Discussion Guide - Book 2

ALIENS ON VACATION

By Clete Barrett Smith

SamanthaGreenMysteries.com

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Dear Serious Reader,

I think I know where I’d like to go for MY next vacation, how about you?

Perhaps Scrub’s Grandma will permit EARTHLING guests one of these days!

Until then, enjoy these alien-friendly activities, discussion questions and journal ideas!

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“The thing that crawled out of the transporter looked like a squid. It was about half as tall as me, but most of that height consisted of its enormous round head, which was purplish red with green swirls and covered on all sides with tiny blinking eyes...It slithered along the floor with the help of at least a dozen snakelike arms, covered in tentacles, which sprang out of its neck.”

Excerpt from Aliens on Vacation by Clete Barrett Smith

“...they had these weird growths–antennae, maybe, which were broad and green and looked kind of like the fronds on a palm tree–sprouting out of the top of their heads. Their bodies were brownish and tube-shaped and speckled with various shades of green and yellow. Adding to their rain-forest look were long arms and legs, each ending in a dozen or so plantlike tendrils.”

Excerpt from Aliens on Vacation by Clete Barrett Smith
Create your own ALIEN!

Scrib and Grandma cross interplanetary paths with some crazy looking (and behaving) “tourists.”

Tune in to your inner Sci-Fi signal and envision an extraordinary extraterrestrial!

Introducing my alien, named: ______________________________

Planet: ___________________________ Shape/Color(s): ___________________________

Galaxy: ___________________________ Features: ___________________________

Diet: ___________________________ Language: ___________________________

use your imagination!

Does your alien have any noses, mouths, ears, eyes, lips, eyebrows or belly buttons?

Arms/legs, hands/feet, fingers, scales, tentacles, pinchers, horns, tails, fur, trunks?


My alien’s self-portrait

Describe the conditions of your alien’s planet (what does it look/feel/smell like? Is there gravity? Water? Plants? Animals? Insects? What exists there that does not exist on Earth?)

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Illustration by Christian Slade
1. When the story begins, how does Scrub feel about having to spend the entire summer with his crazy grandma in "Middle-of-Nowhere" Washington? Why?

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2. What are some of the weird things Scrub observes at Grandma’s place, that lead him to suspect that Grandma isn’t running a typical Bed & Breakfast?

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3. Scrub tells us about his best friend Tyler, who has lived next door since preschool. He says, “Even though he knew me better than anyone else, even my own parents, I was starting to wonder if we’d even be friends if we met for the first time right now.”

What does Scrub mean?

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This isn’t school or homework, so just have fun! Answer questions that interest you. Then dazzle your friends with your deep thoughts!
4. What are some of the jobs Grandma gives to Scrub? How does he feel about being given these responsibilities?

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5. When Scrub first meets Greg, Brian, and Eddie, he is embarrassed by Grandma. But, when Brian and Eddie start making fun of her, he gets a little mad. Why?

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Scrub says, “This was my chance to defend Grandma, but I shrugged and chickened out.” Why was it difficult for him to do the right thing? Have you ever stuck up for someone?

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6. Scrub describes his job at the B&B as “problem-solving through improvisation,” and he compares it to playing basketball. How does Scrub’s summer experience teach him to think on his feet?

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7. After Sheriff Tate threatens to close down the B&B, Grandma tells Scrub, “If we act scared, then that bully has already won. We are simply not going to let someone like that run our lives.” What does this tell you about Grandma? What is even more important to her than keeping her Bed & Breakfast open?

8. In Chapter 3, Sheriff Tate treats Mr. Harnox like a suspicious criminal for walking around the park smelling things. Do you think that Mr. Harnox has earned the right to be nasty back to Sheriff Tate? Yet what does Harnox say to Grandma when she doesn’t want Tate as her Head of Security?

9. Grandma tells David: “Everyone deserves a nice, peaceful vacation, don’t they? And everyone deserves to be treated well, no matter how different they appear.” Have you ever been judged by your appearance and treated differently than others? How did it make you feel?
Now it's your turn to write! Pick an idea below, or think of your own topic.

“If you had told me a week ago I would meet a space alien, I’m sure I could’ve come up with a thousand good questions for it. But I was a total blank now.”

Excerpt from *Aliens on Vacation* by Clete Barrett Smith

What if you had the chance like Scrub to meet a space alien face-to-face? What would you want to ask? Write down a conversation between you and the space alien.

“But those people outside have invited fear into their hearts, and now fear has made its home there. ’... Just look at them. The fear twists their faces so badly that they need some of our disguises just to look like themselves again.’”

Excerpt from *Aliens on Vacation* by Clete Barrett Smith

Grandma says this to Scrub as she watches the mob of townspeople surrounding her Bed & Breakfast, demanding she close it down. Write about what Grandma means by fear making a home. Think of a time when you’ve noticed people getting swept up in fear before they have all the facts.

“Whenever I talked to Grandma she looked right at me...and seemed to really think about what I had to say.”

Excerpt from *Aliens on Vacation* by Clete Barrett Smith

Scrub says talking with Grandma is “different from talking with any other adult.” Her actions show that she trusts him and respects what he has to say. Write about someone in your life who treats you like this, who sees you differently than others see you.