

VEGA'S PIECE OF THE SKY

ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK

The meteorite is just the latest thing to crash, uninvited, into Vega Lucero's road-stop hometown. But when she discovers how much a chunk of the space rock might be worth, she realizes it's exactly the treasure she's been hoping to find.

And maybe a way to convince her mom not to sell the family store to big city developers to help pay for her grandpa's medical expenses.

Determined to find more pieces of the sky somewhere in the perilous desert wilderness, stubbornly independent Vega must set aside her distrust of outsiders to team up with Jasper, a would-be rival—and her own tagalong cousin Mila—on an overnight adventure to find more meteorites before the professional hunters who have descended on Date City do. But along the way, she realizes that she's not the only one with the weight of the world on her shoulders. Jasper and Mila have their own secrets and worries that have brought them on this journey.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer Torres is the author of more than a dozen books for young readers including *Stef Soto*, *Taco Queen*, *Vega's Piece of the Sky*, and *Lola Out Loud*. She writes stories about home, friendship, and unexpected courage inspired by her Mexican-American heritage. Jennifer started her career as a newspaper reporter, and even though she writes fiction now, she hopes her stories still have some truth in them. She holds a doctorate in education and lives with her family in Southern California.





BEFORE YOU READ

Think about the place or places you come from. How have they shaped who you are today? How do you think those places have changed over time?

Explore the cover of *Vega's Piece of the Sky*. What do you notice about the main character, Vega? How do you think she is feeling? How would you describe her setting?

What does "treasure" mean to you? Where do you look for it?

ACTIVITIES

CREATE RECYCLED ART

Vega and Tata create windchimes out of found objects. Try making some recycled art of your own.

Collect small, seemingly worthless objects that might otherwise get thrown away—like bottle caps or scraps of foil—or things you find in your path when out walking. Look for a variety of colors and textures, and try to keep an open mind!

Use what you've collected to create a sculpture or collage.

FIND STORIES IN THE STARS

Take a blank piece of paper and a marker. Without looking at the paper, make a series of random dots all over it while counting down from 5.

Stop after you hit 1 and look down at the page. Connect some or all of the dots so that they form a constellation, a group of stars that, together, make up a shape or pattern.

What shape do you see? Give your constellation a name, then tell the story behind it.

HUNT FOR METEORS

Meteors are made of broken-off bits of comets, asteroids, and even planets. Most never land on Earth to become meteorites, but we can still see them blazing bright across the night sky.

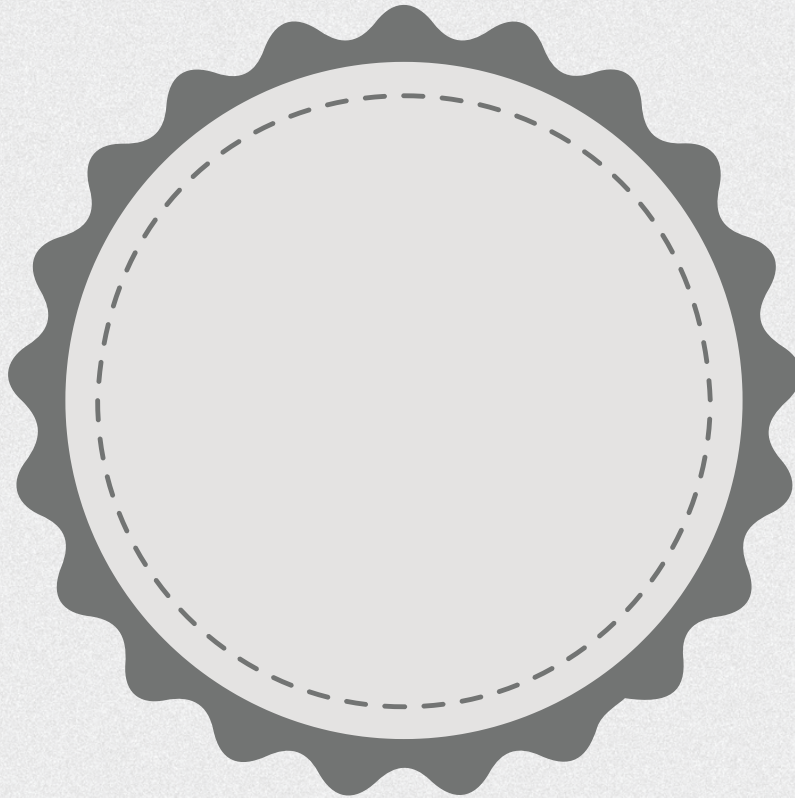
In the Northern Hemisphere, the Perseid meteor shower can be seen in mid-August, while the Geminids are visible around the world in December. In the dark hours of night—around 10 p.m. or later—find a spot away from city lights and simply look up. Be patient! It may take some time for your eyes to adjust.

For more information, check out [Science.Nasa.gov/Solar-System/Meteors-Meteorites](https://www.nasa.gov/solar-system/meteors-meteorites)



Design a Merit Badge

In *Vega's Piece of the Sky*, Mila hopes to earn a Space Science badge in her scouting program. Design a merit badge for an accomplishment that has made you proud. What is the badge called? What must be done to earn it?





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND WRITING PROMPTS

Vega is facing many big changes in her life: Her older brother is thinking about going away to college, her mother is talking about selling the family store, and Tata, her grandfather, is not as strong as he once was. What is a change you have faced, and how did it feel?

If you had five minutes to pack for an overnight adventure in the wilderness, what three things would *definitely* be going in your backpack and why?

When Vega finds an old key in the dirt, she wonders about its past—what doors it might have once unlocked. Imagine that, just like Vega, you discover an old key. Tell the story of who the key belonged to and what it kept locked before you found it.

Vega, Jasper, and Mila are all searching for a meteorite—but they each have different reasons. Which reason could you relate to most?

Travelers passing through Date City don't appreciate Vega's hometown the way she does. What do you love most about where you live? What's the first thing you would show a visitor?

Think about the strengths and weaknesses Vega, Jasper, and Mila bring to the meteorite hunt. Describe how each of them helped one another—or held one another back. What would you contribute if you had been part of the group?

The trio contends with many unexpected obstacles on their hike through the desert. Which challenge would you have found most difficult and why?

The main characters in this story are all keeping secrets of one kind or another. Imagine one of them has shared their secret with you. What advice would you give them?

If you had found the meteorite, what would you have done with it? Donate it to scientists? Sell it? Keep it? Something else?



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