



BORRELIA

A Microbial Mystery

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BORRELIA: A Microbial Mystery. MayaVerse Book 2. Copyright © 2022.

A pregnant woman hospitalized with a rash in New Mexico suffers a potentially fatal reaction from infection with *Borrelia*, a squiggly spirochete bacteria transmitted by blood-sucking ticks. Veterinarian Maya Maguire of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention scrambles to discover the source. She's had no time to recover from anthrax in Arizona and its fallout on those closest to her. Summer heatwaves bring immigrant-associated *Borrelia* in Europe and Lyme disease protests. Juggling an impaired lover and a new arrogant CDC trainee who doesn't understand 'no,' Maya battles expanding personal and microbial invaders.

Book Club Discussion Questions

Schedule with the author at drmayamaguire@gmail.com

1. The genre elements include mystery, women's fiction, and romantic suspense. How do each of these elements contribute to the overall arc and your enjoyment of the story?
2. The main character is a young Chinese American woman adopted as an infant by an Irish-heritage family living in the Southwest. What elements of the character's background enrich the story?
3. What are some biological, regional, cultural, and religious influences on our perceptions of 'the other'?
4. How does the 'me too' theme impact the story? How do you define sexual harassment? What do you think of the decisions the characters take in response to it?
5. The Southwest is intended as a character in itself. How does geography and history influence the story?
6. Maya's perceptions are enlarged by her work in other countries. In what ways do you think exposure to other cultures and ways of life impact us?
7. What are current challenges in balancing work and personal obligations? Are there different roadblocks to achieving this for men and women?
8. This story takes place in 2019, just prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Although the story is fiction, what elements of the story will likely change in 2020?
9. How should public health policy balance the needs of society versus those of individual patients, especially in the face of different perspectives?
10. Zoonotic diseases are those in common between humans and non-human animals. How are transmission, investigation, prevention, and control more complex for zoonotic diseases than those infecting only humans?
11. What is the role of climate change in the story and for zoonotic diseases?
12. How can someone with a veterinary medical degree contribute to disease investigations?
13. For authenticity, writers often rely on personal experience, while protecting privacy of those sharing life events with the author. Writers also use research and close consultation with others to create characters, plot events, and settings not their own. As a reader, do you have a preferred balance of work informed by an author's imagination, research, and representation of their background?

This book is intended for an adult audience, and may contain language, characters, themes, and content that are offensive or triggering to some readers.

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