



2019

What Momma Left Me

Taylor Nelson

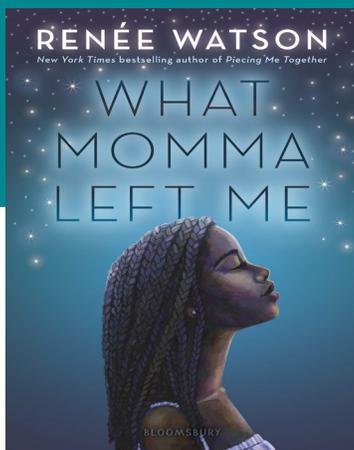
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Book Review

What Momma Left Me

Author

Renee Watson

Illustrator

Reviewer

Taylor Nelson

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Intermediate

Pages

240

Year

2019

Publisher

Bloomsbury Children's Books

ISBN

9781547601738

In the aftermath of her mother's violent death, Serenity and her little brother, Danny, move in with their grandparents and try to pick up the pieces of their lives. The trauma seems never ending, but things get a little easier when Serenity makes friends with Maria, a girl in her class, and meets a cute boy named Jay, who makes her feel seen. But just as Serenity begins to settle in to her new life and home, it all takes a turn for the worse when Danny starts hanging out with the wrong crowd and making poor choices, and Jay is a part of it too. When the crushing weight of all of the secrets and burdens she is keeping inside seems too much to bear, Serenity learns an important lesson: sometimes it's the unsavory ingredients that combine to make the best cake.

This book is a masterpiece of emotion. The premise of the book is heart wrenching, but Watson masterfully balances tragedy and hope, and weaves in lighthearted moments in the midst of pain. Serenity's youthful and naive voice slowly reveals her shattering world and the weight of the secrets she is carrying inside. The relationships in this book are wonderful: Serenity, whose former life saw her with an abusive and neglectful father, is amazed to discover that people really do care about her and that true friendship and love exist in the world. While the subject matter is quite heavy, the book will leave readers with a sense of hope for healing and hope for the future. This is a wonderful story about how pain may tear you down, but it also gives you the chance to start all over again, building relationships and faith along the way.

*Contains mild violence, mild sexual content, and mild drug abuse.