

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Believarexic

by J.J. Johnson

Fifteen-year-old Jennifer has to force her family to admit she needs help for her eating disorder. But when her parents sign her into the Samuel Tuke Center, she must make her way through the strict treatment program, examine her relationships both inside and outside the hospital, and decide for herself what “healthy” really means.

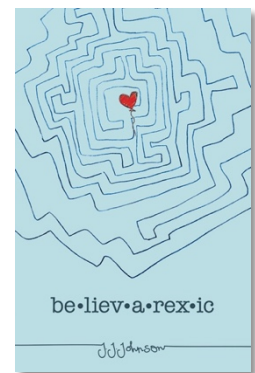
Punctuated by dark humor, gritty realism, and profound moments of self-discovery, *Believarexic* is a stereotype-defining exploration of belief and human connection.

1. J.J. Johnson has written *Believarexic* beginning with free verse, progressing into third-person narrative, and ending with first-person. Do you think this choice is significant? What does it help communicate about the main character?
2. The book is set in the 1980s. Do you think the issues presented are still relevant today? Do you think they have changed? If so, how?
3. Many books about eating disorders focus on the disorder itself. This book focuses on recovery. Why is this important?
4. Jen fights her parents to take her to treatment. Is this realistic? Why or why not?
5. *Believarexic* is considered a fictionalized memoir, which focuses on J.J.’s own personal experience during in-patient treatment, but also has elements of fiction in the story. How does this affect your overall reading of the novel? If you were to write a fictionalized memoir about a time in your life, which parts would you decide to include as fiction and why?
6. How do Jen’s family dynamics contribute to her disorder?
7. What is an assumption you previously made about eating disorders that you now realize is untrue?
8. What attitudes and approaches seemed to be the most helpful for Jennifer’s recovery? Were any damaging?
9. How do you think the cover image of the book relates to the story?
10. Define “believarexic.” What does it mean to you?
11. What role does music play in the book?
12. What would be on your “Believarexic” mixtape?

www.believarexic.com



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PEACHTREE
PUBLISHERS

phone 404-876-8761 • 800-241-0113

fax 404-875-2578 • 800-875-8909

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