

HOLIDAY HOUSE PIXEL INK

READING GROUP GUIDE



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Plotting the Stars 2: Seagarden

by Michelle A. Barry

ABOUT THE BOOK

Forced to hide her newfound magic or risk imprisonment or worse, Myra enrolls in an interplanetary academy exchange program to dig up more about the government's many conspiracies, but instead uproots even darker secrets that could drown everything she's grown to trust.

Revolution is watered with sweat and tears.

As Myra Hodger begins her second year at the elite Scientific Lunar Academy of Magic, she should be happy. Her days of faking Number Whisperer magic are over, and she has friends she can trust with the secret of her Botan abilities. But that doesn't mean she's through pretending to be someone she's not. Mourning Bernie and the incredible moongarden they cultivated together, she feels like she's losing herself just when she found the thing that made her feel whole. She's given a seed of hope when she runs into a teen Rep in the hallway who looks eerily familiar. But irritable Bernard, controlled by his Rep implant, is nothing like her beloved Bernie.

With the continuing interplanetary food crisis conspiracy, an anonymous tip about a community of free Reps who might be able to help save Bernard, and the hunt for more information about what really happened to the banished Botans, all routes seem to point to Venus, and an exchange program with the Venusian Academy of Magical Arts might provide Myra and her friends the cover they need to unearth the answers they seek.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The conflict is the problem to be solved. Identify the conflict of this novel. How does the conflict relate to what happened in *Moongarden*? Explain how the conflict is resolved. Which characters aid in resolving the conflict? The climax is the high point or turning point in a novel. What is the climax of *Seagarden*?
- Myra, Lila, and Canter smuggle seeds from the abandoned moongarden. Discuss their determination to start a new moongarden. They scout the campus of S.L.A.M. to find the most secure location. What is the irony in the location they identify? Why are they convinced it is safe? How does Canter use magic to keep the garden thriving?

- How was Jake Melfin involved with Fiona Weathers's arrest? Myra is returning from the restroom in a restaurant when she overhears a conversation between her mom and Ms. Goble. What is the importance of this conversation? Relate this conversation to the one Myra overhears between Jake Melfin and Mr. Weathers in Moongarden. Explain what Myra's mom means when she says, "Intention is everything in magic and in life" (p. 34). Describe Myra's intention as she begins the new school year. What is Ms. Curie's intention when she takes a teaching position on Venus?
- Discuss Myra's breakup with Hannah. Why is she anxious to reunite with her former best friend? Describe the trip to Hannah's housing development on Venus. What is Myra's first reaction when she sees Hannah? How does Hannah respond? Describe Hannah's reaction when Myra mentions Jake Melfin and his company, MFI. Discuss the information Jake wants from Hannah. Explain what the kids learn about Fiona Weathers, Meredith, Hannah's sister, and Hannah's mother.
- What is a Rep? Describe the friendship that developed between Bernie and Myra. She is devastated that he is gone. How does Myra meet Bernard? Why is she convinced that he is really Bernie? Explain why Canter disagrees with Myra. Why is Myra so interested in the Rep meeting place? What happens when she finds it? Explain why Director Weathers sends Bernard to Venus with the exchange students.
- S.L.A.M. has arranged an exchange program with the Venusian Academy of Magical Arts (V.A.M.A.). What is the purpose of this program? Ms. Goble and Director Weathers choose the participants. Why does Director Weathers want to interview Myra, Canter, and Lila? What does Myra say that causes Canter to say, "Myra nailed it" (p. 73). Why isn't Myra chosen? How does her mother aid in her eventual acceptance?
- What is Myra, Lila, and Canter's motive when they apply to V.A.M.A.? Why does Myra resist all that the school offers? How are Lila and Canter sucked into the program at V.A.M.A.? Explain how Myra seems jealous. How does Myra meet Noah Morris? In what ways are they alike? At what point does Noah realize that he can trust Myra? How does Noah get tangled up with Melfin's scheme? Explain what Lila means when she says, "Friendship isn't a Chemic solution that can be diluted with each new added ingredient" (p 214).
- Compare and contrast S.L.A.M. and V.A.M.A. Describe the campus of V.A.M.A. Myra says of V.A.M.A., "Nothing's organized. Nothing makes sense. Everyone just does whatever they want" (p. 156). Consider this comment and discuss why Myra should fit in at this school. Myra is impressed by the performances at V.A.M.A. but wonders if it's good for the galaxy. Explain the power of the arts. How is magic used to create student performances? Mr. Finch encourages Myra to learn a musical instrument. What causes her to return the trombone after she masters a few melodies?
- Discuss the moment that the seagarden emerges. Explain what Myra means in the following quote: "Hope flickers inside me like an ember, and I roll up my sleeves" (p. 209). Why does the seagarden make her hopeful?

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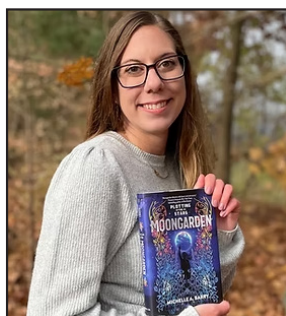


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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Michelle A. Barry was born and raised in Springfield, Massachusetts, though she was later cajoled over the border into Connecticut by her future husband and has happily resided there for many years. She holds a degree in communications from Salve Regina University and has worked as a newspaper reporter, freelance writer and editor, and marketing professional. She currently lives in Connecticut with her charming husband and their two delightful children. She is the author of the Plotting the Stars series. Visit her online at michellebarrybooks.com or follow her on Instagram @michellebarrybooks and X @michelleabarry.