

Duet



ELISE BROACH

BOOK CLUB GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK

Welcome to the world of Mirabelle, a young goldfinch who loves to sing and dreams of becoming a musical star. Michael Jin is an eleven-year-old keyboard sensation, but lesson after lesson, he refuses to play. Mirabelle is responsible for Michael's breakthrough—to her own astonishment, she *sings* the Chopin piece he is beginning to play at the piano. Thus begins a secret adventure that will take Mirabelle and Michael further than they ever imagined—in music, in friendship, and in solving the mystery of a lost piano that could be worth millions. A house full of treasures holds the clues. There, Mirabelle, Michael, and their friend Emily will make an important discovery that links the great composer Frédéric Chopin, the trailblazing author George Sand, and the French Romantic painter Eugene Delacroix.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before connecting with Michael, Mirabelle laments, "I want to see. I want to be seen" (p. 18). What does it mean to see and be seen? Does she accomplish this by the end of the book?
2. The music that Mirabelle and Michael create is described as "*alive, with its own beating heart*" (p. 50). Is there anything you do that makes you feel the way Mirabelle feels when she sings?
3. Mirabelle claims that the first requirement for a true artist is showing up (p. 58). How do the characters in the book show up for their art and each other? Can you think of examples where you "showed up" for something or someone you cared about?
4. Mirabelle gives Michael a second chance after he bangs on the window. Where else do you see the theme of second chances throughout the book? Do you believe in second chances?
5. Mr. Starek says to Michael, "habits and rituals are so important to how we create art" (p. 69). What rituals are important to Michael and Mirabelle? What happens when they are broken? Do you have any routines or rituals that help you do your best work?
6. What does it mean to be in harmony? Can two people be in harmony without music?
7. Mirabelle hypothesizes that "a secret probably feels like a lie to someone who loves you" (p. 224). Do you agree? Why or why not?
8. Michael has a lot of mentors in this book, including Mr. Starek, Emily, and Mirabelle. What do they each teach him? Does Michael teach anything to the others?
9. In the book, Michael, Emily, and Mirabelle attempt to solve one of the many mysteries of Chopin, the piano composer. Why is it valuable to solve mysteries from the past? What do the characters learn from the life and pianos of Chopin?
10. After her experiences with Michael, Mirabelle thinks, "Maybe when you take something fully into your heart—an idea, a person, a passion—it changes you. It changes how you see the world" (280). Do you agree? What has changed how you see the world?

