

Drita My Homegirl

Recommended for Grades 3-6

Book Summary: Drita My Homegirl

Drita leaves war-torn Kosovo with her family and comes to New York to start a safer life. She tries to fit in with the other girls, but her lack of English holds her back. Maxie is holding on to the loss of her mother, unwilling to let her father have any woman friends. Initially she meets Drita and makes fun of her, which the rest of Maxie's friends readily pick up. For a social studies project, Maxie's teacher suggests she present a report on Drita's country and get to know her better. Drita's skills at basketball win Maxie over and they become slow, but true friends.

[SPOILER]

Drita's mother is upset over her cousin who is lost in Kosovo. For days, she does little but sleep and worry. When Drita invites Maxie and her grandmother over, Drita's mother goes into shock over the recent good news about her cousin escaping Kosovo. Maxie's grandmother, a retired nurse, has her taken to the hospital. As she and Drita become good friends, Maxie learns to let her father's friend Lisa into her life.

Author Biography: Jenny Lombard

Jenny Lombard is a teacher, author and playwright. Several of her plays have been produced off-Broadway. Prior to writing, she worked as a screenwriter for Comedy Central and developed an original series for Nickelodeon. *Drita My Homegirl* is her first book for children and has been included on twelve state reading lists. She lives in New York with her husband and son.



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Discussion Questions: Drita My Homegirl

1. Before leaving for America, Drita is so worried about the move that she finds it hard to eat for three days. Why is she so nervous? Have you ever been this nervous? When?
2. Why do you think Drita's family is unhappy with their new home? What do you think they had been expecting after hearing about America?
3. For a social studies project, Maxie's teacher tells her she should do a report on Drita and how she came to America. Why is this difficult for Maxie? What would you do if you were her? Have you ever tried communicating with someone whose first language was not English?
4. Drita and her grandmother nearly get lost because her grandmother is too afraid to ask for directions back home. Why is she afraid to ask for directions? Would you ask for directions in a foreign country? Why or why not?
5. Maxie claims that she and her grandma are as close as can be, but they are also opposite in some ways. In which ways are they close? In which ways are they opposite? Are you close and opposite with anyone in your family? How?
6. To illustrate how Drita hears English, the author writes down the words in italics how they sound to a non-native speaker. How does this enhance the story? Did you find any of the words difficult to understand?
7. During dinner with her dad, Lisa and Darrell, Maxie makes Darrell cry. Why do you think she acted the way she did? Does she have a good reason for acting like she is? Why or why not? What would you have done if you were Maxie?
8. When Drita doubts that she could be friends with Maxie, her grandmother says, "Who would want to be friends with someone just the same as themselves? It would be as interesting as looking in a mirror." Do you agree with her grandmother? Why or why not? How are your friends different from you?
9. Maxie's grandmother tells Maxie she needs to stop hanging onto her mother. How has the absence of Maxie's mother affected her personality?
10. According to Drita's mother, "it is better to have one true friend than a million others." Do you agree? Why or why not? How are Maxie and Drita true friends? How have they both helped each other?
11. When Maxie finishes her report on Drita, everyone wants to ask Drita a question. Why does the school have a new interest in her? Has this ever happened to you?



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