



# gena / finn

by hannah moskowitz  
& kat hegelson

## **Gena/Finn**

978-1-4521-3839-8, \$17.99 HC · 978-1-4521-4385-9, \$13.99 E-book  
Ages 14 and Up · F&P Text Level Gradient: Z+ · Lexile® Measure: 850L

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Gena and Finn would have never met, but for their mutual love for the hit TV show, *Up Below*. Regardless of their differences—Gena is a recent high school graduate whose social interactions largely take place online, while Finn is in her early twenties, encountering the difficulties of job hunting in a poor economy and contemplating marriage with her longtime boyfriend—the two girls realize that the bond between them is more than fan fiction. But when disaster strikes and Gena’s world turns upside down, only Finn can save her, and that, too, comes with a price. Told through e-mails, text messages, journal entries, and blog posts, *Gena/Finn* is a story of friendship and love through social media in the digital age.

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide contains discussion questions designed to spark conversation about themes and ideas raised by this novel.

1. An epistolary novel tells a story using a series of documents, traditionally letters and diary entries. *Gena/Finn* is a modern epistolary novel that uses text messages, email, fanfic, poetry, sticky notes, letters, blogs, and private messages to advance the plot. Which of these formats did you think were most effective in conveying the character relationships and the plot? Has technology changed the way people communicate with each other? If yes, in what ways does *Gena/Finn* illustrate these changes?
2. Have you read any fanfiction? What do you think is the attraction of this type of online virtual community? Do you belong to any online communities that evolved around a shared interest, topic, or hobby? How might reading and writing fanfiction about a TV show or book series create a unique type of bond?
3. Names and identities are extremely important in this novel. Are names and identities the same things? What did the two handles (\_EvenIf and finnblueline) tell you immediately about these characters? Does choosing your name (or nickname) give you a certain kind of power? If you were to choose your own name, what would it be and what would it say about your self-identity?
4. Throughout the course of the novel Genevieve goes by many names (including Eve, Gena, \_EvenIf, Evie, and Bug). Some are names she has chosen for herself, and some are given to her by others. How do these names convey different aspects of her personality? Do the names given to her by others offer any insight into how those people see her?
5. Gena tells Finn, “i have no need for anyone to know every part of me. pieces for everyone where they fit works out easiest for me.” Later she says, “i’ve got my life drawn and quartered.” How do these statements speak to her desire to have many different names and identities? If pieces of her are spread out everywhere, is she ever able to be her whole self? Does anyone ever get to see the real Gena? How do you know? Do most people have different selves that they show to different people? What about you?
6. After the proposal scare, Finn comments that she can’t talk to her “three-dimensional friends” about some of the important changes that are going on in her life. What is the difference between three-dimensional friends and online friends? How might a three-dimensional friendship be deeper than an online friendship, and vice versa?
7. Almost all of Gena’s close relationships are online friendships. Why do you think that is? Are her online relationships genuine relationships? Why might Gena prefer online relationships to three-dimensional ones?
8. The *Up Below* Convention is a turning point in the story in many ways. Not only does it cause a shift in Gena and Finn’s relationship, but it also reveals something significant about Gena’s past. Why does Gena, who is someone with a strong desire for privacy and anonymity, take the risk of attending this convention? Do you think the outcome was worth the risk for her?
9. Eventually it becomes clear that Gena and Finn’s relationship has the potential to evolve from a platonic friendship to a romantic relationship. What does Finn get out of their relationship? What about Gena? Do both girls appear to want the same thing out of their relationship? How important is that in a romantic relationship?

10. This book conveys the girls' attraction to one another. However, there is no discussion about sexual orientation or coming out. Do you feel this adds or subtracts from the story?
11. What is your opinion of Finn's treatment of Charlie? What might have happened between Gena and Finn if there hadn't been an accident while Gena was on the set of *Up Below*?
12. After the accident, Gena tells the therapist some details about her life and upbringing that are not consistent with what she tells Finn earlier in the story. Why would Gena lie to her therapist? Is Gena a reliable narrator? Is it possible that she's lying to Finn and telling the therapist the truth?
13. Gena writes poetry periodically at the beginning of the novel, but shifts to using poetry almost exclusively after the accident. Why might this be? Do her poems change the way you understand and relate to Gena? What insight do they give you into Gena's mindset after the accident?
14. *our counselor says  
you didn't get to choose what happened to you  
you don't get to choose if it still hurts you  
you get to choose if you put it in your sentence about  
yourself.*

What does the counselor mean by this? Do you agree with this idea? What do you think Gena's sentence would be? How about Finn? What would you put in your sentence about yourself?

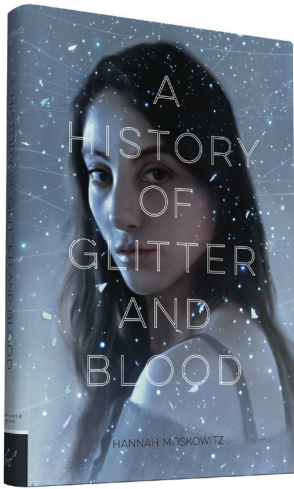
15. *the truth is  
your heart is stronger than you think it is  
and bigger than you think it is  
the truth is  
loving someone isn't a period  
it's a semicolon  
and the choice you make is what comes on the other side.*

How does this apply to the main relationships in the novel between Finn, Gena, and Charlie? What "comes on the other side" of the semicolon for each of these characters?

16. *if love is a semicolon then grief is a comma:  
it won't ever stand alone, but it will give you one breath,  
in.*

This quote is from the last of Gena's poems in the book. What does this say about Gena's healing process? Where do you see Gena one year from the end of the book? Ten years? What about Finn and Charlie?

## ALSO BY HANNAH MOSKOWITZ



**A History of Glitter and Blood**  
 978-1-4521-2942-6 • \$18.99 HC  
 978-1-4521-4097-1 • \$13.99 EB  
**Ages 14 and up**  
 F&P Text Level Gradient: Z+\*  
 Lexile(R) Measure: HL770L

Sixteen-year-old Beckan and her friends are the only fairies brave enough to stay in Ferrum when war breaks out. Now there is tension between the immortal fairies, the subterranean gnomes, and the Tightroppers sent to liberate the fairies. In order to earn money and buy food, Beckan and her friends turn tricks for the gnomes—a risky proposition, as gnomes are known for eating fairies, leaving them alive yet still feeling the pain of their devoured limbs. And as the fairies venture into this underworld, they find themselves tentatively forming unlikely friendships with the gnomes themselves.

When Beckan meets Piccolo, a Tightropper, he joins their circle and introduces them all to his vision for the future of Ferrum, and soon these teens—from opposing sides of the war—find themselves united by a common goal. However, there is more to Piccolo and his plans than Beckan realizes, and she soon finds herself caught between her loyalty to her friends, her desire for peace, and a love she never expected.

This is a book about family, a book about war, a book about what it means to truly love.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Hannah Moskowitz** wrote her first story, about a kitten named Lilly on the run from cat hunters, for a contest when she was seven years old. It was disqualified for violence. First published at sixteen, she is the author of two middle grade and six young adult novels. Her books have received starred reviews, landed a spot on the ALA's Rainbow Book List, and received a Stonewall Honor. Hannah lives in New York City.



**Kat Helgeson** is a videographer and social media specialist living in Chicago, Illinois. She is very active on her twitter @katmankat.

This discussion guide was written by **Daria Plumb**, educator.

For more information or questions about this discussion guide, contact Jaime Wong at [jaime\\_wong@chroniclebooks.com](mailto:jaime_wong@chroniclebooks.com).

