

The Albanian Donna Mazza

Discussion questions

1. What does Rosa hope to achieve from her overseas trip? Are her expectations reasonable? Does travel help people to “find themselves”?
2. What attracts her to the Albanian? Why does she keep going back to him?
3. “Rape is a good reason to feel strange, isn’t it?” (p. 116) How does Rosa’s “feeling strange” manifest itself? Isn’t she acting strangely even before the rape?
4. Are Anya’s friendship and advice helpful to Rosa?
5. Rosa wonders whether her appearance and behaviour are inviting the responses of men she encounters. Do you think they are?
6. It seems clear to the reader – and sometimes it is also clear to Rosa - what she should do. Why then can’t she do it? Have you ever been in a similar situation? Have you been in a similar situation but been able to act? What was the difference? Can such situations be chronic?
7. How does *The Sorrowful Tale of Ariadne Cast Away* – the story that Rosa reads – contribute to our understanding of Rosa’s view of and desires for herself? What is it about the *Greenlander triptych* of the woman trapped in ice (p. 351) that makes Rosa weep?
8. How did Rosa perceive the Albanian culture through her experience of the refugee community in Sweden? Is it a fair depiction?
9. How might the Albanian have told this story?
10. Did you like Rosa? What would you say to her if you could?
11. “Our families left their culture over there, you know, and when you go back you’ll find a missing bit of yourself,” says Isabella (p.12). Is this true? How is Australian culture portrayed?
12. Rosa keeps most of her experiences secret from her family and close friends. Is this typical? How do you think you might react if you had a nineteen-year-old daughter who announced solo travel plans to a troubled region of the world? What if it were your nineteen-year-old son?

