

**Book Discussion Group Guide**

**A. Discussion Questions**

1. When Robert picked up the Effervescent Elixir on his bus, do you think he had any idea how it was about to change his life? Did anything ever happen to you that caused you to have a crazy, upside down type of day?
2. Robert and Janine are sent off together to find the lost cheese of Eliki. Do things go better when they cooperate? What are some ways you can work together with your siblings, parents, and classmates?
3. Robert has a difficult job to do, but there are some grownups around who try to help him. What kind of attitude does Robert need so that he can benefit from their help? Do you ask adults for help when you need it? What's the difference between asking for assistance and expecting someone else to do your job for you?
4. Robert has to answer several riddles in the story. Do you know any riddles? What's your favorite?
5. Have Robert and Janine's feelings about each other changed after the story ends? How do you think this will affect the way they act toward each other?

**B. Recipe - Madame Gorgonzola's 222 Grilled Cheese Sandwich**

**Ingredients:** 2 slices of your favorite cheese, 2 slices of bread, 2 tablespoons of butter

**Directions:**

1. Place the cheese between the slices of bread.
2. Spread one tablespoon of butter onto the top slice of bread.
3. Place one tablespoon of butter into a skillet and melt it on medium heat.
4. Put the sandwich in the skillet, with the unbuttered slice of bread face down, and press the sandwich down with a spatula.
5. After the bottom slice of bread is golden brown, flip the sandwich and press down with the spatula again.
6. When the second side of bread is golden brown, remove the sandwich from the skillet and turn off the stove.
7. Eat it and enjoy.

**Remember to have an adult supervise when you use the stove.** You can change the type of cheese or type of bread to give your sandwich a secret, special twist.

**Book Discussion Group Guide**

**C. Projects and Activities**

**1. Word Search Code**

Robert and Janine find their father's message about traveling through the Swiss cheese tunnels by completing the word search he leaves for them in the tip of Poseidon's trident. Pick a theme, such as types of cookies, or vehicles, or whatever you want, and use those to create a word search that has a secret message embedded between the words.

**2. Riddle me this**

Riddles are among the oldest forms of puzzles. Daimonas posed several riddles for Robert. Thankfully, Robert solved them all. Have a riddle contest with your family. Each person creates a riddle or two and presents it to the family. The person who guesses the most riddles correctly wins.

**3. Cheese Night**

Who knew there were so many different types of cheeses? Not Robert. Host a cheese tasting. Get several different kinds of cheeses that you've never tasted. Create some categories and have your family rate them. You could have tastiest, smoothest, and even smelliest (but we already know which cheese holds that title). Don't forget some crackers to help cut down on the stink.

**D. Activities on the Web**

Mystical creatures pop up all over the place during Robert and Janine's journey. Some of these characters hail from different mythological traditions. With your parents' permission, visit some websites to find out more about these characters. A nice site is the Encyclopedia Mythica: <http://www.pantheon.org/>  
Below are a few of the folks from ancient literature that Robert meets:

Manticore  
Poseidon  
Triton

Simurgh  
Gob

Euryale  
Neptune  
Ozaena (stink polyp)

Chimaera

**E. Related reads**

If you loved Robert and Janine's adventures, and you want more similar books, try these titles below, or ask your local librarian for suggestions:

*Lightning Thief* (Percy Jackson and the Olympians series) by Robert Riordan

*Artemis Fowl* by Eoin Colfer

*Spiderwick Chronicles* by Toni DiTerlizzi