



No Sad Songs

Frank Morelli

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In the poignant *No Sad Songs*, teenage Gabe is not particularly popular. He loves baseball and poetry. His best friend is John. And his grandfather lives with his family and suffers from dementia.

Gabe's occasional responsibilities to his grandfather are already a challenge; when his parents are killed in a car crash, those responsibilities turn into full-time obligations. His long absent, alcoholic Uncle Nick shows up at the funeral and announces that he is moving in; suddenly, Gabe is burdened with caring for not one, but two extra people.

As Gabe navigates his incredible challenges, he meets Sofia, a young woman caring for her ailing mother. They become quick friends. When Gabe proves that he is willing to sacrifice his own future to protect his grandfather, Sofia and John must convince him to find another way.

This is an emotional story, filled with lots of laughter and great sadness. Gabe is an uncommon young man—intelligent, loving, and brave—but he is not perfect. He has a crush on a pretty but shallow girl at school, he isn't very confident, and he doesn't always make the right choices. His loyalty to family is inspiring, and the lessons that he learns as he is forced to quickly grow up are powerful.

Gabe's struggles will speak to anyone who has ever had to balance someone else's needs with their own. A hopeful ending note comes without the false promise of a guaranteed happy ending.

Smartly written, with beautiful characters and a compelling plot, *No Sad Songs* deals honestly with the challenges of caring for someone with dementia.

CATHERINE THURESON (March/April 2018)

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