

**STORY SUMMARY**

Malia has had a privileged upbringing in Indonesia, but since her Indonesian father died, her Canadian mother wants to return to her own family on the other side of the world. Malia, busy fighting to protect her country's rainforests, is determined to stay. Not far away, Ari reminds himself he is lucky to be going to school and competing on the chess team, even if it means an endless round of chores at his uncle's restaurant. But he is horribly worried about Ginger Juice, his uncle's orangutan. The too-small cage where she lives is clearly hurting her body and her mind, but where else can she go? The rainforest where she was born is a palm oil plantation now.

In *Berani*, Governor General's Award finalist Michelle Kadarusman spins together three perspectives: Malia, who is prepared to risk anything for her activism, Ari, who knows the right path but fears what it will cost, and Ginger Juice, the caged orangutan who still remembers the forest and her mother. The choices the young people make will have consequences for themselves, for Ginger Juice, and for others, if they are brave enough—or reckless enough—to choose.

Michelle Kadarusman grew up in Melbourne, Australia, and also lived many years throughout her father's homeland of Indonesia before moving to Canada in the year 2000. Her books have earned numerous nominations, including the Governor General's Literary Awards, the Ontario Library Association Silver Birch Award, and the Green Earth Book Award. Her novels include *The Theory of Hummingbirds*, *Girl of the Southern Sea*, and *Music for Tigers*. Her first picture book, *Room for More*, published in 2022. Michelle now lives in Toronto, Canada and Byron Bay, Australia.

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KEYWORDS:

Activism, Conservation, Rainforests, Orangutans, Indonesia, Chess, Values & Virtues

BISAC CODES

JUV002020 JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Apes, Monkeys, etc.
 JUV030020 JUVENILE FICTION / People & Places / Asia
 JUV035000 JUVENILE FICTION / School & Education
 JUV039220 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Values & Virtues
 JUV029010 JUVENILE FICTION / Science & Nature / Environment

READING LEVEL

Lexile measure : 760L | Fountas & Pinnell : Y

BOOK CLUBS

This guide has been developed for use in classroom book clubs/literature circles. Book clubs support and develop a love of reading, help students build comprehension, and support the development of collaborative learning and critical thinking.

In book clubs, students:

- meet in small groups (4–8) to discuss a book they are reading
- take turns assuming a leadership role within the group
- meet regularly and set the pace for their reading
- take ownership for their learning by:
 - selecting the book they will read (usually from a predetermined list provided by the teacher)
 - determine the pace of the reading
 - prepare for and run their discussions.

Prior to beginning with book clubs, teachers:

- take time to develop and nurture whole-class discussions about books while modeling the skills and behaviors needed to collaborate and work together as a book club
- provide guidance, modeling, and support
- become familiar with all texts prior to making them available to students

During book club discussions, teachers:

- develop a schedule for book clubs ensuring they provide time for reading and discussion
- provide mini-lessons for any needs that may arise
- monitor through observation and conferring as well as supporting student self-assessment

Key elements:

- Groups meet on a regular basis, with time provided in class to read and discuss their book
- Students use a “reader’s notebook” to write notes, comments, insights, and questions while they read
- Students bring their reader’s notebook to each meeting to support their discussion
- Discussion topics may emerge from the students as they read; however, the teacher provides discussion topics and provocations to help students engage in rich discussions (suggestions are provided in this guide)
- Group meetings are collaborative, with each group developing a set of norms for their group
- The teacher serves as facilitator
- Assessment is grounded in teacher observation, student conversations, and student self-assessment
- Book clubs promote a love of reading

Thinking about Assessment...

This Discussion Guide offers a range of prompts, tasks, and provocations to support Book Club discussions. While using this guide in the classroom, teachers have a number of opportunities to use observation, conversation, and product to assess student thinking and learning. The tasks and prompts offered in this guide are designed to support discussion, sharing, and student thinking while providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate comprehension, extension of thinking, and critical literacy. Assessment can include: self-assessment and peer assessment, conversations with students through teacher/student conferences; group discussions; and products created by the students.

For the teacher and student to have a clear, common understanding of the expectations and criteria to achieve success while reading the novels, educators develop learning goals based on curriculum expectations and share them with the students in language they can understand. Then together, the educator and students co-create criteria to make the path to success visible and clear.

These success criteria are posted in the classroom, are visible to all students, and may be revised and edited based on the learning and understanding of the students.

As the Book Club meetings are collaborative and begin with the groups developing a set of norms for their group, it is suggested that all groups open each meeting with a reflection of the previous discussion. These reflections can highlight what went well during the discussions; what needs to improve in these discussions; and considerations for the current discussion.

Discussion Guide:

This discussion guide will offer a variety of tasks, discussion prompts, and questions to provoke thinking and deepen comprehension before, during, and after reading of the novel. These are suggestions only and it is certainly not necessary to complete the entire list of suggested activities/questions. Educators are encouraged to make choices based on the strengths, needs, and interests of the students.

Highlighted Curriculum Expectations

Ontario Ministry of Education Language Arts Curriculum K–8

Oral Communication

- 1.2 Active Listening Strategies
- 1.3 Comprehension Strategies
- 2.4 Demonstrating Understanding
- 1.5 Making Inferences/Interpreting Texts
- 1.6 Extending Understanding

Reading for Meaning

- 1.4 Demonstrating Understanding
- 1.5 Making Inferences/Interpreting Texts
- 1.6 Extending Understanding
- 1.7 Analyzing Texts
- 1.8 Responding to and Evaluating Texts

Reading: Understanding Form and Style

- 2.1 Text Forms
- 2.3 Text Features
- 2.4 Elements of Style

Reading with Fluency

- 3.1 Reading Familiar Words
- 3.2 Reading Unfamiliar Words

Reading: Reflecting on Reading Skills and Strategies

- 4.2 Interconnected Skills

Media Literacy

- 3.1 Creating Media Texts

Pre-Reading Suggestions

The purpose of these tasks is to develop knowledge and understanding as well as to prompt conversation and discussion about the topics mentioned throughout this novel. In doing so, the hope is the reader will become engaged as they read, comprehend the issues presented, develop a sense of empathy for the characters and world-wide issues and become aware of the author's organization of the text.

BEFORE READING

1. This story takes place in Indonesia. On a map, identify the location of Indonesia.
2. Determine the distance of travel from your home to Indonesia and the time it would take to travel there by plane.

Research the country and create a research log in which you will jot down any new information you learn as you read. Suggested topics to research include: Where is Indonesia located? Which countries are its neighbors? What is its population? What is the economy based on? What are important natural resources? What languages are spoken? What religions are practiced there? What is the climate of Indonesia like (temperature, precipitation, seasonality)?

Looking at the map provided in the text, discuss the location of Indonesia and share your newly researched information.

3. What does the word *activism* mean?
Identify people who are recognized as activists. What were their reasons for wanting to be activists? Share this information in a large-group discussion.
4. What does it mean to be brave? Discuss ways people can demonstrate bravery.
5. Review the glossary at the end of the book. Why is this text feature included? How does the glossary help the reader?
6. At the beginning of the text, there are two pages dedicated to some other novels written by the author, Michelle Kadarusman.

Read the "praise" for these two novels. In your group, share interesting the facts you read. Does this information make you want to read the other novels? Why? Why not?

Conduct research to discover what other books Michelle Kadarusman has written. Is there a common focus throughout the author's books?

7. *Girl of the Southern Sea* was a finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award. Research this award and discuss why it is an honor to receive this status.

DURING READING

Please check in with your book club at the suggested points in the novel.

Malia (pp. 11–15):

1. What information has the reader learned about Malia in this first chapter?
2. Research the palm-oil industry. Consider the following topics when researching: the countries that produce the largest quantity of palm oil; the uses of palm oil in the world; the amount of money this industry brings into a country; the impact on the environment.

While reading this text, add new information to your research log.

3. Where in Indonesia does Malia live? Locate the city on a map.

Ari (pp. 17–22):

1. In this chapter, the reader is introduced to the second main character in this text, Ari. Jot down information you have learned about Ari. Share this information in a small group.

- Define and discuss the word *foreshadowing*. The author seems to be using this writing technique when describing Ari's feelings after he looks into Ginger Juice's cage.

Malia (pp.23–25):

- Describe the foods mentioned in the text to this point. Add this information to your research log about Indonesia.
- The reader is getting insight into Malia's worries about moving to Canada. Begin a list of her worries and continue to add to this list as you read the text.

Ari (pp. 27–30):

- Explain why Ari is feeling guilty regarding his cousin and friend, Suni. Do you think he is justified in feeling this guilt? Why? Why not?
- In the last paragraph of this chapter, Ari describes "buried feelings" when looking at Ginger Juice. Make a prediction of what he may be feeling.

Malia (pp. 31–34):

- Refer to the glossary in the text to define the word *becak*.
- How is Indonesia different from your country? Create a Venn diagram to show the differences and similarities. Be prepared to add to this Venn diagram while reading the text.
- How would you describe Putu and Malia's friendship?

Ginger Juice (pp. 35–37):

- The reader is getting an idea about what happened to Ginger Juice. Share your thoughts about Ginger Juice's past with a partner.
- The author is writing each chapter from a particular character's point of view. How does this impact the story for the reader? Explain your thinking.

Ari (pp.39–42):

- On page 42, Ari thinks, "These affluent players do not care so much about the tournament....They don't care about the prize money and are not hungry for the win." What does Ari mean by this thought? How is this working to his advantage?

Malia (pp.43–48):

- Malia's teacher, Mrs. Harwono, highlights another difference between Indonesia and Canada. Discuss this in a small group and add this information to your Venn diagram about the differences between your country and Indonesia.
- Do you think Malia was courageous to do what she did? Why? Why not?
- Malia comments, "Real activists don't let rules get in their way." With a partner, discuss your thoughts about this statement. What are the consequences/rewards of being an activist?
- In this chapter, Putu gives Malia a hint as to how she feels about Malia going to Canada. Describe how Putu is feeling. Why do you think Putu feels moving to Canada is "good fortune"?

Ari (pp.49–51):

- Why did Ari's elation from winning the tournament disappear so quickly?
- How do you think the petition and other information included on the flyer will impact Ari and his uncle? Ginger Juice? Explain your thinking.
- Continue to research the palm-oil industry and its impact on forests. Add this information to your research log.

Malia (pp.53–57):

- The reader continues to learn new information about Indonesia. Add this information to the research log.
- Malia describes her feelings of being ashamed to be different. With a partner, describe ways that students may feel different from others.

3. Malia has loving memories of her father. Which memory do you like the best? Explain your thinking.
4. Reflect on memories you have of a special person. In your reading journal, record your memories of this loved one.

Ari (pp. 59–61):

1. Do you agree or disagree with Ari's decision to put Ginger Juice in a larger cage? Why? Why not?
2. Research information about orangutans. Some suggested topics include: their behavior, their habitat, foods they eat, their lifestyle, how they care for their young.
3. Do you think Ari's uncle was right to accept Ginger Juice in lieu of cash owed to him from a bet? Why? Why not?

Malia (pp. 63–65):

1. How is a Hindu cremation ceremony different from the funeral customs you are familiar with? If you are Hindu, how does the ceremony that Malia describes compare to your own experiences?
2. Make a prediction as to what you think will be the consequences of Malia's online petition.
3. Malia receives an email that refers to her as a *bule*. Using the glossary in the text, define this word.
4. Why do you think Malia deletes the email?
5. How does this email add to Malia's feelings about being different? Discuss your thinking.

Ari (pp. 67–69):

1. How do Ari's chess skills help him form his plan to improve Ginger Juice's life?
2. Continue to add to your research log of new information about Indonesia.

Malia (pp. 71–74):

1. Were your predictions regarding the online petition and its consequences for Malia correct?
2. On page 73, Malia says, "Everything is unraveling in

the wrong direction." What does she mean by this statement?

Ginger Juice (pp. 75–78):

1. How does the author's writing change in the chapters from Ginger Juice's perspective?
2. The reader is learning new information about orangutans in this chapter. Add this new information to your previous research.
3. Create a list of adjectives to describe the memories Ginger Juice has of her *Ibu* (her mother).

Ari (pp. 79–81):

1. How do Ari and his uncle differ in their thinking about the care Ginger Juice needs? Provide examples from the text to support your answer.
2. On page 80, Ari uses the word *injustice* when describing what is being done to Ginger Juice. Define the word. Do you agree or disagree with the use of this word in this situation? Why? Why not?

Malia (pp. 83–86):

1. Discuss and explain your understanding as to why the Indonesian government supports the palm-oil industry. Revisiting your earlier research, how does your own thinking compare to the government's? How would an environmentalist's point of view compare?
2. As a class, discuss how the consequences of this online petition are looked upon differently in Indonesia than they would be in Canada. Add new information to your Venn diagram.
3. How has Malia's decision regarding the online petition impacted others around her? Create a list of these people and the impact caused.

Ari (pp. 87–92):

1. Suni's letter to Ari gives the reader an idea of how life in their village is different for women and girls than it is for men and boys.

In a small group, share and discuss these differences using the prompts below:

Why do you think these differences exist?

How does gender impact opportunities for education in Ari and Putu's village?

How does this compare to life in your own community? Record this information on your Venn diagram.

Ginger Juice (pp.93–95):

1. Create a list of adjectives to describe Ginger Juice's feelings about the death of her mother. How are these feelings like those of a human?

Malia (pp.97–101):

1. As a class, discuss the information Mr. Ahmed, the school principal, shares with Malia and her mom during their meeting. In your discussion, include the consequences of Malia not signing the letter.

Do you think this is a "just" consequence? Why? Why not?

2. Do you think Malia should sign the letter? Why? Why not?

Ari (pp. 103–107):

1. Summarize the new information Ari has learned in this chapter.

Malia (pp.109–112):

1. With a partner, define and discuss the word deforestation.
2. Discuss how deforestation and the palm-oil industry in Indonesia are connected.
3. Review your list of people who have been impacted by Maia's online petition. Add new information to this list.

Why have Malia's actions and her petition resulted in such severe consequences?

4. Why do you think Malia is headstrong about being an activist?
5. Has there been a situation where you wanted to see change? Share this experience with a partner.

Ari (pp. 113–116):

1. Referring to your previous research about orangutans, do you think it is possible for orangutans to learn to paint and accomplish other "enrichment activities"? Why? Why not?

Ginger Juice (pp.117–118):

1. How are Ginger Juice's feelings and perspective different from those of the humans around her? Give examples from the text to justify your answer.

Ari (pp. 119–122):

1. How do Ari and his uncle's opinions about Ginger Juice continue to differ? Give examples from the text to support your thinking.
2. Predict what you think Ari will do for Ginger Juice. Explain your thinking.
3. What do you think should be done with Ginger Juice? Why?

Malia (pp. 123–130):

1. On page 126, Malia's Oma says, "You are not defined by where you live or where your parents are born or where you were born. You are defined by what is in your heart, by your actions, your words." Do you agree with this statement? Why? Why not?
2. Using what Oma explains to Malia on pages 126–127, write a five-line poem about who you are. Begin each line with the words I am.
3. Do you agree with Oma's explanation as to why Malia can't stay with her in Indonesia? Why? Why not?
4. Malia's Papa left her with very important words: "treat people with kindness" and "never take your blessings for granted."

With a partner, find and discuss examples from the text which demonstrate that Malia has understood and is living by her father's words.

How can we show kindness in our lives?

Make a list of the blessings you have in your life.

Ari (pp.131–133):

1. In your opinion, why do you think Ginger Juice is “slipping away from the world”? Explain your thinking.

Malia (pp.135–139):

1. Malia’s mom describes Malia as “having guts”. Do you agree with this comment? Why? Why not?
2. Malia describes herself as “someone with privilege”. What does this mean?

Do you think it would be easier for someone with privilege to become an activist? Discuss your thinking and ideas.

Ari (pp.141–142):

1. How is Ari showing his love and concern for Ginger Juice?
2. Is this type of love like the love Malia is showing for her country? Explain your thinking.

Malia (pp. 149–151):

1. Make a prediction as to how you think Malia and Ari can help each other.

Ari (pp.153–155):

1. How has Malia helped Ari?
2. Why is Ari worried?
3. How has Ginger Juice’s situation impacted Ari? Give examples from the text to support your thinking.

Ginger Juice (pp.157–158):

1. What do you think is happening to Ginger Juice? Why?

Ari (pp. 159–161):

1. Why does it take courage for Ari to call Orangutan Rescue?
2. The person in charge of the orangutan rescue mission explains to Ari why it is illegal to keep orangutans in cages, as pets. What new information have you learned about orangutans from this

explanation? Add this to the research you have collected.

3. Why is this rescue mission risky for Ari and his uncle? Provide examples from the text to support your answer.

Malia (pp. 163–165):

1. How does Malia’s activism mindset help her to come up with the blog idea?
2. Is there a topic that could move you to an activism mindset? Share your ideas with a small group. Gather ideas from your group to help you research your ideas further.

Ari (pp. 167–174):

1. Add new information you learn about orangutans to your existing research.
2. What consequences do you think Ari will face because of his call to Orangutan Rescue? Explain your thinking.

Malia (pp. 175–178):

1. “One person can make a difference.” How is this statement connected to Malia and Ari and their actions? Explain your thinking using examples from the text.
2. Where would you like to make a difference?
3. How do you think Ginger Juice’s rescue has changed Ari and Malia’s relationship and their future mindset?

Ari (pp.179–181):

1. On page 181 the text reads, “I have learned that it is possible to ignore truths that are right under our nose. You can choose to ignore them, or you can speak up.”

Discuss your thoughts about this statement. How does this statement apply to you?

2. Do you think Ari’s uncle was relieved Ginger Juice was rescued? Why? Why not?

Malia (pp. 183–185):

1. Malia tells Ari that he was brave for doing what he thought was right, even though it wasn't easy. In your journal, write about a time when you did the right thing, even though it wasn't easy.

Ari (pp. 187–191):

1. How does Ari's activism in helping Ginger Juice give him the courage to help others? Summarize Ari's actions in this chapter.
2. How does Ari show his love for his cousin and friend, Suni?

Malia (pp. 193–196):

1. Describe Malia's relationship with Bibi.
2. Why do you think Malia wants to visit Bibi's village? What has Malia learned during this visit?

Ari (pp. 197–202):

1. Ari has arranged for his cousin, Suni, to take his place in school for the remainder of the school year. Explain why this was an unselfish act, and an uncommon situation in their small village.

Ginger Juice (pp. 201–202):

1. How does Ginger Juice react to her new environment?
2. How does this align with how Malia and Ari are feeling at this point in the text?

Ari (pp. 203–206):

1. Describe the changes in Ari's life.
2. How have his actions helped others?

Malia (pp. 207–208):

1. Use examples from this chapter to demonstrate that Malia has accepted her move to Canada.

Ginger Juice (pp. 209–211):

1. Describe the changes in Ginger Juice after the rescue.
2. This chapter reveals Ginger Juice's name that was given to her by her mother. What is this name? Why does this name suit her?

AFTER READING

1. Why do you think the author chose to end the story from Berani's perspective?
2. Review the section about orangutans at the end of the text.

Review the research you gathered on orangutans.

Record any further questions and wonderings that you still have.

Discuss these questions and wonderings with the large group.

3. Create a poster or PSA to make others aware of the danger to orangutans and their natural environment because of the palm-oil industry.
4. Research other animals that are endangered because of industries and deforestation. Share this information with the large group.
5. Create a travel brochure using the information gathered about Indonesia.
6. As a group, list ideas about ways to become activists for a specific cause.
7. Review the Venn diagram created about the differences between your country and Indonesia. Share and discuss everyone's Venn diagrams in a large group. Add any new information to your own Venn diagram.
8. Read the author's note at the end of the text. Record interesting information you have learned about the author. How did the author's life experiences impact the writing of this book?

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