

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for

## Izzy, Willy-Nilly

by  
Cynthia Voigt

### Book Information

Cynthia Voigt, Izzy, Willy-Nilly  
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Book Level: 4.9  
Interest Level: UG

Izzy had everything going for her until she accepted a date with Marco and ended up crippled for life.

**Award:** ALA Notable/Best Books; Margaret A. Edwards Award

**Topics:** Disabilities, Physical; Disasters, Crashes; Diseases/Disorders, Alcohol Abuse/Addiction; READNOW - Demco Media Turtleback Books, Demco Media - Read Now Grades 9+; READNOW - Perma-Bound, Perma-Bound - Read Now Grades 9+; READNOW - Renaissance Learning, RLI - High School (Theme: Tough Decisions); Recommended Reading, California Recommended Lit., English, 6-8; Recommended Reading, YALSA Popular Paperbacks

### Main Characters

Hendrik Lingard Izzy's father, who is usually calm and collected

Isobel Lingard (Izzy) a sweet-tempered, popular, fifteen-year-old girl who has her leg amputated after a terrible car accident

Jack and Joel Lingard Izzy's lively older brothers

Jane Lingard Izzy's genteel mother, who has very high standards for appearance and manners

Lauren Izzy's former friend who is obsessed with being pretty

Lisa Izzy's friend who makes a limited attempt at maintaining a relationship after Izzy is injured

Marco Griggers a high school senior who likes to date younger girls; he was driving intoxicated when he had the accident with Izzy

Rosamunde Webber an intelligent, outspoken classmate of Izzy's; she becomes Izzy's friend after the accident

Suzy Wilkes Izzy's fickle friend who deserts her after the accident

Tony Marcel a sensitive high school senior who tries to be supportive of Izzy after the accident

### Vocabulary

**amputated** cut off

**attire** clothing; something a person is wearing

**clumsy** awkward

**hovering** standing over; staying close by something

**memorize** learn by memory

**reassure** comfort or relieve someone

### Synopsis

When fifteen-year-old Izzy wakes up in the hospital, she learns that she has been in a horrible car accident and may need to have her leg amputated. She eventually remembers that Marco Griggers was taking her home from their date. Extremely drunk, Marco suddenly drove the car into a tree. Izzy has already told the police that she cannot remember the accident, and they do not come back to question her again. After her leg is amputated, her best friend, Suzy, calls and advises her not to seek revenge on Marco by reporting him to the police. When Suzy and Izzy's close friends Lisa and Lauren come to visit her in the hospital, they are strange and distant. In the weeks that follow, Izzy is disappointed by their lack of support for her. Suzy does not even want to return her phone calls.

Izzy is discovering, however, that everyone in her life is treating her differently. The most surprising person is a girl named Rosamunde, who suddenly starts visiting Izzy in the hospital even though she and Izzy were not friends before the accident. Rosamunde is very different from Izzy's other friends, who were popular and pretty. Rosamunde is outspoken and makes little effort to look or act like other girls. When Izzy returns home, she looks forward to Rosamunde's visits.

At home, Izzy's mother encourages her to keep up her relationships with her popular friends, but Izzy

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soon realizes that Rosamunde is the only one who is truly supportive of her. It is Rosamunde who encourages her to accept a spot on the school newspaper, helps Izzy catch up on homework and eventually forces Izzy to return to school.

As the weeks go by, Izzy discovers new strengths. Formerly a lively girl with a reputation for always being nice, Izzy now struggles to make people recognize her as someone other than the girl who lost her leg. When she finally confronts Marco about the effect of his actions on her life, she feels she is on her way to becoming a strong and independent person.

### Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

#### Initial Understanding

When Rosamunde criticizes Suzy, Izzy accuses Rosamunde of being jealous. What reasons does Izzy give for Rosamunde's jealousy?

*Izzy claims that Rosamunde is jealous of Suzy because Suzy is smart, popular and pretty.*

#### Literary Analysis

What does Izzy's father regard as his role in his family?

*He feels it is his job to provide the family with the things they need. He likes to thoroughly plan out details when he wants to do something special for the family, but he is not compelled to explore how his family truly feels about his plans.*

#### Inferential Comprehension

How are Suzy and Rosamunde alike?

*Both girls try to influence Izzy's behavior regarding Marco. Both girls are also smart, and both girls attend Lisa's party. Also, both girls visit Izzy at the hospital and at home. Both girls are often unavailable when Izzy calls them, although for different reasons: Suzy actively avoids Izzy, and Rosamunde frequently has babysitting jobs.*

#### Constructing Meaning

When Rosamunde calls Izzy's family "best of breed," what does she mean?

*Rosamunde says that Izzy and her family are "what people like you should be like." She means that they are not only outwardly pleasant with nice manners but that they also have good hearts and are basically good, kind people.*

### Teachable Skills

**Recognizing Feelings** In this story Izzy's feelings are often shown by a description of the "miniature Izzy" inside Izzy's head. Have the students choose at least three of these descriptions and explain what the miniature Izzy's actions show about Izzy's feelings.

**Understanding Characterization** Several characters in *Izzy, Willy-Nilly*, but most notably Izzy, present one face to the world while hiding what they are really feeling. Direct students to scenes in the book such as Lisa and Suzy's visit to the hospital (Chapter 6) or Lisa's New Year's party (Chapter 21). Have students select one scene from the book and create "masks" on posterboard to represent the "outward" Izzy and the "real" Izzy. Students can present their masks to a small group, explain the difference between the two sides and discuss why Izzy put on a "mask" in that scene.

**Responding to Literature** Marco does not receive any punishment for his actions, and Rosamunde reports to Izzy that he has continued his irresponsible and dangerous behavior.

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Engage students in a class discussion of the consequences Marco could or should have faced for driving while intoxicated. Have students work in small groups to prepare a presentation about drinking and driving. Suggest that they include in their research and preparation interviews with law enforcement officers, substance abuse specialists, medical personnel or victims who can share their experiences. If possible, have students videotape their presentations as public service announcements.

**Making Predictions** Izzy is very uncertain about what her future will be like. Have the students write a story about what Izzy's life is like ten years after the end of this book. Have them include what has become of her relationship with Rosamunde and how she has adjusted to her prosthetic leg.