

★ From *The New York Times* Bestselling Creator of *Hooky* ★

MARIONETTA

MIRIAM BONASTRE TUR

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WEB
TOON

DISCUSSION GUIDE

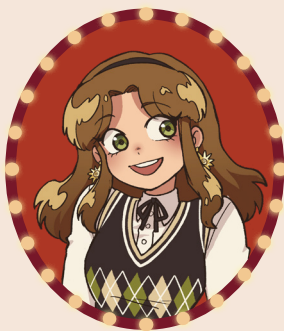
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ABOUT THE BOOK

Julia Lazarrett is happy with her honest and predictable life. But when her best friend Kamille convinces her to visit a traveling circus that has come to their hometown, both of their lives are changed forever.

Thrust into a world full of secrets and magic, Julia accepts a horrifying deal that saves her from an untimely death. However, in exchange, this honest girl is forced to discover whether she has what it takes to kill someone else.

Themes: Fantasy, Supernatural, Self-Discovery, Friendship, Coming of Age



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Miriam Bonastre Tur is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Hooky* and the creator of the hit WEBTOON *Marionetta*. She was born in a small town near Barcelona and started doodling before she even learned to walk. She studied comics at the Escola Joso Center for Comics and Visual Arts and now works as a character designer in animation. She lives in Spain.

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PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Marioneta is a Spanish word that translates to *marionette* in English. What is a marionette? Based on the story's title, can you make any guesses about its potential themes?
2. *Marionetta* is an ongoing webcomic (a comic created for online distribution). Volume 1 is its first adaptation to a print format. Have you ever read a webcomic? How do webcomics differ from traditionally published comics, graphic novels, or manga? Consider their layouts, plot structures, and other elements.
3. Have you ever been to a circus? What do you know about real-life circuses? How are circuses portrayed in the media?
4. What are some of your favorite fictional worlds? What elements of those worlds do you enjoy the most? Are there any shared elements between these worlds? Consider their histories, mythologies, power dynamics, political structures, social structures, and physical components (such as flora, fauna, and geography).
5. What is propaganda? Why do governments use propaganda? Can you think of any real-life examples of governments using propaganda throughout history or in modern times?
6. How do you feel about and treat people who look, think, or act differently from you? Have you been told what to think about people who are different? By whom? And for what purpose?
7. Why is it important to have rules and laws? Is there ever an appropriate time to break rules or laws? Why do you think that?
8. If you were presented with the opportunity to become immortal, would you take it? Why or why not? What do various stories in books, movies, video games, etc., have to say about the idea of immortality?



GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Before the title page, readers are given a brief tease of the story to come. What do you learn from these three pages? What questions do these pages raise? Do you find this preview to be effective at building intrigue? Why or why not?
2. By the end of chapter 2, what has the reader learned about the world of *Marionetta*? Use specific images and text selections to support your answers. Based on the world and story so far, what do you predict might happen in the coming chapters?
3. How does the artwork in chapter 3 differ from the artwork in previous chapters? Consider color, shapes, patterns, and layouts. How does the art make you feel? Why?
4. In chapter 8, Anthonn and Sahed get into a fight. What is the fight about? What does each character want, both in this moment and more generally?
5. Questions surrounding Julia's contract continue to develop. Who do you think offered her the contract? Why? Use evidence from the text and images to support your conclusion.
6. At the beginning of chapter 11, what is going through Julia's mind as Rainah is confronted by the military men? Do you think she has thoughts that aren't referenced in the text? Why or why not?
7. In chapter 14, Julia's conversation with Sahed is intertwined with panels showing Anthonn hiding a knife and viewing a collection of hats and masks. What do these images communicate to the reader?
8. Does Dotty's story in chapter 16 change your perception or understanding of the circus and its inhabitants? Did it answer any of your questions or inspire new ones?
9. What do you make of Anthonn's attempts to integrate Julia in chapter 16? Do you think he is earnestly trying to make Julia more comfortable, or does he have ulterior motives?
10. Did you enjoy "Trevor's Love Quest"? Why or why not? What do you think it added to your experience of the book, if anything? Would you like to read more Traveling Troupe Side Stories?



POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Julia and Kamille change throughout the story? What caused them to change? Cite specific evidence to support your answers.
2. What are the themes of the book? How and when are these themes developed? Cite specific evidence to support your answers.
3. What are the connections between the book's title and its characters, plot, and themes?
4. Do you think this story has a villain? If so, who is it? Why do you think that?
5. Why do you think Kamille is so drawn to Sahed and Rainah? How do her feelings for them change throughout the book?
6. What ideas has the Kalgratti government and its propaganda instilled in Julia? Why do you think she is more swayed by it than Kamille is? Are there any similarities between Kalgratt and real-world governments?
7. Within the world of *Marionetta*, what ideas does the country of Kalgratt represent? What ideas does the circus represent? How do the two compare? How do Julia and Kamille relate to the ideas of each?
8. In media, circuses and show business often represent ideas of freedom and an embrace of repressed desires. This is contrasted with a broader world that represents order and conformity. What other pieces of media can you think of that portray similar themes and ideas?
9. In what ways is Julia a good friend to Kamille? How could she be a better friend? Similarly, in what ways is Kamille a good friend to Julia, and how could she be a better friend? How do their individual lives and experiences affect their friendship? Are there any lessons you can learn from their friendship?
10. How would you describe the relationship between Sahed and Rainah? Use evidence to support your answer.



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Beneath the Big Top—Circuses in Media

Marionetta is part of a long line of stories that feature circuses. And just like in all good stories, the characters, settings, and moments in *Marionetta* tie into larger ideas that relate to the real world—and even our own lives. But *what* ideas, exactly, do the circus in *Marionetta* and its performers represent?

First, working individually or as a group, ask readers to identify other stories in novels, comics/graphic novels/manga, movies/TV, video games, etc., that feature circuses, carnivals, or performances. Through notetaking or discussion, readers should consider the importance of the circus in each story. Do characters go to the circus in search of something? What do they find or experience? Do their lives or circumstances change because of those experiences? How do the people of the circus compare to the outside world? How might all of this relate to or act as an allegory for the experiences of real-world, everyday people?

Next, using the internet or other library resources, instruct readers to identify one or two other stories that feature circuses, carnivals, or performances. After checking to ensure stories are age-appropriate, give readers time to experience their selections. As they read, watch, or play their chosen stories, ask readers to consider their new story in the same way they did the others.

Finally, ask readers to reconsider *Marionetta*. By considering circuses in other stories, have they gained any insight into the deeper meaning of the book? Does this change how they view the story?

If desired, readers can prepare a short presentation in the style of their choice (such as a PowerPoint presentation, infographic, YouTube-style video, TikTok-style video, or written essay) about the symbolic meaning of circuses in media. Readers should cite specific examples to support their conclusions.

Brochure created by Matt Slayter, an educator with expertise in pop culture-based education. He regularly works with manga and graphic novel publishers to create teacher- and librarian-friendly resources.



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