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# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



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## ABOUT THE BOOK

Rosie loves Jack. Jack loves Rosie. So when they're separated, Rosie will do anything to find the boy who makes the sun shine in her head. Even defy her parents' orders and run away from home. Even struggle across London and travel to Brighton on her own, though the trains are cancelled and the snow is falling. Even though people might think a girl like Rosie, who has Down syndrome, could never survive on her own.

Introducing a strong and determined protagonist with Down syndrome, debut author Mel Darbon gives readers an underrepresented but much-needed point of view with a voice-driven, heartfelt story of finding your place in an often big and intimidating world.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Based on the cover illustration and title, what did you expect this book to be about?
- Do you have any experience interacting with people with Down syndrome or others with developmental disabilities? How did your past experience affect how you read Rosie's story?
- How did you react when you first discovered Jack did not also have Down syndrome?
- Rosie encounters a wide variety of people on her journey with an even wider variety of reactions to her physical appearance. What similarities or differences did you notice in how people interact with her?
- Many people are rude to Rosie, treating her less like a person, whether she notices it or not. How did it feel to experience this from Rosie's point of view? Would you have reacted differently if you read Rosie's story from a different perspective?
- Rosie has a distinctive way of expressing herself. How do you feel the language she uses contributes to your understanding of her?
- Think of the way Rosie speaks and Jack's frequent misspellings in his postcards to Rosie. How do you feel this contributes to your understanding of these two and how they communicate with each other?
- "The words in my head are the same as yours," Rosie says to Tom (page 223). "Sometimes they just come out wonky." Discuss the differences between Rosie's own thoughts and the way she speaks to others. Why do you think the author chose to depict Rosie in this way?
- When a woman sees Rosie at the train station she says to her, "Terrible that girl is missing, isn't it? She's one of yours, isn't she?" (page 243). Discuss the assumptions people make when they first see Rosie and notice she has Down syndrome.
- The police lady assures Rosie that Lisette will be taken care of, but how did you feel finishing the book and not knowing exactly what would happen to her and Tom? How do you think the police lady will help Lisette?
- Despite believing that she was going on a simple journey to find Jack, Rosie ends up dealing with some very serious situations, even fighting to stay alive. Were you surprised by the scary and sometimes life-threatening situations in which Rosie finds herself? Why do you think the author chose to include these scenes?
- What did you think of the ending? What do you hope happens next?
- Did reading this novel change your perception of those with Down syndrome? In what ways do you feel different now than before you read it?

14. How do you think Rosie's parents will handle her desire for independence going forward?
15. Rosie begins her journey with lots of uncertainty, thinking, "I'm too stupid to do this" (page 82), but her determination to reach Jack only grows by the time she arrives in Brighton. In what ways does Rosie change throughout this story?
16. What do you think was the author's purpose in writing this book? Do you think she has succeeded?
17. If you had the opportunity to ask Mel Darbon one question about *Rosie Loves Jack*, what would it be?