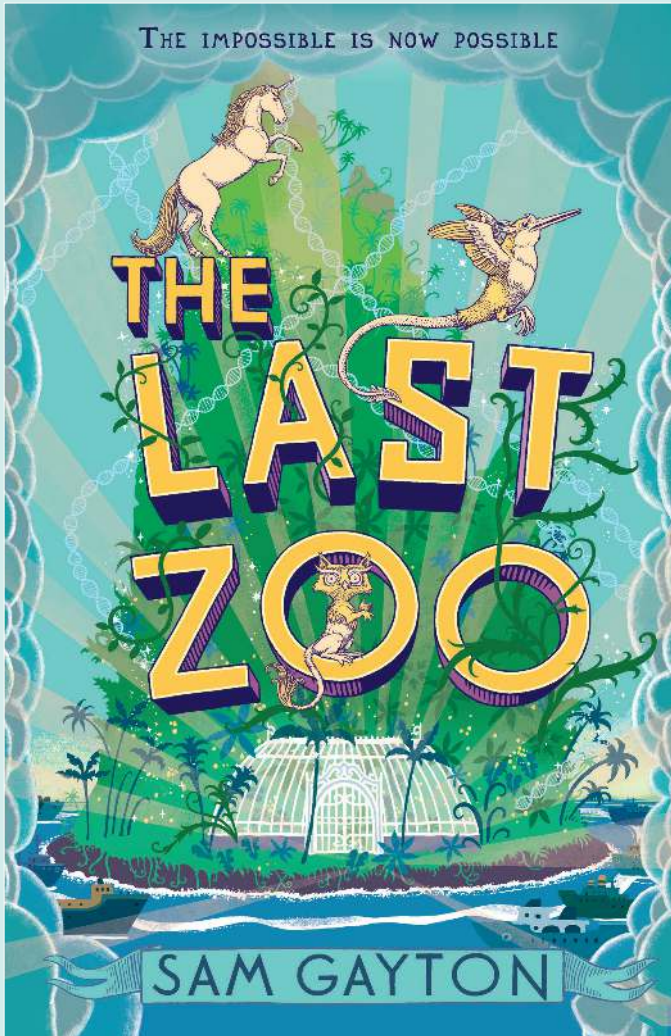


READING GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



THE LAST ZOO

by Sam Gayton

Published by Andersen Press

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Pia lives in the world's last zoo: a place where the impossible is actually possible, ever since scientists detonated a reality bomb. Weird and wondrous creatures have been dreamt into existence - unicorns, singing hippos, hummingdragons, genies... and angels, who might be the most important creations of all, because the Earth needs a miracle to survive.

But one morning Pia makes a terrible discovery: the angels are missing. To find them, she will need to solve the riddle they left behind, make a pact with a devil, and take a perilous journey into the glitch, where nothing is as it seems...

'An enchanting read' ALEX SCARROW

'Gayton conjures worlds far beyond your imagination and characters that grab you by the hand and pull you with them, headlong into adventure' GILL LEWIS

DISCUSSION GUIDE:

If you were a seamer, what *voilà* would you like to create?

When Pia realises the angels are missing, she doesn't raise the alarm. What do you think you would have done if you were her?

What food would you wish up from a genie?

The Last Zoo imagines what disasters climate change could cause for the world, and Pia realises that humans were the danger to the planet all along, but also that we can be the solution, 'not with despair, but with hope. Not with madness, but with sense.' What do you think we can do to help prevent the environment being destroyed?

The reality bomb destroyed the underlying laws of the universe, making the impossible possible. Do you think the reality bomb was a good idea? Did Siskin and the others have any other choice?

Zugzwang's name comes from chess, when all the moves a player can make will be bad for them. Why do you think his father Siskin, and the author Sam Gayton, have given him this name?

What do you think of the way Threedeeep 'speaks'? How can emojis help us communicate?

Urette says that 'some mistakes you can't fix'. Do you think this is true?

Pia makes a deal with the devil, which she finds difficult to get out of. Have you ever made a promise you regretted?

In the zoo, 'doomsay' – talking about the end of the world – is illegal. What do you think about banning people from talking about certain subjects?

'It's almost like the zoo staff are different species of voilà, all in separate enclosures with their own environments.' What do you think of the way the Rekkers and the rest of the zoo treat Urette?

The genies speak in Tellish, having conversations like a dramatic third-person narrator. Write a paragraph in their language, describing a normal day in your life.

How does Pia deal with losing her parents? Does it make it easier or harder for her to have them around as ghosts?

Discuss the connection between memory and reality, and how these get distorted in the Seam.

Kids are best for creating voilà, especially because bad things tend to happen to adults who go inside the Seam. Why do you think that might be?

You are a zookeeper for a new type of voilà, but have just woken up to find them missing. Write a short story imagining what's happened and how you would react.

Like Ishan, you've just moved from the sprawl to work on the ark. Write a note to a friend or family member at home, telling them what it's like, how it's different and how it makes you feel about the future of the world.

OTHER BOOKS BY SAM GAYTON:

