

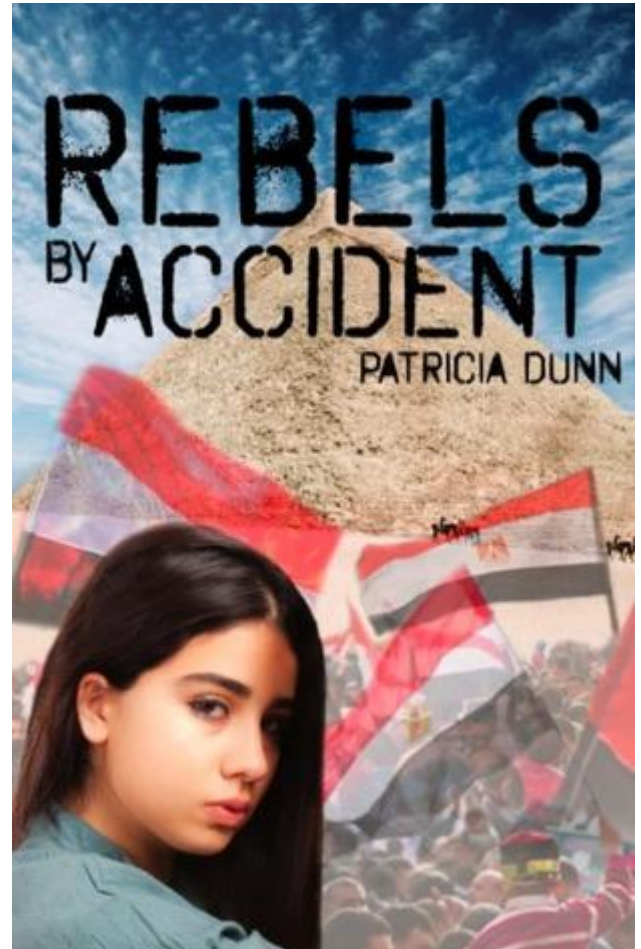
Rebels by Accident, by Patricia Dunn Reading Assignments, Discussion and Essay Questions

About the Book:

Patricia Dunn's debut novel *Rebels By Accident* tells a story of revolution. "Not just the huge ones that happen on the streets with thousands marching," Dunn said. "The kind that happens inside us all as we grow and change and figure out who we are in this world."

Rebels By Accident features an Egyptian-American teen in our post 9-11 world so disconnected from her culture, she secretly believes she comes from a backward country where people still travel by camel and women walk six steps behind the men. After her first high school party ends in jail, she is sent to live with her grandmother in Cairo. While there, she witnesses a political revolution led by young men and women who use Facebook to organize protests to overthrow their corrupt government. In Tahrir Square, surrounded by thousands of protestors, Mariam finally embraces what it means to be American and Egyptian.

<http://www.champagnesundaysmagazine.com/Rebels-by-Accident.html#.UJ3tmy5sr5w.tumblr>



Rebels by Accident: Assignment Overview

*This outline of *Rebels by Accident*, by Patricia Dunn, provides brief summaries of each chapter and offers suggested way to break up the reading of the book, if desired.*

Ch 1: Deanna and Mariam are in jail	}	Ch 1-6: p.1-44 (44 pages)
Ch 2: Deanna and Mariam are released from jail		
Ch 3: Deanna and Mariam get sent to Cairo, Egypt		
Ch 4: The plane ride to Cairo, Egypt		
Ch 5: In the airport		
Ch 6: Deanna and Mariam meet Ahmed		
Ch 7: Sittu picks up the girls from the airport	}	Ch 7-11: p.45-77 (33 pages)
Ch 8: Deanna and Mariam arrive at Sittu's apartment		
Ch 9: Deanna and Mariam meet Hassan		
Ch 10: A True Mirror		
Ch 11: Mariam learns about Islamic feminism	}	Ch 12-16: p.78-119 (41 pages)
Ch 12: Deanna and Mariam go to the Pyramids		
Ch 13: Deanna and Mariam climb in the Pyramids		
Ch 14: Deanna and Mariam ride camels		
Ch 15: Deanna and Mariam bump into Ahmed		
Ch 16: Maryam and Sittu bond		
Ch 17: January 25--Deanna and Mariam aren't allowed to go to Tahrir Square	}	Ch 17-20: p.120-166 (46 pages)
Ch 18: January 25--Deanna and Mariam go to the mall; Sittu has coffee with Ahmed		
Ch 19: January 25--Deanna and Mariam go ice skating		
Ch 20: January 25--Mariam meets Muhammad; Deanna goes to Tahrir Square		
Ch 21: Sittu in the hospital	}	Ch 21-23: p.167-198 (31 pages)
Ch 22: Maryam and Muhammed look for Deanna		
Ch 23: Deanna arrives at the hospital and shares her story		
Ch 24: Deanna and Hassan kiss	}	Ch 24-28: p.199-233 (35 pages)
Ch 25: Baba agrees to come to Cairo		
Ch 26: Maryam prays		
Ch 27: The gang celebrates Mariam's birthday		
Ch 28: Hassan and Muhammad are part of the April 6 group; Muhammad is missing		
Ch 29: Baba tells Mariam the truth	}	Ch 29-34: p.234-263 (30 pages)
Ch 30: Muhammed arrives at the hospital		
Ch 31: Sittu dies		
Ch 32: Maryam prepares the body		
Ch 33: Maryam and Deanna go home		
Ch 34: Maryam and Deanna at home		

Rebels by Accident: Questions for Discussion

These questions can be used as guiding questions for the teacher to lead a discussion or can be distributed to students to answer as homework. Most questions require critical thinking and analysis.

Chapters 1-6

1. While Mariam and Deanna are both teased by their peers, they have very different reactions to the bullying. Why might that be?
2. What does Mariam think of her Egyptian and Muslim heritage? Provide examples from the book to support your claim.
3. How did Deanna and Mariam each prepare for their travel to Egypt? If you were taking an international trip, how would you prepare for it?
4. In chapter 5, Mariam and Deanna meet a fully covered woman in the bathroom and Mariam recalls her father's opinion on "the cockroach suit." In chapter 6, we see the same woman come to the defense of another woman, in defiance of the police officer. How do the woman's actions challenge Baba's opinion?
5. How does Ahmed explain to Mariam and Deanna about the arrest they witness in the airport? What does he think about the Egyptian government?

Chapters 7-11

1. In chapter 8, Sittu says: "It seems like Americans don't think about Egypt much, except for pyramids, Nile cruises, and our relations with Israel" (p. 56). Based on the book so far, what else do you know about Egypt?
2. Question about cultural customs in Egypt
3. In chapter 10, Mariam and Deanna discover Sittu's true mirror. Why do you think the author included this mirror in the story? What theme or main idea does it support?
4. In chapter 11, Mariam, Deanna and Sittu have a conversation about women in Islam. What message do you think the author is trying to send? How does she do so?

Chapters 12-16

1. Egyptian characters in the book (Sittu, Salam, and Hassan) continue to make remarks about the upcoming demonstrations. Choose one character and write a paragraph describing what they might be thinking and feeling.
2. In this section, the use of technology begins to emerge as a recurring theme.
 - What are some of the different ways the characters use technology?
 - What do you think the author is trying to tell us?
3. Why do you think Sittu is not telling Mariam and Deanna about the protests planned for January 25th?
4. Sittu quotes Obama's speech made in Cairo on June 4, 2009. "I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based

on mutual interest and mutual respect; and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition... Instead, they overlap and share common principles—principles of justice and progress, tolerance and the dignity of all human beings” (p. 112-113). This speech, called “A New Beginning” was an important speech for the Obama administration. What do you think Obama meant by ‘a new beginning’ and what do you think his administration might have done to carry that out?

5. In chapter 16 Sittu reveals to Mariam that she’s been blogging a little bit about the Egyptian political situation. Write your own version of Sittu’s January 24 blog post, based on her conversation with Mariam in chapter 16 and what you know about Egypt.

Chapters 17-20

1. Why does Deanna want to go to the protest on January 25th? Why doesn’t Mariam? If you were there on January 25th, how would you feel about the protests?
2. In chapter 18, Deanna considers buying a turquoise *hijab* and Mariam doesn’t understand.
 - Why do you think Deanna wants to buy one, what does Sittu tell her, and why doesn’t she buy it in the end?
 - What do you think of Deanna buying and wearing a *hijab*?
3. In chapter 18, Sittu says to Mariam that “it must be very hard to be ashamed of who you are.” Mariam responds in the narration by saying “There’s nothing I can say to Sittu that could convince her I’m okay with being Muslim and Egyptian, because the truth is I’m not okay with it. It would be so much easier if I were Christian or Jewish or even an atheist.”
 - What makes Sittu think that Mariam is ashamed of who she is? Use the text to support your answer.
 - Why do you think Mariam is not “okay with being Muslim and Egyptian?”
 - If you were Mariam’s friend, what would you tell her?
4. In chapter 20, Mariam meets several young Egyptians heading to Tahrir Square. What are their attitudes towards the protests? Use the text to support your claim.

Chapters 21-23

1. Based on Mariam and Deanna’s experiences in Tahrir Square, describe what the Square was like on January 25th. Use the text to support your claim.
2. In chapter 22, Mariam shouts that she’s Egyptian and says that “for the first time in my life, I don’t feel shame. I feel awesome.” Why do you think that is? What changed?
3. Sittu says to Deanna and Mariam that she is “angry you both disobeyed me, but I’m proud you followed your hearts.” Which do you think is more important? How can teenagers reconcile the need to obey authority with the desire to follow your heart?

Chapters 24-28

1. Based on chapter 24, how do Hassan and Ahmed feel about the demonstrations? Use the text to support your claim.
2. Why do you think Mariam decides to engage in Muslim ritual and pray, even though she had previously “stopped being Muslim”?

Chapters 29-34

1. In chapter 29, Mariam finally speaks with Baba on the phone. How has their relationship changed? Why do you think that is?
2. Why didn't Muhammed tell Mariam he had been arrested? What would you have done in his situation?
3. Why do you think the author had Sittu die at the end of the book? Is it important for the message of the story?
4. Why do you think the book is called *Rebels by Accident*?

Final Essay Questions:

1. Select two themes or central ideas in *Rebels by Accident*. Discuss the development of these main ideas and how they interact with each other throughout the book.
2. *Rebels by Accident* is narrated by Mariam. Select a section of the book and write it from a different character's perspective.
3. How does Mariam's character change throughout the book?
4. Based on the Egyptian women you have seen in the book (starting with the women in the airport), what do you think it is like being female in Egypt? Does this surprise you? Why/not?