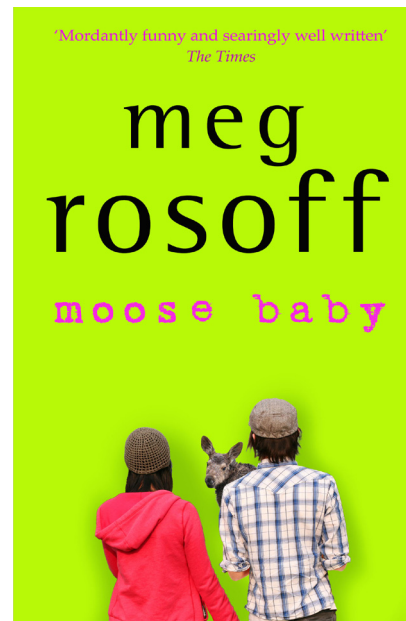




Barrington Stoke

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION GUIDE



MEG ROSOFF

Moose Baby

PART 1 Introduction

PART 2 Exploring Moose Baby

PART 3 About the Author

PART I INTRODUCTION

These discussion points have been written to provide ideas for exploring Meg Rosoff's **Moose Baby**.

Before using the activities, we hope you will read and enjoy **Moose Baby** with your students.



Moose Baby

Whatever Jess thought she was expecting, she wasn't expecting this...

They were all waiting to say 'I told you so'.

Jess's mum. The midwives. Her boyfriend's mum and dad.

'I told you you should be careful.'

'I told you you wouldn't cope.'

'I told you that girl was bad news.'

Jess was ready for it all. Bring it on. She just wasn't ready for a ... moose baby.




In Meg Rosoff's witty and wise comedy, one teenage girl learns that parenthood is always a journey into the unknown.

PART 2 EXPLORING MOOSE BABY





I. CHARACTERS


WHY DOES THE MIDWIFE GIVE JESS THE EVIL EYE?

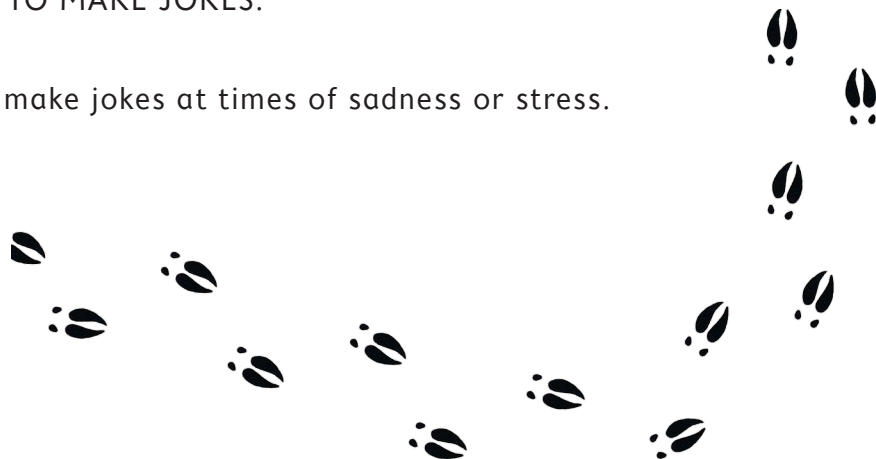
-  Do you think it's fair of the midwife to think less of Jess because of her age?
-  Do you think that a lot of people think this way?
-  What age is 'too young' to become a mother?

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MISS STAINES THE SOCIAL WORKER?

-  Jess and Nick think she is patronising – do you agree?
-  What do you think of the phrase Unique Challenges? What does it really mean?

EVEN THOUGH NICK AND JESS ARE IN SHOCK AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BOOK, THEY BOTH MANAGE TO MAKE JOKES.

-  Why do people make jokes at times of sadness or stress.










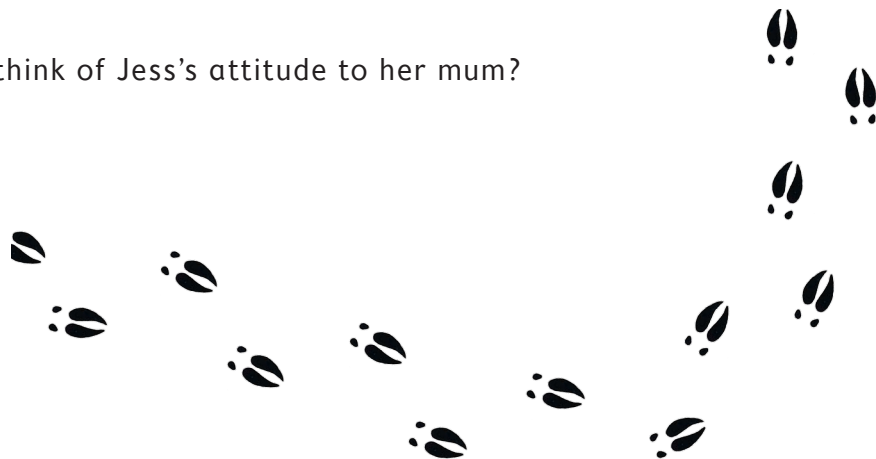
2. JESS'S MUM

JESS'S MUM IS ANNOYED WITH JESS AND NICK FOR HAVING A BABY IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND AT FIRST SHE IS EVEN MORE UPSET WHEN JESS HAS MOOSIE.

MOOSIE AND JESS LIVE WITH HER, BUT SHE WON'T GIVE UP HER JOB TO LOOK AFTER MOOSIE.

IN THE END SHE BECOMES VERY FOND OF MOOSIE – SOMETIMES JESS IS ALMOST JEALOUS AND THINKS SHE LOVES MOOSIE MORE THAN JESS.

-  What do you think of Jess's mum's attitude?
-  If you were in her place, would you be annoyed with Jess and Nick for the fact that Jess got pregnant?
-  Is it fair to be annoyed about the fact that Jess had a moose baby?
-  Would your mum give up her job if you were in the same position as Jess?
-  What do you think of Jess's attitude to her mum?







3. PARENTING


WHEN MOOSIE IS SIX WEEKS OLD, JESS SAYS, 'I CAN'T SAY I WAS GETTING USED TO BEING A MOTHER, BUT I WAS DOING WHAT WAS NEEDED TO KEEP BOTH OF US ALIVE AND OUT OF JAIL.'


 Do you think most new mums feel in control, or do many feel a bit like Jess?


JESS SAYS 'HANGING AROUND WITH YOUR BABY AT HOME IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM HAVING TO SEND HIM TO SCHOOL. IT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JUST BEING SOME KID WITH A BABY AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN BEING A PARENT WITH A CAPITAL P'.

 What do you think Jess means by this?

 When a child goes to school, what things do parents have to start dealing with?


 What new people do parents have to start dealing with?

 When most teen parents have a baby, do you think they think ahead to the time their baby will start school?

 Do you think many teen babies are planned?

WHEN JESS AND MOOSIE GO TO THE ANIMAL-BABY CLUSTER GROUP, NICK CAN'T COME BECAUSE HE IS WATCHING A FOOTBALL GAME.

 What does this say about Nick?





 Is becoming a teen parent tougher for girls or boys, or is there no difference?







4. THEMES



AT THE CLUSTER GROUP, THE OTHER PARENTS TALK ABOUT TREATING THEIR NON-HUMAN CHILDREN THE SAME WAY AS THEIR HUMAN CHILDREN, AND THEY ALL WANT THEIR NON-HUMAN CHILDREN TO GO TO MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS, NOT SPECIAL SCHOOLS.

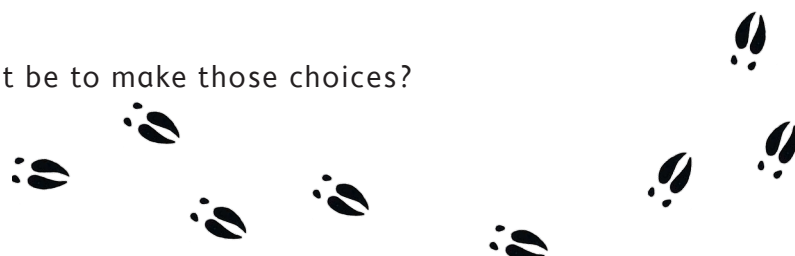
-  Outside the world of Moose Baby, which children might go to special schools?
-  Why?
-  Do you think it is ever alright to separate children with special needs and children without special needs?
-  What are the arguments for and against special schools?

WHEN MOOSIE GETS OLDER AND GOES INTO RUT, JESS IS SENT TO SEE A COUNSELOR FOR DEPRESSED TEENAGERS.

-  Outside the world of Moose Baby, do you think a teenage mum might get depressed?
-  Why?

AT THE END OF MOOSE BABY, NICK AND JESS MUST CHOOSE WHETHER OR NOT THEY SHOULD TAKE MOOSIE TO CANADA AND LET HIM GO.



-  Outside the world of the book, what choices does a pregnant teen or a teen mum have?
-  How hard would it be to make those choices?







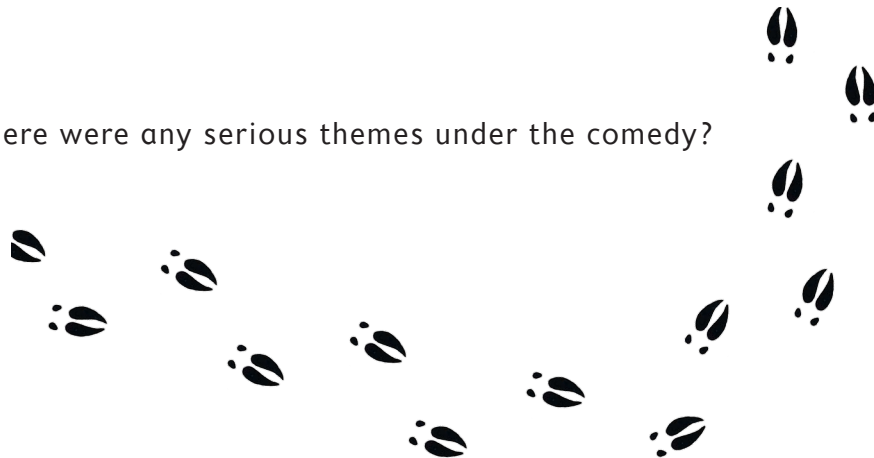
5 THE BOOK

THE OTHER BABIES AT JESS'S MUM-AND-TODDLER GROUP LOVE MOOSIE.

-  How important is the choice of animal to the way the book works?
-  Would it be a very different story if Jess had a cat baby or a crocodile baby?

DID YOU ENJOY MOOSE BABY?

-  Did you laugh?
-  Did you think there were any serious themes under the comedy?



PART 3 ABOUT MEG ROSOFF



Meg Rosoff was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in the USA in 1956. She is the second of four sisters.

She attended Harvard University in 1974. After 3 years at Harvard she moved to England and studied sculpture at Central St. Martins in London, England. She returned to the United States to finish her degree in 1980, and later moved to New York City for 9 years, where she worked in publishing and advertising.

Aged 32 Rosoff returned to England and began to write.

Her young-adult novel **How I Live Now** won the annual Guardian Children's Fiction prize, a once-in-a-lifetime book award judged by a panel of British children's book writers and her novel **Just in Case**, won the CILIP Carnegie Medal.

She currently lives in London where as well as writing she walks her dogs, takes her daughter to school and cleans up the dishes... occasionally.

You can find out loads more about Meg on her own website:

WWW.MEGROSOFF.CO.UK

