

THE TAPESTRY OF TALES

Discussion ideas and questions

The Tapestry of Tales is an action packed, funny book, filled with imperfect, but big-hearted middle schoolers who keep getting themselves - and the fairytale characters who just want to get on with their stories - into trouble. In addition to introducing many readers to fairytale characters like Anansi, the Groac'h and selkies for the first time, The Tapestry of Tales also explores themes of wanting to fit in, the ups and downs of being part of a family and what it means to be a good friend.

- 1) At the beginning of The Tapestry of Tales Cia is worried about fitting in because she believes that her experiences with magic and fairytale characters make her different.
 - a) How do you think her classmates would have reacted if she had told everyone about what had happened to her at the end of 7th grade?
 - b) Why is it so scary to be different from other kids your age? What was Cia afraid of?
 - c) When is being different actually something awesome? Think about a time you met, or read about, or saw someone who was awesome because they were different.
 - d) By the end of the book, Cia is more comfortable with being different from her classmates. What happened to make her feel that way?

- 2) In Chapter 4, Cia is angry with her mom because her mom doesn't take Cia's fears about the Evil Queen seriously and she won't answer Cia's questions. (p. 39 – p.45). Cia is torn between wanting her mom to treat her like a grown-up and also wanting her mom to fix everything. (p.198, p.203 – p.205)
 - a) Have you ever felt that way?
 - b) Do you think Cia's mom was wrong or right not to tell Cia the truth about the Evil Queen and who her mom really was?

- 3) Cia breaks the promise that she gave her mom that she'd stay away from fairytale characters. She lies to her dad, telling him she's sleeping over at Romy's when she's really flying to Paris. Cia knows that it's wrong to break promises and to lie, but she tells herself that it's okay because she has to try to stop the Evil Queen from hurting kids.
 - a) What do you think? Did Cia do the right thing?
 - b) The choice that Cia has to make – keep the promise to her mom, tell her dad the truth or try to stop the Evil Queen – is an example of a moral dilemma. Doing a bad thing for a good, selfless reason. Can you think of any other examples of moral dilemmas? Have you ever had one?

- 4) In chapter 25 Madame Fredepia summons Anansi. Neither Cia or Romy recognize the name, they don't know who Anansi is.
 - a) What about you? Had you heard of Anansi before you read this book?
 - b) Why do you think so many young readers have not heard of him?

- 5) In Chapter 33 Cia and her friends are relieved when Anansi shows up again, but then they realize that he might not be on their side at all.
 - a) What did Cia and Romy see and hear when they were in Madame Fredepia's apartment that should have taught them not to trust Anansi?
 - b) Anansi is an example of a "trickster." Tricksters feature in folktales, myths and fairytales. They are characters who have a lot of important knowledge, but play tricks and are unpredictable. Can you think of any other tricksters in books you've read or movies you've watched? (Hint: there is one in the Marvel movies.)

- 6) Are there other characters in The Tapestry of Tales who you had not heard of before? Selkies? The Groac'h?

- 7) Romy does a lot for Cia. She figures out a way for them to fly to Paris, she stops Cia from hurting herself with the Evil Queen's mirror (p. 205 – p. 206). She's always

super supportive of Cia (even though Cia finds it a bit annoying sometimes: p. 24- p.27, p.81, p.148 – p.149, p.203).

- a) Do you think that Cia is as good a friend to Romy as Romy is to her?
 - b) Does Cia appreciate everything that Romy does for her?
- 8) The theme that caring about someone, or something, other than yourself makes you stronger recurs throughout the book. Cia's terrified of the Evil Queen, but her desire to help Gavin is stronger than that fear, so she is able to confront the Queen.
- a) Why does caring about someone else make us braver than if we were just worrying about ourselves?
- 9) For most of the book, John Lee is angry and scared, and it's understandable: he thinks he's turning into a beast again, he gets kidnapped by Cia and Romy, is almost eaten by a witch and is forced to steal the Mona Lisa.
- a) So, why does John choose to stay with Cia and Romy when he is able to go home with Miss Pesky (p.351)?
 - b) What has he learned about Cia that has changed his mind?
 - c) How have his experiences changed him?
- 10) Cia is brave. She races into a cave to rescue John, even though she knows there's something terrifying in there; she tricks the Evil Queen and steals her mirror and stands up to Carabosse; but Cia's not able to talk to John about how she feels.
- a) Why is it so hard for Cia to talk about her feelings? What is she afraid of?
 - b) By the end of the book, Cia and John are friends. How did that happen?