

Now You Say Yes

Bill Harley

Peachtree Publishing (Aug 1, 2021)

Hardcover \$16.99 (384pp)

978-1-68263-247-5

Bill Harley's novel *Now You Say Yes* emphasizes the importance of kindness, bravery, and family.

Fifteen-year-old Mari is used to her world falling apart, but she never imagined that she'd lose her adopted mother, Stef, too. Now, terrified of what going into the system will do to her autistic younger brother Conor, Mari determines to find the one person in the world who might take them in. Armed with just their wits and their mother's car, Mari and Conor set out on a cross-country trip to find another home.

The book's colorful cast exemplifies the power of kindness. Mari and Conor meet many strangers, including a man at a gas station and the kind Cardenal family, who help to ease their burdens along the way. And Mari herself is a strong, goodhearted girl who's fearful of being unworthy or being loved. Conor is oblivious to the world around him but brilliant, and he loves Mari with ferocity, though he cannot always express it.

Mari's emotional maturation is a large aspect of the story: she tries to be the adult Conor needs while processing her own trauma, too. She finds relief in at last being able to visit the Grand Canyon (a longtime dream of Stef's), but other than one tearful occasion, does not seem to process her mother's death. She shares little information about the loss at all, resulting in a sense of mystery around it.

As hopeful as it is heartbreaking, the novel *Now You Say Yes* follows a siblings' search for a place in the world.

VIVIAN TURNBULL (July / August 2021)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.