

Leila and the Blue Fox is a captivating novel set in the beautiful landscape of the Arctic summer. The story follows Leila, a young girl who embarks on a journey with her mother, and a further crew of four, to find Miso and reconnect with her mother. While travelling, she meets the fox, whose presence becomes a symbol of strength and determination and guide to her and her mothers reconciliation, against a backdrop of perceived abandonment. The story contains a blend of nonfiction, environmentalism and adventure, making it a story that captivates young readers and many adults.

The book shows Leila's journey of self-discovery where she learns courage, loyalty, and responsibility. She faces challenges, not only from the harsh environment but also from people around her. Leila's relationship with her mother is strained and complex. Her mother is preoccupied with her obsessive observation of the fox and struggles to understand Leila's need for comfort and consideration. Leila, longs for her mother's support but is often misunderstood. The two daughters onboard vent about their struggles and find refuge in each other. Their rocky relationships point out the challenges of being a consistent and present parent while juggling personal desires and attachments. This adds emotional depth to Miso's journey.

Hargrave's descriptions of the world that the characters explore are vivid, giving readers a strong sense of being with the character. The setting becomes a character in itself, influencing the actions of the protagonist and adding to the mood of the novel. The environment is beautiful. Kiran often describes icy plains and a variety of shells. People forget the dangers of the land around them, which is highlighted when they cross paths with a polar bear. This scene shows the dedication to their mission and the need to be aware of your surroundings.

A main theme within the novel is the significance of the relationship between humans and their environment. The fox shows the fragility of nature and the ever more urgent need to protect it. The story encourages readers to reflect on their daily actions and the impact they have on the world around them, especially as issues such as climate change and the deterioration of our environment becomes a more pressing issue.

Leila and the Blue Fox is a remarkable book, one that will stay with me for ages. I found I saw both the reason for the daughter's resentment and her mother's love for her career. It was interesting to see their relationship progress as the book went on, from a feeling of near abandonment to flourishing love and friendship. While it's just over 240 pages it's thoroughly enjoyable. The illustrations by Tom de Freston provide a refreshing break to admire his art before continuing with the book. The drawings give the whole book a dreamlike feel and it's like the illustrations are telling their own story. With its magical setting, strong and independent protagonist, and key themes, it's a must-read for anyone who enjoys stories about nature and adventure.