

Title: Run Rebel Author: Manjeet Mann

LIKES

- Moving, gripping, all the emotions! ('I cried on the train')
- Very real – we know kids in these situations
- Role of sport esp running struck a chord. Running as therapy – losing herself in it. Juxtaposition of claustrophobic family life vs freedom of running
- Really effectively conveyed what it's like to be 'othered' in the country in which you were born. Nuanced sense of what she's negotiating and stretched between every day eg: clash of home/school culture; self with family and Asian community/self with white friends; the important connections/identity that comes from keeping up certain traditions vs those which hold her back or are toxic.
- Felt all her internal conflict – pulled in so many directions
- The mother – a foil for her but also a convincing character in her own right
- The empowerment of the female characters.
- The powerful message that even small, personal actions can make a difference
- Verse novel form made it immediate and visceral.
- Clever use of typography (capital letters) and placement e.g. the characters 'facing each other' and the dark pages for the mother
- Range of male characters. Not just vilified – even the Dad shown to be unhappy/weak when she goes back. Her pull back to him, despite everything he has done, is realistic and well-depicted
- The sister – representation of a woman who didn't want to be a mother
- David – not just 'another pointless hot boy' – a real support and friend
- Hope, but realistic too. She's brave and resilient, but she needs adult support to escape.
- The structure – the stages of revolution
- Teacher characters – not hopeless/awful! Trying to enthuse, help and support. Going above and beyond to do that, but not always 'getting it'.
- Makes you curious – looking at young people around you and wondering what they might be dealing with at home.
- The aunties – like CCTV!

**DISLIKES**

- Some didn't like the acrostics (some did)
- The sister – a bit of a let down. The Oxford dream a bit far fetched and not set up well through the story? The local uni would have perhaps been just as hopeful but less 'happy ever after'
- Too many happy endings. Didn't need a happy ending for everyone!
- Some didn't like the fact that Jaz and Ruby stayed together (arranged marriage) but others thought this showed that there was no need to throw all tradition out or that it was realistic to show that it's not easy to leave a marriage esp with a child. Jaz's character necessary to give hope that the next generation of men might do better.
- A lot of repetition. Was this deliberate to show the relentlessness of her situation? A bit too much of it.
- There should be a list of helplines and resources at the end of the book for those in similar situations.

**PUZZLES**

- Did David always know Amber was in that situation?
- Over what period of time does the story take place?
- Wanted to know about the aunties and more about Ruby. She needs her own book!
- What happens to the dad?
- When the mother goes to hospital – wouldn't a whole load of safeguarding kicked in? Visits to the family, school informed etc?

**PATTERNS (Within this book and links to other books and real-life experiences)**

**Within the novel**

- The female characters are both foils for Amber, and parallels. Disempowered women who find their power, in individual ways.
- Cycles of abuse down the generations. Maybe Amber and Ruby have broken the chain?

**Real life links**

- Pupils who we know/have known dealing with difficult home lives
- Lived experience of feeling like a racial ‘other’
- Being laughed at for wanting to do girls’ football.
- The importance of running – therapeutic
- Experience of conflict with parents or times when home culture and school culture clash

**Links to other books / film**

- Bend it Like Beckham
- Purple Hibiscus
- Three Girls by Katie Clapham – girls who love sport
- The Colour Purple

**HOOKS**

- How much impact can your personal actions have? A discussion about this could be a good way in

**READING ALOUD, HAVING IGNITED THEIR CURIOSITY**

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**OUTPUTS FOLLOWING READING (ORAL AND WRITTEN)**

- Links with PSHE/Wellness - raises important issues, perhaps better than non-fiction. Have done this with *The Crossing* – debate points provided by English dept
- Link to unit on protest poetry – discussing the impact of personal actions as well as group protest

**RESOURCES**

**OTHER**

- Might be good one for 'time poor' year 10/11
- Good for reluctant readers – substantial content but a quick read.
- Recommendations of verse novels for Y7: Cloud Busting by Malorie Blackman, In the Key of Code by Aimee Lucido
- Know certain pupils who would really relate to the book but this needs sensitive handling e.g. tell the class about it and leave it open for anyone to come and borrow it. Or suggest it very lightly, giving a sense of what it's about. Could feel less alone, but might also be very painful.
- Discussed the impact of informal/authentic sharings, for example, Run Rebel has now been shared with:
  - a couple of girls whose families wouldn't allow them to play on the girls' football team and it has been passed around to a little group. Thinking about setting up a small book group for them.
  - a reluctant reader who is now passing it on to his friends
  - a Y11, who loved it and said reading it gave her hope that she can overcome her own personal challenges. The book is now doing the rounds of her tutor group.

