The Magical, Mystical Book of EVERYTHING



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TCM Teacher Created Materials

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CHAPTER ONE



A New Day

"Ahh, that hits the spot.
Does it not?"

The tiny, gray-haired woman of uncertain age sat sipping her morning tea. She set down her teacup with a satisfying clink on its matching saucer.

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"I wonder who—I mean what*—is in store for us today.*
Felis, my dear, what do you say?"

Mrs. Bibliogo stretched the crooked joints of her wrinkled hand along the tabby fur of the contented library cat. Felis purred in agreement. Each day always brought a new seeker. And Mrs. B always knew exactly what that seeker truly sought. She kept it handy in the creaky, old cabinet behind the reference counter. The cabinet had weird etchings of wizards, wands, and moonlight, if one cared to look closely enough. Which Felis did not, thank you very much. He was just fine where he was, plopped comfortably on Mrs. B's blanket-covered lap.

"Well, we'll be ready when they come.
Won't we, little furry one?"
"Surrrrre," Felis purred in reply.
"That's my witty kitty."

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CHAPTER TWO



Enter Rosie

Rosie turned right off Bleecker Street onto 7th Avenue, lugging her heavy backpack. She was headed home from school to where her family lived above Popolchek's Bakery.

"Hi, *Bubbee*," Rosie called as she opened the bakery's screen door, ringing the bell overhead.

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Rosie's grandmother looked up from the counter where she was helping Mr. Kapowitz buy his daily raisin babka.

"Hello, *bubeleh*," Bubbee said with a warm smile. "Have a snack, and then put on your apron. We have a special order of macaroons to bake right away."

Rosie smiled at Bubbee but groaned inside. Ugh! She did *not* like working at the bakery. It had been in her family since long before Rosie was born. All her friends got to go home after school, get their homework done, and then just hang out doing whatever. But not her—she had to work in this stupid, smelly bakery. Okay, it didn't smell. Well, it smelled pretty great actually.

She would never tell Bubbee how she felt. Bubbee loved this place. The whole family did.

"Okay, Bubbee, I'll come in a minute," Rosie called, heading up the side stairway to the family's upstairs apartment. Unlocking the door and stepping inside, she heard her parents

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in the kitchen. It sounded like they were arguing about something.

"Oh, great," Rosie whispered under her breath. But she froze where she was, trying to listen in without alerting them that she was there. It might be something interesting, and they always thought she was too little to know things.

"She's got to learn, Miriam. She has no idea what they went through, and she takes it all for granted," Rosie heard her father say.

"I know, I know. But do you really think it's best? That old woman scared me to death when I was a kid. I mean, she's a little spooky, don't you think? And how old is she anyway? She had to be 100 years old 20 years ago!" Rosie's mother clearly didn't agree with whatever her dad wanted.

"All I know is, she changed everything for me in ways I still don't understand—it's all a little fuzzy—but I know it worked."

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Book Club Questions

1. Why is the bakery important to the Popolchek family?
2. What words or phrases let you know that Rosie doesn't want anything to do with the family bakery?
3. How does the tone of the story change from the present-day chapters to the flashbacks?
4. Why does the author have Mrs. Bibliogo speak in rhyme?
5. What might happen if Rosie wants to become something other than a baker when she grows up?
6. If you could make a new title for this book, what it would be?

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