

HOLIDAY HOUSE

PIXEL+INK

BOOK CLUB GUIDE



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Team Canteen: Rocky Road

by **Amalie Jahn**

ABOUT THE BOOK

A hot pink boa that might be magic bonds four unlikely friends from summer camp and gives them the courage to face the challenges they encounter back home.

On the final night of summer camp, Tasha, Raelynn, Claire, and Billie get busted stuffing themselves with ice cream in the mess hall's walk-in freezer. But when they slip away without being punished, they're convinced the pink feather boa Billie put on to stay warm is magic.

Back at home, each member of Team Canteen tests the boa's powers as they face their own challenges. It's going to be a rocky road from the start of the school year back to Camp Happy Hollow. Will the boa continue to protect Team Canteen, or will their friendship end up being the most magical find of all?

Alternating among the friends, *Rocky Road* is a smart, soaring celebration of the highs and lows of middle school and the unbreakable friendships that see kids through, no matter what comes next. It's *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* for a new generation of readers.

QUESTIONS

The Story

- In what way are Tasha, Raelynn, Claire, and Billie outsiders? How do they find one another? Why do they call themselves Team Canteen? Explain how being a team helps them face their personal lives at home.
- Identify each character's conflict, their problem in the story to be solved. Cite specific passages or scenes from the book. Discuss how the characters' conflicts contribute to the overall conflict of the book.

- Theme is the central idea or message of a book. What is the central theme of this book?
- Discuss the structure of the book and the author's use of the third person point of view.
- What is the contribution of the text messages between the four main characters?
- What is the role of the boa that Tasha finds at camp? Explain why Billie wants Raelynn to be the first to try out its magic.
- How does each member of the team need the boa? Debate how each finds their sense of self. Why are they convinced the boa is responsible for solving their personal conflicts?

The Characters

- Claire is a scholarship camper. In what way does she feel like a charity case at camp and at home? Why does she dread going home? Describe her family. How is Claire embarrassed by her family's situation? How and why does Miss Birdie help Claire? Explain how her dad reacts when he learns that Claire is working at Miss Birdie's secondhand shop for money. Discuss the relationship that develops between Claire and Sam at Miss Birdie's.
- Billie wants to be a set designer; his father wants him to be a hockey star. Why doesn't Billie share his dream with his family? Discuss Billie's response when he is named MVP for his team's hockey game. At what point does Billie know that what he really wants to do is to perform? How does Julius encourage him? Explain how his family reacts when they learn that he is skating the role of Miss Hannigan in *Annie on Ice*.
- Contrast Raelynn and her fraternal twin sister, Baylee. At what point did their relationship change? Raelynn thinks that her mother favors Baylee. Cite scenes or direct quotes from the novel that Raelynn may be correct. How does her dad understand and promote Raelynn's interests and talents? Raelynn wears the boa to school. What magic is she hoping for? How does Jamal Murphy react to the boa? Why is Raelynn surprised by his reaction?
- Tasha comes home from camp to discover that her cousin, Jillian, had moved in after the death of her mother. How does Tasha resent Jillian? When does everything change for them? What is the importance of the poem that they write together?

The Reunion

- Describe the reunion of Team Canteen. How do they embrace Jillian? Why do they pass the boa to her?

Guide created by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



USA *Today* bestselling author **Amalie Jahn** is the recipient of the Literary Classics Seal of Approval and the Readers' Favorite Gold Medal for her debut YA novel, *The Clay Lion*. Her first YA contemporary, *The Next to Last Mistake*, won the prestigious IBPA Benjamin Franklin Award and *A Walk Between Raindrops* was selected by *Kirkus Reviews* as one of the Best Indie Books of the Year. *Team Canteen: Rocky Road* is Amalie's first book with Pixel+Ink/Holiday House. A TED speaker, human rights advocate, and active promoter of kindness, Amalie lives in North Carolina with her husband, two children, and three extremely overfed cats. Visit AmalieJahn.com for more.