

the books of
LAURA RESAU
readers guide

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LauraResau.com
www.randomhouse.com/teachers

ABOUT THE BOOKS OF LAURA RESAU

A master storyteller, Laura Resau deftly weaves magic into the fabric of her novels, creating diverse settings, exceptional characters, and a collage of relationships from the tender and tenuous to the strong and heartfelt.

In Resau's debut novel, *What the Moon Saw*, Clara learns that relationships bring joy as well as pain, insight that helps her to understand the world around her more clearly. In *Red Glass*, Sophie and her family travel with their beloved six-year-old Pedro to his hometown where he needs to make a heartwrenching decision. In *The Indigo Notebook* and *The Ruby Notebook* readers witness Zeeta and Layla define their family of two and also have meaningful interactions with people they meet. In the characters of Zitlally and Crystal, Resau crafts characters that discover the strength of family and friendship as they fall in love with Star and help save his life in *Star in the Forest*. And in *The Queen of the Water*, Resau's newest novel based on a true story, readers follow seven-year-old Virginia who is taken from her village in Ecuador to be a servant to a mestizo couple

Step into the worlds of Resau's characters . . . taste the food, smell the aromas, and see the vivid characters in the world in which they live. Experience the joy and pain of friendship and family as the characters change and grow, change that brings them to self-acceptance and love and respect for others.

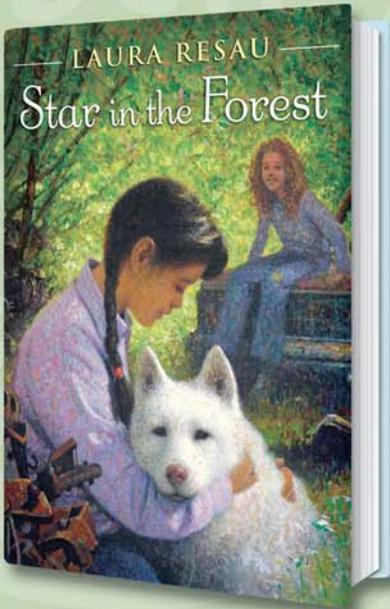
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



© Ian Schneider

With a background in cultural anthropology and ESL-teaching, Laura Resau has lived and traveled in Latin America and Europe—experiences which inspired her books for young people. Resau lives with her husband and young son in Colorado. She donates a portion of her royalties to indigenous rights organizations in Latin America.

“Rumi loved ocean and saucer metaphors. So do I. To me, writing a novel feels like trying to fit a raging, deep, sparkling, infinite thing like the ocean into a few hundred pieces of ink-spotted paper. Or into a saucer.”—Laura Resau



Star in the Forest

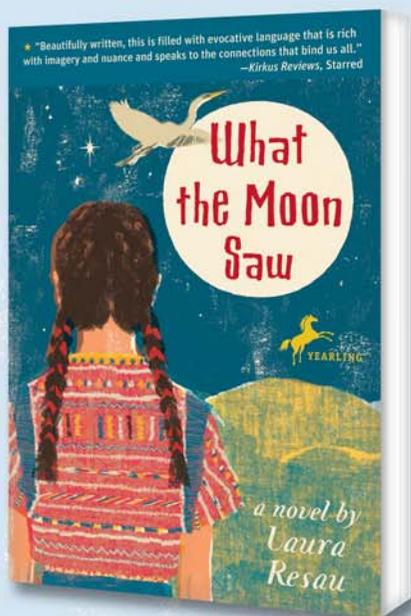
AN ENCHANTING STORY
ABOUT IMMIGRATION
FOR YOUNGER READERS.

Grades 2–5 • HC: 978-0-385-73792-0
GLB: 978-0-385-90700-2 • EL: 978-0-375-89594-4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is Zitlally afraid to be herself when she is around Morgan, Emma, and Olivia? How does Zitlally's fear affect her actions?
- How does Crystal first show kindness to Zitlally? Why does Zitlally finally respond to Crystal's desire to be friends?
- What changes occur in Zitlally's family after her father is deported? Why does her mother finally agree to send her father the money to return to the states?
- Why does Zitlally keep Star a secret from her family?
- Why is Zitlally convinced that Star is connected to her father? What does Zitlally believe about the connection between Star and her father? Is there support in the book for her belief? Why or why not?
- How do Crystal and Zitlally help each other emotionally? How do their strengths and weaknesses compliment each other? What effect does the relationship have on each of them?
- Why does the responsibility of taking care of Star help both Crystal and Zitlally? How do the girls save Star's life?
- Crystal spouts lies about her family to everyone she meets. Why is she honest with Zitlally's dad the first time she meets him? How does Zitlally react to Crystal's honesty?

★ "The focus is on the developing friendships, both between Zitlally and her previously ignored neighbor, and between the fearful youngster and the dog. Conversations between the two girls are believable and the details of their lives convincing."—*School Library Journal*, Starred



What the Moon Saw

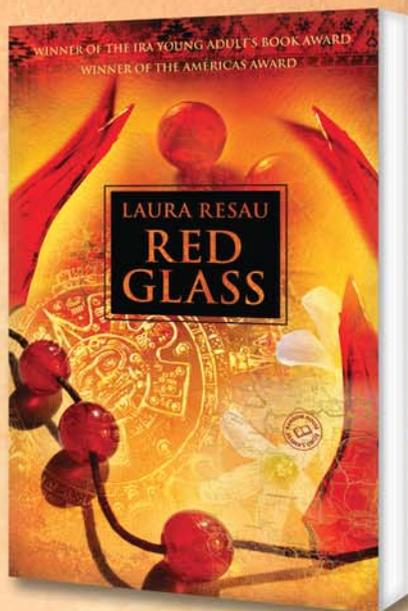
*A captivating story of
discovering your true self
in the most unexpected place.*

An ALA-YALSA Best Book for Young Adults
Grades 5 up • PB: 978-0-440-23957-4 • HC: 978-0-385-73343-4
EL: 978-0-375-84927-5

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is Clara's initial reaction upon receiving the invitation to visit her grandparents in Mexico? Why does she decide to make the trip? What role do her parents play in her decision?
- When Clara arrives at her grandparents' home, she realizes that she will have no TV, no computer, no movies, and no music for 60 days. How does she react to the fact that she is visiting such a remote place? Clara asks herself, "Who am I without all these things that fill up my life?" (p. 37) What does Clara discover about who she is?
- The last words Clara's father says to her before she boards the plane is, "Clara—you're my pathway home." (p. 116) How will Clara be a path for her father to return to Mexico?
- When Clara meets Pedro for the first time, she can only see him through the eyes of her friends in the states. When does she begin to see Pedro for who he is? How does this change their relationship? How does Pedro's life change as a result of his relationship with Clara?
- The connection between Clara and her grandmother illustrates the phenomenon of generational similarities. What characteristics do Clara and her grandmother share? How does the gift of "knowing things" prove itself in both of their lives?
- How are the village of Yucuyoo and the people who live there affected by Clara's visit? What does she bring them that they didn't have before her visit? How is the impact Clara and Marco make similar?
- Clara learns the details of her grandmother's life through the stories her grandmother tells her. What does Clara learn about her father's life as a boy in Mexico? How does that knowledge change her perspective of her father?
- What does Clara learn about the cyclical nature of life through her relationship with her grandparents? How does Clara's visit with her grandparents change what she values? How do her priorities change as a result of her 60 days in Mexico?

★ "Readers . . . will find themselves swept up in this powerful, magical story, and they'll feel, along with Clara, 'the spiderweb's threads, connecting me to people miles and years away.'"—*Booklist*, Starred



RED GLASS

The journey to return a young orphaned boy to his village in Mexico forces 16-year-old Sophie far out of her comfort zone.

An ALA-YALSA Best Book for Young Adults • An IRA Young Adult Book Award • A *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year
A VOYA Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers • An Americas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature

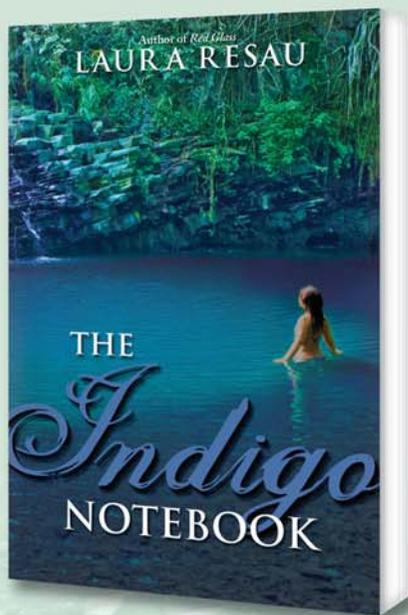
Grades 5 up • PB: 978-0-440-24025-9 • HC: 978-0-385-73466-0
EL: 978-0-375-89059-8 • CD: 978-0-7393-7976-9

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Willing to risk his freedom and the safety of his family, Sophie's stepfather, Juan, helps the Mexicans who cross the border into the United States. What role do Sophie and her mother play in assisting the Mexicans crossing the border? What effect does this have on Sophie? How does Juan's assistance help the Mexicans?
- Sophie sees herself as a loner, "a free-floating, one-celled amoeba." (p. 9) How does Sophie's image of herself change as she travels to Mexico and meets new people? What experiences there allow her to become part of an organism?
- Sophie whispers to Pablo in English, "Maybe we are two amoebas together." (p. 12) What does she mean by this? How does Sophie's need to help Pablo end up helping them both?
- Sophie's first memory of Mexican immigrants coming to her home in the middle of the night is a man eating a raw egg and throwing the empty shell on the ground. She kept the shell to remind her of what mattered most in life. At that time in her life, what mattered most to Sophie? How do her priorities change after her trip to Mexico? How do the immigration laws affect Pablo, Mr. Lorenzo, and Dika? How are Sophie and her family, United States citizens, affected by the laws?
- When Dika and Mr. Lorenzo begin talking about taking Pablo home to his village, Sophie's fear and worry immobilize her. Of what is she so afraid? On what are her fears based? Does she have legitimate reasons to be afraid? Why or why not?
- The relationship between Dika and Mr. Lorenzo changes during the course of their trip to Mexico. How does the change in their relationship help each of them overcome a part of their past? How will releasing their past enable them to have a more fulfilling future?
- When Sophie arrives at the hospital and sees Angel and Mr. Lorenzo, she hopes they notice "that a layer of heavy, thick stuff that used to separate her from the world was disappearing." (p. 218) What was the "stuff"? How does she let go of her angst?
- Despite almost being killed, Angel is determined to recover his mother's jewels before he returns to Tucson. Why are the jewels so important to Angel? How does Sophie help Angel achieve his goal?
- Sophie learns that "it is in the harshest places where you appreciate beauty the most." (p. 274) How could each of the characters in *Red Glass* relate to this lesson?

★ "The vivid characters, the fine imagery, and the satisfying story arc make this a rewarding novel."

—*Booklist*, Starred



THE *Indigo* NOTEBOOK

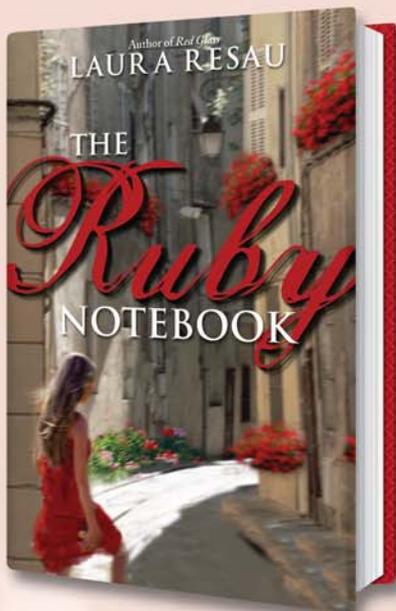
Zeeta's life spent roaming the globe takes an unexpected turn when she meets Wendell, an American boy searching for his birth parents.

Grades 5 up • PB: 978-0-375-84524-6 • HC: 978-0-385-73652-7
GLB: 978-0-385-90614-2 • EL: 978-0-375-89384-1
CD: 978-0-307-57979-9

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- One of Zeeta's survival skills for relocating every year is her ability to make new friends quickly. What techniques does Zeeta use to find people to befriend? What aspect of her nature does she have to overcome in order to make friends? How do her notebooks help her?
- Born in 1207 into a family of learned theologians, Rumi, through poetry, expressed the absolute love of God and the idea that love alone is capable of revealing the truth of love. How do Rumi's poetry and beliefs affect both Layla and Zeeta? What effect do the poetry and beliefs have on their life choices? When does Zeeta begin to give credit to some of Rumi's beliefs? Why?
- Layla and Zeeta's early-morning trek to the waterfall could have ended in Layla's death, and the incident transforms their lives. What changes occur in Layla's life that have an adverse affect on Zeeta? How does Zeeta respond to the changes? What could Zeeta have done differently?
- Zeeta's life experiences are an asset to her and Wendell as they search for his birth parents. What does she contribute that Wendell desperately needs in order to find his parents? How does Zeeta's desire to find her own father help Wendell?
- Being a *curandero*, or spiritual healer, is valued in many countries, but Wendell does not understand his "gift," feeling afraid and ashamed to let others know he possesses this power. How do Zeeta and Taita Silvio help him recognize the goodness of his gift? How does Taita use his power to help Wendell?
- What is the significance of the red ribbon Wendell uses to tie the letters together that he has written to his birth parents? How does the ribbon connect him to his birth family? How does this knowledge affect Wendell?
- After Wendell finds his father, Faustino, Zeeta worries that Wendell is in danger, but at the same time her own life is falling apart, and she is fearful of losing her mother to a life they will both hate. Why is Zeeta so confused about her mother's relationship with Jeff? Why is Layla so willing to cast aside the life she loves?
- Wendell naively trusts Faustino because he is his father and Wendell has wanted to find his birth father all of his life. How does Faustino prove himself to be a wicked man? What is he willing to lose to gain wealth? Is there hope for a relationship between Faustino and Wendell? Why or why not?

"An entertaining and suspenseful read."—*School Library Journal*



THE *Ruby* NOTEBOOK

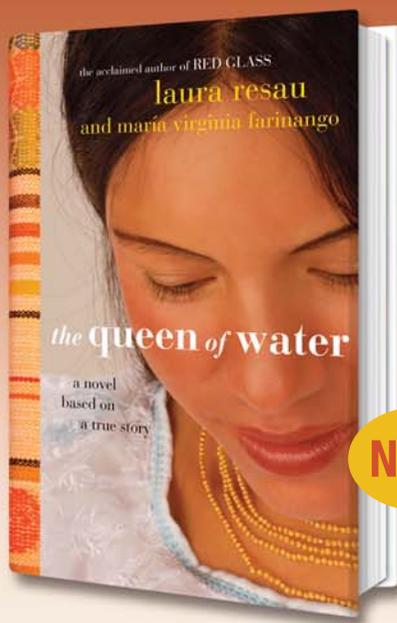
A remarkable novel about learning to accept love in all of its wondrous and imperfect forms.

Grades 5 up • HC: 978-0-385-73653-4
GLB: 978-0-385-90615-9 • EL: 978-0-375-89761-0

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Zeeta says on page 4, “My heart has been torn apart, over and over, every year, every time we say good-bye to our home. Still, somehow . . . in the new home, my heart heals, and hopes, and loves . . . only to be torn apart again.” What are the pros and cons of Zeeta’s transient lifestyle compared to a child raised in the same town all their lives? Why do so many of the people Zeeta meets assume her life is happy and exciting?
- Zeeta’s friends in Aix are all unique. How does she choose her friends? Why is it so easy for Zeeta to make friends? What do her friends have in common?
- On page 79, Jean-Claude tells Zeeta she is a wanderer, a gypsy like him. How does Zeeta respond? Why does Jean-Claude have such different views about their lifestyle?
- Layla and Zeeta each interpret the story of the troubadour on pages 83–85 through their own unique lenses. How do their interpretations differ? What meaning do you take from the story? How could you apply it to your life?
- Zeeta asks, “Why is it that the forbidden always holds so much allure? (p. 91) What “forbidden” things is Zeeta seeking? How does she discover the answers she is seeking?
- When Layla and Zeeta read the letters from J.C., why do they react so differently? Why do Zeeta and Layla have such conflicting feelings for J.C.? How do Zeeta’s hopes for finding J.C. conflict with Layla’s fears that Zeeta will find him? In what ways do they resolve their conflicts?
- When Wendell and Zeeta go to Marseilles, they meet Maurice and he tells them, “At the darkest times . . . that’s when you find your treasure.” (p. 224) How does Maurice convey the idea of living in a prison of “ifs”? How does Zeeta relate the prison of “ifs” to her life?
- Zeeta places high expectations on a father she has never met. When she finally discovers who her father is, does he measure up to her expectations? Why or why not?
- Families reuniting is a theme present in both *The Indigo Notebook* and *The Ruby Notebook*. What families have been reunited? What is the common factor in every family concerned? How has the unified family impacted Zeeta and Layla?

★ “Weaving bits of magic, city lore and bittersweet romance into each of the many plot lines, Resau has again crafted a complex and satisfying novel that is both a mystery and a tender, wise meditation on love and self-identity.”—*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred



the queen of water

with Maria Virginia Farinango

A moving true story about reclaiming your identity.

NEW!

Grades 7 up • HC: 978-0-385-73897-2
GLB: 978-0-385-90761-3 • EL: 978-0-375-89680-4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Staring at the scars on her legs made by her drunken father, Virginia wonders if words can make scars on her heart. (p. 32) What words would have made scars on Virginia's heart? How can her scars be healed?
- The Doctorita verbally and physically abuses Virginia. Why does Virginia continue to stay with her when she has an opportunity to run away from her? How does the Doctorita convince Virginia that she can't leave?
- To improve her self-image and attain her dreams, Virginia stops eating and begins to exercise constantly. Why does she think that being thin will change her life? What does Jose tell her to make her start eating again? (p. 139) Why does Virginia choose to believe him?
- Why do the Doctorita and Carlos refuse to allow Virginia to have a boyfriend? How does Virginia defy them? What happens as a result of her defiance?
- Watching the TV show *The Slave Isaura* causes Virginia to consider she might be a slave, but she notices that the Doctorita does not see herself as an evil master. Is Virginia a slave? Why or why not?
- Virginia becomes afraid when Carlos begins to sexually harass her. How does Virginia deal with Carlos' unwanted advances? Why does he eventually stop?
- When Virginia leaves the Doctorita and returns home, why is she so uncomfortable? What decisions does she make as a result of her inability to feel at home with her family? Why does she feel such shame about being an *indigena*? What do Virginia's choices say about her character?
- Ultimately, Virginia's life transforms as she becomes a confident, successful young woman. How does her childhood help her become the Queen of Water? What life lessons does she learn as a result of her time spent with the Doctorita? How does she resolve the conflict between life in the two cultures?

Prepared by Susan Geye, Director of Library Services, Everman ISD, Texas.

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