



Forever Cousins by Laurel Goodluck; Illustrated by Jonathan Nelson
Charlesbridge, 2022
9781623542924 (Hardcover)
Ages 4 to 7
Preschool to Grade 2

BOOK SYNOPSIS

In this Native American story, Kara and Amanda are best-friend cousins. Then Kara leaves the city to move back to the Rez. Will their friendship stay the same?

Kara and Amanda hate not being together. Then it's time for the family reunion on the Rez. Each girl worries that the other hasn't missed her. But once they reconnect, they realize that they are still forever cousins. This story highlights the ongoing impact of the 1950s Indian Relocation Act on Native families, even today.

This tender story about navigating change reminds readers that the power of friendship and family can bridge any distance.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"A sweet story of friendship, family, and community." – *Kirkus Reviews*

"Nelson's digital, cartoon illustrations nicely capture cultural details, subtly incorporating varying skin tones and fashion choices within the family and signaling differences between life in the city and on the Reservation." – *Booklist*

"With themes of friendship, love, and values and beautiful color illustrations of happy, friendly faces, this book is sure to become a favorite of young readers." – *San Francisco Book Review*

"Goodluck, who has an intertribal background of Mandan, Hidatsa, and Tsimshian, weaves in cultural details that bring a cheerful freshness and situate the cousins fully within both their family and their Native experience." -- *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- A 2022 Junior Library Guild Selection
- 2023 NCTE Charlotte Huck Honor Book
- American Indians in Children's Literature Best of 2022

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Forever Cousins Activity Guide](#)
- [Author Interview: Laurie Goodluck - *Cynsations*, Cynthia Leitich Smith blog](#)
- [Classroom Connections: Forever Cousins by Laurel Goodluck - Caroline Starr Rose](#)
- [American Indians in Children's Literature Blog: Highly Recommended Forever Cousins](#)
- [Author Laurel Goodluck introduces *Forever Cousins* - YouTube](#)
- [Exploring Native Narratives: A Chat with Children's Book Authors Kim Rogers and Laurel Goodluck](#)

AUTHOR STATEMENT (OPTIONAL)

I was stunned when I learned *Forever Cousins* was banned (AKA: held from circulation) in Brandywine, Michigan. I never dreamed a sweet book about two loving Native cousins navigating moving away from one another could get banned. But realistically, the specific book content is not the reason it was banned. I am sure the president of the school board never even read the book. I'm sure his tactics stem from his fear of the changing diversity demographics in the United States (AKA The Browning of America).

When I heard that conservative PACS backed the president of the Brandywine School Board, I took my energy and focused on what was happening in my community by volunteering. My good friend, Ronalda Tome-Warito, was running for Albuquerque Public School (APS) Board. She is Diné (Navajo), and there has never been a Native person on our school board. Ronalda ran in District 2 against a school board member financially backed by Mothers of Liberty, another conservative group not concerned with our students' education. With the efforts of the community and Ronalda's hard work, she was sworn in recently, marking a historic moment for New Mexico as the first Native person on the APS Board since it was established in 1891.

I encourage readers to learn about your school boards and local government in your community. Who are the people on your boards making these decisions for our children? Are they backed by conservative PACS that are censoring our libraries? Most importantly, vote, volunteer, and donate if you can.

NOTE: I currently have three books published, two of which have been censored. The second is *She Persisted: Deb Haaland*, which was part of the books held on shelves unless librarians pushed the

diverse button (AKA: banned by segregating books) to include in their Scholastic Book Fair. Recently, Scholastic has apologized and reversed this practice.

***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.