



## Discussion Questions for *Echo* by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Lost in a forbidden forest, Otto meets three mysterious sisters and finds himself entwined in a quest involving a prophecy, a promise, and a harmonica.

Decades later, Friedrich in Germany, Mike in Pennsylvania, and Ivy in California each, in turn, become interwoven when the very same harmonica lands in their lives. Each faces daunting challenges: rescuing a father, protecting a brother, holding a family together. And ultimately, their suspenseful solo stories converge in an orchestral crescendo.

1. The sisters say to Otto, “Your fate is not yet sealed. Even in the darkest night, a star will shine, a bell will chime, a path will be revealed.” What do you think this means to Otto, Friedrich, Mike, and Ivy?
2. The harmonica brings beauty to the lives of all who play it, even during difficult times in their lives. Can you think of something in your life that brought you beauty during a difficult time? Explain.
3. How does the harmonica play a role in the journeys of Friedrich, Mike, and Ivy? What is the reason that they each pass the harmonica along? How did you feel when they send or give it away?
4. Compare the lives of Friedrich, Mike, and Ivy. How are their challenges similar and how are they different?
5. How do Friedrich, Mike, and Ivy show great bravery? Discuss a time you were brave. Did someone or something help you be brave? Explain.
6. How does music affect you during difficult times in your life? What are some of your favorite songs or types of music to listen to when you are sad?
7. Friedrich, Mike, and Ivy are all made to feel inadequate by other people. Do you think they would be treated differently in today’s world? Why or why not?
8. How do friends and family support each harmonica owner to realize his or her musical talents? Has someone helped you to realize your talents? Please explain.
9. Friedrich wonders if the audience listens with their hearts. How do you think someone listens to music with his or her heart?
10. At the end of section four, what is the significance of the last line? “. . . and connected by the same silken thread.” How does that phrase echo the themes of the novel?