

Reader's Guide for *The Oceanography of the Moon*

- 1) At the beginning of the book, Riley regrets keeping Julia's ashes imprisoned in the box for a decade. Discuss how this symbolizes Riley's and Vaughn's situations at the start of the story and how things change by the end. To delve deeper, relate your discussion to other mentions of boxes or cage-like things mentioned in the story.
- 2) Why do you think Vaughn finally found the courage to meet Riley?
- 3) Did you dislike Vaughn at first? When and why did your feelings about him change—or not change?
- 4) Discuss why the moon was an escape for Riley as a child. What about that place felt safe to her? How did being attracted to Vaughn help her see her moon had become a trap?
- 5) Why does Vaughn's arrival at the farm cause Riley and Vaughn to revisit memories that are painful?
- 6) Riley likes to imagine Julia protecting Kiran and giving him magic when his heart stopped. Discuss how Julia *had* given magic to Kiran. Do you think Riley understands her role in his magic?
- 7) Why do you think Vaughn and Riley decide to trust magic in the middle of the book? How does the magical "curse" of Vaughn's rock help them become more intimate?
- 8) Discuss the ways Kiran's clockworks and fossils altered outcomes. Is that something you'd be willing to call 'magic'?
- 9) Do you think Sachi possesses something that could be called magic? In what way? Did her art create magic in the story?
- 10) Julia's books changed many lives. Is that a kind of magic? Do you believe art has the potential to change lives?
- 11) Why do you think Kiran's birth was so healing for Riley?
- 12) Riley loves and trusts Sachi, Alec, Kiran, and Colton. Why do you think she continued to keep her secrets from them?
- 13) Discuss your feelings about Colton as the story progressed. Were you surprised about what he did on the roof?
- 14) Early on, Riley thinks she and Vaughn were attracted to each other's inner darkness. Later she believes they were attracted to each other's light. Which do you think is truer?
- 15) How did you feel when you discovered a deceased person, Julia Mays, was central to the story? Discuss how people live beyond death through their acts of love and joy.
- 16) Discuss why Vaughn sympathized with the white hare in a brown world.
- 17) Why do you think the author chose to base Kiran's magic on clocks and fossils?
- 18) Would you have forgiven Vaughn?
- 19) After scattering Julia's ashes, Riley appreciates a pale, distant moon in daylight. Discuss how this is meaningful in her character arc.
- 20) What does the last line in the book mean to you?