



ALL THE THINGS WE FOUND

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Ruthie feels like she's finally getting back to normal after her baby brother was stillborn three years ago. So when her mom announces she's pregnant again, Ruthie can't believe she would risk it. At least she has her trusty dog, Izzy, her favorite fantasy book series and a new friend who helps her learn that sharing her grief can lighten the load.

KEY THEMES

- Death and Dying
- Grief and Loss
- Family
- Mental Health
- Friendships
- Books and Literature



READ-ALoud SUGGESTIONS

- **P. 9** – Ruthie returns home from the park with Izzy. “When we got to my house, my dad’s car was in the driveway...”
- **P. 37** – Ruthie and her mom are at a bookstore. “Then something caught my eye. I gasped as I grabbed the rack to stop it from turning...”
- **P. 147** – The night after her birthday celebration, Ruthie is in the park with Ally. “We sat there for a while, not saying anything...”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think the title, *All the Things We Found*, means? Who is the “we” and what do you think they found? Could the title have more than one meaning?
2. Look at the book’s cover, identify all the different elements and discuss how they are important and relate to the story. Did the cover capture your attention when you first saw it? What did you like or dislike about it? Did your opinion on the cover change after you read the book?
3. What is the main theme of *All the Things We Found*?
4. What do you think was the author’s purpose in writing this book? Do you think she was successful?
5. Ruthie starts a journal to write down her feelings. Have you ever tried keeping a diary? If so, how did it make you feel to write down your feelings and thoughts? What do you think are the benefits of writing down your feelings?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joanne Levy is the bestselling and award-winning author of a number of books for young people, including *Double Trouble*, *Fish Out of Water* and *The Book of Elsie* in the Orca Currents line and the middle-grade novels *Let It Glow*, *Bird Brain*, *The Sun Will Come Out*, *Small Medium At Large* and *Sorry For Your Loss*, which was nominated for a Governor General’s Literary Award and won a Canadian Jewish Literature Award. Joanne lives in rural Ontario with her husband and several pets. Find out more about Joanne at joannelevy.com.



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6. Ruthie mentions a few times in the book that, “Feelings are complicated.” What does that mean to you? Discuss a time when your feelings were complicated.
7. Losing someone close to you, including a beloved pet, can be very difficult and sad, but honoring them with a service or memorial can be healing and meaningful. How do you feel about the ways Ruthie (and her family) memorialized those they lost? What might you have done differently?
8. Ally and (eventually) Ruthie write poems to express how they’re feeling. What is it about poems (even terrible ones!) that can help with expressing feelings? Have you ever written poetry? If so, how did it make you feel? Do you enjoy reading poetry?
9. Discuss your favorite scene from the book. Why does it stand out to you? What makes it meaningful?

ACTIVITIES

1. Create a new book cover for *All the Things We Found*.
2. Creating a new story using an existing book and its characters and settings is called writing fanfiction. Ruthie and Jenna talk about writing their own book as a continuation of the Unicorns of Faravelle Forest series. Write your own fanfiction. You can write a story about Ruthie and her friends and family, about the Unicorns of Faravelle or you can write about the characters and setting from one of your favorite books.
3. While you can write stories inspired by other people’s work, you can’t legally publish or directly copy them. Research “plagiarism”, “fanfiction” and “copyright”. Learn what the words mean and when it’s okay to use an author’s work and when it isn’t.
4. Start a journal for your own thoughts and feelings. It doesn’t need to be fancy, but decorate it to make it personal and special to you.
5. Izzy was supposed to be a service dog but her personality was such that she made a wonderful companion for Ruthie but wouldn’t have been a good fit for the rigorous demands of being a service dog. Research the different types of service dogs, what is required of them, what they can do and how people benefit from their work.
6. Write a letter to your favorite author and tell them what their book or books mean to you. It’s up to you if you send it (via email or regular mail), but authors love getting fan mail!
7. Ruthie enjoys going on birding walks. Give it a try! Birds are everywhere, even in city neighborhoods. See how many birds you can identify. Hint: get a book from the library about birding or, if you have access to a cellphone, download the Merlin app that can even identify birds by their songs. Write down the list of birds you see/hear.
8. Write or videotape a book review of *All the Things We Found*. You can include a brief plot summary (no spoilers!), what you like/don’t like about the book and why, how you feel about the characters and the plot, how the book made you feel or whatever you feel inspired to say about the book.
9. Assemble a playlist for the book of songs that fit with the themes or make you think of the characters or the story.
10. Using old magazines, make a collage that represents themes, scenes and/or characters from the book.
11. Start a book club with some friends so you can discuss *All the Things We Found* and other books. Choose a book each month to read and discuss. Take turns choosing what to read.
Hint #1: Talk to your local librarian as some public libraries have book club kits so everyone can read at the same time.
Hint #2: If you choose *All the Things We Found* or another of Joanne Levy’s books, get in touch with the author by email at joanneblevy@gmail.com and she’ll send you bookmarks for everyone in your book club.

