



***When Red Is Blue* Discussion Guide**

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This guide is meant to aid discussions as they relate to *When Red Is Blue*.

*******SPOILER ALERT*******

The following questions talk about key plot details. If you have not yet read *When Red Is Blue*, you may want to refrain from reading this guide.

1. The story shifts between Kate's childhood experiences and the present – what benefit does this "time shifting" have to the reader? Is there any negative effect on the reader (if so what)?
2. There are many relationships in the story, chiefly the relationship between Kate and her mother Sofia. How does Kate's relationship with her mother compare to others in the story?
3. Kate runs through several emotions and feelings when dealing with her mother. Pick one of the following emotions/feelings and discuss Kate's experience with it in relation to her mother (giving examples to support your claims): shame, fear, love, hope, hate, pity, selfishness, hopelessness.
4. Mentally ill individuals such as Sofia spend their lives in contact with doctors and mental health professionals. Did these professionals help Sofia? Why or why not?
5. When Sofia goes off her medication her life unravels; however, it is common for the mentally ill to stop taking their prescribed medications when they begin to feel better. Do you think mentally ill individuals should be required (in other words forced) to take medication? Why or why not? Use examples from the book to support your claims.
6. Discuss the benefits and/or drawbacks of Sofia being mentally ill and living in a small town – what are they and would they be the same if she lived in an area with a larger population, such as Lansing (where Kate lives)?
7. Generally there are five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance); does Kate go through these stages? How does she fit the standard model of grieving?

8. Sofia Faraday is discovered behind a church, assumed to have lain down and passed away, not to be found until a significant amount of time after her passing. How might Sofia's death have been prevented? Who was responsible for Sofia?
9. What role did Kate's father play in managing Sofia's mental illness and the impact it had on Kate. What could he have done differently?
10. What role does Colin play in Kate's response to her situation? How does his behavior tie into her issues?
11. Kate has a dream of "running away" to California – for what she calls a "fresh start," where people don't know her and where she can basically start life anew. Why can't she accomplish the same start in her hometown? Why can't she start over in Lansing? Do you think she can truly start over anywhere?
12. If you could speak with one of following characters in the story, what would you say? Why?
 - a. Kate Faraday
 - b. Colin (Kate's boyfriend)
 - c. Sofia Faraday (Kate's mother)
 - d. Art Faraday (Kate's father)
 - e. Dr. Stoddard
13. How do think you would respond to the situations presented in the story if you were in Kate's shoes? What would you do differently?
14. Kate is very stern with her mother (example, when Sofia begs to move to Lansing with her). Why does Kate behave this way? Discuss what difference it would have made if Kate had taken a "softer" approach to her mother's mental illness.
15. After finishing the story has your opinion on the mentally ill changed, if at all? What aspects of the story changed or solidified your opinions?