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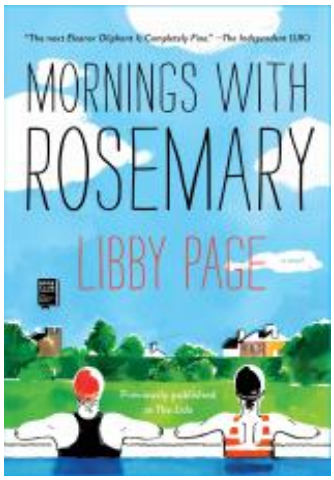
Mornings with Rosemary

by Libby Page



About the Book

We're never too old to make new friends --- or to make a difference.

Rosemary Peterson has lived in Brixton, London, all her life, but everything is changing.

The library where she used to work has closed. The family grocery store has become a trendy bar. And now the lido, an outdoor pool where she's swum daily since its opening, is threatened with closure by a local housing developer. It was at the lido that Rosemary escaped the devastation of World War II; here she fell in love with her husband, George; here she found community during her marriage and since George?s death.

Twentysomething Kate Matthews has moved to Brixton and feels desperately alone. A once promising writer, she now covers forgettable stories for her local paper. That is, until she?s assigned to write about the lido?s closing. Soon Kate?s portrait of the pool focuses on a singular woman: Rosemary. And as Rosemary slowly opens up to Kate, both women are nourished and transformed in ways they never thought possible.

In the tradition of Fredrik Backman, THE LIDO is a charming, feel-good novel that captures the heart and spirit of a community across generations --- an irresistible tale of love, loss, aging and friendship.

Discussion Guide

1. Describe the opening of THE LIDO. How does it establish Brixton as a character? Do the interludes throughout the novel of life there help you to understand the community better? What do you think of Brixton? Is it somewhere you could see yourself living?

2. When Kate is first introduced to the reader, she is described as anxious, ?living under a cloud. It follows her wherever

she goes, and however hard she tries she can?t seem to outrun it? (2). What was your first impression of her? What do you think of the life she creates for herself in Brixton? Does she seem happy to you? Why or why not?

3. Describe your first impression of Rosemary? Do you like her? Rosemary is acutely aware of the results of aging, from the aches in her knees to the free bus card that she is now eligible to receive. Both are ?a part of her life now that she resents. She still always pays for her bus ticket, on principle? (14). What does this detail tell you about Rosemary? In what other ways does she attempt to exert control over the aging process?

4. Rosemary agrees to allow Kate to interview her about the lido on the condition that Kate goes for a swim. What prompts Rosemary to require this? How does swimming in the lido expand Kate?s view of it? Would you have agreed to Rosemary?s request?

5. Describe Kate?s relationship with her sister. Is Erin a good older sister to Kate? Why or why not? Why do you think Kate is nervous about introducing Erin to Rosemary? What do the two women think of each other?

6. Rosemary and George are described as ?a couple, like the quotation marks around a sentence? (73). Is this an apt description? How would you characterize Rosemary and George?s relationship? Do you think it was a solid one? Why or why not? How did they compliment each other?

7. The early articles that Kate writes for the *Brixton Chronicle* are ?not stories that she would show the tutors who taught her journalism master?s classes? and the fact that her mother collects them in a scrapbook ?makes it even worse? (9). Describe the Kate?s articles. Why is she ashamed of them? Why do you think her mother?s saving them compounds Kate?s feelings? Do you think she is a good journalist? Explain your answer. What skills does her job require?

8. When Kate was studying to be a journalist, she struggled to take the words of her classmates ?as a comment on something she had created outside of herself, rather than a personal attack? (210). Is this still true of Kate? One of her colleagues tells her that she is too personally invested in her stories. Do you agree? How does this affect Kate?s stories?

9. When Kate thinks of Erin and her life ?she feels left behind, as though Erin has run off into the distance and Kate is left frozen on the starting line terrified by the sound of the gun marking the start of the race? (55). Compare Kate?s view of Erin?s life with its reality. Are there any issues that Erin struggles with? What does Erin think of Kate? What causes the two to open up to each other? Were you surprised by any of their disclosures?

10. Rosemary tells Kate, ?When you?re my age you?ll understand.... You begin to miss yourself? (62). What does Rosemary mean? What parts of herself does she miss most?

11. Why is Rosemary initially reluctant to reach out for help in saving the lido? What changes her mind? Describe the people who join or aid the protests to save the lido. Do any of them surprise you? Which ones and why? What reasons do the others have for helping?

12. While Kate doesn?t know Jay particularly well ?his strawberry blond hair and kind face are part of the fabric of her days at the paper and somehow soothing? (119). How is Jay able to calm Kate? What role does he play in the protests? Why is the lido important to him?

13. When asked about why the lido is important to her, Rosemary ?can?t begin to say everything so instead she says the start of the truth? (64). Discuss some of the reasons the lido is so important to Rosemary and to the community of Brixton. If Kate were asked the same question, what do you think her answer would be? Are there any places in your life that are as important to you as the lido is to Rosemary and Kate? Tell your book club about them.

14. What are some of the ways that the residents of Brixton attempt to save the lido? How do Kate?s and Jay?s professional roles influence their methods of protest? Were there any that you thought were particularly successful? Which ones and why? How would you have protested to save the lido if you were in Kate?s position?

Author Bio

Libby Page is a *Sunday Times* bestselling author whose work has been published in over 20 territories around the world. Before becoming an author, she worked in journalism and marketing. She lives in Somerset, England, with her husband and young son.

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