

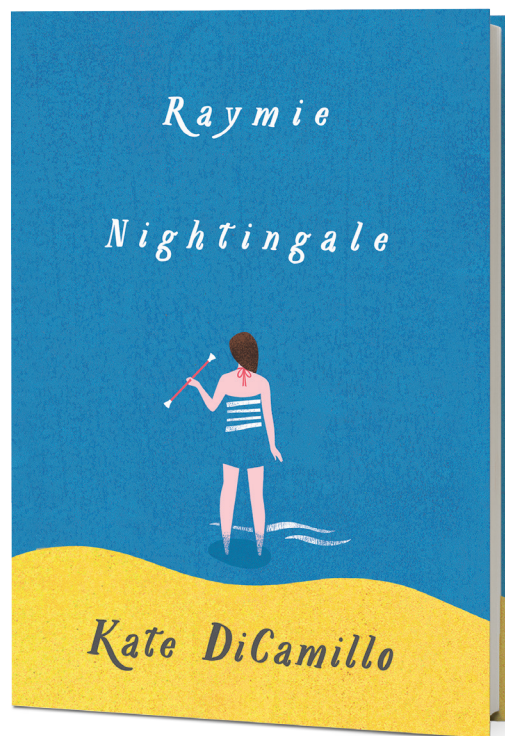
Raymie Nightingale

Kate DiCamillo

Two-time Newbery Medalist Kate DiCamillo returns to her roots with a moving, masterful story of an unforgettable summer friendship.

Raymie Clarke has come to realize that everything, absolutely everything, depends on her. And she has a plan. If Raymie can win the Little Miss Central Florida Tire competition, then her father, who left town two days ago with a dental hygienist, will see Raymie's picture in the paper and (maybe) come home. To win, not only does Raymie have to do good deeds and learn how to twirl a baton, she also has to contend with the wispy, frequently fainting Louisiana Elefante, who has a show-business background, and the fiery, stubborn Beverly Tapinski, who's determined to sabotage the contest. But as the competition approaches, loneliness, loss, and unanswerable questions draw the three girls into an unlikely friendship—and challenge each of them to come to the rescue in unexpected ways.

Kate DiCamillo is one of America's most beloved storytellers. She is the former National Ambassador for Young People's Literature and a two-time Newbery Medalist. Born in Philadelphia, she grew up in Florida and now lives in Minneapolis, where she faithfully writes two pages a day, five days a week.



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Also available as an e-book

Discussion Questions

You've got to have friends. . . .



What role does friendship play in the lives of Raymie, Louisiana, and Beverly?

What do the three girls have in common? How are they different?

What are some of the life-changing transformations that take place in the story as a result of friendship?

Does the friendship of Raymie, Louisiana, and Beverly remind you of any friendships that you know? Have you ever experienced this kind of friendship?

Are there any characters in this book whom you would like as a friend? Why or why not?

Do you believe in magical thinking?

Magical thinking is the belief that a thought, action, or event can cause something else to happen without any logical reason for that to be true—for example, the belief that wearing a certain shirt will make your favorite sports team win a game, or that avoiding stepping on cracks will keep something bad

from happening. There are many examples of magical thinking in *Raymie Nightingale*. How many can you identify?

Raymie hopes to win the Little Miss Central Florida Tire competition so that her father will return. Do you think her winning will bring her dad back?

Louisiana and her grandmother are living on the edge and barely surviving, but they also are dreaming of better things. Do you see magical thinking at work in their lives?

Beverly and Raymie both use magical thinking in their relationships with their fathers. What problems do they have related to their fathers? How do the solutions they come up with involve magical thinking?

What a character!

What three words would you use to describe Raymie? Louisiana? Beverly? Describe how the traits of these characters come to life in the book.

Over the course of the story, each of the Three Rancheros has the opportunity to move from being powerless to taking action. How do Raymie, Louisiana, and Beverly each take charge in their lives?

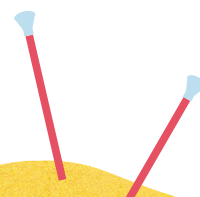
Which character seems to be the most changed by the story's end?

The secondary characters in *Raymie Nightingale* are beautifully portrayed. What are your impressions of Mrs. Borkowski, Mrs. Sylvester, Louisiana's grandmother, Raymie's mother, Alice Nebbley at the nursing home, Ruthie, and Ida Nee? Why are these characters important? What do they bring to the story?

There are a number of memorable relationships between the characters in *Raymie Nightingale*. Pick one relationship that you like and explain its significance to you.

Is there a scene in *Raymie Nightingale* that captures the essence of a character for you?

Are there heroes in this story? Who do you think they are, and why?



The big questions

A question that echoes throughout *Raymie Nightingale* is “What is life all about?” Does the story give us answers?

Raymie often describes having the feeling that her soul is shrinking. What do you think she means by this? What do you think she feels in those moments when she says her soul is inflating or growing bigger?

Death and what it means are explored through the characters of Mrs. Borkowski, Louisiana’s parents, Archie the cat, and Clara Wingtip. Discuss how Raymie, Louisiana, and Beverly understand death. Do you agree with them?

Can you relate to the girls’ thoughts and fears? Do you think the kids in this story see life and death differently than the adults do?

Life can offer other types of loss as well—the ending of marriages and families, hopes and dreams. Discuss the ways the girls understand these kinds of losses.

What is the saddest part of the story for you?

Hope (and humor) springs eternal

One of Kate DiCamillo’s signature themes is hope. How is hope explored in this story?

Compare the role of hope in *Raymie Nightingale* with the use of the theme in other books by Kate DiCamillo.

Who do you think is the most hopeful character in the story? What passages describe this person’s hopefulness? Who else is hopeful?

What do you think are the funniest moments in *Raymie Nightingale*?

How did you feel at the end of the story?

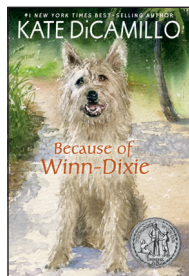
Activity Suggestions

Raymie believes that learning to twirl a baton is a way to win the Little Miss Central Florida Tire competition. Do you know how to twirl? If not, set up a baton lesson with some friends. You can find videos online on how to twirl and throw them.

For Raymie and her friends, reading to the elderly at the nursing home is an act of kindness, a good deed to put down in their applications for the competition. Have you ever read to someone? Try it! Find someone you would like to read to, whether a pet, a friend, a younger sibling, or someone elderly. Choose a book that you think your listener would like, practice reading it out loud, and offer to read to your selected listener for twenty to thirty minutes.

Raymie gained a great deal of confidence from taking a lifesaving class—something that everyone could benefit from. Classes in junior lifesaving as well as CPR or first aid/defibrillator training are a great opportunity to gain important life skills. Find a class in your community or at your school and sign up for it with your friends.

Other Perfect Book Club Selections from Kate DiCamillo



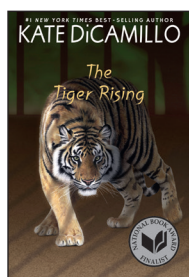
Because of Winn-Dixie

“Poignant and delicately told.”
— The New York Times Book Review

“DiCamillo doesn’t shy from bad things, and while she validates a child’s sense of grief and loss, she also holds open life’s possibilities.”
— Minneapolis Star Tribune

“An exquisitely crafted first novel. Each chapter possesses an arc of its own and reads almost like a short story in its completeness, yet the chapters add up to much more than a sum of their parts. . . . This bittersweet tale of contemporary life in a small southern town will hold readers rapt.”

— Publishers Weekly



The Tiger Rising

★ “The author delves deeply into the psyches of her cast with carefully choreographed scenes, opting for the economy of poetry over elaborate prose. . . . DiCamillo demonstrates her versatility by treating themes similar to those of her first novel with a completely different approach. Readers will eagerly anticipate her next work.”

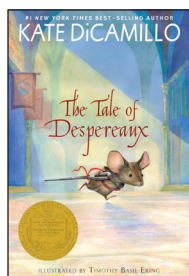
— Publishers Weekly (starred review)

“Together [the characters] learn about trust, friendship, and feelings as they plot to set the tiger free. In the process, they learn another valuable lesson, one that readers won’t soon forget.”

— Dallas Morning News

“The brief novel, which features a well realized setting and an almost palpable aura of sadness, has a certain mythic quality.”

— The Horn Book



The Tale of Despereaux

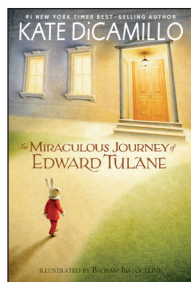
“[DiCamillo] sets the stage for a battle between the forces of Darkness and Light in *The Tale of Despereaux*, and the book is a terrific, bravura performance.”

— The New York Times Book Review

“Unexpectedly complex in the relationships between its characters, DiCamillo’s fable, engagingly illustrated by Timothy Basil Ering,

delivers a carefully orchestrated, but not overstated, testament to the power of love and forgiveness.” — San Francisco Chronicle

★ “The author of *Because of Winn-Dixie* and *The Tiger Rising* here shifts gears, demonstrating her versatility while once again proving her genius for mining the universal themes of childhood. . . . I must tell you, you are in for a treat.” — Publishers Weekly (starred review)



The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

“One reading is hardly enough to savor the rich philosophical nuances of DiCamillo’s story. I think I will go read it again right now.” — The New York Times Book Review

“This choice is destined to become a classic.”
— Dallas Morning News

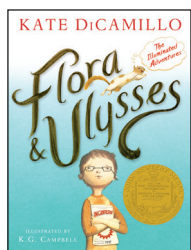
“When Edward’s journey ends, the reader will be wishing this story could go on and on.” — The Washington Post



The Magician's Elephant

“With its rhythmic sentences and fairy-tale tone, this novel yields solitary pleasures but begs to be read aloud. Hearing it in a shared space can connect us, one to one, regardless of age, much like the book’s closing image: a small stone carving, hands linked, of the elephant’s friends.” — Washington Post Book World

★ “Reading like a fable told long ago, with rich language that begs to be read aloud, this is a magical story about hope and love, loss and home, and of questioning the world versus accepting it as it is.”
— Kirkus Reviews (starred review)



Flora & Ulysses

“Full of Ms. DiCamillo’s dry, literate wit and bursting every so often into action-packed comic-strip sequences illustrated by K. G. Campbell . . . a funny, eccentric novel.”
— The Wall Street Journal

“Kate DiCamillo’s newest book . . . is that rarest of all treasures, a truly inventive and appealing children’s middle-grade novel.” — Boston Globe

“As with her previous big-hearted novels, DiCamillo proves once again that ‘astonishments are hidden inside the most mundane being,’ and gives us another fantastic story.” — The Washington Post

“Beautifully written. . . . The accompanying illustrations and cartoons are enchanting, and the remarkable DiCamillo demonstrates she has storytelling power to spare.” — Chicago Tribune