

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

# PENCILVANIA



### ABOUT THE BOOK

In this illustrated, modern take on *The Phantom Tollbooth* meets *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, author Stephanie Watson beautifully explores grief and creativity through an unforgettable fantasy world.

Ever since she first learned to hold a crayon, Zora Webb has been unstoppable. Her drawings fill sketchbooks and cover the walls of the happy home she shares with Frankie and their mother.

But when Zora's mom is diagnosed with leukemia, everything changes. After months of watching her mom grow weaker, a frustrated Zora draws her mother's portrait in an attempt to force her to face the truth—that she might not get better. When her mother dies the next day, Zora blames herself and her art.

Desperate to escape the pain, Zora scribbles out her artwork. Her dark, furious scribbles lift off the page and yank Zora and Frankie into Pencilvania, a magical world that's home to everything Zora has ever drawn. And one drawing—a scribbled-out horse named Viscardi—is determined to finish the destruction Zora started.

Viscardi kidnaps Frankie, promising to scribble out her and all of Pencilvania at sunrise. Zora sets out to rescue her sister, venturing deep into Pencilvania—a place crawling with old memories and new dangers.


### ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR



#### STEPHANIE WATSON

is a children's book author based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Learn more at [stephanie-watson.com](http://stephanie-watson.com).

 @Stephanie Watson - Children's Book Author

 @StephEWatson



#### SOFIA MOORE

is a Ukrainian-American artist and illustrator based in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Learn more at [sofiamooreart.com](http://sofiamooreart.com).

 @sofiamoore\_illustration



## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

# PENCILVANIA



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Pencilvania, the things Zora drew don't necessarily show up or act the way she expects them to. Airplanes are tiny, skyscrapers waddle across the street, and the person Zora drew to be a superhero is only a drummer! Why do you think some drawings show up and act in unexpected ways?
2. The scribbled-out horse named Viscardi is on a mission to finish the destruction Zora started back in the real world. Is there a reason why Viscardi is the most evil of all the Scribs?
3. Near the beginning of the book, Zora and Frankie find themselves at a balloon release ceremony in Zora's honor. How does Zora feel about this? There's another balloon ceremony toward the end of the book. Does Zora feel differently about it? Why?
4. Airrol is Zora's constant companion in Pencilvania. What are the qualities in Airrol that make him a good friend to Zora? Is there anything that you and Airrol have in common?
5. When Zora first enters Pencilvania, she's unable and unwilling to draw. When she's trapped in Viscardi's Lair of Despair, the Voom—her creative power—returns. What brought it back?
6. Zora's little sister Frankie wants to stay in Pencilvania forever, until she discovers that if she stays, she'll never grow up. Would you rather stay in a magical world of your drawings and never grow up, or live in the real world and have the chance to become an adult?
7. Zora's mom avoided talking about how serious her illness was with her daughters. Was she lying to them? Is there a way to both lie and tell the truth at the same time?
8. Zora calls the creative energy inside her "Voom." Zora's mom said that everyone has Voom—the impulse to be creative. Some people use their Voom for drawing, but it could be used to make and do other things too. What do you use your Voom for?
9. Have you ever temporarily lost your Voom like Zora did? How did you get it back?
10. Imagine you have your own Pencilvania, where everything you ever drew lives. How is it different from Zora's Pencilvania? What kinds of beings, objects and places are there?