

ROCK ON:

A STORY OF GUITARS, GIGS, GIRLS, AND A BROTHER
(NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER)



curriculum connections

- ❖ Friendship
- ❖ Music
- ❖ Sibling Rivalry

Ages: 12 & up

by
Denise Vega

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Consider the novel's cover. In what ways does the image represent the events that transpire throughout the course of the book?
2. As the novel opens, Ori tells readers, "My dad likes to joke that the first word I ever spoke was *guitar*, but apparently it was *Del*. Not *Mama* or *Dada*, like most kids, but the name of my older brother." [p.7] Given this knowledge, what can you infer about Ori's early relationship with his brother? Why does that make the current climate of their relationship so difficult?
3. What are your earliest impressions of Ori's best friends, Nick, Troy, and Alli? Are they good friends to Ori? Using textual examples, support your position.
4. After being momentarily disappointed that his brother seems to be a no-show at his first official "gig," Ori also feels relief, as he thinks, "I never knew these days whether Del would be Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde." [p.12] What has Del done to cause Ori to feel this way?
5. Describe Ori or Del. What makes him a dynamic character? What are three things that you find the most appealing about this character? What are the three things that you find the least appealing? What are the biggest challenges he has to overcome? Is he the type of person you would want to befriend? Why or why not?
6. Consider the *Colorado Rocks* blog pages which are embedded into the story. To what degree do the people who regularly post on the blog influence the characters and the story? How does this feature impact your experience of reading the novel?
7. *Rock On* has some memorable secondary characters, including Gwyn, Vela, and Ed Gold. Who is your favorite or least favorite? What is it about this character that you find endearing or off-putting?
8. Why does the Band to Be Named Later struggle to choose a band name? In your opinion, is this hurdle indicative of larger issues?
9. Explain the significance of the title, *Rock On: A Story Of Guitars, Gigs, Girls, and a Brother* (not necessarily in that order). Does it accurately describe the events and relationships portrayed in the novel? If you could offer an alternative book title, what would it be?
10. How would you describe Ori's family? In what ways has Del's swift departure from college and return home impacted his family? In what ways is Ori's family similar to or different from your own?
11. Consider Ori's music and Jane's poetry. What role does art play in their lives? In what ways does it allow them to offer the world the "truths" they might not freely articulate? In what ways does this shared passion bring them together?
12. Ori is profoundly affected by the change in his relationship with his brother, Del, and often finds himself unable to communicate his feelings except through music. How does Ori overcome these challenges? How do Ori and Del change over the course of the novel?
13. Why does Del's guidance about "boxes and string" prove to be so inspirational to Ori and his bandmates?
14. Throughout *Rock On*, readers witness the complexities of various character relationships. Whose relationship seemed most similar to one of your own personal relationships? What about it reminded you of your experiences?
15. Using the phrase, "This is a story about..." supply five words to describe *Rock On*. Explain your choices.

about the book



ROCK ON:
*A Story Of Guitars,
Gigs, Girls, and a Brother*
(not necessarily in that
order)

by Denise Vega

978-0-316-13310-4

Ori Taylor is the lead singer, guitarist, and song-writer of the Band To Be Named Later, a garage band he started with his friends. After years of being known as the mini version of his sports-star brother, Del, Ori is looking forward to stepping out of his older brother's shadow, learning to perform in public, and rocking the Battle of the Bands contest. Oh, and maybe finally working up the nerve to talk to a girl in person instead of just over e-mail. But when Del suddenly returns from college, he expects Ori to step back into his role of little brother, just when Ori is starting to come into his own.

With his confidence wavering, will Ori be able to overcome his stage fright and lead the band to rock glory? Will the Band To Be Named Later ever get a real name? Will their best performances remain in the garage?

Denise Vega's deft exploration of brothers, bands, friends, and crushes promises to have readers tuning in page after page, because among all the ups and downs of being a teen, one thing's for sure: It's hard to rock out in high school.

about the author

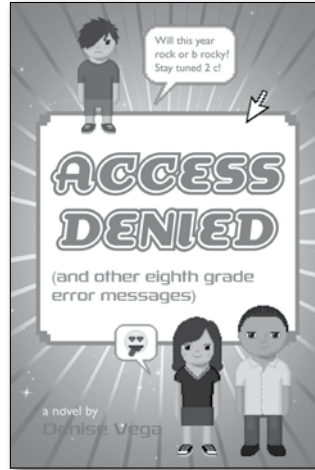


Denise Vega can't play an instrument or sing to save her life, but she *loves* music, especially rock and roll. She and her husband have an extensive music collection on vinyl, CD, and digital downloads. Denise wrote and illustrated her first book when she was 12 (check it out on her website) and is the author of *Click Here* (to find out how I survived seventh grade), *Access Denied* (and other eighth grade error messages), and *Grandmother, Have the Angels Come?* You can find out more at www.denisevega.com.

also by Denise Vega



CLICK HERE
(to find out how I survived seventh grade)
978-0-316-98559-8



ACCESS DENIED
(and other eighth grade error messages)
978-0-316-03450-0

Praise for Denise Vega

“Immediate and funny.”
—Kirkus

“Readers will feel like they have insider information on what it is like to be in a band....This book will be enjoyed by teens who like music, poetry, or a good family story.” —VOYA



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