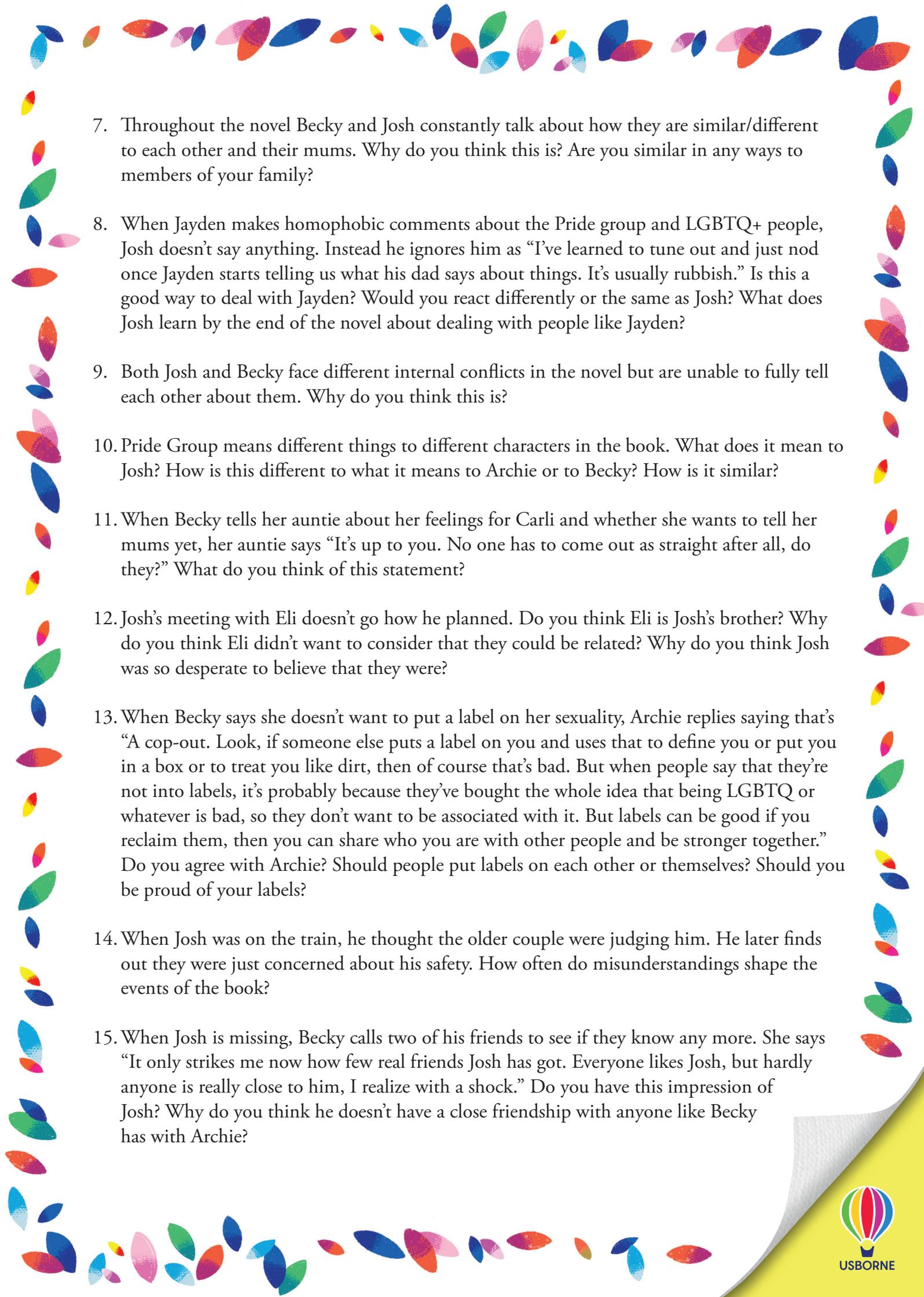
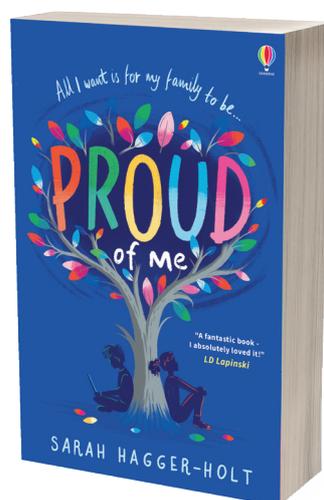


Discussion Questions

1. Becky starts the novel by saying that “When people ask about my family, I always say that Josh is my twin brother. It’s easier that way. It saves a whole load of explaining.” Why do you think she feels the need to blur the truth? Who is it easier for?
2. Secrets are shown to be a key theme right from the start of the novel. Why do you think the characters all keep secrets?
3. Becky mentions having to tell people she has two mums many times. Should she have to tell people at all? Do you think people automatically assume that everyone has a mum and a dad at home?
4. When the family are in the attic looking through their old things, Josh talks about throwing all of them away, but Becky says “Shut up, it’s our history, isn’t it? We can’t just chuck it away.” To which Josh replies “But you can’t live in the past, can you? Better to turn this room into something useful.” Do you agree with Josh or with Becky? Or do you have a different view?
5. Why do you think Josh is so keen to find his biological dad and Becky isn’t? Why do you think Josh focuses more on not having close male relatives than Becky does?
6. When Carli visits Becky’s house for the first time, she discusses the tension between religion and homosexuality, and her disagreeing with her parents about their views on gay marriage. Did you learn anything from this chapter about religion and homosexuality or have you come across any other views about it?

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7. Throughout the novel Becky and Josh constantly talk about how they are similar/different to each other and their mums. Why do you think this is? Are you similar in any ways to members of your family?
 8. When Jayden makes homophobic comments about the Pride group and LGBTQ+ people, Josh doesn't say anything. Instead he ignores him as "I've learned to tune out and just nod once Jayden starts telling us what his dad says about things. It's usually rubbish." Is this a good way to deal with Jayden? Would you react differently or the same as Josh? What does Josh learn by the end of the novel about dealing with people like Jayden?
 9. Both Josh and Becky face different internal conflicts in the novel but are unable to fully tell each other about them. Why do you think this is?
 10. Pride Group means different things to different characters in the book. What does it mean to Josh? How is this different to what it means to Archie or to Becky? How is it similar?
 11. When Becky tells her auntie about her feelings for Carli and whether she wants to tell her mums yet, her auntie says "It's up to you. No one has to come out as straight after all, do they?" What do you think of this statement?
 12. Josh's meeting with Eli doesn't go how he planned. Do you think Eli is Josh's brother? Why do you think Eli didn't want to consider that they could be related? Why do you think Josh was so desperate to believe that they were?
 13. When Becky says she doesn't want to put a label on her sexuality, Archie replies saying that's "A cop-out. Look, if someone else puts a label on you and uses that to define you or put you in a box or to treat you like dirt, then of course that's bad. But when people say that they're not into labels, it's probably because they've bought the whole idea that being LGBTQ or whatever is bad, so they don't want to be associated with it. But labels can be good if you reclaim them, then you can share who you are with other people and be stronger together." Do you agree with Archie? Should people put labels on each other or themselves? Should you be proud of your labels?
 14. When Josh was on the train, he thought the older couple were judging him. He later finds out they were just concerned about his safety. How often do misunderstandings shape the events of the book?
 15. When Josh is missing, Becky calls two of his friends to see if they know any more. She says "It only strikes me now how few real friends Josh has got. Everyone likes Josh, but hardly anyone is really close to him, I realize with a shock." Do you have this impression of Josh? Why do you think he doesn't have a close friendship with anyone like Becky has with Archie?

16. Becky overhears a conversation between her auntie and Neil about how her mums had asked Neil to be their donor. That conversation sets Becky wondering who her donor dad is: “In the middle of all the bustle, I can’t help but look at every man who comes in and wonder – did they ask him? Or him? Could he have been my dad? It hits me – this must be what Josh wonders all the time. It’s hardly bothered me before, but something’s changed: now that I know who it could have been, I want to know who it is.” What’s changed for Becky? Do you think she now understands how Josh feels? How did you feel reading that section of the book?
17. When Becky comes out to her parents, she doesn’t get the reaction she was expecting. Why do you think this is? Why do you think they’re worried about her and is this worry greater because they’re gay?
18. When Carli tells the Pride group that her mum has complained to the school about the group, Becky says “As Carli talks, a cold feeling takes hold inside me. All the stuff she’d said before about her mum’s ‘traditional views’ flashes back into my mind. But Carli always played it down, like it wasn’t really that serious. Now I know that someone can be as polite and friendly as Carli’s mum and still think horrible things, like that I’m immoral and corrupting just because I’m gay. She can believe that something about me is so awful that she wants her daughter to have nothing to do with people like me. It makes my stomach churn.” Why do you think it seems so much worse that Carli’s mum is “polite and friendly” and still thinks these things?
19. Becky says “Mum and Ima have always been clear: our family’s nothing to be ashamed of, but nothing to draw attention to either. We’re normal, just like everyone else. Some things are, well, not exactly secret, more private, to keep within the family. Just in case. In case of what, I’ve never been sure.” Why do you think Becky’s Mum and Ima think like this? What do you think the “Just in case” means? How does this link to the discussions in the final chapter?
20. What did you think of the ending? Why do you think Sarah Hagger-Holt chooses not to share the donor information with her readers?



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