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Forget Me Not



Synopsis

Astronomy-loving Calliope June has Tourette syndrome, so she sometimes makes faces or noises that she doesn't mean to make. When she and her mother move yet again, she tries to hide her TS. But it isn't long before the kids at her new school realize she's different. Only Calliope's neighbor, who is also the popular student body president, sees her as she truly is--an interesting person and a good friend. But is he brave enough to take their friendship public? As Calliope navigates school, she must also face her mother's new relationship and the fact that they might be moving--again--just as she starts to make friends and finally accept her differences. Ellie Terry's affecting debut will speak to a wide audience about being true to oneself.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 670 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: Feiwel & Friends (March 14, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1250096278

ISBN-13: 978-1250096272

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 61 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #44,984 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #33 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Moving](#) #59 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness](#) #96 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Special Needs](#)

Age Range: 10 - 13 years

Grade Level: 5 - 8

Customer Reviews

Gr 4-8 • Terry's middle grade debut is about one girl's urgent search for true friendship and a sense of home. Constantly on the move after her father's death, Calliope June Snow (Calli) arrives in St. George, UT, with her lovelorn mother, a few suitcases, and an egg carton rock collection. Exhausted by her inability to fit in and tired of always being the new girl, Calli, who has Tourette syndrome (TS), seeks solace in a connection to her neighbor Jinsong, the student body president and an expert pitcher. The novel is a duet, with perspectives from both Calli and

Jinsong. Written in a patchwork of prose poetry and free verse, Terry's narrative deftly represents the reality of TS in its fullness. It works to deconstruct common misconceptions, such as that those who have TS have a propensity to swear, and sheds light on the raw confusion and the frightening nature of a physical experience that is utterly unpredictable. However, Jinsong's efforts to defend and protect Calli feel somewhat truncated and predictable. Calli's final act of generosity toward Beatriz, one of her tormentors—offering her the gift of forgiveness, symbolized by a laminated poppy flower—appears both neat and unconvincing. Though the book has some flaws, the tale of a young woman with TS coming of age is an important literary perspective yet untold for a middle grade audience. VERDICT This exploration of Calli's neurological disorder and her struggle to find her place will stay in the hearts and minds of readers for a long time; a good addition for most collections. —Alpha DeLap, St. Thomas School, Medina, WA

"Written in a patchwork of prose poetry and free verse, Terry's narrative deftly represents the reality of TS in its fullness. It works to deconstruct common misconceptions, such as that those who have TS have a propensity to swear, and sheds light on the raw confusion and the frightening nature of a physical experience that is utterly unpredictable . . . This exploration of Calli's neurological disorder and her struggle to find her place will stay in the hearts and minds of readers for a long time; a good addition for most collections."--School Library Journal

Terry, who has Tourette syndrome herself, offers enormous insight into an often-misunderstood condition, writing in verse for Calliope's chapters and prose for Jinsong's. Her poetic explorations of Calliope's anxiety and Jinsong's moral struggles are honest and moving."--Publishers Weekly

This heartfelt, multivoice story with a meaningful message about friendship and acceptance is perfect for kids who appreciate realistic, character driven stories, such as Rebecca Stead's Goodbye Stranger (2015)."

Booklist

Terry's use of figurative language and symbolism is magical. This book will appeal to most middle school girls and will hopefully get read by some boys as well. It will offer lessons in tolerance, acceptance, and kindness toward those different than themselves."--School Library Connection

The novel's dual narrative offers differing perspectives on the experience of Tourette syndrome, both in Callie's verse, which is driven by genuine descriptions of uncontrollable impulse, and Jinsong's frustration-filled prose. . . . the narrative ends with the emphasis on character that is the driving force of the entire story. Terry, who has Tourette syndrome, provides perceptive insights into an oft-misunderstood disorder through Callie's voice, making Forget Me Not a character-driven success. This is a recommended purchase, particularly for school librarians who

can benefit from the teachable elements of both empathy and poetic form."--VOYA

I had good intentions of only reading 20 pages and then doing some work, but these characters ... Oh wow, these characters are so real and defined and heartbreaking. I fell hard for Calliope and for Jin. Honestly, I could have spent an entire week with them. Terry's writing is gorgeous, evocative, and tight. It's clear Terry understands the middle school experience, especially for a new student. I give FORGET ME NOT five full stars and one bright moon. A brilliant read.

In a field of novels about children with challenges, this flower stands out. It is the story of Calliope June, an earth-lover and star-gazer who would love to have a best friend. Unfortunately, her rather eccentric mother likes to pick up and move on often. For Calli, that means new towns and new schools with the same old sea of staring faces. Her baggy vintage dresses don't really hide the tics and twitches. Should she tell them she has Tourette's? Once again, she endures the comments and the smirks, but could this be her turn for true friendship? Her neighbor, Jinsong, accepts Calli just the way she is, quirks and all, and he shares her love of stars and space. Unfortunately, it is not a matter of IF, but a matter of WHEN Calli and her mom will pack up and head out. Written in open verse, this novel is ideal for speed readers and reluctant readers, allowing them to quickly appreciate the sweet honesty of Calli's story and learn about accepting peers with disabilities. They will certainly never forget her.

A novel written in verse, FORGET ME NOT is a story about a girl, Calliope June, who longs to live in a town for enough time to make a friend. Making friends is not easy for Calliope since she has Tourette syndrome. Hiding her ticks is challenging, especially when kids start to notice and comment how strange she is. When a new friendship for Calliope starts to blossom, will she have to move again? FORGET ME NOT is an important book to have in every classroom and school library. Themes of acceptance, overcoming challenges, and doing the right thing are threaded throughout this book. Author, Ellie Terry, who is diagnosed with Tourette syndrome paints a realistic picture of life for a child with TS. The characters pull at your heart and will linger with you long after you finish the book. Beautifully written.

Ellie Terry's beautiful debut tells the tender story of a girl who faces challenges, echoing the quiet bravery explored in R.J. Palacio's Wonder. On the surface, Tourette's Syndrome might seem to be the worst battle faced by Calliope June. It

is her mother's wayward longing to find greener pastures that poses her greatest challenges as she leaves each "home" with a rock souvenir and added heartbreak. Gaining insight from her experiences, she acknowledges that Tourette's is misunderstood by classmates. History has shown Calli that it takes time to make friends and time is another variable that is out of her reach. She never gives up hope, but remains guarded, knowing that her mother may decide on a whim to disconnect Calli from her latest set of friends. She resents her mother's wanderlust, but isn't blind to her mother's good intentions. Calli is determined to dominate the unconscious movements and sounds that are out of her control. TS may cause her to endure uncontrolled movements, but her resolve remains fixed. Calli tends to her needs, embracing her value. Her reward is friendship and self-acceptance. Readers will find their own reward in Ellie Terry's eloquent prose.

Terry's verse is beautiful, and her characters are the kind that suck you right in and make you want to wrap your arms around them all. Highly recommended. (Also, I'm obsessed with that cover!)

This is a poignant true to life story of a 7th grader with Tourette's Syndrome. Told from the point of view of Calli and also her neighbor Jinsong's POV, the novel is lyrical and lovely. I didn't think I liked novels in verse, but this story really resonates. Calli's relationship with her mother, her peers, her teachers, and herself are all beautifully shown and her journey to self acceptance. This story will capture the heart of anyone who has every felt different or afraid to be who they are.

Ellie Terry's FORGET ME NOT is such a sweet and heartfelt verse novel of friendship, first loves, and having the courage to be yourself. I loved the dual point of view, as I think it added such depth to it. The verse was gorgeous. And it was also an honest #ownvoices portrayal of Tourette's syndrome. This is one of those books where you don't want to let go of the characters and which you'll read more than once.

I read this book in one sitting, and so did my nine-year-old daughter. The writing and the story are simply beautiful. The book is written in verse, so it's a pretty quick read, and the author's personal experience with Tourette syndrome make it an unusually compelling read. I thought the author nailed the ups and downs of middle school, and I loved the main characters' even more because of their flaws.

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