



# The Tunnel

Discussion Guide by Sarah Howden



Book written by Sarah Howden and illustrated by Erika Rodriguez Medina

## About the Book

After something bad happens, a boy feels sad and gray, unwilling to talk about it with anyone. So he picks up a shovel and starts digging a tunnel from his room, deep down and into the backyard. Out there, far from the lights of the house, it's dark enough that he could disappear. But the quiet distance also gives him the space he needs to see his family's love and start returning home. Quiet, emotionally resonant text is paired with grayscale drawings accented with red in this thoughtfully layered exploration of coping with tough emotions, and taking time and space to heal.

## Before You Read

- Looking at the cover, what would you guess this book is about?

## After You Read

- What “bad thing” do you think happened to the main character? Why do you think we aren't told what exactly it was?
- Early on in the story, the boy doesn't want to hug his mom or talk to his Aunt Cheryl. Have you ever felt like you just want to be left alone? Do you have any favorite alone activities that help you feel better when you're upset?
- Why do you think the boy makes a decision to go back home, when he's out in the yard?
- Do you notice differences between how the creatures in the tunnel look when the boy is digging away from the house and when he's returning?
- Why do you think the mom's face is compared to the moon?
- Do you like the artist's choice of colors? What do you think she might have intended by it? Do you think it suits the story?

### ISBN

978-1-77147-427-6

### CURRICULUM LINKS

**Language Arts:** Reading

**Development:** Social and Emotional Learning

### READING LEVELS

**Grade:** 1+

**Fountas & Pinnell:** I

**Lexile® Measure:** AD460L

**Reading Recovery Level:** 16

**Common Core:** RL.1, W.1, SL.1, L.1

