



## Rocky Road

By Rose Kent

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### Rocky Road By Rose Kent

*Ice cream warms the heart, no matter what the weather.*

That's the Dobson family motto. Whenever things get tough, they break out the special heart-shaped bowls and make sundaes. The road has been especially rocky lately for Tess and her deaf little brother, Jordan. Their plucky Texan mother talks big, but her get-rich-quick business schemes have only landed them in serious financial hot water.

Ma's newest idea is drastic. She abruptly moves the family to snowy Schenectady, New York, where she will use the last of their savings to open her dream business: an ice cream shop. (Too bad the only place she could find an apartment is in a senior citizens' complex.) Tess wants to be excited about this plan, but life in Schenectady is full of new worries. Who will buy ice cream in their shop's run-down neighborhood? What will happen when their money runs out? Worst of all is Ma herself-she's famous for her boundless energy and grandiose ideas, but only Tess and Jordan know about the dark days when she crashes and can't get out of bed. And Tess can't seem to find the right words to talk to Ma about it.

This moving story of family, community, and ice cream proves that with a little help from the people around us, life really can be sweet-and a little nutty-just like Rocky Road.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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# **Rocky Road**

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### Editorial Review

#### From School Library Journal

Grade 5–7—Tess Dobson's life is complicated. Her younger brother, Jordan, is deaf and prone to bouts of behavior as "FrankenJordan." Her mother walks the narrow ledge of bipolar disorder, a walk that always seems to end in "shooting stars" or a crash. To make things even more complicated, Ma has decided to move the family from Texas to Schenectady, NY, where she uses all of their savings to open an ice-cream shop. Despite the promises that Schenectady will hold all the answers to their problems, this new town brings its own set of complications, which include living at a senior citizens' complex. Tess struggles with these difficulties but unexpectedly finds the support she never knew she needed. Through it all, there is ice cream. This book is sweet and leaves a relatively pleasant taste much like the rocky-road ice cream that serves as a metaphor for Tess's life. Due respect is paid to the challenges of having a parent who suffers from bipolar disorder, as well as the disorder itself. Tess seems much older than her 12 years but this is in keeping with her family situation. Her involvement with peer mediation is slightly contrived but it is necessary to her growth. As the Dobsons say, "Ice cream warms the heart...," and so will this book.—Naphtali L. Faris, *Saint Louis Public Library, MO*

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#### From Booklist

With stars in her eyes, Ma moves seventh-grader Tess and her younger brother Jordan, who is deaf, from Texas to Schenectady, New York, where she plans to open an ice-cream shop. With dread in the pit of her stomach, Tess starts her new school and begins to make friends in their new neighborhood, a senior-living community. Though it's good to see her mother so full of energy, ideas, and optimism, she knows that Ma's soaring emotional states inevitably plummet into crushing episodes of depression. Readers with their own family challenges may find it heartening to see Tess handle hers by building a diverse, supportive, multigenerational community around her. The story's slow pace gives plenty of time to develop characters and relationships so that when the dreaded climax occurs, it seems believable that Tess has the help she needs to cope with it. Predictable, yes, but also a hopeful family story from the author of *Kimchi and Calamari* (2007). Grades 5–7. --Carolyn Phelan

### About the Author

Rose Kent, a former naval officer, lives in Niskayuna, New York, just east of Schenectady, with her husband and children in a house with a dozen ice cream scoopers. She is an ardent believer in the redemptive power of a sundae.

Her first book, *Kimchi & Calamari*, was nominated for several state library awards. Visit her at [www.rosekent.com](http://www.rosekent.com).

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