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Ages: 8-12

Sofía Acosta Makes a Scene

Emma Otheguy

Stuck between different worlds, can she find her own rhythm?

A poignant, coming-of-age story about a Cuban American girl trying to figure out where she belongs—both in her ballet-loving family and in the wider world.

Themes: Hispanic/Hispanic American Interest, Community, Family & Relationships, Art, Music & Theater



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Discussion Questions

1. Do you take part in any after-school activities? What are they? How long have you participated? Did your parents take part in a similar activity when they were your age? What do you find the most exciting or fun part of this activity and why?
2. The book opens with the planning of Mr. Kalinack's citizenship party, and Sofía is placed on the History and Contexts Committee; what do you think that means? Why might that be relevant to planning this type of party?
3. Sofía's family hosts a few dancers from Cuba who are planning to defect. What does that mean, and what circumstances might make a person choose to do this?
4. Sofía's best friend Tricia doesn't want "outsiders" moving into their community; being a second-generation immigrant, Sofía is hurt and confused by this notion. What would you do or say to a close friend of yours who felt the same way as Tricia? How do Sofía's relationships with Tricia and Laurita evolve throughout the book?
5. Do you think Laurita was justified in what she said to Sofía during their argument? Sofía describes how she felt after the fight: "A mix of stunned, angry, sad, and happy. Stunned at all of Laurita's words. Angry that she told me off. Sad that I know she's right." (p. 198) Have you ever felt like this? What did you do to make yourself feel better?

Activities

1. Sofía thinks that to be an Acosta, she must be a ballerina. But throughout the book she discovers that her family is about more than ballet—it's about "amor y carino." Write about what makes you special. What are your hobbies and interests? How do you stand out from your family and friends?
2. Sofía and Laurita are assigned to the History and Contexts Committee and create a poster about immigration. Research and create your own poster about immigration. You can even research local community programs or organizations that assist immigrants.
3. When did your family come to this country? Do a little research to learn more.

Praise for *Sofía Acosta Makes a Scene*

"Bighearted, nuanced, and insightful."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"This is fine fare indeed for balletomanes and a keenly felt examination of competing desires and familial expectations."

—*The Bulletin*

Also by Emma Otheguy



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