

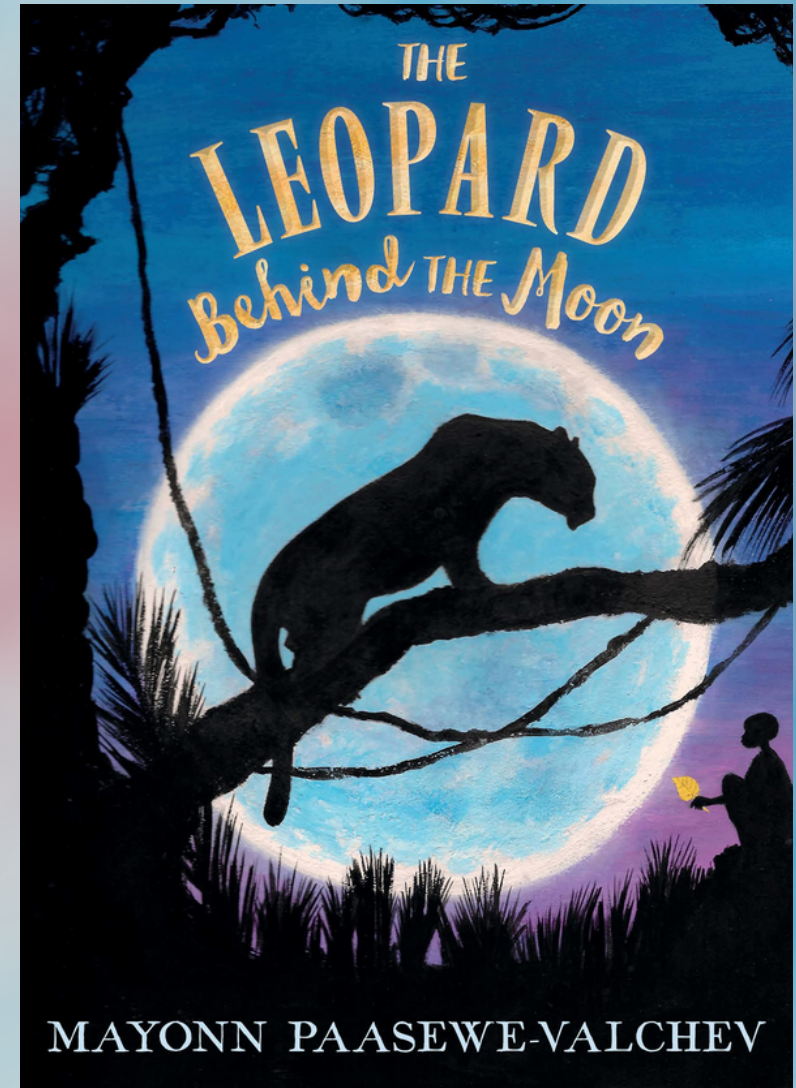


# The Leopard Behind the Moon

## Reading Guide

Intro to the Book  
Discussion Questions  
About the Author  
Readalikes

Book Discussion with  
the Author!  
Tuesday, November 30, 4pm



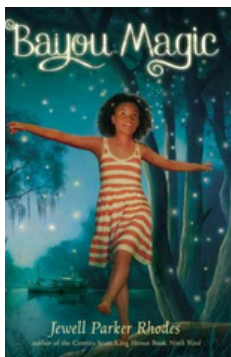
## About the Author: Mayonn Paasewe-Valchev

Mayonn Paasewe-Valchev (Mă-yonn Pass-sā-way Văl-chěv) was born in Liberia, where she was exposed to a culture of oral storytelling at a young age. She lived in the Netherlands for several years, where she learned to stuff her klompen (wooden shoes) with carrots and developed a love for reading stories—especially tales written by Roald Dahl and Astrid Lindgren. She lives in Georgia with her family.

Find out more about Mayonn at [mayonn.com](http://mayonn.com), and on Instagram and Twitter @mayonnvalchev

## Readalikes

Did you enjoy reading THE LEOPARD BEHIND THE MOON? Give some of these other books a try!



Bayou Magic  
by Jewell Parker Rhodes



Dragons in a Bag  
by Zetta Elliott



Tristan Strong Punches a  
Hole in the Sky  
by Kwame Mbalia



King and the Dragon  
Flies  
by Kacen Callender



MAYONN PAASEWE-VALCHEV

# Behind the forbidden, magical door



There are three important laws in Ezomo's village: Do not go to The Valley, do not go out at night, and never, ever, ever open the magical door that protects them all. But when Ezomo encounters the leopard believed to have killed his father, he and his two best friends embark on a journey that leads them past the boundaries set by their elders.

With his friends by his side, Ezomo chases after the leopard, certain that it has the power to cure all. But in the process, he discovers the truth about his village. And that cautionary tales exist for a reason.

Mayonn Paasewe-Valchev's debut novel balances a gripping adventure with themes of friendship, community, identity, grief, and resilience. Poignant and memorable, Ezomo's story will appeal to fantasy lovers and readers of Grace Lin and Kelly Barnhill.

## WARNING!

**Spoilers ahead! To avoid spoiling the story, only read the discussion questions AFTER you finish reading the book!**

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** Ezomo was deemed useless in his village of Sesa. Do you think Ezomo had any strengths that the villagers overlooked? If so, what were they, and how might they have been useful to his community?
- 2** What role did Oma and the boys and girls under the mango tree play in shaping Ezomo's beliefs about himself? What are examples of ways we shape the self-belief of others both positively and negatively? How do we shape our own self-belief?
- 3** In the swamp behind the village door, Ezomo opened up to Chimama and Muja about his father's death—something he hadn't done before. Why do you think he was willing then to share? What would you have done if Ezomo had opened up to you about his father?
- 4** In the village of Ekewe, Yeanue offered Ezomo a leaf from the strange tree. Do you think Ezomo made the right choice? Why or why not?
- 5** Humongous scolded Ada and said, "But you can cast your hurt on other people. Your heart will never heal that way. It will only grow darker." What do you think Humongous meant by this statement? In what ways do we cast our hurt onto others, and what might be the consequences of doing so?
- 6** In the final chapter of the book, we see Ezomo sitting under the mango tree with Chimama, Muja, Ada, and Ofasa, whispering and giggling when Oma isn't looking. This is a contrast from when we first meet Ezomo in Part I. What understanding did Ezomo gain during his journey that led to his happier state?