

THE GILDED GIRL

DISCUSSION GUIDE

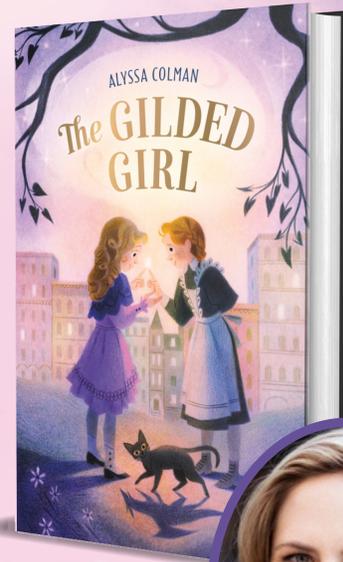
ABOUT THE BOOK

Miss Posterity's Academy for Practical Magic is the best kindling school in New York City—and wealthy twelve-year-old Emma Harris is accustomed to the best. But when her father dies, leaving her penniless, Emma is reduced to working off her debts to Miss Posterity alongside Izzy, a daring servant girl who refuses to let her magic be snuffed out, even if society dictates she must. Emma and Izzy reluctantly form a pact: If Izzy teaches Emma how to survive as a servant, Emma will reveal to Izzy what she knows about magic.

Along the way, they encounter quizzes that literally pop, shy libraries, and talking cats (that is, house dragons). But when another student's kindling goes horribly wrong, revealing the fiery dangers of magic, Emma and Izzy must set aside their differences or risk their magic being snuffed out forever.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alyssa Colman won the 2013 Primary Stages ESPA new play competition and was a semifinalist at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center National Playwrights Conference. She has participated as both a mentee and mentor in the Author Mentor Match program and is a member of SCBWI. Alyssa now lives in Los Angeles, where she enjoys making a mess in her kitchen and hiking with her family.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *The Gilded Girl* is told from the perspectives of both Izzy and Emma. Whose point of view did you connect with initially, and why? Did that change during the course of the novel?
2. At the beginning of the story, Emma frequently buys gifts for the other students and often tries to help around the school, which actually creates more work for Izzy. Why doesn't Emma understand the unintended consequences of her actions? How does Emma change after she's forced to work as a servant?
3. Why does Izzy maintain her gruff attitude and fierce independence throughout the beginning of the story? What makes her finally open up?
4. At what point in the story do you think Izzy and Emma become true friends, rather than just allies working toward the same goal? What are some qualities of a good friend?
5. Why do you think that Emma hides her wealthy upbringing from Tom when she first meets him? How would you feel if your friend hid something about themselves from you?
6. When Emma, Izzy, and Tom are running from the police officers after buying the Kindling flints, people in the Tarnish aid in their escape. Why would the people of the Tarnish want to help them? Once magic is made accessible to everyone, do you think places like the Tarnish will still exist?
7. Miss Posterity believes that the Kindling winds reward people with worth, while Emma learns that anyone who is worthy can kindle magic. What's the difference between having worth and being worthy? Which one does our society reward most—worth or worthiness?
8. Emma discovers that fancy tools and a prestigious background aren't necessary to wield magic. She thinks, "There were things in the world that deserved her anger. For the first time in her life, she didn't care what Mama or Papa would have done. The only thing that mattered was what she was going to do." What are some things that you think are worth being angry over?
9. By the end of the story, Miss Clementine and the students—even Beatrice—stand up for Izzy and Emma when Miss Posterity threatens to throw them out. What do you think inspires them to finally stand up against the wrath of Miss Posterity? Why can it be scary to challenge people in power?
10. The story ends with the creation of a new magical school designed by Emma herself. What do you think life will be like at the Manhattan School for Magic? What would you want to learn if you could attend a school for magic?

