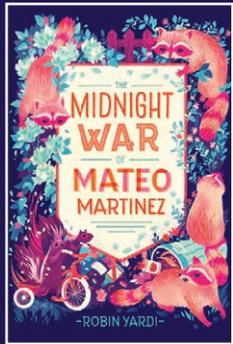




**Robin Yardi** lives in the California foothills, where—every once in a while, in the dark of night—a skunk or two will sneak by. She loves good stories, animals of all sorts, homemade cakes, and kids. She thinks kids are way cooler than grownups, which is why she writes just for them. Visit her online at [www.robinyardi.com](http://www.robinyardi.com).



*The Midnight War of Mateo Martinez*

Robin Yardi

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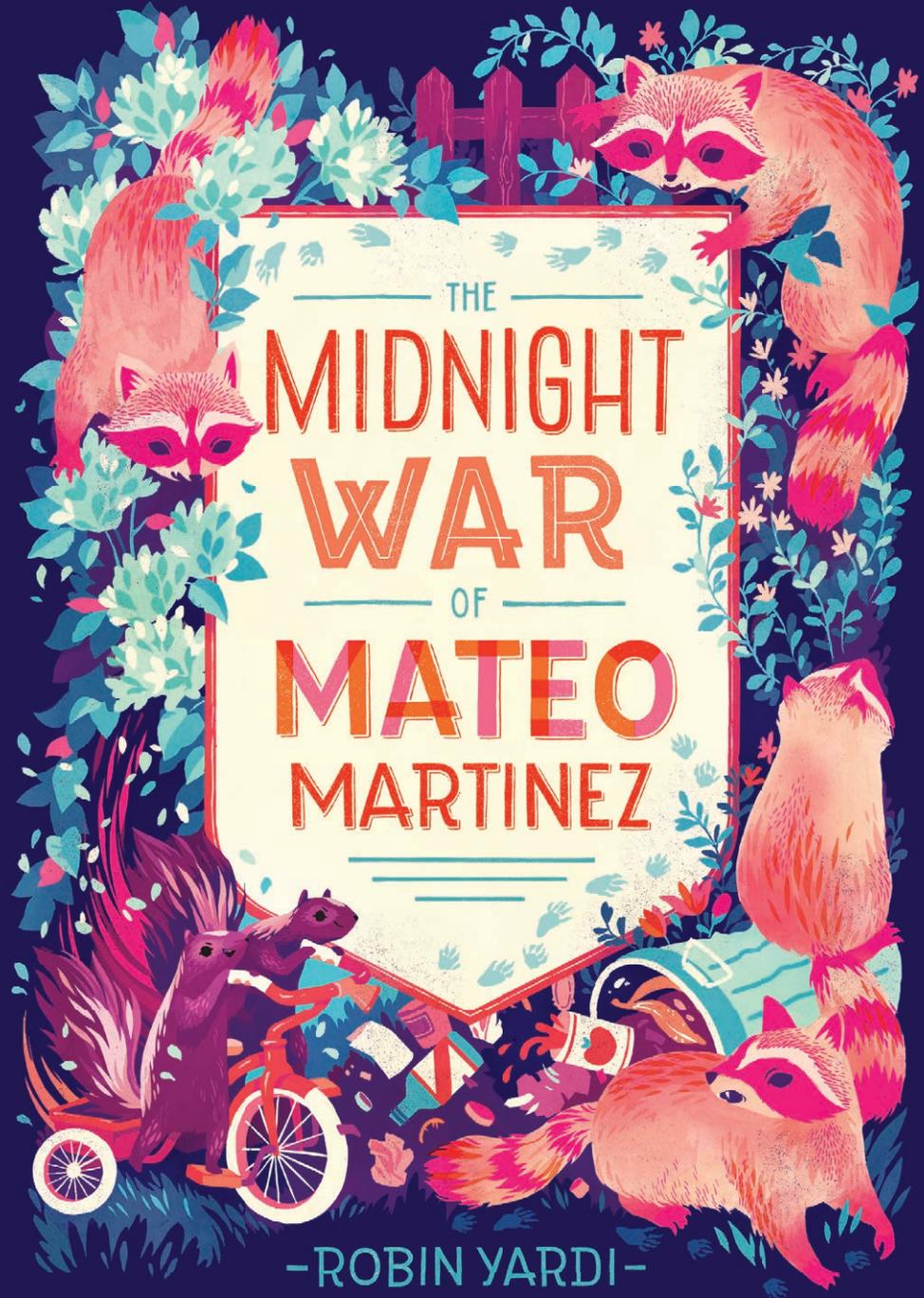
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—ROBIN YARDI—

DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Life is confusing for  
Mateo Martinez.**

He and Johnny Ramirez don't hang out anymore, even though they used to be best friends. He and his new friend Ashwin try to act like brave, old-time knights, but it only gets them in trouble. His parents keep telling him to hold his sister's hand when crossing busy streets, even though she's the one who always runs ahead. And last night, two skunks stole Mateo's old trike.

**Wait—two skunks stole  
his trike?**

Mateo is too big for that rusty kid toy. He has a cool, shiny new bike anyway. But Mateo also has a neighborhood to protect. And he's about to begin a big, stinky quest to catch the thieves. A quest that starts in the middle of the night!

As Mateo protects his neighborhood, he also learns a few things about growing up and letting go.



## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who steals Mateo's trike? How did they manage to do that? Is he sure that this is what happened?
2. Why does Mateo get in trouble for not holding Mila's hand? Was it his fault?
3. Why does Mateo watch over his neighborhood? What oath did he and Ashwin take?
4. Why is Mateo so concerned about the trike? Why is it so important to him to find out where it went?
5. What happened between Johnny and Mateo? How did they stop being friends?
6. What does Mateo do when the group of guys he used to play soccer with invite him to play...without Ashwin? What does Danny do in response?
7. What does Mateo think he and Ashwin have that Danny Vega does not?
8. What was the Catapult Catastrophe? What impact did it have on Ashwin and Mateo?
9. What about being Ashwin's best friend is Mateo still getting used to?
10. How does Mateo feel about Mila? What about having a sister has changed his life?
11. Who in the book speaks Spanish? How does Mateo feel about not speaking Spanish?
12. What happens when Mateo sits out at night to catch the skunks and find out where his old trike went?
13. In chapter seven, what reason does Mateo's dad give for why Danny and the other boys aren't kind to him and Ashwin? Do you think Mateo's dad is right? Why or why not?
14. Mateo is surprised when Johnny tells his friends that Mateo can come along with them in chapter fifteen. What does Johnny say is the reason Mateo can hang out with them? What other reasoning might he have, and why can't he say it?
15. Why is Mateo not sure if he wants to go ride bikes with Johnny, Danny, and the others? What helps him to make up his mind?
16. How does Ashwin react when Johnny asks Mateo to roll with them?
17. When Mateo, Mila, Ashwin, and the skunks are racing to get to the playground before the raccoons, why does Mateo make them stop?
18. How do Mila and Mateo come to each other's aid in the Midnight War?
19. Why doesn't Mateo think of Johnny as a bad guy?
20. Compare and contrast Ashwin and Mateo's situation with the skunks' situation. What does Mateo learn about his situation from their experience with the skunks?