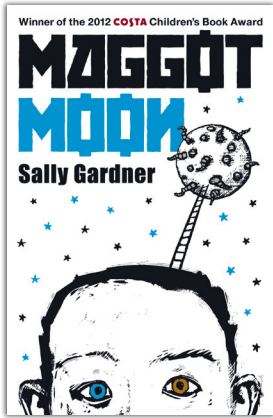


MZGGQT MOON

DISCUSSION GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK

Hector and Standish are friends. They live together in Zone 7 where the Motherland can keep them, and others like them, under surveillance. When the friends find out something about the Motherland's plans for a moon landing their lives take on ever more threatening levels of change. And soon Standish finds he really does have to make a stand.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Standish's former teacher used to say, "*start your story at the beginning*," (p. 3). Do you agree that is how stories should be told? Do you think this story would have had the same impact if it had been chronological?
2. Hector says, "*there are train-track thinkers, then there's you, Standish, a breeze in the park of imagination*" (p. 4). What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a 'train-track thinker'? What are the rewards and dangers of thinking differently?
3. How does Standish compensate for his lack of reading and writing skills? Given his circumstances, in what way are his other skills more useful to him than academia?
4. When people are killed by the government, all evidence of their existence is erased. Why do you think the Motherland does this instead of using the killings as an example of its supremacy and total control?
5. "*I believe the best thing we have is our imagination*," Hector tells Standish (p. 142). Do you agree or disagree?
6. The people in Zone 7 condemn the lies they're told by the Motherland, but they all keep secrets and lie to each other. Do you think they recognise what they're doing? If so, how do you think they justify their actions?
7. Standish's mother paid with her tongue and ultimately her life for dissenting against the Motherland. Was she right to object, even though it put not only her, but her whole family, at risk? Can you remember instances in history where people have risked their own lives to stand up for what they believed in to change the way things were? What would you do?
8. Standish calls Hans Fielder the "*real idiot*" (p. 72), because he never questions anything. Why is it important to question authority?

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FURTHER CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. People are banished to Zone 7 for being 'impure', i.e. for being different to the norm as defined by the leaders of the Motherland.

Write a short essay discussing whether something similar to the notion of 'impurity' still exists in our society today.

2. Standish says, "*Gramps was the only person that still pulled at the gravity in me,*" (p. 23).

Why is this such an apt description of their relationship? Write a story about the person who pulls at the gravity in you.

3. Why is propaganda so powerful? How are people tricked into believing things they should recognise as lies? Can you think of examples in recent history where propaganda was used to sway the opinion of the masses? Present one case to your classmates.

4. Write an extra chapter detailing what happened after Standish exposed the moon landing as a hoax.

5. Standish says, "*A uniform was a way of making us all the same,*" about their school uniforms, and considers this uniformity a bad thing (p. 17).

Write a short essay discussing the pros and cons of wearing school uniforms today.

6. What real historical setting is the book based on? Compare the characters and countries in the story with those from the actual event. Who is who in the story? How do story and reality compare?

7. Standish says, "*Of course we only saw this in black and white, it was the commentator who was doing the colouring in by numbers*" (p. 95).

What does he mean? Do you think our media still does the same thing? Find examples.

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FURTHER THOUGHTS

The following are discussion questions that are based on, but often go beyond, the actual scope of the book.

1. Can a few people change the course of history? Should they try even if the outset is bleak?
2. *"I knew him. But I knew I didn't. I had never seen him before,"* Standish says of his first meeting with Hector (p. 39). Have you ever experienced anything similar? Do you believe people can have an instant connection when meeting each other for the first time?
3. People know there are severe punishments for criticising the Motherland, but many criticise anyway. Are they stupid or brave? What would you do if you found yourself in a similar situation?
4. Standish says *"I was sure all we needed to do was get a message to Planet Juniper and they would come and rescue the world, make it possible for me and Hector to live in the land of Croca-Colas"* (p. 67). Even though their rocket never took off, did Standish keep his promise to Hector?
5. Gramps tells the Lush family *"if we turn on each other and you all die then they have won. If we stay together we are strong"* (p. 44). If you barely had anything yourself to survive, would you look out for other people too? How does Gramps's way of thinking make him different from the Fielder family? Can you blame the Fielders for doing what they're doing?