



AUTHOR

SOFIA SEGARRA-ORENSTEIN

Sofia Segarra-Orenstein is a teenage author who adores astronomy and all things related to space. She also loves animals and the study of different types of fauna. Her appreciation of the island of Puerto Rico and her culture prompted her to write this story about a young girl, Marz Starchild, who is curious about the oddities of the universe through her avid appreciation of STEM and her own Puerto Rican culture. Sofia also is an avid advocate for women's rights especially in Latin American culture. She hopes to inspire many other young Latina women to embark on a journey similar to Marz Starchild so that they can find their voice.

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MARZ STARCHILD

ACROSS THE UNIVERSE AND BACK AGAIN

In our vast universe, finding one's place in it all is a daunting task. Marz Starchild is the story of a Puerto Rican girl from New York City, who is trying to find herself and the universe all at once. In Marz's journey across time and space, she discovers the one harmonizing vibration that unifies all living things. In this journey of "magical sci-fi realism," we go on a voyage across the stars and into the human heart.





AUTHOR Q&A

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE THIS BOOK?

The experiences I went through after hurricane Maria in 2017 truly prompted me to start writing about my emotions and what I was going through. I was going through tough times and I tried to find a source of happiness or else I wouldn't have been able to process my emotions properly. I tried to run or do sports, but it wasn't really helping me. I then found the wonders of writing, which became my safe haven, and where I could write about what I was going through. Thus, I wrote about a girl, who was trying to find herself in such an immense universe because it was exactly how I was feeling at the time. I needed to find myself in an upside down world and I think that through writing a story about a curious Marz, I started to gain a glimpse into my own persona.

HOW DID YOUR BACKGROUND AND YOUR LOVE OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE PLAY A ROLE IN THE CREATION OF YOUR BOOK?

I have always loved mathematics and the sciences because they are unique ways of understanding and describing our world and the universe. When I was a young girl, I dreamed of becoming an Astrophysicist because I was fascinated with the vastness of space and our galaxy. My parents used to buy me books about space, especially those written by Neil DeGrasse Tyson, and I used to spend hours reading and trying to understand the intricacies of our universe. So, I wanted to create a story where all my dreams and passions for the sciences were displayed so that other young Latina girls can feel inspired to explore the furthest corners of the universe and pursue mathematics and sciences as potential careers.

IF YOU COULD TELL A YOUNG PERSON ABOUT WRITING AND DEVELOPING THEIR IMAGINATIONS, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THEM?

One of the main goals of my book is to inspire other young Latina girls to dream big and work tirelessly to make their dreams a reality. So, my message to young people everywhere is to never stop dreaming, and to remember that the world we live in needs more dreamers and those with the courage to make their dreams a reality.



THE MAIN CHARACTER DREAMS ABOUT GOING ACROSS THE UNIVERSE AND BACK AGAIN. HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH YOUR IDEA OF MAGICAL SCI-FI REALISM?

I am a huge Harry Potter fan. After reading all the books written by J.K. Rowling, my parents took me on a surprise visit to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios-I was mesmerized! I came up with the idea of my main character when I was walking through Universal Studios, especially Diagon Alley. I loved being immersed in the magic and the world of Harry Potter, but I always wondered what a character like me would look like. So, I challenged myself to create a young Latina character with my same passions, who goes on adventures, like my beloved Harry Potter characters did. Thus, the idea of creating a magical universe where a girl, just like me, goes through both in real life and in imagined and magical journeys entered my mind and all that I could do next was write about it. Also, the process of creating Marz and her inner and outer universe was also very magical for me as I could see my ideas come to life on paper.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN VALUES OF YOUR STORY?

There are a few main overarching values that run through my story. They are: passion, love, family, inner-discovery, friendship, curiosity, compassion, and unity. Passion is the guiding principle for Marz's adventure since it's what primarily drives her to help save her planet and Proxima B. Love is the central theme that connects all of the aspects of the story, especially the one of a grandmother. My own grandmother always showed me so much love and it helped to shape my character; likewise, Marz's grandmother's love helped to guide her toward the salvation of both planets. In Puerto Rican culture, family is very important. I wanted to represent that in the story and how Marz respected/never took for granted her family members. Also, Marz goes through a journey of self-discovery and profound introspection, which is where her inner-discovery takes place. Marz's friends help her through the entirety of the journey so friendship was an important part of the story because without her great friends, Marz would've felt so lonely, lost, and disconnected in this journey. Compassion is an important part as well because Marz always tried to understand other peoples' struggles to try and help; she even tried understanding the collective struggles of a planet. Curiosity helped inspire Marz to act and learn about the universe which helped her to make so many unique inventions and come up with extravagant ideas. Lastly, unity is mostly seen when all the characters come together to help each other reach a common noble goal and objective; we are always strongest when we work together.

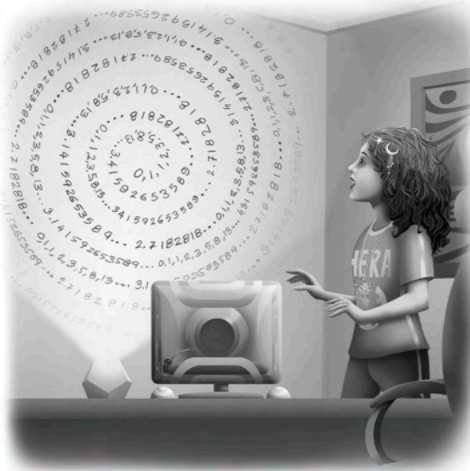
ABOUT THE BOOK



COME ON A JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME WITH MARZ AND HER FRIENDS ACROSS THE GALAXY AND BACK AGAIN

In our vast universe, finding one's place in it all is a daunting task. Marz Starchild is the story of a young Puerto Rican girl from Brooklyn, New York, who is trying to find herself and the universe all at once in her own way. She begins uncovering the underlying wonders of a new planet through the activation of her invention, the Realm Portal, and an ominous beeping sound that signals the start of a journey neither she nor her friends will soon forget. Marz and her friends embark on a voyage across the stars to try and save a dying planet, Proxima Centauri b, and in doing so they end up saving their own world from imminent destruction. However, in order to save these sister planets, she and her friends travel across time and space where they discover the harmonizing vibrations that unify all living things.

As Marz undergoes this adventure, she learns the power of believing in oneself as she overcomes obstacles, the power of keeping her Puerto Rican customs and traditions alive, and the power of friendship. In this journey of "magical sci-fi realism," a blend of scientific and mathematical facts alongside deeply held family and cultural values are revealed as we are all taken on a powerful and exciting voyage across the universe and into the human heart.



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