

Educator Discussion Guide

FORGET ME NOT

by Ellie Terry

Illustrations by Oana Befort

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Nominee 2019-2020

Grade 6-8

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Calli June's life isn't looking too great—all she wants is to live in the same town long enough to make a friend, but every time her mother's relationships crumble, she has to pack up her astronomy books and leave everything she knows behind. Calli does everything she can to hide the quirks brought upon by her Tourette's Syndrome (which her mother and doctor have warned her to be silent about) as she starts school in St. George, Utah, but it isn't long before the other students realize she's different. Calli's humor and spirit quickly win over her neighbor and classmate Jinsong, an accomplished athlete and student body president. Just as their friendship starts to blossom, Calli has to face the news that she may have to move yet again as Jinsong is torn between his friendship with Calli and his fear of losing favor with his classmates. Written in two voices, Calli's flowing verse and Jinsong's straightforward prose, *Forget Me Not* beautifully depicts a bright and courageous young girl's struggles with moving, bullies, neurological disorders, and accepting herself.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ellie Terry is a writer, poet, and mother of three living in St. George, Utah. Terry, who has Tourette's Syndrome, SPD, and OCD, writes from her own experiences to craft novels that inspire young readers to embrace what makes them different and clear up common misconceptions about disorders like Tourette's. *Forget Me Not* is Terry's debut novel. Information on her upcoming projects can be found at her website, ellieterry.com, and her Twitter, @EllieTerryBooks.

Biographical information taken from author's website at <https://ellieterry.com/>.

Website accessed on September 30th, 2018.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Forget Me Not's cover art was created by Oana Befort, a Romanian graphic designer, illustrator, and mother of two. Befort earned her Master's degree in Graphic Design and Visual Communication from the National University of Arts in Bucharest, Romania. Inspired by nature and folk art, her vibrant and intricate work has attracted clients such as Anthropologie, Hallmark, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, Etsy, and Urban Outfitters. More of her work can be seen at her blog, oanabefort.com.

Biographical information taken from illustrator's website at <https://oanabefort.com/>.

Website accessed on September 30th, 2018.

BOOK AWARDS

2020 Missouri Truman Readers Award Preliminary Nominee
2019 Maine Student Book Award Nominee
2019 Utah Beehive Book Award Nominee (YA Fiction)
2017 Association for Mormon Letters Middle Grade Novel Award Finalist
2017 Nerdy Book Club Awards: Poetry and Novels in Verse
Books Between Podcast: Best Middle Grade Books of 2017
A Mighty Girl's 2017 Best Books of the Year
MG Bookshelf Best of 2017
2017 Whitney Award Nominee
Book Riot 100 Must-Read Middle Grade Books for the Summer (2017)

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

Learning	About	Tourette's	Syndrome:
Ask your students about Tourette's Syndrome. What do they know about it? Do they know any family members, historical figures, or fictional characters who have Tourette's Syndrome? Show the students a documentary or video about the experiences of people who live with Tourette's and ask them what else they'd like to learn about it. Students could make a presentation based on what they've learned from the video, the fact sheet, and reading <i>Forget Me Not</i> , or they could come up with questions they'd like to answer about Tourette's and research them.			

Example video from Tourette's Association of America: <https://tourette.org/about-tourette/tourettes-doesnt-have-me/>
Accessed October 14th, 2018.

Tourette's fact sheet from National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS):
<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Tourette-Syndrome-Fact-Sheet>

"Tourette Syndrome Fact Sheet", NINDS, Publication date January 2012.
NIH Publication No. 12-2163

Learning About Lunar Exploration:

In *Forget Me Not*, Calli declares that she wants to be the first woman to walk on the moon. Students can better understand Calli's dreams and learn more about science, astronomy, and history by studying resources about the first moon landing, which took place on July 20th, 1969. Students can view restored footage of the original Apollo 11 moonwalk and learn what conditions on the moon were like for the crew.

Nasa page with restored Apollo 11 moonwalk footage:
https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/apollo/apollo11.html
Accessed October 14th, 2018.

Additional footage: <https://moon.nasa.gov/resources/310/first-men-on-the-moon-apollo-11-the-eagle-has-landed/>

Accessed October 14th, 2018

Apollo 11 launch video: <https://moon.nasa.gov/resources/288/apollo-11-launch/>

Accessed October 14th, 2018

Infographic explaining conditions on the moon: <https://www.space.com/27203-living-on-the-moon-explained-infographic.html>

Accessed October 14th, 2018

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Calli decide to go by a nickname? Why does Calli dislike her name, and what does Calli's new name mean to her?
2. Why do you think Calli's mother and doctor told Calli not to discuss her Tourette's with anyone?
3. Moving to a new place is a huge source of stress for Calli. Have you had to move to a new place before? How did having to move make you feel at first? What challenges do you face when moving to a new place?
4. Why do you think Calli's mother cuts her hair? How does Calli feel about this, and why do you think she struggles to tell her mother how she feels?
5. What are Calli's relationships with her mother and father like, and how does this affect how she views the world around her?
6. Calli June is interested in geology, so she collects rocks, keeping one from each new place she moves to. Do you collect anything? If so, what do you collect and why?
7. Calli's sections of *Forget Me Not* are written in verse, while Jinsong's are written in prose. How does this difference fit the "voices" of both the characters?
8. Bullying is a prevalent issue throughout *Forget Me Not*. What would you do if you see someone being bullied? Has reading Calli June's story caused you to think differently about what you'd do in situations like this?
9. How does Jinsong's role as student body president shape his interactions with others, particularly Calli?
10. *Forget Me Not's* author Ellie Terry and her daughter both have Tourette's Syndrome. How do you think this impacted the book?
11. Which character in the book do you identify most with and why?
12. Calli June becomes fascinated with the language of flowers during the story. What is the significance of the poppy, and what does it mean to Calli?
13. Calli June celebrates Zhongqiu Jié (also known as the Moon Festival or Mid-Autumn Festival) with Jinsong and his family. What special events or holidays does your family celebrate? If your family makes any special dishes, what are they? How do you help your family prepare for the event?
14. Jinsong remembers a proverb from his grandfather, "A man should choose a friend who is better than himself." Do you think Jinsong's actions match this proverb? If so, how?
15. Why does Calli forgive Beatriz? If you were in Calli's position, would you have forgiven Beatriz? Why or why not?

16. At the end of the story, Calli decides to disregard the advice of her mother and doctor by telling her classmates about her Tourette's Syndrome. How might this change lead to better things for Calli?
17. Think back to the pre-learning activity about Tourette's Syndrome. What have you learned about it as a result of reading Calli's story? If you met someone who had never heard of Tourette's Syndrome and wanted to learn more, what would you tell them?

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Science and Geology:

Calli June collects rocks, adding one rock from every new place she moves to her collection. Ask students to bring in a rock from home and examine it. Is the rock igneous, metamorphic, or sedimentary? What does the composition of the rock reveal about the climate where it was found?

- <https://geology.com/rocks/>
- <http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/earth/rocksandminerals.html>

Social Studies and History:

Calli's friend Jinsong is Chinese, and Jinsong invites Calli to celebrate Zhongqiu Jié (also known as the Moon Festival or Mid-Autumn Festival) with his family. Have students research facts about China and the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival using resources like the ones below. Each student will share three new facts about China or Chinese traditions with the class.

- <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/china/#china-dragon.jpg>
- <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/mid-autumn-festival-east-asia-harvest-moon-celebrate-when-is-it-mooncakes-lanterns-a8552276.html>

Science (Astronomy):

Calli June dreams of becoming the first woman to walk on the moon, and she loves to look up at the night sky. Students can use resources like the ones below to find which constellations and planets are currently most visible.

- <https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/video/details.php?id=1552>
- <https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/planner.cfm>
- <http://www.skymaps.com/downloads.html>

English:

The language of flowers plays an important role in the plot of *Forget Me Not*. Calli learns that her favorite flower, the poppy, represented courage in Victorian times. Each student will research the meaning behind their favorite flower and present it to the class. Can students think of any other stories where the symbolism behind flowers is prominently featured? How would students use their favorite flower to convey meaning in a story?

- http://www.gardens.si.edu/come-learn/docs/Template_HistBloom_Language%20of%20Flowers.pdf
- <https://www.almanac.com/content/flower-meanings-language-flowers>

Vocabulary:

Precipitation
Spheroid
Conquering
Circumstances
Interrogation
Neurological

Experimental
Intermediate
Suffocating
Somersaults
Futon
Accusation

Goon
Brimming
Disposal
Arrangements
Shimmering
Gullible

RELATED WEBSITES

Interviews with Author Ellie Terry

- <http://sarahscoop.com/author-interview-review-the-scoop-on-ellie-terry/>
- <http://www.writersdigest.com/editor-blogs/guide-to-literary-agents/author-interviews/debut-authors-ellie-terry>

Terry discusses the process of writing *Forget Me Not*, her advice to budding writers, and what's next for her.

Interviews with Illustrator Oana Befort

- <https://blog.ohhdeer.com/home/2017/10/6/day-in-the-life-oana-befort>
- <https://art.royalbrush.com/community/behind-the-scenes-with-oana-befort>

Befort discusses her creative process and shows off some of her traditional art techniques.

Astronomical Society of the Pacific

<https://www.astrosociety.org/education/hands-on-astronomy-activities/>

Fun hands-on activities that will make students excited to learn about astronomy and space.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Activities

<https://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/5-8/index.html>

Space-related activities and resources designed and selected with middle grade students in mind.