

HOLIDAY HOUSE

READING GROUP

GUIDE



HC: 9780823453597 · PB: 9780823458950 · e-book: 9780823455324

Forget-Me-Not Blue

by **Sharelle Byars Moranville**

★“A unique book with the message that the scars of generational trauma are deep and lasting, but the cycle can be broken with creative outlets, strong family ties, and determination.”

—*School Library Journal, Starred Review*

★“An optimistic conclusion, ferried by an enduring heroine, rounds out this hopeful novel.”

—*Publishers Weekly, Starred Review*

A Bank Street Best Children’s Book of the Year
A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

ABOUT THE BOOK

Perfect for fans of *Encanto* and *Turning Red*, this intimate and heartfelt middle grade novel follows two siblings fighting to stay together amidst the ripple effects of addiction and generational trauma.

Siblings Con and Sofie’s mom promised that nothing would ever come between them—but when she disappears without any warning, she becomes the one who’s tearing them apart.

With no one else to rely on, inseparable siblings Con and Sofie must decide who they can trust and whether it’s safe to share their hearts with family members who have the power to hurt them. Sofie has always turned to Con—and to books—during times of upheaval in their unstable lives. But as their mother is arrested and their guardianship becomes uncertain, Sofie will have to find hope in the most important story of all: her own.

Moranville’s captivating and vulnerable prose explores the ways in which addiction’s ripple effects pass through generations and how familial bonds can remain unbreakable through the most difficult circumstances. Expertly grappling with difficult topics at an age-appropriate level, this novel is a sensitive, nuanced exploration of children’s enduring resilience and optimism.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- From the very beginning of the story, Sofie declares Con the best brother in the world. She is determined to follow his footsteps into Mr. Bloom's fifth grade class and win the Student Explorer Award just as her brother did three years earlier. But because of setbacks in her life, this does not happen. How do Sofie's feelings and reactions to this disappointment show her character growth?
- When her life gets sad and scary, Sofie escapes by reading, swimming, and gardening. How do those activities help Sofie, Con, and Gunner form bonds, learn about each other, and grow together?
- Sofie is often wrong in, but never in doubt of, her judgment of people. Think about Gunner, her California great-grandmother, the Advocate, Jade, her mother, and Tommy. How do her opinions about these people change as she gets to know them, and how does that affect Sofie's growth?
- Sofie assumes her California great-grandmother, whom she has never met, is surely a mean old lady. And she definitely sends wildly inappropriate Christmas gifts every year. But the Christmas box she sends at the end of the book is so on-target that Sofie's heart is full. How does that fabulous Christmas box show the understanding, connection, and healing that happens during the story? How is Gunner the hero in bringing about this healing?
- Sofie's mom's boss at the restaurant, Tommy, turns out to play a surprising role in her life. How do the characters work together to knit Sofie's old and new life together in a way that includes everybody?
- How does the title, *Forget-Me-Not Blue*, which is Sofie's mom's favorite color, express one of the main themes of the story?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sharelle Byars Moranville is the author of critically acclaimed middle grade novels *Over the River*, *Forget-Me-Not Blue*, and *27 Magic Words*, which received starred reviews in *School Library Journal* and *Kirkus Reviews* and was a Notable Children's Book in the Language Arts. She lives in Southern Illinois. Learn more at SharelleByarsMoranvilleBooks.com.