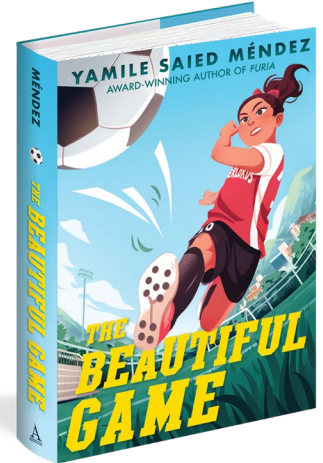# BOOK CLUB GUIDE FOR
THE BEAUTIFUL GAME
BY YAMILE SAIED MÉNDEZ

ABOUT THE BOOK

At thirteen years old, Valeria "Magic" Salomón is already the best soccer player her town has ever seen. But everything changes at the State Cup semi-final when Valeria gets her first period while *Wearing. White. Shorts.* After her team is unexpectedly eliminated, she goes from their secret weapon to their scapegoat and finds herself scrambling for a spot on an all-girl's team. With the next tournament looming on the horizon, Valeria has a month to figure out her place on her new team and learn how to play like a girl.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The first chapter is not only the introduction to the book and to Valeria's story, but it also sets up a lot of relationships. What were your assumptions about her team, friends, and family after that first chapter? Did those assumptions change by the end of the book? If so, how?

2. Valeria is taken by surprise when she gets her period. Were they any clues before? Was there anything she could have done differently?

3. Valeria has a fraught relationship with authority: her grandpa, the assistant coach, and coach Blume. How does she navigate them? To some people she might come across as rude, but is it rude when she stands up for herself? Why or why not?

4. How is being part of the Amazons different for Valeria than being part of the Overlords?

5. Why is Valeria's nickname, Magic, important to the story? How do you feel she relates to it?

6. What does soccer (or fútbol) represent to the different members of Valeria's family?

7. Valeria adores Lita. In what ways is their relationship mother/daughter and in what ways is it grandmother/granddaughter?

8. How does Valeria's family dynamic change once Maxwell moves in?

9. Why do you think the girls on the Amazons and their moms enjoy talking about their first periods and coming of age?

10. How does Valeria change throughout the story? How does it show in her relationship with Sasha, Max, and Benny? And how about with her grandparents and her dad?

11. What is the beautiful game that is the center theme of the book? How does it resemble the sport?