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YAQUI DELGADO WANTS TO KICK YOUR ASS: THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

MEG MEDINA

ADAPTED AND ILLUSTRATED BY MEL VALENTINE VARGAS

ABOUT THE BOOK

It's the beginning of sophomore year, and Piedad "Piddy" Sanchez is having a hard time adjusting to her new high school. Things don't get any easier when Piddy learns that Yaqui Delgado hates her and wants to kick her ass. Piddy doesn't even know who Yaqui is, never mind what she's done to piss her off. Rumor has it that Yaqui thinks Piddy is stuck-up, shakes her stuff when she walks, and isn't Latina enough with her white skin, good grades, and no accent. And the message is that Yaqui isn't kidding around, so Piddy better watch her back. At first, Piddy is more concerned with finding out details about the father she's never met, navigating her rocky relationship with her mom, and staying in touch with her best friend, Mitzi. But when the harassment at school escalates, avoiding Yaqui and her gang takes over Piddy's life and threatens her safety. Is there any way for Piddy to survive without closing herself off from those who care about her the most—or running away?

More relevant than ever a decade after its initial publication, Meg Medina's empowering story, adapted as a graphic novel by Mel Valentine Vargas, is poised to be discovered by a new generation of readers.

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

This discussion guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL), as well as the speaking and listening standards for comprehension and collaboration and for presentation of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL). Questions can also be used in writing prompts for independent work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read “A Note from Meg Medina” at the beginning. How do you think a graphic novel reimagining of her original story might further reach readers? If you have read both versions of the book, in what ways do the experiences differ?
2. Piddy is treated differently by others—especially Yaqui Delgado—because of how she is perceived. Can you think of a time when you were misjudged based on an initial perception? What about a time when you misjudged someone?
3. Piddy, like so many of us, has many intersectional identities. What are some of Piddy’s intersectional identities?
4. Translanguaging—fluid toggling between different languages in the text—is a purposeful choice by a creator. Why do you think there are no translations for Spanish words and phrases, and how does that choice affect your reading of the story?
5. Ma saves her money in a coffee tin. What is she saving for? What hopes and dreams does she have for Piddy?
6. Ma’s parenting often feels oppressive to Piddy. How do Ma’s hopes and dreams affect her decisions and her approach to parenting? How do these in turn affect Piddy’s behaviors?
7. How does Piddy feel about moving? How does her mother feel moving might improve their lives?
8. What do readers learn about Piddy’s father? Why might Mel Valentine Vargas have chosen to use fewer words and more images in the moments on pages 30–33?
9. What are the ways in which Piddy gets bullied? What is she most afraid of?
10. Even close friendships can be fraught. When Piddy compares herself to Mitzi, what differences is she lamenting? What does Piddy wish for, and how do you know?
11. Piddy’s relationship with her mother and her relationship with Lila are both important. Though they seem very different in the story, how are they both necessary? How would you describe Lila’s relationship with Piddy?
12. What does Lila tell Piddy about her parents, and how does this new information shape Piddy’s understanding of her identity?
13. Piddy is ruthlessly bullied and faces many pressures both inside and outside of school. Write about these pressures or discuss them with a partner. How does being bullied affect her? Why is the bullying so hard to stop? What might you do differently if you were in her position?
14. Piddy finds refuge in a few physical spaces, including her old building and Salón Corazón. Who or what gives Piddy comfort, and what do they provide? Where do you feel most comfortable, seen, and heard?
15. Readers get clues about Yaqui’s home life when she gets busted. Why do you think a caseworker shows up to the school? How might Yaqui’s own life experiences affect the way she treats others, including Piddy?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

16. Why is Piddy afraid of telling the truth about what's been going on to most adults and to her friend Mitzi? Who can she trust? How does the bullying affect the way she sees herself?
17. Clara faces her own shame about her past. How do you think her experiences motivate the way she parents Piddy?
18. Why does it feel like a violation to Piddy when the teacher displays her writing about Yaqui on the bulletin board?
19. Allies are people who unequivocally show up to support others, even when the cause falls outside of their own experiences. Who are Piddy's allies at the new school? How do Rob and Piddy support each other? Support your thinking with evidence from the text.
20. On page 152, Piddy thinks, "*This body. It's causing me so much trouble.*" What does Piddy mean by this?
21. What happened to Joey's mother? How does Joey's family life affect him, and how does he respond?
22. How does Clara reconcile and explain the past for her daughter?
23. Ultimately, at the end of the story, what does Piddy learn? Who in the text teaches her? How does she learn to be herself and feel comfortable with all that she is?



ABOUT MEG MEDINA

Meg Medina is the 2023–2024 National Ambassador for Young People's Literature and the author of the Newbery Medal–winning *Merci Suárez Changes Gears* and its sequels, as well as the young adult novels *Burn Baby Burn* and *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*, a Pura Belpré Award winner. Meg Medina lives in Richmond, Virginia.



ABOUT MEL VALENTINE VARGAS

Mel Valentine Vargas is a queer Cuban American graphic novelist based in Chicago. They hope to draw the kind of illustrations that their younger self, and others like them, could have seen to feel less alone. Mel Valentine Vargas loves singing in Spanish, playing farming video games, and eating lots of gyoza with their friends.

These questions were prepared by Nawal Qarooni, an educator, writer, and adjunct professor who supports a holistic approach to literacy instruction and family experiences in schools across the country. Drawing on her work as an inquiry-based leader, mother, and proud daughter of immigrants, she centers her pedagogy on the rich and authentic learning all families gift their children every day. She is the author of *Nourishing Caregiver Collaborations: Elevating Home Experiences and Classroom Practices for Collective Care*.