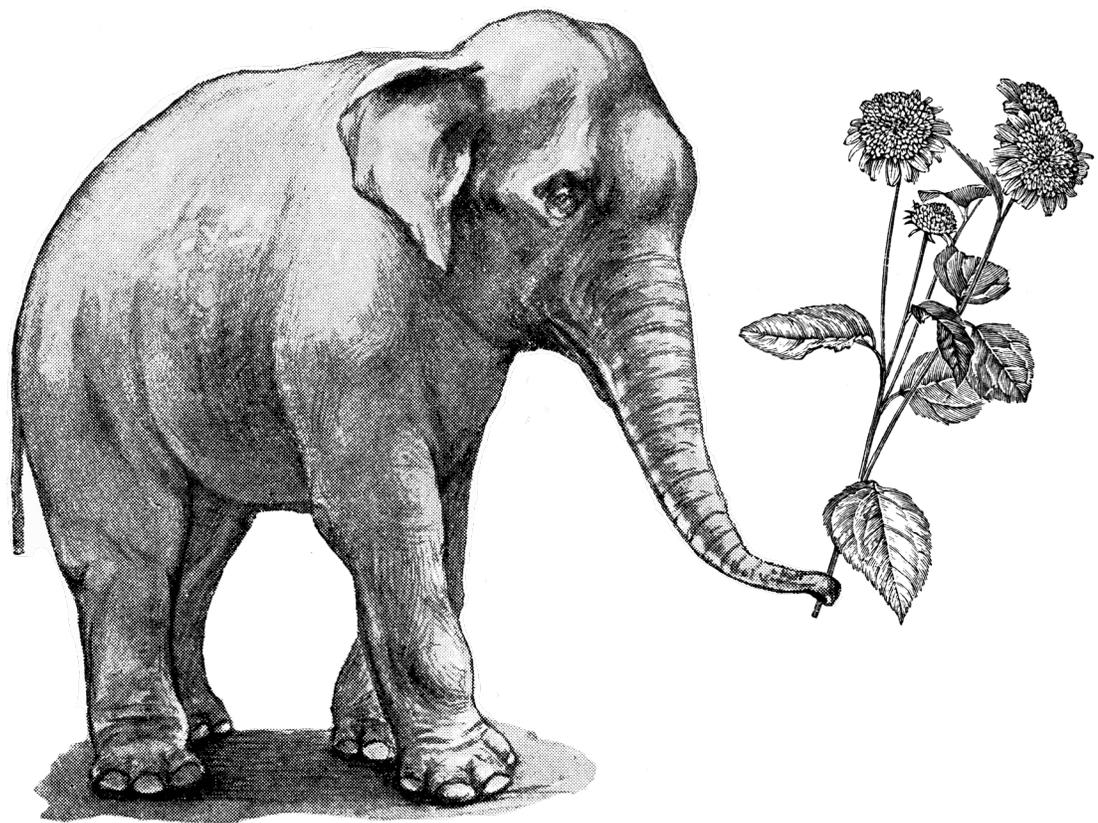


# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS



## EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR LIBRARIANS, EDUCATORS & BOOK CLUBS

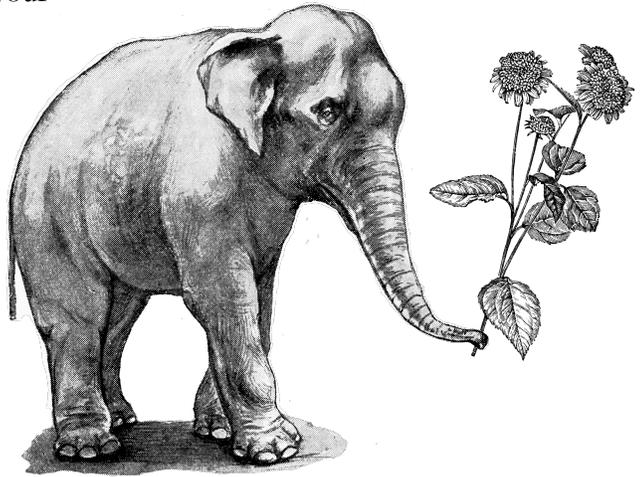


# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide, written by former middle school English teacher and middle grade and young adult novelist Jennifer Ziegler, can assist your exploration of the novel with the following components:

- ◆ **Understanding and Analyzing** with comprehension questions like, “How does Nitty know it’s time to plant the seeds?”
- ◆ **Extending and Connecting** with prompts like, “Nitty says that Twitch is ‘brave’ but ‘possibly foolish, too.’ How can an act of bravery also be considered foolish? Explain with a real or hypothetical example.”
- ◆ **Creating** with ideas like, “Come up with your own recipe for rain. Be sure to include a list of ingredients, necessary equipment, and step-by-step directions.”



## ACTIVITY KIT

Also available for classroom, library, or book club reader engagement are the following activities:

- ◆ **Plant a Froozle Flower Garden:** The characters plant mysterious seeds that grow into an astounding crop of tall flowering fruit plants they call Froozles. The kit contains a seed packet template and iron-on text for garden markers to plant your own Froozle Flower Garden.
- ◆ **Elephants, Education & Empathy:** The book may stimulate reader curiosity about elephants, especially those in captivity. The kit shares the resources available at the Elephant Sanctuary of Tennessee, a sanctuary for retired circus and zoo elephants. It also contains an idea and templates to hold a “Magnolious Move-o-thon” to raise money and awareness for the elephants in the sanctuary.
- ◆ **Gleam Jar:** The character Nitty carries a mason jar with small objects that remind her of the family she has lost. The kit contains an empty jar template for readers to reflect on memory.
- ◆ **Mustache Maker:** One of the compelling supporting characters runs the Schnurrbart Emporium, making mustaches for those who cannot grow their own. The kit offers a photograph of a 1930s man who is badly in need of a mustache.

These activities were created by Curious City and can be found by searching “magnolious” at [CuriousCityDPW.com](http://CuriousCityDPW.com).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Suzanne Nelson is the author of several middle grade and young adult novels, including **A Tale Magnolious**, **Serendipity’s Footsteps**, and the **Cake Pop Crush** foodie romance series. She lives in Ridgefield, CT, where she also teaches creative writing workshops for middle-graders and teens.

You can visit Suzanne at [www.suzannenelson.com](http://www.suzannenelson.com) or follow her on Twitter @snelsonbooks or on Instagram and Facebook @suzannenelsonbooks.

Follow and share engagement with the novel under the hashtag #TaleMagnolious.

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## ABOUT THE NOVEL

### A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: THE ADVENTURES OF AN ORPHAN, HER ELEPHANT, AND SOME RATHER UNUSUAL SEEDS

By Suzanne Nelson  
Published by Random House Children's Books  
ISBN-13: 9781984831743  
Age Range: 8 and up

This heartwarming novel tells of a remarkable bond between two outcasts, a girl and an elephant, and the way they change one small town forever, simply by finding a family to love. Nitty Luce is an orphan—and a thief. Magnolious is an elephant—and a fugitive.

When fate brings these two unlikely friends together, they set off on an unexpected journey. Before long, they end up in Fortune's Bluff, a once-thriving town devastated by a decade of dust storms.

Everyone Nitty meets there—from a grumpy farmer to a forlorn mustache maker—has lost hope. But Nitty and Mag sense there's something special buried underneath the town's dust—and that maybe they can help it grow.

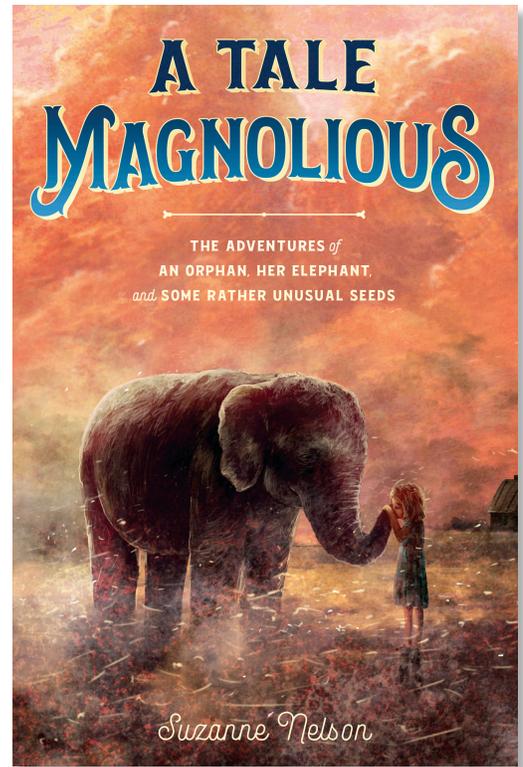
With a touch of magic and a harvest of hope, Nitty and her exceptional elephant set out to change the destiny of a dying town, proving that from the smallest seeds grow the greatest friendships.

## PRAISE FOR THE NOVEL

“Readers will be delighted by this effervescent story full of adventure, heart, and a dash of magic.”  
—*School Library Journal*

“A beautifully written fantasy allegory with comic grace notes.”  
—*Kirkus Reviews*

“This beautiful story, set during the Dust Bowl, shows the power of hope and love even in dire circumstances. Nelson's ingenious young characters, wise adults, enriched vocabulary, tongue-in-cheek humor, and understanding of the elephant's feelings make this perfect for reading aloud.”  
—*Booklist*



# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## DISCUSSING, EXTENDING, CREATING WITH THE NOVEL

### CHAPTER ONE

#### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ Where did Nitty Luce run away from? Why?
- ◆ Who is Miz Ricketts?
- ◆ Why is the town going to execute the elephant Magnolious?

#### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Would you be scared of Mag? Why or why not?
- ◆ On page 9, Nitty remembers a prank she once played on Miz Ricketts. Have you ever played a prank? If so, describe it. If not, discuss how you feel about pranks.

#### Creative Writing

Draw a picture of Nitty based on the descriptions within Chapter One.

### CHAPTER TWO

#### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ According to the book, what are elephants extremely good at?
- ◆ How does Mag size people up?
- ◆ Where does Mag take Nitty?

#### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Discuss a time when you've gotten filthy. What were you doing? How did you look? Describe in detail.
- ◆ Mag and Nitty liked each other right off the bat. Have you ever met someone and instantly liked them? If so, who? Why? If not, explain whether or not you think it's possible to like someone immediately after meeting them.

#### Creating

In the book, Nitty thinks, "The whole world needs that sort of green." Pick a color. Now imagine a world without it. What would it look like? What would be missing? What things would you miss the most and why?

### CHAPTER THREE

#### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What deal do Mag and Nitty make with Windle?
- ◆ Who is Clara?
- ◆ What itches on Windle? Why is this significant?

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Do you like Windle Homes? Why or why not? Use specific details from the book to explain your answer.
- ◆ What do you think Nitty means when she says, “Fortune’s Bluff is a woeful tribulation of a name”? Do you think it’s a suitable name for the town? Why or why not?

## Creating

Draw a picture of Windle’s house according to the description on pages 26-27.

-or-

Imagine what the house looked like when Windle first lived in it and write a paragraph describing it. Use specific details.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ Who is Twitch? What did Nitty think he was at first? What other name does he go by?
- ◆ What is the big blue box Twitch carries with him? What does it do?
- ◆ Why does Mag agree to plow the field?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Do you have, or have you ever had, a nickname? If so, what is it? How do you feel about it? If not, tell us about someone you know who has a nickname. Does the nickname fit them? Why or why not?
- ◆ Why do you think Windle changes his mind about helping Nitty and Mag? Tell us about a time when you weren’t going to do something, but then you changed your mind. What happened?

## Creating

Animals do many important jobs in our society, including transportation, security, hunting, helping, and other tasks. Think of a job and give it to an elephant—or another animal atypical for that task. Write a brief story or description about what that would be like.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What does Twitch like to read?
- ◆ How does Windle help Mag?
- ◆ What are the contents of the Glean Jar, and what do they represent?
- ◆ How does Twitch get away with staying away from home for so long?
- ◆ Who fixes the windmill?
- ◆ How does Nitty know it’s time to plant the seeds?

### Extending and Connecting

How does Mag feel about Nitty? Use evidence from the book to back up your claim.

The contents of the Glean Jar remind Nitty of people and past times, and the rocker makes Windle think about Clara. Tell us about an object that reminds you of someone in your life—from the present or long ago. What is the object? Why does it make you think of this person?

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Creating

Pages 61-62 describe dreams that Nitty, Mag, and Windle have that night. Consider the character of Twitch and make up a dream he might have had that same evening. Be sure to link it to details you already know about him.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What do Nitty and Mag see when they wake up?
- ◆ Why won't Mag leave?
- ◆ What does Windle give Nitty to read? What else does he give her?
- ◆ What does Nitty ask to do at the end of the chapter?
- ◆ Give evidence from this chapter that Windle is softening toward Nitty and Mag.

### Extending and Connecting

Do you like to read aloud? Why or why not? Do you like to be read to? Why or why not? Look up the definitions of “viridescent” and “resplendent.” What else could be described in such terms? Write two original sentences—one for each word—that demonstrate their meaning.

## Creating

Suzanne Nelson, the book's author, uses sensory details to help readers imagine the story. Write a paragraph describing the sights, sounds, smells, tactile sensations—and perhaps tastes, if appropriate—of the room you are in right now.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ Describe Fortune's Bluff and its inhabitants.
- ◆ What does Nitty see dangling in the window of Crispin Sigh's bakery?
- ◆ Who owns the biggest building in Fortune's Bluff? Name at least two things about it that make it stand out.
- ◆ Who is Ferdinand and what does he make?
- ◆ Why are some people wearing earmuffs?
- ◆ What do Nitty and Twitch find in the broom closet?
- ◆ What do we discover about the relationship between Windle and Mayor Neezer Snollygost?
- ◆ What unusual talent does Neezer Snollygost have?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Compare and contrast the Snollygost General Store and the bakery. What do they have in common? What makes them very different?
- ◆ Describe something you are good at. It could be something typical like playing piano or basketball, or something unusual like wiggling your ears. When did you first realize you were good at this? How often do you get to do it?

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Creating

Choose one of the side characters introduced in this chapter and draw them according to their description.

-or-

As you did in the questions for Chapter Five, describe a dream they might have that night based on what you know about them.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ At the top of page 98, Windle says, “I was a fool to say such a thing.” What did he say? To whom? Why does he regret it?
- ◆ What did Windle buy at the general store?
- ◆ At the bottom of page 99, what action does Nitty take after Windle says, “After love comes loss. And loss brings more unhappiness.”?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Compare and contrast the characters of Nitty and Mag. How are they similar? How are they different?
- ◆ In this chapter there are at least two instances where characters show that they care about someone without using words. Think of someone important to you. Consider an action you do to demonstrate that you care about them. Who is it and what do you do for them?
- ◆ Now tell us about an action someone does, or has done, for you to demonstrate they care.

## Creating

On page 99, Nitty thinks, “A heart wasn’t like a canned good, meant to sit on the shelf of some darkened cupboard for years, shut up tight. No. Hearts were meant for opening.” This is called a simile, a figure of speech that compares two unlike things using the words “like” or “as” (example: tall as a tree). Create your own simile comparing a heart to something else. Be sure to explain, as Nitty does, how they are similar or different.

## CHAPTER NINE

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What is heaped on Neezer Snollygost’s desk? What does this reveal about him?
- ◆ Why is Miz Turngiddy working for Mayor Snollygost? What is the hope that keeps her going?
- ◆ What “carved a hollow” in Neezer Snollygost’s heart?
- ◆ What is the Whirlybog?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Look up the meaning of the word “hubris.” How does it apply to the character of Neezer Snollygost? Explain, using details from the book to back up your statements.
- ◆ Miz Turngiddy keeps offering to help Neezer with his projects, but he won’t allow it. Write about an instance when you wanted to help someone, but they wouldn’t let you. Explain the situation and how it made you feel.

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Creating

In Chapter Nine, we learn about a variety of gadgets and gizmos that Neezer Snollygost invented. If you could create a device, what would it be? Why is it needed? Draw or describe it to illustrate its features.

## CHAPTER TEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What is happening with the crop?
- ◆ What does Nitty do every day after supper? How do Mag and Windle help?
- ◆ What book did Twitch see Neezer carrying?
- ◆ What injustices and misfortunes have the Sigh family suffered?
- ◆ When Nitty gives her opinion about the bread, Bernice reacts in a surprising way. What does she do?
- ◆ What did Miz Turngiddy leave behind at the bakery?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Make your own guesses as to what might be making the WHUMP! sound inside the institute.
- ◆ Have you ever thought someone was mean but later discovered they weren't that bad? Tell us about it. If not, write about why you think someone might be mean to others.
- ◆ If you were to make a secret delivery to someone, who would it be and what would you bring them? Why?

## Creating

Come up with your own recipe for rain. Be sure to include a list of ingredients, necessary equipment, and step-by-step directions.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ Why do Nitty and Twitch end up in Schnurrbart Emporium?
- ◆ Describe the inside of the emporium.
- ◆ Who does Ferdinand recall selling a mustache to? What did this person tell him?
- ◆ What's Twitch's theory about the storms? What evidence does he have to support it?
- ◆ Who interrupts them at the emporium? What news does this person bring for Twitch?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ On page 135, Ferdinand says, "I never could stand up for myself. Let alone anyone else." Think of the other characters you've met in the book. Who else isn't good at standing up for themselves? Why do you think this? Are there characters who are good at standing up for themselves? If so, who? Why do you think this?
- ◆ Are you good at standing up for yourself? Why or why not? Discuss an instance that proves your opinion.

## Creating

Design the perfect mustache for yourself. Be sure to give it an appropriate name.

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What does Windle stare at as he sits at the table?
- ◆ Who sends Nitty a note?
- ◆ Who drives out to the farm? Why?
- ◆ Describe Mag's "impressive entrance."
- ◆ What is unusual about the two loaves of bread in this chapter?
- ◆ What are the Sigh children fighting over?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Have you ever been too afraid to reach out to someone or say that you're sorry after a disagreement? Write about it. In your opinion, why can apologizing be difficult?
- ◆ If you were to write a secret note, who would you write it to? Where would you leave it so they could find it?

### Creating

Write the note you imagined in the question above.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What do Twitch, Nitty, and Bernice learn from the newspapers?
- ◆ What does the key belong to? Who figures this out?
- ◆ Who is in the photo Nitty finds?
- ◆ What is in the notebook?
- ◆ What does Twitch find that upsets him?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Twitch says that criminality smells like "rotten eggs and turnips." In your opinion, what would goodness or love smell like?
- ◆ Write about a time when you had to tell someone that they were wrong. Who was it? How did you feel? What happened?

### Creating

Crispin Sigh uses his talents as a baker to convey information—by baking clues into the top of the bread. Choose something you are adept at and write up a plan where you use this talent to convey messages.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ Who was Anna?
- ◆ Who is at the farm when they return from town? Why is this person there? What does Mag sense about this person?
- ◆ At the end of the chapter, what does Twitch suggest they do?

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Nitty says that Twitch is “brave” but “possibly foolish, too.” How can an act of bravery also be considered foolish? Explain with a real or hypothetical example.
- ◆ Would you rather remember or forget your saddest memories? Explain your answer.

## Creating

Miz Turngiddy is always in possession of a notebook. Write a sample entry about something she might have observed around town.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What does Miz Turngiddy mistakenly hear Neezer shout? What did he actually shout?
- ◆ What does Miz Turngiddy hope that Neezer will allow her to do?
- ◆ What does Miz Turngiddy read in the Kickapoo Gazette?
- ◆ Who does Neezer send a telegram to?
- ◆ Describe what’s in Neezer’s workshop.

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Like Miz Turngiddy does on page 179, contemplate the nature of contentment. What would it look and feel like for you?
- ◆ Do you ever read newspapers? How do you typically get your news about your community and the world at large? Do you think it’s a good way of getting information?

### Creating

Write out a daily schedule for Neezer Snollygost listing how he spends his time from the moment he wakes up to the moment he goes to bed. List start times and end times as well as locations and other necessary details.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ Why couldn’t the residents of Windle’s farm sleep?
- ◆ Why does Windle rush out of bed?
- ◆ What new details does Windle share about Neezer, Clara, and Lillah?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Think about a time when you were feeling low. How long did your gloomy mood last? Did something happen to snap you out of it, or did it just pass?
- ◆ Write about a time when you tried to do something and failed. How did you react? How did others react?

### Creating

If you had to choose a song to be playing in the background of this chapter, what would it be? Why did you choose it and how does it fit the tone and actions of this section?

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What change comes over the farm as everyone sleeps?
- ◆ What wakes up Nitty? Who else is awake?
- ◆ What does Nitty divulge about the Gleam Jar?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Are you a good listener? Is there someone you talk to who's a good listener?
- ◆ In this chapter, Nitty ruminates on the nature of promises. Have you ever made a promise that you tried to keep, but couldn't? Tell us about it. What was it? What happened? If it has never happened to you, write about difficulties you or others face when trying to keep promises.

### Creating

Assemble a found poem by lifting key phrases and words from this chapter and turning them into a poem. Choose at least six key phrases, and assemble them in any order, adding line breaks wherever you need them.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What does the fruit taste like to Twitch? What does it taste like to Windle?
- ◆ What do they name the fruit?
- ◆ What do they decide to do with the fruit?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ What do you think the fruit would taste like to you? Explain your answer.
- ◆ What would you name the fruit? Why?

### Creating

Design an ad for the fruit. Use persuasive writing to try to get people to buy it.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ Describe what Nitty, Windle, and Twitch see when they head into town. Use specific details from the book.
- ◆ What were the only two buildings left untouched by the duster?
- ◆ According to Windle, why weren't the residents of Fortune's Bluff doing anything?
- ◆ What did Crispin Sigh swear that morning that he'd never do again? What changes his mind?
- ◆ Why didn't Ferdinand want any fruit at first? What changes his mind?
- ◆ What happens when Neezer eats the fruit? How does this change things?
- ◆ What does Nitty's angry pacing remind Mag of?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ In this chapter, Twitch talks about how fear gets in the way of things. Write about a time when you wanted to do something but were too scared. What happened? Did you change your mind?

## A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

- ◆ Mag can smell emotions on people. Choose an emotion and describe how you think it might smell to Mag. Be sure to use descriptive words and/or comparisons.

### Creating

Think of two residents of Fortune's Bluff that we have not been introduced to. Feel free to give them names and make up other details about their lives. Then write a dialogue they might have after the events of this chapter. Make sure they discuss the fruit, Windle, and Neezer.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ Why do the Sighs visit the farm the next morning? What do they bring?
- ◆ How has Crispin changed?
- ◆ Why do the residents of Fortune's Bluff come to the farm?
- ◆ Why does Nitty decide not to hide Mag from all the visitors?
- ◆ What does Twitch take from Neezer's car?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Twitch loves reading Detective Comics, and they have definitely had an influence on him. What are your favorite kinds of things to read? What do you like about them? Have they had an effect on how you think or what you do?
- ◆ Compare and contrast the characters of Nitty and Bernice. How are they similar? How are they different?

### Creating

Think of a restaurant for yourself and give it a name. Create a menu of different foods (appetizers, main dishes, desserts) that are all made out of the fruit.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ How is this latest duster different from all the others?
- ◆ What news does Mrs. Higglar bring?
- ◆ How do Nitty and Mag play hide-and-seek?
- ◆ What do Nitty and Twitch see Neezer doing?
- ◆ Who rescues Nitty and Twitch? How?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Have you ever proceeded with plans even though you were sick? What were the plans? What happened? Would you make the same or a different choice if you had to do it over again?
- ◆ Do you have a friend like Twitch—or maybe Bernice? How is your friend similar? How are they different?

### Creating

Design a new “disguise” for Twitch or Nitty. Draw it or describe it. What makes it a good disguise for sleuthing? Explain.

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What does Bernice say she's been up to? What has she learned?
- ◆ What is the last thing Twitch says before heading to his house?
- ◆ Why is Windle so upset with Nitty?
- ◆ Where does Nitty take shelter during the next duster? Why?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Mag tries to calm Nitty in this chapter. What helps soothe you when you are upset? How do you try to calm others?
- ◆ Compare and contrast the characters of Windle and Neezer. How are they similar? How are they different?
- ◆ Windle is angry with Nitty, but how else might he be feeling? Explain your reasoning.

### Creating

Draw or describe the perfect home for an elephant. Explain why it's perfect.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What happens at midnight?
- ◆ What two items (in addition to his periscope) does Twitch bring with him to help them on their mission?
- ◆ What does Twitch say to convince Nitty to go along with his plan?
- ◆ What does Mag do just as they are about to leave? Why?
- ◆ What does Bernice have with her "for defense"?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Do you have any secret calls, signals, made-up words, or inside jokes with friends or family? Explain if you can. If not, make up a signal you could use with people close to you. Describe it.
- ◆ List objects you would bring with you on a secret mission. Explain the reason for each one.

### Creating

Write a script for a TV commercial advertising Mr. Moop's Cough Syrup. Feel free to make up details about its ingredients or history.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ How do Nitty, Twitch, and Bernice get past the iron fence surrounding the Snollygost Institute?
- ◆ Nitty discovers key information about the trucks that regularly go to the institute. Where are they from, and what are they bringing?
- ◆ How do they sneak inside the Snollygost building?
- ◆ What tune does Neezer's nose begin whistling? Why does this strike fear into Nitty's heart?
- ◆ Why does Neezer let them go?
- ◆ Who comes to their rescue?

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Extending and Connecting

- ◆ If you were there in the institute and saw that Twitch seemed frightfully ill, would you continue with the mission or take him back home? Explain your reasons.
- ◆ Has anyone ever told you something that you at first assumed was wrong or silly, but later realized was true? What was it? How do you usually check to see if information is true or not?

## Creating

Draw the Whirlybog according to the description in the chapter.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What does Nitty see when she first wakes up?
- ◆ What happened to Twitch after Nitty blacked out? What will the Higglers do now?
- ◆ What happened to Mag?
- ◆ Who comes to see how Nitty is doing?
- ◆ Describe Neezer Snollygost's plan for Fortune's Bluff.

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Compare and contrast the characters of Miz Turngiddy and Crispin Sigh. How are they similar? How are they different?
- ◆ Which version of Fortune's Bluff would you prefer to live in—the way it was before the dusters or the way Neezer imagines it can become? Explain your decision.

## Creating

Pretend you are Neezer Snollygost and write a review for the book **Heavenly High Rises**. Does he recommend it? Why or why not? Make up details about the book that he particularly likes (or doesn't like).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What is Mag doing at the start of the chapter?
- ◆ Neezer mentions two people who are headed to Fortune's Bluff. Who are they?
- ◆ Mag remembers the day her trainer died. How is her memory different from the news accounts?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ In your opinion, why does Miz Turngiddy's head ache? Explain your reasoning. Has anything like this ever happened to you?
- ◆ Mag's version of the event is very different from what people say happened. People often jump to conclusions when they don't have all the facts. Write about a time when someone assumed a story about you that wasn't true. How did they misunderstand the events? Were you able to explain your version?

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Creating

Write a news story about the break-in at the Snollygost Institute. Include facts as to what happened, where, when, and how. As for the why, pretend to have interviewed either Neezer or one of the characters who broke in (Nitty, Bernice, or Twitch) and include quotes. Note that you will have a different version of the events depending on whom you interview.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What has Nitty decided to do? Why?
- ◆ What did Twitch and his mother get in the mail?
- ◆ According to Nitty, what are the pros and cons of Twitch leaving?
- ◆ What advice does Twitch give Nitty before they part?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Describe something that happened to you that, like Twitch's leaving, was both good and bad.
- ◆ Is Twitch giving up on his investigation? Explain your answer.

## Creating

Pretend you are Windle and write a letter to Lillah explaining at least one of the book's events.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ Why doesn't Nitty see anyone when she heads into Fortune's Bluff?
- ◆ Who has come for Nitty?
- ◆ What is in the envelope Miz Turngiddy holds?
- ◆ What does Windle call Nitty?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Why do you think Miz Turngiddy balks at handing over the envelope? Explain your answer.
- ◆ Have you ever been able to understand an animal? Tell us about it. If not, do you think it's possible to understand animals? Why or why not?

## Creating

Concoct a plan to rescue Mag. Write it out step by step or write a chapter scene in which you attempt it.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What is Neezer planning?
- ◆ Why doesn't Nitty go straight to Mag?
- ◆ Who tries to distract Neezer in order to help Windle and Nitty? How?
- ◆ What does Windle call Neezer? How does Neezer react?
- ◆ What makes Neezer hesitate for a moment?

# A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Extending and Connecting

- ◆ On page 318, Windle and Nitty discuss what it's like to sit atop an elephant. What do you think the world would look like from up there? Describe what would seem different.
- ◆ What do you think is your Achilles heel?

## Creating

What would you say to Neezer to try to reason with him? Write a brief dialogue in which you try your best to persuade him to halt his schemes. Explain.

## CHAPTERS THIRTY AND THIRTY-ONE

### Understanding and Analyzing

- ◆ What happens to Neezer?
- ◆ What happens to Twitch?
- ◆ What happens to the crop?
- ◆ What almost happens to Mag? Who prevents it and how?
- ◆ What happens to Fortune's Bluff?

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Do you have friends or family who live far away? How often do you communicate with them? How do you communicate?
- ◆ Which of the book's characters are you the most similar to? Explain how you are similar.

### Creating

Write a scene that happens after the end—in one, five, or ten years after the event in the book. Be sure to include what happens to Nitty, Windle, Twitch, Mag, and your favorite townspeople.

## OVERALL

### Extending and Connecting

- ◆ Consider character motivations. List as many reasons as you can think of why Nitty and Twitch want to defeat Neezer. Which reasons do they have in common? Which are unique to one character?
- ◆ Neezer Snollygost often refers to the Fortune's Bluff motto: "For community progress, fulfillment, and the betterment of all." List three examples of actions Neezer takes that go against this sentiment.
- ◆ The author of **A Tale Magnolious**, Suzanne Nelson, uses a motif of growing things throughout the story. People are often described the way plants and other natural things would be described. Find at least five examples of this in the book.
- ◆ Neezer Snollygost is almost always whistling a tune—in his unique way. Research online and find the lyrics to one of the songs he whistles. How is the song appropriate or ironic to the scene it is in? Explain using details from the book.
- ◆ Consider the unique names of the characters in the story. Choose one of the names and write about why it's the perfect for name for the person.

## A TALE MAGNOLIOUS: EDUCATOR & DISCUSSION GUIDE

- ◆ Symbols are very important to the characters. For example, the items in Nitty's Gleam Jar represent particular people or ideas. The rocking chair represents Clara because it belonged to her, but also because she was soothing and steady, just like the chair. Choose three characters and pick a symbol from the book that could represent them. Why are the objects appropriate for each character you've chosen? How are the symbols and characters similar? Now choose an item from your life that represents you. Why is it the perfect symbol for you?
- ◆ Compare and contrast two characters that you haven't yet compared. How are they similar? How are they different? Consider their actions, their beliefs, their backgrounds, as well as physical traits and personalities.
- ◆ Consider this question from Nitty on page 300: "Why is it that caring for another soul means you want to do what's best for them, even when it's hurtful to you?" Answer the question in a short essay, using examples from the text or your own life to make your points.
- ◆ Consider watching the documentary "An Apology to Elephants" (PG-YV, 45 minutes). It poignantly portrays the predicaments of circus elephants and elephants in captivity.

### Creating

- ◆ Draw a picture of one of the villains in the *Daily Tatter* Twitch is always reading, like Cutthroat Cob or Fang-toothed Lou—or make up your own villain, give them a name, and draw them.
- ◆ Choose four characters. Write acrostic poems out of their names. Be sure to include specific and unique details about their lives and traits.
- ◆ Crispin Sigh speaks in rhyming riddles that turn out to be clues. Write one of your own in which you try to pass along important information to Nitty, Twitch, Windle, and/or Bernice.
- ◆ Draw a map of Fortune's Bluff and its surroundings. Be sure to mark places from the book where important scenes take place.
- ◆ Throughout the story, Twitch refers to the list "Ten Ways to Be a Villain." Write your own top ten list that could serve as a guide to characters in the book, such as "Top Ten Ways to Be a Hero" or "Top Ten Ways to Be a Curmudgeon," or something similar.
- ◆ Write a brief story from the point of view of an animal, real or made up, as they interact with people over the course of one day. What do they think and feel about the human world around them? How do they sense things and get information in ways that are different from humans?
- ◆ Individually or as a group, create a front page of *The Daily Tattler*. Include at least three sensational "news" stories with attention-getting headlines, draw at least three "photos," and create a Table of Contents (a list of stories with captivating headlines that readers would find inside the issue).
- ◆ Put together your own Gleam Jar. Find four small objects and put them into a jar with a lid. Make up stories about each one and write them down. Why are these items meaningful? Make up details about how you got them, where they came from, or who gave them to you. Be sure to give them emotional significance.

**AGAIN, LOOK FOR THE COMPANION ACTIVITY KIT BY  
SEARCHING "MAGNOLIOUS" AT [CURIOSCITYDPW.COM](http://CURIOSCITYDPW.COM).**