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Inside

*Parched:*

## A Conversation with Georgia Clark

**Robots, renewable resources, and romance get tangled together in this thrilling futuristic novel about a utopian city and the sixteen-year-old girl who challenges its peace.**

**Q: What was the inspiration behind *Parched*?**

**A:** When I was nineteen, I left Sydney, Australia, for a three-month backpacking stint in Mexico and Guatemala. The culture shock, combined with being away from home for the first time, left a stunning impression on me. I've always wanted to explore this coming-of-age sensation—when you feel like the whole world isn't how you thought it was.

At university, I had my eyes opened to the injustices in the world and spent more time at protests than at classes. It was an intensely fun, exciting, and heartfelt period of my life that I wanted to explore in my character Tess joining Kudzu, the rebel underground movement intent on defying the Trust's stranglehold on Eden.

**Q: What makes this book special to you?**

**A:** I'm fascinated by the wondrous and strange concept of artificial intelligence. I started thinking about whether a machine would be able to feel human emotions and what that might be like, and decided to join the conversation. But I'm not a gadget lover. My cell phone is literally six years old—I dare you to show me someone using an older one! Mostly, I wrote *Parched* to be the kind of story I love getting lost in: an exciting, high-concept roller coaster in a brave new world, full of passionate, flawed characters on a thrilling, gritty adventure.

**Q: What important message do you feel it brings to young readers?**

**A:** I don't write books with messages; rather, I write about things I am curious about. I am curious about the pursuit of utopias, and their inherent flaws. I am curious about people who make the wrong choices, and why. I am curious about revolutionaries, and the future, and about love. If a reader finds a message in *Parched* that's meaningful for them, wonderful. But meaning happens in the space between the page and the imagination; I don't believe I can control that. It's different for everyone.

## And now, just a few fun questions:

**Q: What was your favorite book growing up?**

**A:** The Dark Is Rising series by Susan Cooper. I also read every single Sweet Valley High book—shhh!

**Q: What is your favorite memory from childhood?**

**A:** School holidays visiting my grandparents in a coastal Queensland town. My grandfather, Pa, taught me and my brother to fish practically before we could walk! Open sea fishing too—we'd leave before dawn every day. We'd spend our days swimming and eating pineapples and playing with my cousins. Even though I'm a vegetarian now, I could still catch and gut a fish with my eyes closed.

**Q: Did you have any pets? If so, which one was your favorite?**

**A:** We had many pets: Casper the Friendly Ghost (a moody white cat), fish (they all died very quickly), mice (one got pregnant, and I didn't even know until it gave birth—eep!), and a handful of rescue dogs. Impossible to pick a favorite, but I did love Peppy, a black papillon cross kelpie. She was beautiful and very protective. Miss her little black nose!

**Q: What inspired you to write, and when did you know you would become an author?**

**A:** I was a writer from a young age—I don't remember making the conscious choice to start writing. We didn't have a television growing up, which I think made my imagination even more fertile and fantastical. I love telling stories and being told stories. Also, I don't mind the long hours. I think I knew I could be an author when I didn't balk at the prospect of working on one project for several years at a time.

**Q: Name three of your favorite authors/children's book authors of all time.**

**A:** Maggie Stiefvater: she's a lyrical, adventurous writer, plus she is just a cool lady to boot.  
Bret Easton Ellis: *Glamorama* is my fave book for grown-ups (very grown-up grown-ups).  
Margaret Atwood is a genius.  
Lauren Oliver is fantastic, as is Laini Taylor.  
New fave author is Rainbow Rowell; just finished *Eleanor & Park* and loved it! (Sorry that's more than three!)

**Q: What book have you most wanted to read but haven't yet?**

**A:** I haven't read the new Maggie Stiefvater yet, *The Dream Thieves*—it's on my list. Also *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Madness* (best title ever).

**Q: What book from your childhood changed your life?**

**A:** The Dark Is Rising series and *The Hobbit* both were pivotal in creating an early love of adventure; twisting, exciting plots that took me out of my bedroom and into other, faraway places.

**Q: If you could live in any book, which would it be?**

**A:** Narnia. Or Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory. Or maybe Forkes, because I love rainy days.

**Q: If there is one thing you could tell your readers about life, what would you say?**

**A:** Be curious. Ask 'why?'. Focus on expanding your point of view rather than defending it. Be generous, with your words, your actions, your time. Don't look for reward: it will come. Don't pursue money. Pursue passion. Money will come. Travel as much as possible. Live in a foreign country. Be kind and open and engaged. Then you will live an extraordinary life.



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