

The VOYAGE of LUCY P. SIMMONS

by BARBARA MARICONDA

DISCUSSION GUIDE

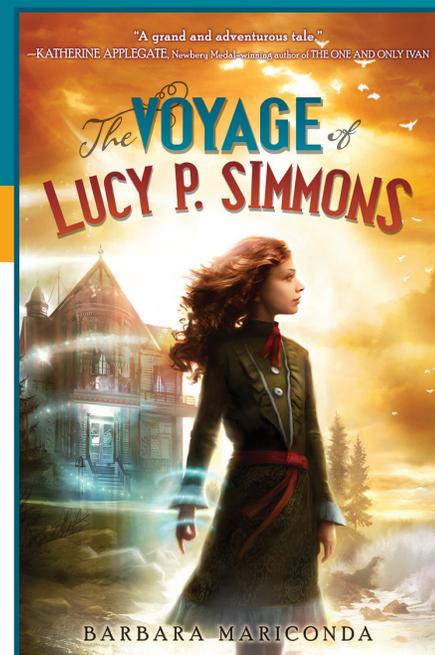
ABOUT THE BOOK

An enchanted flute that vibrates when danger is near, sparkling mist that unlocks a drawer of family secrets, and a bookcase that expands to conceal her hiding place—these are the bits of magic Lucy P. Simmons has experienced since her parents drowned at sea.

The magic is helping Lucy keep her house—Father’s beloved “ship on shore”—out of the hands of her greedy uncle Victor. Lucy thinks the magic is coming from Marni, a mysterious woman who seems to be one with the sea itself . . . and who bears a striking resemblance to the mythical siren in the painting in Father’s study.

Together, Lucy and Marni devise a plan to stop Uncle Victor’s conniving ways. In the process, Lucy makes unexpected friends and discovers that courage and love turn out to be the most powerful magic of all.

The Voyage of Lucy P. Simmons is a timeless story overflowing with dazzling magic, swashbuckling adventure, and good, old-fashioned heart.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does the very first paragraph of the novel foreshadow what’s to come? From a writer’s perspective, why might an author use foreshadowing? What does it inspire in the reader?
2. What word might you use to describe Lucy’s life with her mother and father prior to the boating accident? What evidence can you cite in the text to support your view? Next think about your relationship with your family. Write about some aspect of your life together or activities that you share with your family that illustrates something significant about your relationship.
3. Do you think that Lucy’s father makes the right decision in attempting to save the Brute? Why or why not?
4. Describe Uncle Victor’s character and personality traits. How does he demonstrate these characteristics during the reading of the will in Chapter 3?
5. Authors use *personification* when they assign human characteristics or abilities to an inanimate object. How is Lucy’s house personified? Can you provide specific instances of this? What or who do you think the personified house represents, and why?
6. Aunt Pru writes of a family curse. Do you believe that there is such a thing as a family curse? Why or why not?
7. There are several times in the book when Lucy deliberately lies to Uncle Victor. In your opinion, is lying ever justified? Why or why not? If you believe that lying can sometimes be justified, name a circumstance in which lying would be acceptable.
8. Addie is one of Lucy’s strongest allies. Discuss the ways in which Addie demonstrates her loyalty to and belief in Lucy.



Discussion questions continued on the next page . . .

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9. What are some of Aunt Margaret's character traits? For each trait, cite a particular circumstance in which we see that trait in action.
10. In Chapter 11, Addie is angry at Lucy. How do the two of them make amends and bring about something positive from the experience?
11. What do you think of "Miss Maude's" school? How is it different from your school? Would you enjoy a school such as that? Why or why not?
12. Marni is a mysterious character. Where do you think she came from? What do you think she has to do with the magic? Why do you suppose she took an interest in helping Lucy and the Perkins children?
13. Why was the meeting of Lucy and the Perkins children so awkward? What do you think Lucy learned from that experience?
14. In Chapter 14, p. 148, Marni says, "Courage is not about being unafraid. Courage has to do with moving forward in the face of fear." What does she mean by that? Describe a time when you moved forward in the face of fear. Did you feel courageous at the time? Explain.
15. Why do you think it is difficult for Lucy to go sailing with Marni and the Perkins children? And, why do you suppose Marni feels it is important for Lucy to go sailing again?
16. Do you think Walter is a good big brother to Annie and Georgie? Cite examples from the story to support your view.
17. During the storm in Chapter 19, Marni urges Lucy to come down into the cellar. Why do you think Lucy hesitates?
18. In Chapter 20, p. 227–230, Lucy is faced with a dilemma—should she save the Brute? What do you think influences her decision? As she takes hold of his arm (p. 230) the glitter begins its final transformation on the house. What do you think is the connection between these two events?
19. Why do you think the house transforms into a ship? And, what do you think bolsters Lucy's confidence to set her sights on Australia?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BARBARA MARICONDA was a teacher for twenty-two years before becoming a full-time writer. She's written scores of books for teachers and numerous books for young readers, including an Edgar-nominated middle-grade novel, a picture book that was a National Best Books and Children's Choice finalist, and a Moonbeam Award Gold Medal winner. *The Voyage of Lucy P. Simmons* was named a 2013 Children's Book Committee/Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Book of the Year. An avid traveler, Barbara's ridden a camel in the Sahara, a rickshaw in Tokyo, a hot-air balloon over the Valley of the Kings, a dogsled in Alaska, climbed the Great Wall of China, kissed the Blarney Stone, camped in the outback, and explored the pirate queen Grace O'Malley's castle on Clare Island, Ireland. She strives to empower the next generation of authors through her company, Empowering Writers.

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