

Forever We Dream

Mark Workman

Birdeto Books

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A thought-provoking and entertaining novel, Forever We Dream follows triplets in their pursuit to find their missing mother.

In Mark Workman's charming novel *Forever We Dream*, teenage triplets use a talent competition to search for their long-lost mother.

Elliana, Bellamona, and Gabriella are triplets conjoined at their midsections. Their medical condition is not the only reason the sixteen-year-old girls are extraordinary; they are also costume designers, musicians, and aspiring entrepreneurs. Despite their many talents, the girls still face all the difficulties of adolescence. They are awkward, have acne, and are bullied at school. Their life at home is not ideal, either. Their mother abandoned them when they were young and their father is immersed in his work. Nonetheless, the sisters are determined to reunite with their mother and learn why she left.

The book makes great use of diction and figurative language to set forth the triplets' story and reveal themes. The girls' appearance is described in vivid detail. For example, their movements at birth are likened to the fluttering wings of a butterfly. Their father nicknames the girls *papilio*—Latin for "butterfly." The repetition of this nickname throughout the narrative amplifies the butterfly motif, paralleling their teenage transformation from awkwardness to beauty.

The triplets' external struggles with body image parallel their interior struggles with self-worth, acceptance, and independence. Throughout, the beauty of the butterfly is contrasted with the unattractiveness of caterpillars: The bullies refer to the triplets as "caterpillar" because their medical condition forces them to turn sideways and inch through entryways and narrow spaces. The contrast of the caterpillar against the butterfly is a symbolic representation of appearance versus essence, inspiring consideration of the innate dignity of all people.

Tension within the storyline builds as the search for the triplets' mother is woven into an intense battle-of-the-bands competition. Ellie, Mona, and Gabby audition for a televised music competition, hoping their mother will see it and recognize them. In pursuit of their lifelong dream of reconnecting with their mother, the girls learn they are much more gifted than they realized; they have a realistic shot at winning the competition. A second layer of complexity is added when the triplets' rival attempts to sabotage their performance, resulting in gripping suspense leading toward the book's resolution.

A perennial story of self-discovery, *Forever We Dream* is a captivating novel in which three young dreamers cultivate the virtues of hope and tenacity.

PAIGE SOTO (February 24, 2025)

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