**When You Reach Me**

by

Rebecca Stead

**pages 1–20**

1. Who is the narrator of *When You Reach Me?* Also, from what point of view does the

narrator tell the story?

2. Write some details about the setting of the story. When does it take place, and

where do Miranda and her mom live?

3. Miranda has two big conflicts, or problems, to resolve. What are they?

4. Reread pages 1–2. How do you think Miranda feels about the

note writer? What makes you think this?

5. Mom’s dream is to become a criminal defense lawyer. In what ways does she show

she would be good at this job?

6. Reread the paragraphs about Sal on page 17. What do we learn about Miranda

through her memories of Sal?

7. Reread pages 16-18. What are things the laughing man does that make him seem

crazy?

8. Have you ever lost a best friend or gone a long time without talking to him or her?

How did this make you feel?

**pages 21–53**

9. Miranda says the note writer wants her to mention the key in the fire hose in her

letter. Why do you think the note writer wants to know about the key?

10. Do you think Miranda will tell her mom about the note writer?

11. When reading a story, it is important to note the causes and effects of important

events. A **cause** leads to an event. It is the reason the event happens. An **effect** is

what happens as a result of an action. Understanding how events are related will help

you understand the story as a whole.

Complete the Cause-and-Effect Chart below using information from pages 21–53 of *When You Reach Me.*

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| --- |
| Causes Effects  Marcus punches Sal ---------------------------🡪 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-------------------------🡪Miranda and Annemarie become friends  Marcus notices Miranda’s---------------------🡪\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Favorite book |

12. On pages 21–24, Miranda tells the beginning of her story for the note writer. What happens during this story? What characters are involved? Think about this new evidence. Then record your conclusions and questions on the worksheet.

13. Sal stopped talking to Miranda on the same day he got punched by Marcus. Do you think the two events are related? Why or why not?

14. Why does Marcus think Miranda is smart, even though she doesn’t understand everything he says about time travel?

**pages 54–78**

15. Earlier you made a prediction about the note writer’s reason for wanting to know about Miranda’s key. Was your prediction correct? Why or why not?

16. Did you predict Miranda would tell her mom about the notes? So far, Mom only knows about one note. Do you think Miranda will tell her about others she receives? Why or why not?

A **metaphor** is the comparison of two things that are mostly unalike but similar in an important way. On page 71, the comparison of little distractions in life to a veil is an example of metaphor.

17. What does this metaphor help us understand about small things that distract us?

18. What are some small things in your life that might distract you?

19. On page 54, Miranda says her mom would call Colin “attention-seeking.” How does Colin get attention, and what kinds of attention does he get?

20. Why do you think Colin suddenly wants to be with Miranda and Annemarie all the time?

21. Reread pages 57–61. Why is it so puzzling that the note writer asked Miranda to mention her key in a letter?

22. Reread pages 64–66. What does Miranda notice about her apartment during Annemarie’s visit? Why do you think she is noticing these things now?

23. Why are Miranda and Julia at war? What is their war about?

**pages 79–99**

24. On page 82, Miranda observes that Annemarie looks like she is either warm or wearing makeup. What might make Annemarie look that way?

25. On pages 95–96, Annemarie admits to having epilepsy and needing a special diet. Why do you think she ignored her special diet while she was with Miranda and Colin?

26. On page 96, Annemarie says she doesn’t like being lectured about what she eats. Then Miranda remembers Julia lecturing Annemarie at lunch once. Does this change your ideas about who really ended the friendship between Annemarie and Julia? Explain your answer.

27. In *When You Reach Me,* Mom seems to speak for the author about how people should treat others. How does Mom show caring toward people on pages 84–85?

28. What traits does the author give Mom to make her a character whom readers look up to

29. Reread pages 88–93. Do you think Miranda may have misjudged Julia? Who is really the meaner one in these chapters? Explain your answer.

30. Reread pages 93–94, which describe a memory Miranda has about Marcus and Sal. What does Miranda think she could have done to change future events?

**pages 100–127**

31. On page 95, Annemarie announced that she had received a rose. Do you think Colin gave it to her? Why or why not?

32. On page 99, Marcus waved at Miranda and walked up next to her, instead of ignoring her, like he usually does. What do you think Marcus and Miranda will talk about?

33. On page 106, the laughing man turns and runs when he sees Marcus. Then Marcus says this has happened before. Why do you think the laughing man runs from Marcus?

33. On page 114, Miranda talks to the laughing man. He says many of the same things Miranda has heard him say before. However, this time he seems more normal to her. Does he seem more normal to you, too? Why or why not?

34. What are two things Marcus and Julia compare to moments in time? How are these things like moments in time?

35. How is a person like a cartoon character running on a barrel?

36. On page 117, Mom says, “I just feel like I’m stuck, like I’m afraid to take any steps, in case they’re the wrong ones.” Then Miranda says she thinks they both are stuck. What are some ways Miranda and Mom seem unable to move forward?

37. Reread pages 118–122. During this chapter, Miranda and Mom are in an argument.

What is the argument about?

38. On page 122, Miranda says that she didn’t hug her mom, even though she wanted

to. Have you ever acted like Miranda, after a fight with a family member or friend?

Why is it sometimes hard to be nice to someone after you have been mean to him or

her?

**pages 128–156**

39. Jimmy blames Miranda, Colin, and Annemarie for his missing bank. Do you think he’ll ever let them come back to work?

40. Reread pages 154–156. Miranda once assumed she and Julia had nothing in common. However, now she knows they have some similar interests. Draw a Venn diagram to make notes about how Miranda and Julia are alike and different. Write their similarities inside the part where the circles overlap. Write their differences in the outer parts of the circles.

41. On page 135, the note writer’s second “proof” happens. Does this provide any information that helps you draw new conclusions about the note writer? What other information on pages 128–156 seems connected to the note writer’s identity?

42. On page 137, the setting is described as “peaceful and sad and deserted.” How does

the setting reflect how Miranda feels at this point in the story?

43. Reread this text from page 139:

I walked up the hill, where the sunlight seemed to touch everything like it was a hyper kid running all over a toy store—it bounced off the dirty metal lampposts, the shiny brass awning posts, even the

sunglasses of a woman walking her dogs with a cup of coffee in one hand. Everything *shined.*

Miranda has just found out she will get to talk to Annemarie. Based on the setting description you just read, how does Miranda feel about this news?

44. On page 144, Miranda’s attitude toward Julia changes, when she sees that Julia misses Annemarie the same way Miranda misses Sal. Describe a time when something like this happened to you. With whom were you able to connect? What experience did you share

**pages 157–181**

45. How did the day Marcus hit Sal lead to the events on pages 157–162?

46. Why do you think the events on pages 157–162 are written as a list?

47. Did you understand Sal’s reason for taking a break from his friendship with Miranda?

48. Do you think the break was good for them both? Explain your answer.

49. Why does Miranda want to protect Marcus from the police?

50. Note what Mom is wearing on pages 178–179. How is it different from what she usually wears? What change in Mom is reflected by this new way of dressing?

**pages 182–197**

51. One theme in *When You Reach Me* is that no one is exactly what he or she seems to be. Rebecca Stead communicates this idea through many characters in the book. Think about Sal, Marcus, Colin, Annemarie, Julia, Jimmy, and the laughing man. Choose one of these characters to write about.

52. Another theme in *When You Reach Me* is that all people should be treated with respect. Mom is one character who shows how to treat people respectfully. Write about one of the other characters who also shows this theme.

53. Think again about the characters and events in *When You Reach Me.* What is another theme they help communicate? Write the theme on the lines below, and explain how it is communicated.

54. What does Miranda realize when her “veil” is lifted?

55. Earlier in the story, Miranda said she thought the note writer might have been born without a veil. What did she mean by this? Do you agree with Miranda? Explain your answer.

56. Marcus mentioned earlier that the laughing man would turn and run whenever he saw Marcus. Why do you think the laughing man did this?

57. Miranda is sad, because the note writer saved Sal but couldn’t save himself. However, is it possible the note writer did save himself in some way? How is Marcus’s life better because the laughing man kicked Sal away from the truck?

58. Sal stopped talking to Miranda on the same day he got punched by Marcus. Do you think the two events are related? Why or why not?