

MAYA

AND THE RISING DARK



RENA BARRON

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

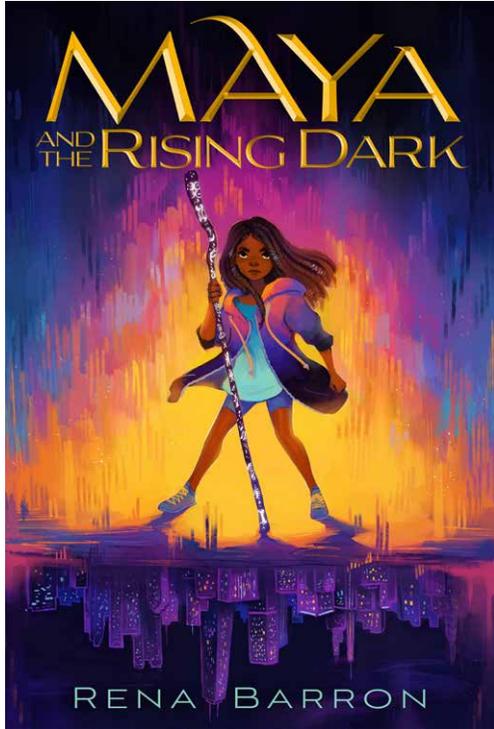


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Books for Young Readers

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

9781328635181 • HC • Age Range: 8-12 years • Grade Level: 3-7



About the Book

Twelve-year-old Maya is the only one in her South Side Chicago neighborhood who witnesses weird occurrences like werhyenas stalking the streets at night and a scary man made of shadows plaguing her dreams. Her friends try to find an explanation—perhaps a ghost uprising or a lunchroom experiment gone awry. But to Maya, it sounds like something from one of Papa’s stories or her favorite comics.

When Papa goes missing, Maya is thrust into a world both strange and familiar as she uncovers the truth. Her father is the guardian of the veil between our world and the Dark—where an army led by the Lord of Shadows, the man from Maya’s nightmares, awaits. Maya herself is a godling, half orisha and half human, and her neighborhood is a safe haven. But

now that the veil is failing, the Lord of Shadows is determined to destroy the human world, and it’s up to Maya to stop him. She just hopes she can do it in time to attend Comic-Con before summer’s over.

Common Core State Standards Methodology

Maya and the Rising Dark provides an excellent opportunity to apply critical thinking, problem solving, analytical, and literacy skills through inferencing, determining theme, identifying vocabulary, citing textual evidence to support opinions, and describing the plot of the story. This educator’s guide provides suggested activities developed to align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Reading: Literature, Writing, and Speaking and Listening. Each activity includes a reference to the CCSS strand, domain, and standard supported. Visit the Common Core State Standards website www.corestandards.org for additional information.

Pre-reading Activities

1. The Core of Storytelling: Myths, Legends, Folklore, and Fairy Tales

Storytelling is common to every culture. People enjoy listening to and telling a good story. The five basic elements of a story include characters, setting, plot, conflict, and resolution. Some of the most enduring forms of storytelling have been handed down through myths, legends, folklore, and fairy tales. It is important to understand and respect that some people or cultures may consider a myth as historical fact. *Note: Some of these terms overlap in their meaning.*

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

Definition (Ref: Kids.WordSmyth)	Example
<p>A myth is a story or group of stories to explain how the world began and why nature and people behave the way they do.</p>	<p>Central American Myth: Huracán was the god of the wind and storm. He played a large role in the three attempts to create humankind, destroying the second generation that displeased the gods and creating the third and final version of the human race out of corn. The word <i>hurricane</i> is derived from the name Huracán. (Ref: Your Dictionary)</p>
<p>A legend is a story or group of stories that have been handed down from a time long ago and that many people know but cannot prove to be true or untrue.</p>	<p>North American Legend: Johnny Appleseed traveled around America with nothing but the clothes on his back, a cooking pot on his head, and hands full of apple seeds. He threw apple seeds wherever he went, so that apple trees would grow up and produce apples for others to eat. (Ref: Transparent Language)</p>
<p>Folklore consists of stories and traditions of a group of people or a culture handed down through the years.</p>	<p>West African Folklore: There once lived a king with a magic drum that everyone wanted. A tortoise concocted a scheme to get it, but he didn't realize its power. He returned it to the king and was given something to sustain him and his family with food. (Ref: World of Tales)</p>
<p>A fairy tale tale is a story involving magical events and creatures in a make-believe world. It sometimes incorporates a lesson to be learned.</p>	<p>European Fairy Tale: Little Red Riding-Hood is given some food to take to her grandmother. She sets off, and on the way, while traveling through the woods, she meets a talking wolf. Little Red Riding-Hood tells him that she's going to visit her grandmother. The wolf runs ahead to the grandmother's house, disguises himself as the old woman, and tries to eat Little Red Riding Hood. (Ref: Interesting Literature)</p>

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

Give examples of some popular stories that can be classified as myths, legends, folklore, or fairy tales. Can you think of examples that fall under multiple definitions below?

Definition	Example
<p>A myth is a story or group of stories to explain how the world began and why nature and people behave the way they do.</p>	
<p>A legend is a story or group of stories that have been handed down from a time long ago and that many people know but cannot prove to be true or untrue.</p>	
<p>Folklore consists of stories and traditions of a group of people or a culture handed down through the years.</p>	
<p>A fairy tale is a story involving magical events and creatures in a make-believe world. It sometimes incorporates a lesson to be learned.</p>	

CCSS Alignment: ELA-Literacy.RL.3.2, RL.3.10, RL. 4.10

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

2. Fiction or Reality

Indicate which of the following statements are true or false.

Statement	Fiction or Reality
1. The Titans were deities that came before the Olympians in Greek mythology.	
2. The legend of Johnny Appleseed is based on a real person.	
3. King Arthur is a fictional character in children's books, such as <i>King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table</i> . He was not a real person.	
4. <i>The Princess and the Frog</i> is a fairy tale.	
5. Folklore teaches us stories of how the world was made and includes heroes and gods.	

CCSS Alignment: ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.10, RL.4.1, RL.4.3, RL.4.4, RL.4.10, RL.5.10

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

3. Learning About Maya's Hometown: Chicago

Maya and the Rising Dark is set in Chicago, Illinois, a city known for many famous attractions. Research these popular locations in Chicago and jot down details in order to get a better idea of the setting of the story.

Attraction	Location	History/Importance
Chicago Water Tower	Downtown (Magnificent Mile)	Built in 1869 and is the second oldest water tower in the United States. It is one of the only buildings still standing that survived the Great Chicago Fire.
Museum of Science and Industry		
<i>Cloud Gate</i> /Millennium Park		
Willis/Sears Tower		
Buckingham Fountain		

CCSS Alignment: ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.10, RL.4.1, RL.4.3, RL.4.10, RL.5.10, RL.6.1

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

Reading Comprehension/Companion

4. Identifying Clues in the Text

Maya and her friends and family have hobbies, interests, and special powers that are mentioned throughout the book. Use context clues to jot down descriptions for each character.

Name	Physical Description	Hobby, Interest, or Special Power
Maya		
Frankie		
Eli		
Papa (Eddy and Elegguá)		
Miss Lucille		
Miss Ida		
Nana (Nana Buruku)		
Mr. Jenkins (Shangó)		
Miss Mae (Oshun)		
Ernest (Eshu)		
Zane (Ogun)		
The Lord of Shadows		
Commander Nulan		

CCSS Alignment: ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.4, RL.3.5, RL.3.10, RL.4.1, RL.4.3, RL.4.10, RL.5.2, RL.5.4, 5.10, RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.4, RL.7.1

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

5. Before/After



Maya enjoys her father's stories throughout the text. Building on the "Core of Storytelling: Myths, Legends, Folklore, and Fairy Tales" pre-reading activity, think of the mythological creatures mentioned in her father's tales. In a small group, use the storyboard below to build a story with a beginning, middle, and end featuring one of them.

Book Title _____ Name _____

Name of the Author _____ Date _____

STORY BOARD

<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">BEGINNING</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Details</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Details</div>
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<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">MIDDLE</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Details</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Details</div>
↓	
<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">END</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Details</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Details</div>

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

6. Creative Writing

The orishas play an important role in *Maya and the Rising Dark*. In our world, the belief in orishas started with the Yoruba people of West Africa and spread with the Atlantic slave trade. Can you think of a cultural tradition you celebrate, how

it may have changed or stayed the same through the years, and write a short explanation about the history of that tradition?

CCSS Alignment: ELA-Literacy.RL.3.10, RL.4.10, RL.5.10, W.3.2, W.3.8, W.4.2, W.4.8, W.5.2, W.5.9, W.6.2, W.6.9, W.7.2, W.7.9

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

Discussion Questions

1. *Maya and the Rising Dark* includes themes such as good versus evil, the importance of family, and learning about your heritage. What other themes can you identify? Pick one and explain how the author conveys it in the text and develops it over the course of the novel. Please cite specific examples and details.
2. At the beginning of the book, Maya thought what she saw was her imagination or a daydream. What are some things you daydream about, or what happens when you let your imagination run wild?
3. Rena Barron wrote *Maya and the Rising Dark* with influences from the traditions of her ancestors. What traditions from your heritage or ancestors would you want to share with Maya?
4. Maya lives in Chicago, a city that is known for many popular tourist attractions, buildings, and food. Can you name one thing that Chicago is known for?
5. Maya's father has a staff with symbols on it to represent him as the guardian of the veil. If you had a staff, what symbols would you want on yours?
6. How might the plot change if Maya was aware of her father's true identity earlier on?
7. Throughout the book, Maya realizes that her favorite comic book and its characters start to come to life. What book or comic book would you want to come to life?
8. Maya risks her life to save her father despite her family insisting it is too dangerous. Has there been a time when you wanted to do something that might be unsafe and your parents stopped you? Why do you think they did this?
9. In chapter 9, Miss Lucille explains that the *veil* that Papa created is a barrier between the human world and the Dark world. It keeps humans safe from the Lord of Shadows and the darkbringers. What real-life "veil" helps human life exist on Earth? There are negative consequences when the tears in the veil appear in the book. What kind of negative consequences can happen if there are tears in our veil?
10. Miss Lucille also explains to Maya and her friends that the Lord of Shadows waged war on the orishas. What is his reason for starting this war? How was this war resolved?
11. At Comic-Con, Maya and her friends realize that the gateway to the Dark is a broom closet. Where would you hide a secret gateway to the Dark? Explain why you think it would be safe there.
12. In chapter 17, Maya realizes the consequences of her actions after she sets a fire and harms young darkbringers. Have you been in a situation where you hadn't thought through the consequences of your actions?
13. Maya and her friends instantly assume the children are bad because they are darkbringers. How might this situation have been different if they didn't immediately judge them based solely on their appearance? Please explain.
14. Maya experiences many dreams and nightmares throughout the book. Describe a recent nightmare or dream you have had. What do you think it means? Did it have anything to do with your real life?
15. Which supporting character do you believe plays the most important role? Use specific examples from the text to support your opinion.

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

16. Maya suffers from a medical issue called anemia. At important moments throughout the story, she often feels dizzy from her condition. Do you have something that you have to overcome or live with? How do you handle it?
17. Maya, her father, and her friends all share similar goals. Compare and contrast the ways they go about achieving these goals. What does that reveal about their characters?
18. When Maya and her friends go to Comic-Con in chapter 14, she sees people dressed up as her favorite superhero. Do you have a favorite superhero, and what makes them your favorite?
19. In chapter 18, hoping to keep Eli and Frankie safe, Maya tells them to go back instead of continuing their journey into the Dark together. How might the story have changed if Eli and Frankie had listened to her? What were the benefits of them sticking together as a team?
20. In the text, Maya meets many orishas in her neighborhood. Name some of these orishas and describe what they represent within the fictional world of Chicago.
21. When Miss Lucille explains the origins of the orishas and the darkbringers, she explains that the darkbringers, “consumed the resources from the ocean” (p. 91). How did this impact the growth of the world around them?
22. In chapter 24, Frankie describes the staff as a conduit, “a channel to carry something from one place to another” (p. 238). Can you think of an everyday example of a conduit? Describe it.
23. Frankie’s theory about the staff helps Maya feel more confident in herself. What’s another instance where Frankie’s science-based reasoning was helpful?
24. *Maya and the Rising Dark* is told from the first-person point of view. How does Maya’s point of view affect the story? How might the story differ if it was told from a different point of view? What if the Lord of Shadows was telling the story?
25. Miss Ida and Miss Lucille are two of the characters who help Maya and her friends. Cite two specific examples from the text where the twins aid Maya and her friends.
26. Papa, Maya, and her friends all fall victim to the elokos at some point in the story. What creatures from Greek mythology do the elokos remind you of?
27. Eli is forced to hurt the darkbringer in the helicopter to save himself and his friends. Can you describe how this decision affects Eli? Do you think he wishes he could have found another solution?
28. Throughout the book, Maya makes many discoveries about herself, her loved ones, and the world around her. How does Maya’s world view change from the beginning of the book to the end?
29. At the end of the story, Maya becomes a guardian of the veil in training. How do you think her life will change with her new role?

CCSS Alignment: ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.10, RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.4, RL.4.10, RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.4, RL.5.10, RL.6.2, RL.6.4, RL.7.1, RL.7.2, SL.3.1, SL.3.2, SL.3.6, SL.4.1, SL.4.2, SL.6.1, SL.7.1

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

Arts and Crafts Activity

1. If you were secretly a darkbringer, what would you turn into so you could surprise Maya and her friends? Would you have curved horns? A barbed tail? Draw your darkbringer self.
2. Maya quickly discovers that most people in her life are orishas. Draw a picture of your family and friends and write what their orisha powers would be. Then add details to show what they would look like as their orishas.
3. In Maya's neighborhood, most of the houses are greystones, an architectural style popular in some Chicago neighborhoods. Draw your house or your idea of a perfect house and share your favorite thing about it.

CCSS Alignment: ELA-Literacy.RL.3.10, RL.4.10, RL.5.10

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

Vocabulary

As you read *Maya and the Rising Dark*, consider the words below. Does the context provide clues to their meaning? Explain why or why not.

- extracurricular (p. 5)
- biased (p. 11)
- insinuate (p. 31)
- hypothesis (p. 43)
- repellent (p. 44)
- splice (p. 54)
- replicate (p. 74)
- equilibrium (p. 93)
- mannequin (p. 101)
- millennium (p. 128)
- recessive (p. 129)
- liberator (p. 135)
- celestial (p. 137)
- wielding (p. 149)
- dense (p. 150)
- fantastical (p. 163)
- misnomer (p. 169)
- velocity (p. 176)
- quarantined (p. 188)
- exquisite (p. 192)
- abyss (p. 201)
- manipulate (p. 239)
- dread (p. 267)
- self-righteous (p. 274)

Maya and the Rising Dark Word Puzzle

Z R O T A R E B I L S Q S M E
 R E P E L L E N T I O E E I X
 R L H L Y A S D S W L R V L T
 N A A V V I F E Y F K E I L R
 M I S C N L H N R Z M P S E A
 O A U U I T A I I I S L S N C
 V R A Q O T G T S D S I E N U
 V T W P E H S N E S Y C C I R
 E A Y S T N O A E T B A E U R
 E H N E D M N R T C A T R M I
 R E O F E V F A O N I E Q Q C
 D U D R E A D U M V A L Y Z U
 S D E S A I B Q G G F F P B L
 M A N I P U L A T E V K M S A
 M U I R B I L I U Q E C I P R

- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|
| ABYSS | EXTRACURRICULAR | MANIPULATE | RECESSIVE |
| BIASED | FANTASTICAL | MANNEQUIN | REPELLENT |
| DENSE | HYPOTHESIS | MILLENNIUM | REPLICATE |
| DREAD | INSINUATE | MISNOMER | SELF-RIGHTEOUS |
| EQUILIBRIUM | LIBERATOR | QUARANTINED | SPLICE |

CCSS Alignment: ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1, RL.3.4, RL.3.10, RL.4.4, RL.4.10, RL.5.4, RL.5.10, RL.6.1, RL.6.4, RL.7.1

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

About the Author

Rena Barron grew up in small-town Alabama, where stories of magic and adventure sparked her imagination. After penning her first awful poem in middle school, she graduated to writing short stories and novels by high school. Rena loves all things science fiction, ghosts, and superheroes. She's a self-proclaimed space nerd. When she's not writing, she can be found reading or brushing up on her French. You can visit her online at renabarron.com.



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Q&A with Rena

Q: What inspired you to write *Maya and the Rising Dark*?

A: For *Maya and the Rising Dark*, I was inspired by this idea of a girl who loved superheroes and stories. No surprise that I loved reading and telling stories while I was growing up, especially anything to do with Greek mythology. I hadn't known a lot about the rich stories of my ancestors from West Africa, and I'm still learning about them now. For Maya's story, I fused my love of mythology with my desire to understand the beliefs of my ancestors.

Q: Was Maya's neighborhood inspired by a real Chicago neighborhood?

A: Yes! Maya's neighborhood is based on the Back of the Yards on the southwest side of Chicago, where I lived several years ago. For people who know Chicago, it's a neighborhood that usually makes the news for the wrong reasons. When I wrote Maya's story, I wanted to focus on the sense of community and joy that thrived in the neighborhood despite what we always saw on the news. It's important for everyone to see that Chicago isn't just skyscrapers, pizza, and famous

attractions. There are so many neighborhoods that tourists and even locals have written off as "no-go" zones, and I wanted to write about a part of the city we don't often see in a positive light.

Q: Why do you think it was important to write this story?

A: When I was growing up, I never saw myself represented in the books that I loved to read. I never got to be the hero or go on a fantastical adventure to save the world. Nowadays, there has been a slow change in traditional publishing to correct that bias. I wrote Maya's story to help fill the gap so that every child will have the opportunity to read about people who represent them and also read about people from different backgrounds, too.

Q: Why do you think representing different people and perspectives is important in books?

A: Some people say that books aren't real, so it doesn't matter that a Black girl isn't the main character, but that's easy to say if you've always seen someone who looks like you in the books you've read. Books help us build empathy and

MAYA AND THE RISING DARK

BY RENA BARRON

share common hopes, fears, and dreams. I write stories that reflect the rich diversity of the real world, so we can all see ourselves as the center of our own stories and imagine endless possibilities.

Q: Were Maya and her friends inspired by real people?

A: Absolutely! This may sound self-indulgent, but Maya, Frankie, and Eli all have parts of my personality. I was a huge X-Men fan when I was their age, and also loved science and ghosts. I still adore those things! I was in after-school math tutoring, so Ms. Vanderbilt is inspired by my

seventh- and eighth-grade math tutor. My mom listened to a lot of blues music, so Ernest (aka Eshu) has a harmonica because it's the instrument I remember the most from my childhood.

Q: What do you have in store for readers for book two?

A: I don't want to spoil the story, but let's just say that Maya, Eli, and Frankie will face new threats to their neighborhood and discover a secret that will change their lives forever.

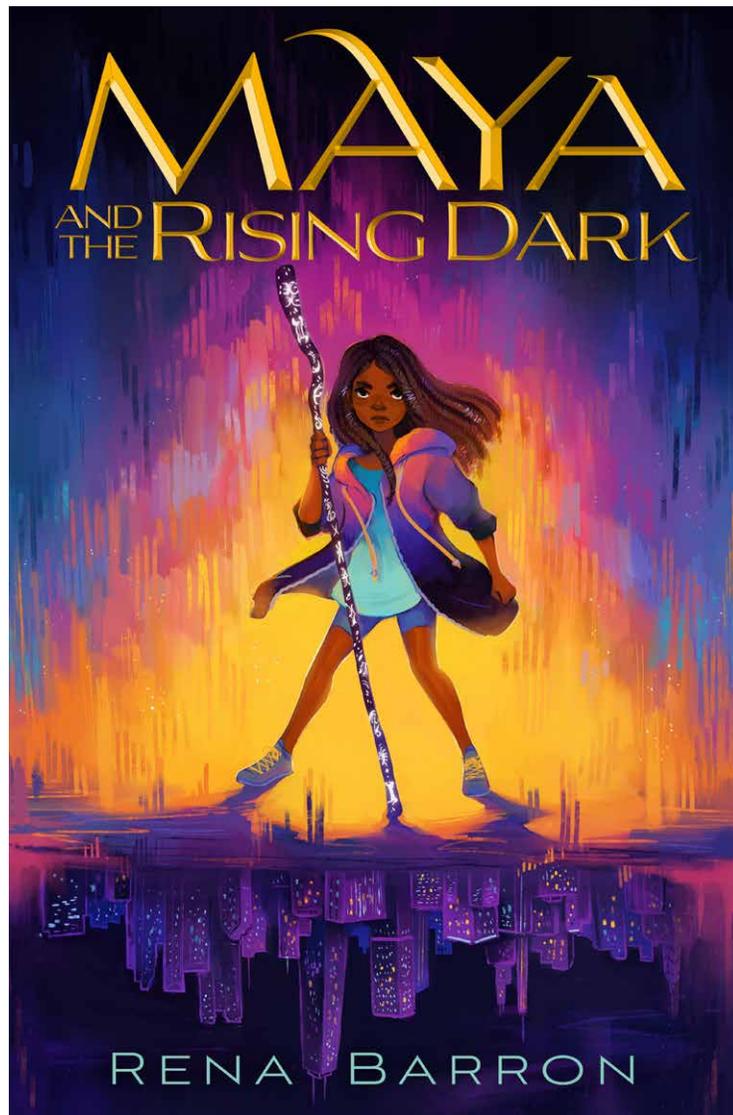
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