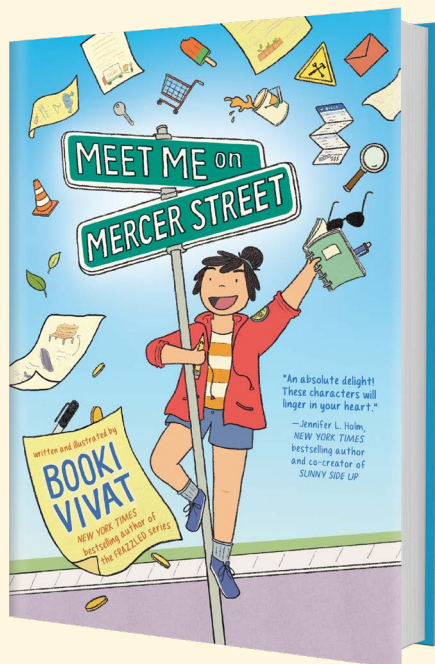


DISCUSSION GUIDE

MEET ME on MERCER STREET

By BOOKI VIVAT



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Also available in ebook and audio
Ages 8–12 • Grades 3–7

About the Book

Aspiring artist Kacie spends most of her time on Mercer Street with her best friend, Nisha, people-watching and doodling whatever is happening in their neighborhood. But when she comes back from a summer away, the local corner store is boarded up, the adults in town are all on edge, and Nisha is nowhere to be found! Everything is changing, and Kacie's not sure what to do about it. Especially without Nisha to help her. But Kacie has a knack for noticing things, and with her sketchbooks and observational skills, she just might have what it takes to figure out what's really happening on Mercer Street.

Filled with both cartoons and graphic comic panels, Booki Vivat draws a hilarious-yet-deeply-perceptive portrait of a changing neighborhood, a mysterious disappearance, and the girl who's determined to understand how she fits into the picture.

About the Author



Photo © Kamolpat Trangratapit

Booki Vivat is the *New York Times* bestselling author-illustrator of the *Frazzled* series. She grew up in Southern California, telling stories and doodling. Before becoming an author, she taught middle school English abroad and worked in publishing in New York. Now she lives in Oakland, California, and makes books for kids! Follow her on Instagram at @bookibookibooki and learn more at bookivivat.com.

Advance Praise for *Meet Me on Mercer Street*

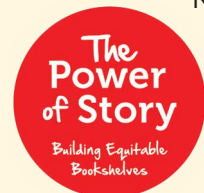
“An absolute delight! These characters will linger in your heart.” —Jennifer L. Holm, *New York Times* bestselling author and co-creator of *Sunny Side Up*

“Part graphic novel, part text, all heart. Booki Vivat has created something truly special with this illustrated story of friendship and community. I wish that I could live on Mercer Street!”
—Christina Soontornvat, three-time Newbery Honor winner

“*Meet Me on Mercer Street* is truly special—funny, heartfelt, and deeply thoughtful. Booki Vivat has a gift, and this book is a joy.” —Tae Keller, Newbery Medal-winning author of *When You Trap a Tiger*

“An uplifting and timely story about friendship, community and change. Kids will love how the fun illustrations bring Kacie’s sleuthing adventures around the neighborhood to life!”
—Janae Marks, author of *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*

“A brilliant book about the strength of community—and the power of art to observe, inspire, and make change. Visually stunning, emotionally tender, and laugh-out-loud funny. Kacie is adorable, and Mercer Street is the place to be!”
—Lauren Magaziner, author of the *Case Closed* series

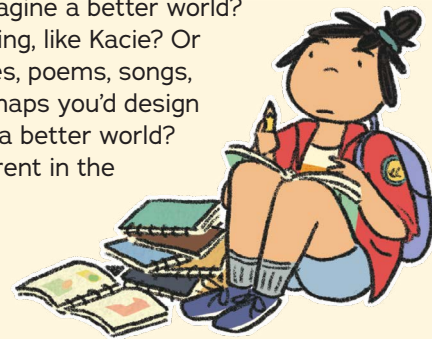


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MEET ME on MERCER STREET

Discussion Questions

1. Kacie has always loved being an artist, but at the start of the story, she isn't sure that her art can make any difference in the world. "I'm mad that everything around me is changing, but I'm just a kid so all I can do is draw pictures and watch it happen," Kacie says (p. 133). Do you think Kacie has changed her mind about the power of her artwork by the end of the story? Who does she share her work with? How has she used her art to make a difference to her family and to her community?
2. At the very beginning of the book, there is a quotation from writer and social activist Grace Lee Boggs: "You cannot change any society unless you take responsibility for it, unless you see yourself as belonging to it and responsible for changing it." How can you tell that Kacie sees herself as belonging to the community on Mercer Street? How does she learn that she can take responsibility for changing it, in both big and small ways?
3. Look at the picture of Kacie's parents on page 12. Why do you think they look so worried? Do they explain the reasons to Kacie when she asks? Later on, Kacie gets so frustrated about being kept in the dark that she yells, "it doesn't make it better! Everyone wants to act like things are fine, but I know something's wrong!" (p. 132). After this outburst, Kacie's parents are finally willing to talk. What do you think they said?
4. The illustrations in *Meet Me on Mercer Street* sometimes play with perspective and scale. On page 90, for example, the man in the suit towers over Kacie, whereas on pages 121 and 166, Kacie is drawn even larger than the buildings beside her. Why do you think Booki Vivat made these creative choices? Similarly, in the mural that Kacie paints with Marcus (p. 186), Vivat has drawn one thing much bigger than everything else. What is that thing? How does this creative choice emphasize what the Mercer Street community cares about?
5. Kacie is not enthusiastic about Danny at first: he lives in Nisha's old apartment, and he disturbs the Bench Grandpas with his skateboarding. "Whoever he is, I don't trust him," says Kacie (p. 52). So what makes Kacie decide to defend him when he is falsely accused of graffiti? Why does she decide to give him a chance? How is Kacie's friendship with Danny different from her friendship with Nisha, and in what ways is it the same? *Bonus question: Can you find Danny in some of the illustrations near the beginning of the book, long before Kacie actually meets him? Why might the book's creator have chosen to visually include him before he was part of Kacie's story?*
6. Kacie's life has been full of changes since she got home from her vacation, and some changes are harder to cope with than others. Which changes were the most difficult for Kacie to adapt to? What made those changes so hard for her? What advice would you give Kacie that might help her with those changes?
7. Although Kacie has lived on Mercer Street for a long time, she still remembers a time when she was new to the community, and Nisha was showing her around the neighborhood. The Bench Grandpas, Mr. Becker, and Mr. Xin have even longer memories of the changes that have come to Mercer Street over the years. Do you think Danny has become part of the community by the day of the block party? What about the manager of the new \$Mart, or the man in the suit? What does it mean to be a member of a community?
8. Look at the final scenes of the block party, on pages 182–185. Do you think this is a happily-ever-after ending? What do you think will happen next? Will Kacie and her neighbors be able to stop the man in the suit from building new stores on top of the Community Garden? Will Kacie's parents be able to afford to keep their store on Mercer Street, or will they have to move away like Nisha's family? Which new things and new people have become part of their community?
9. Think about your community. Are you thinking of a place, or of particular people, or of both? What do you love about it? Have you noticed any changes in your community as you've gotten older during the past few years? How do you feel about the way things have changed?
10. As she puts the final touches on the new mural, Kacie says, "I'm learning that [art] can also be about imagining the world as you want it to be" (p. 162). What kind of art would *you* use to imagine a better world? Would you use drawing, like Kacie? Or would you use stories, poems, songs, dance, or plays? Perhaps you'd design a video game set in a better world? What would be different in the world you imagine?



Discussion questions prepared by Vila McHenry, who holds degrees from Harvard University and Georgetown University and is currently a middle school teacher and a homeschool parent.

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