

A FLASH OF NEON



SOPHIE
CAMERON

TEEN BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE



Laurie loves stories. She loves reading them in her mums' bookshop in their small Scottish town. She loves sharing them with new readers. She also loves telling stories about people she's not yet met and places she's not yet been. But when one of these people comes crashing into Laurie's world, it turns her whole life upside down.

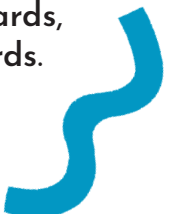
Neon is the boy Laurie's been dreaming of for the last six months, and he's exactly as she had created him - down to his ability to play any instrument he picks up. And when he steps off the train and into Laurie's world, he teaches her what it means to be real.

A fantastical story about imagination and friendship from the award-winning author of *AWAY WITH WORDS*.



About the Author


Sophie Cameron is a YA and MG author from the Scottish Highlands. Her debut MG novel *OUR SISTER, AGAIN* won the Leeds Book Awards, and *AWAY WITH WORDS* was shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal for Writing, UKLA Award, Polari Prize, Spark! Book Awards, and a runner-up at the Diverse Book Awards. She lives in Spain with her family.





Book Club Discussion Questions



1. Originally Laurie creates Neon to fit in with her new friends, but then he becomes an important fixture in her life, someone she can tell everything to. Have you ever had an imaginary friend? What were they like, and do you remember what they meant to you? Or if not, what would you want your imaginary friend to be like?
 2. Neon comes from the Realm, where all imaginary creations live. What fictional person or creature would you most want to meet and why? How would you react to them appearing in the real world?
 3. Laurie asks her mum 'How real do you think stories are?'. How do you interpret this question - what does 'real' mean when it comes to fiction? Mutti mentions the impact of stories and how they are 'mirrors for how we see ourselves'. Do you think that makes books real?
 4. Laurie and Mutti also discuss 'why representation is so important. Especially for queer people, people of colour, disabled people, all sorts of marginalised groups. Stories can help people feel seen and included or show them what they can achieve.' What does it mean to you, to see a character that reflects your experience?
 5. The Blanks are 'the opposite of imagination, creativity, curiosity. They're the absence of it'. What inspires you? When are you most creative? And what do you do when you're finding it hard to think of new ideas?
 6. Another impact of the Blanks is that people start losing their empathy - complaining about books with characters or plots that differ from their own experience. How do you think books and imagination can help promote empathy? Are there any stories you've read that have made you think differently, or introduced you to new ideas?
 7. When Laurie and her friends banish the Blanks using stories, they take inspiration from video games, TV shows, theatre... Storytelling is all around us! Can you think of more art forms, other than books, that involve storytelling? Do you have a favourite way of sharing stories?
 8. Starting secondary was challenging for Laurie, especially when her best friend Tilly makes new friends and she feels pressure to change. Neon encourages her to be herself and tells her she deserves friends who are good to her. What do you look for in friendship? What do you think it means to be a good friend?
 9. Every Book & Cranny, Laurie's mums' bookshop, is at risk of closing as fewer people are visiting. Do you have a favourite bookshop? What do you like most about it? Why do you think bookshops are so important?
 10. Something Neon helps Laurie with is her confidence. He encourages her to sing, and to be 'Laurie the Deluxe edition' - the same, but with added confidence and sparkle! Is there something that you love to do, but don't feel ready to share with more people? What does help you or would help you feel comfortable to do it?
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