

The Space Between Lost and Found

Sandy Stark-McGinnis

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Woven of heartbreak and hope, Sandy Stark-McGinnis's *The Space Between Lost and Found* is about a girl who's determined to make the most of every moment.

Cassie wishes that her mother were a dolphin—not because she doesn't want her mother at home, but because she misses the way her mother was before the onset of early Alzheimer's. Once, her mother remembered her name; now, everything is different for the Rodrigues family, and her mother forgets more by the day. Desperate to make one last memory while she still can, Cassie takes her mother on an adventure to fulfill the one dream she never forgot.

As the story flips between the present and past, happier times, its brief backward-looking scenes give sweet insights into the love that binds the Rodrigueses together, even after their circumstances change. Though serious, the narration maintains a charming, childlike sensibility. Cassie's voice is strong; she describes everything from her mother's illness to what happened at recess.

The book's characters are complex: Cassie learns to balance being a kid with the grownup realities of what it means to lose a parent, and her former friend Bailey comes to understand that friendship sometimes requires forgiveness. Strong adult role models, including Cassie's art teacher, are major contributors who stay actively involved in Cassie's life. The ocean is a constant presence, with symbols including glass dolphins illustrating the importance of finding a new normal. The book's vibrant language mirrors the art that Cassie takes such pride in creating.

Filled with raw emotion and exemplifying the power of family, *The Space Between Lost and Found* is a moving novel in which a girl struggles to find her place in an upended world.

VIVIAN TURNBULL (May / June 2020)

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