - 26.10. Fewer areas to put sunscreen on and fewer areas to be sunburned.
27. What are the last 10 worst reasons about not having arms in chapter 30?

- 27.1. Feet hurts, due to feet being used as hands
- 27.2. Nonhandicapped people using the handicap stalls in the bathroom
- 27.3. No pushing a heavy wheelbarrow.
- 27.4. Splinters are a real pain in the butt
- 27.5. No hand or arm massages.
- 27.6. Harder to keep my balance
- 27.7. Harder to do...everything
- 27.8. No wiping away a friend's tears when he's hurt
- 27.9. No hugging him to make him feel better
- 27.10. No reaching out for him when he walks out the door