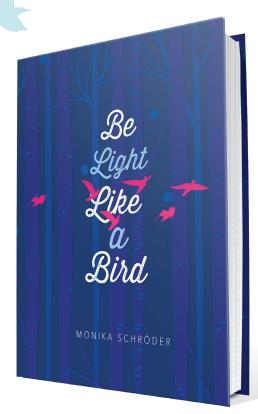


DISCUSSION GUIDE

ABOUT THE BOOK:

After the death of her father, twelve-year-old Wren finds her life thrown into upheaval. Ma won't talk about their loss, and Wren can't understand why. And when Ma packs up the car and forces Wren to leave the only home she's ever known, the divide between the two grows deeper still. As she and her mother settle on Michigan's Upper Peninsula and work to build a new life, Wren must learn to cope with her grief and discover the person she's meant to be without her father by her side.



A bittersweet, coming-of-age story of a child forced to overcome grief and adversity, Be Light Like a Bird deftly handles themes of loss, connection, self-discovery and environmental concerns - weaving them all together in a powerful story.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Monika Schröder grew up in Germany, but has worked in American international schools in Egypt, Oman, Chile, and India. Before moving to the US in 2011, she was the elementary school librarian at the American Embassy School in New Delhi. She currently lives with her husband and dog in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. BE LIGHT LIKE A BIRD is her fourth novel for young readers. You can visit her online at www.monikaschroeder.com





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:



- 1. Authors often look for an interesting beginning to their stories. BE LIGHT LIKE A BIRD starts with a scene in which Wren buries a dead squirrel in hopes that it will make her feel better. What was your reaction after reading the first chapter? What did you expect the book to be about after reading it?
- 2. What are Wren's challenges in trying to make friends with Carrie? Have you ever tried to make friends with a person you really wanted as a friend, but your attempt failed? Have you ever felt like you had to act differently from who you really are around others in order to be accepted by them?
- 3. What enables Wren to finally break off her relationship with Carrie?
- 4. When Wren is first paired up to work with Theo she doesn't like him. Over the course of the story they become good friends. Identify the turning points in their relationship and discuss how their interactions impacted Wren.
- 5. Why do you think Wren buries roadkill? What else in the novel is buried, or perhaps, unburied?
- 6. Several people in the novel keep secrets from each other. What secrets does Wren's mom keep from her? What secrets does Wren keep from her mom? From Theo? What prevents us from being honest with others about our private thoughts and feelings? Is it possible for a relationship between two people to exist completely without secrets?
- 7. Wren and Theo work on a social studies project about a controversial public policy issue. Their teacher encourages them to pick a topic that has meaning in their life and to research its pros and cons. Think of an issue in your community and discuss pros and cons.
- 8. At the end of the book a community has formed in Pyramid that hadn't been there before. How did this community form and what binds its members together?
- 9. Many characters in the book deal with loss and are at different stages in processing that loss. Discuss the losses Wren, her mother, Theo, and Randle have experienced and how they each deal with it
- 10. Theo reminds Wren that Randle forgave his mother for the pain she inflicted on him in his youth. Who else had to forgive another person in the novel? Why is it so hard sometimes to forgive someone?
- 11. Consider the book's title, "Be Light Like a Bird" (not like a feather). Do you think this is a fitting title?



12. At the beginning of the book Uncle Huey asks Wren's mother to hold a memorial service for the father to give Wren closure. What does it mean to reach closure after someone's death? Do Wren and her mother find closure at the end?