

## Discussion Questions for Chasing Vermeer

What are the benefits of Ms. Hussey's idea that her class should decide what they want to learn about rather than her deciding for them? Are there any potential problems with that approach?

Ms. Hussey declares that the letter as a form of communication is "dead." Is it (do people even write letters anymore)? The kids in her class argue about what is the most accurate way to communicate. What do you think is the best form of communication?

Petra says she believes human beings need questions more than answers. What does she mean? Do you agree? Would you rather have more questions or more answers to think about?

What is art? Who decides? (Is the fence behind us art? Is a rock art? Is a hair on your head art?)

Is art a lie that tells the truth, as Picasso is quoted in the book as saying, or is art the truth that tells a lie, as Calder says? What could those two statements mean?

What is a coincidence? Do you believe in coincidences or do you think everything happens for a reason? Who remembers some of the coincidences in the book?

What is important to Petra, and later Calder, about Charles Fort's book, *Lo*? Does anyone know what Charles Fort was trying to say in his book?

Are there ways in which it might have been a good thing the painting was stolen?

Calder believes that there are patterns everywhere. What is the biggest pattern he and Petra see after they have solved the mystery of *A Lady Writing*? How do the patterns he sees help him?

What are some of the clues Petra and Calder uncover that lead them to the painting?

Mrs. Sharpe has written down messages she has received from the Lady in the Vermeer paintings. She says to the kids, "Something managed to communicate with each of us... each in a way that we were willing to hear or see." What does she mean by "willing to hear or see"? Can books/art/nature literally communicate with us? If so, how?

Do you believe in supernatural occurrences?

Who knows what the Fibonacci Sequence is? Is there a way it might help us understand this book?

What would you say is the main point the author might want us to take from reading this book?