

TALKING TO THE MOON

DISCUSSION NOTES



- We first meet Iris when she is living with her Grandma and she tells us all the good things about where she lives. What are the good and bad things about where you live?
- Discuss why you think Iris prefers living with Mimi. She was an only child for a long time before the twins were born – do you think she finds it hard now that her parents have to focus on looking after the twins?
- Both the house where Iris is living with Mimi and the house where she lives with her parents sound very chaotic. Why do you think she prefers the chaos of Mimi's house?
- What does the phrase 'losing your marbles' mean, and why do you think we use it?
- Why do you think Iris doesn't say anything to Mimi when she puts jam on her eggs and does other strange things?
- What do you think about the relationship between Mason and Iris? Discuss whether you think the way that Iris treats Mason is right. Why does their friendship seem to work even though Iris is sure she doesn't really like him?
- The book is written in lots of short sections. How do you think this affects the story?
- Iris begins to write notes for Mimi. Do you think they will help?
- Mimi talks to the moon and Iris talks to her seagull. Why do you think they both like talking to something that can't reply? How might this help them?
- Iris describes her lie as a punch bag: 'I imagine the lie like a punch bag – I've just thwacked it as far as I can and it's about to swing back and hit me round the head.' Do you think this is a good description? Try to come up with some metaphors of your own to describe lies and how they make you feel.
- Why do you think Iris is determined to find out what happened to Coral? Come up with some theories of your own – what do you think could have happened to Coral?
- Mimi loves the sea, Mason loves marbles. Think about something you love and tell a partner about it. Why does it make you happy – was it because of the person who introduced you to it?
- Mimi is embarrassed when she realises her clothes are on inside out, but Iris joins her. Has anyone ever done something like this for you before, to stop you from feeling embarrassed? How did it make you feel?
- Discuss the importance of memories. Why do we need them? What are some of your favourite memories?
- Iris doesn't tell anyone about Mimi losing her memory for a while. Do you think this makes her feel worse or better?
- Do you know anyone who has had dementia? Did it make you feel scared/worried/sad?
- Lee tells Iris that we have to make the best of what life throws at you. Is this a good attitude to have? Think of some situations that you have been struggling with, or that have made you sad. How can you make the best of them?
- At the end of the book, the mystery of Coral is solved and Mimi gets to meet her. How did this scene make you feel? Does it feel like a good conclusion to the story?
- Discuss what you think might happen next to each of the characters. Do you think Iris will stay with Mimi? Will Mimi and Coral keep in contact with each other?



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ACTIVITY IDEAS



NOTES FOR ME

Iris starts to write notes for herself and for Mimi, to help her remember. Write some notes to remind yourself what you have learnt from *Talking to the Moon*. Think about what the book has taught you about friendship, family and memory. Share your notes with each other. Does anyone have something that you didn't think of? Add some of your favourites to your own list.

MY MEMORIES

Mimi starts forgetting things and getting muddled. Losing your memories can be scary and worrying for the people around you, too. Think about some of your favourite memories, such as a day out, a school trip or a holiday. Create a storyboard of your favourite memory. Split your page into six sections and draw what you remember. Write a couple of sentences below each drawing that explain what happened. Show your storyboards to the group and explain why it is your favourite memory. Are there any common themes in the group's favourite memories? Is it the location or the people you are with that make them important to remember?

OTHER PEOPLE

Iris talks a lot about the people around her – what they like and dislike and how they act. Choose someone you are close to and create a fact file about them. Include their name, age, likes and dislikes, what you love about them, their portrait and some of your favourite memories together. Why are they important to you?

THE PAST

How much do you know about the childhood of your parents, grandparents or carers? Plan out a list of interview questions for one of them to find out about their past. Are there any mysteries left unanswered, similar to the mystery of Coral? Carry out your interview and take notes on what you find out. Did anything surprise you? Next time you meet as a book group/class, report what you have found out. Record your findings; this could be in the form of a newspaper article, a story, or a formal piece of writing. Why is it important that we find out about what happened in the past and remember it?



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