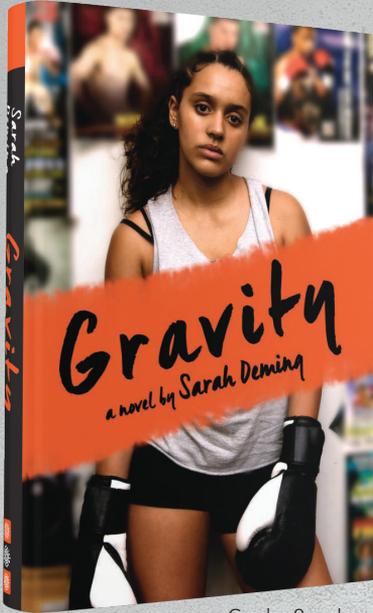


Gravity

a novel by Sarah Deming

Discussion Guide

ABOUT THE BOOK



Grades 9 and up
HC: 978-0-525-58103-1
GLB: 978-0-525-58104-8
EL: 978-0-525-58105-5

When Gravity Delgado walks into Cops 'n Kids, a no-frills Brooklyn boxing gym, and starts working with the legendary Coach Thomas, she joins a true melting pot of fighters. There's the flirtatious Lefty (a southpaw), hard-to-beat D-Minus ("They call me D-Minus 'cause I'm all you need"), artistic Kimani "Monster" Browne, and a host of others. At the gym, Gravity finds the unexpected: the father she's never had in her coach, not one but two romantic prospects, and, most important, a love and talent for boxing. If she can stay focused despite her troubled home life, she might just have a shot at the Olympics.

With each blow, each jab, and each punch, Sarah Deming draws her readers into the gritty and inspiring world of Gravity Delgado, a Jewish Dominican teenager growing up in Brooklyn and aspiring to greatness.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Sarah Deming is a New York City Golden Gloves champion and boxing journalist. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Threepenny Review*, as well as on HBO and CNBC. She coaches and mentors young boxers at NYC Cops & Kids—the real-life gym that inspired Gravity's story.

★ "Readers will immediately stand in Gravity's corner as she battles distractions and fights against the odds in pursuit of her dreams. A riveting pugilistic must-read."

Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Do a quickwrite about boxing, boxers, the ring, and what you know about the history of the sport.
2. What responsibility do we have to one another? To family members?
3. Have you ever been disappointed in or hurt by someone? What did you do to move past it? Did you use this hurt to energize or motivate you?
4. Define *family*. Who do you consider to be family? Did you include anyone who isn't related to you? Why do you consider them family? What characteristics or traits do these people possess that elevate them to the level of family?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Study the cover of *Gravity*. Look at the young woman. What do you know about her? How would you describe her? What about the image on the cover gives you these perceptions and opinions?
2. Gravity is pulled in many directions: she is a high school student, a boxing champion, and the de facto caregiver for her younger brother, Ty. How would you assess her ability to navigate these roles?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

3. Gravity has a complicated and destructive relationship with her mother and her absent father. Who are the parental figures who have supported her and her brother? Explain how these adults are mother and father figures.
4. There are many words of wisdom in this book. Reflect and respond to the following:
 - a. "A kite is a form of defense against evil." (p. 59)
 - b. "The spirit is what keeps you alive. We're just passing by. This is just a learning experience." (p. 60)
 - c. "That's boxing." (p. 79)
 - d. "Women are tough." (p. 211)
5. Andre made a sexually inappropriate and unwanted comment to Gravity. (p. 165) How did that moment affect Gravity? How did she respond? Why? How would you respond in a similar situation?
6. Do you agree with Gravity's decision to leave Cops 'n Kids after her argument with Coach? What do you think about Coach's actions? (pp. 230–231, pp.237–238) Explain your answers.
7. Gravity has a lot on her plate. Not only is she a champion boxer, but she has all the normal teenage stresses of school and relationships, as well as a less than ideal home life. How does she juggle all these things? Is she ever overwhelmed? Do you ever feel overwhelmed? How do you manage it?
8. Gravity loves boxing. "She felt so filled up, like she had more power than she could ever use." Why do you think Gravity is so drawn to boxing and the power it gives her? Is there anything that makes you feel powerful?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

9. How do other athletes describe their sports? How do they express adoration for the sport and their place within it?
- a. **Kobe Bryant:** “Dear Basketball”
(Text: theplayerstribune.com/en-us/articles/dear-basketball.
Video: believeentertainmentgroup.com/portfolio-item/dear-basketball/)
 - b. **Serena Williams:** “Serving Greatness” (allure.com/story/serena-williams-unapologetic-greatness-cover-interview-2019)
 - c. **Ronda Rousey:** “I’m not a do-nothing b****.” (foxsports.com/ufc/story/ronda-rousey-i-m-not-a-do-nothing-bitch-072915)
10. If you could have a conversation with Gravity, what would you discuss? What life lessons do you think she would share with you? What would you share with her?

BEYOND THE BOOK

1. **Text to Text:** Browse through IMDB’s “The 50 Best Boxing Movies of All Time” (imdb.com/list/l5021220211/), and discuss the cover images, titles, and movie descriptions. What do you notice? Then read Jaime Lowe’s article “Women Have Been Boxing in the Shadows for Too Long” (nytimes.com/2016/08/15/magazine/women-have-been-boxing-in-the-shadows-for-too-long.html), published in the *New York Times* in 2016, and consider what the movies and article emphasize about the pursuit of boxing careers, female involvement, and societal pressures.
2. **Presentation:** After reading *Gravity*, create a vlog or podcast about Gravity Delgado. What’s the essence of her story? What’s noteworthy about her journey? What happens next (in your opinion) to and for Gravity?



A LETTER ABOUT MAKE ME A WORLD

from creative director, Christopher Myers

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WOULD SET LIMITS ON OUR CHILDREN'S IMAGINATIONS.

When our kids ask hard questions, which all young folks inevitably do, there are people who would like our children to sit down and shut up. There are people who want our children to be silent, to feel invisible. There are people in the world who are invested in glass ceilings and fences and walls to keep our young people from realizing their potential, from dreaming too audaciously, from knowing each other.

WE ARE NOT THOSE PEOPLE.

Make Me a World is an imprint dedicated to exploring the vast possibilities of contemporary childhood. We strive to imagine a universe in which no young person is invisible, in which no kid's story is erased, in which no glass ceiling presses down on the dreams of a child. Then we publish books for that world, where kids ask hard questions and we struggle with them together, where dreams stretch from eons ago into the future and we do our best to provide road maps to where these young folks want to be. We make books where the children of today can see themselves and each other.

When presented with fences, with borders, with limits, with all the kinds of chains that hobble imaginations and hearts, we proudly say—no.

Let us think beyond those limits, instead, MAKE ME A WORLD.