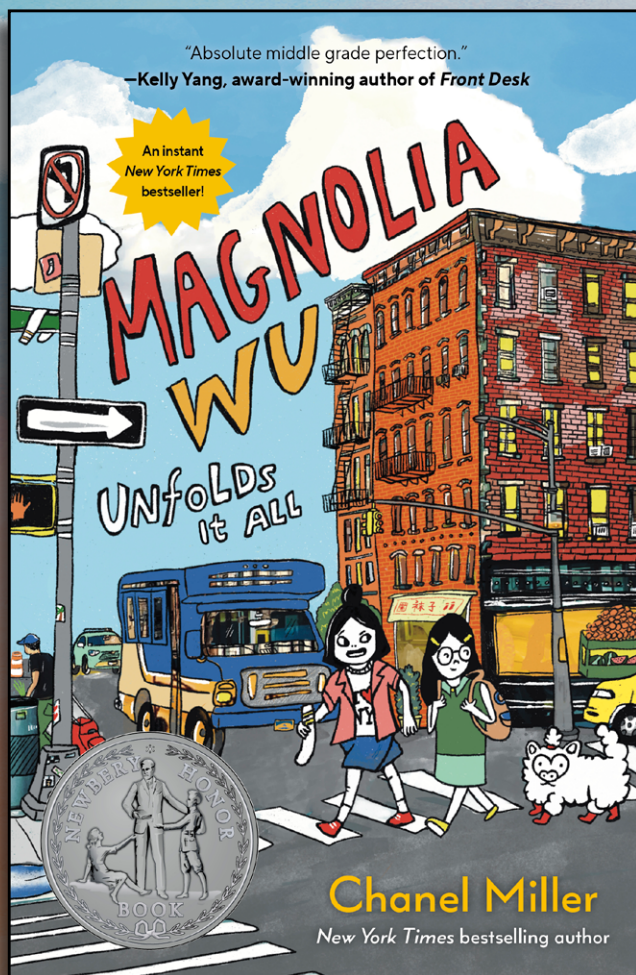


# A DISCUSSION GUIDE TO THE NEWBERY HONOR- WINNING



A NEWBERY  
HONOR BOOK

A  
TEXAS  
BLUEBONNET  
AWARD  
NOMINEE



AN ALA  
ALSC NOTABLE  
BOOK

★“Thoughtful, creative, and  
compassionate.”  
—KIRKUS REVIEWS, starred review

“A celebration of the quiet  
courage and daily bonds that  
make us a community!”  
—KELLY YANG, award-winning  
author of *Front Desk*

## ABOUT THE BOOK

A fun, funny, and poignant story of friendship and community starring Magnolia Wu, a ten-year-old sock detective bent on returning all the lonely only socks left behind in her parents' NYC laundromat.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHANEL MILLER is a writer and artist. Her memoir, *Know My Name*, was a *New York Times* bestseller, a *New York Times Book Review* Notable Book, and a winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, the Ridenhour Book Prize, and the California Book Award. It was also a best book of the year in *TIME*, *The Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *NPR*, and *People*, among others. She was named one of the Forbes 30 Under 30 and a *TIME* Next 100 honoree, and was a *Glamour* Woman of the Year honoree. She has always dreamed of writing and illustrating children's books.



Photo credit: Mariah Tiffany

You can visit her online at **Chanel-Miller.com** or follow her on Instagram **@Chanel\_Miller**.



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Iris brings in the sock board from the street, saying she wants to help find the socks' missing owners. This idea surprises Magnolia because "it had never occurred to Magnolia to take action to return the socks herself. She thought of life as something that unfolded around her and happened to her while she was content being an observer" (p. 24). Think of times when you watched life unfold around you. Were you content being an observer? Were there times when you took action instead?
- 2 Magnolia is embarrassed after suggesting the wrong spelling for a word in Lisa's crossword puzzle. However, Lisa says her error was "a creative act" and evidence of how smart she is (p. 36). How might our mistakes show our imagination and intelligence?
- 3 While searching for the owner of the flamingo sock, Magnolia and Iris run into Aspen, a boy from school. How does Aspen act toward Magnolia and the laundromat? The story about his stuffed animal Otto and Magnolia's father explains the reason for his actions but doesn't excuse his racist taunts and bullying. Why is Aspen's behavior wrong?
- 4 Aspen tells Magnolia and Iris that flamingos are naturally gray but turn pink after eating shrimp. He says, "Flamingos become what they consume," and Iris writes him a note that says she hopes he stays gray (pp. 86–87). What does she mean by this? What are some things you consume, and how have they made you who you are?
- 5 Magnolia is often self-conscious and embarrassed about her family. However, throughout the story, Magnolia is continuously surprised by the community's perceptions of her parents. How do people such as Zito, Aspen, Jessica, and Anu change Magnolia's understanding of her family?



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

- 6 Iris and Magnolia become friends very quickly. In what ways is Iris a good friend to Magnolia? After their first big fight, Magnolia realizes that she “had never had a best friend and didn’t know the responsibilities of her new position” (p. 105). What are the responsibilities of a best friend? How does Magnolia become a better friend to Iris?
- 7 To find the missing owners of the socks, Magnolia and Iris roam the city and talk with many folks in their community. What are some ways the community members have helped one another over the years? Who do you know in your community? How can you help or support them?
- 8 The message “Go Home” is graffitied on the walls of the Salty Muscles fitness studio. This act shocks Magnolia, who can describe times when she herself felt that message through others’ actions, emotions, and words. Why is this message so hurtful?
- 9 The NYC Sock Detectives were able to track down the owners of the black-and-white checkered sock, the pink knitted sock, the flamingo sock, the ice cream sock, and the coconut-scented sock. Which missing sock adventure was your favorite? Why?
- 10 Iris had a sock puppet named Mr. Ketchup. Why was Mr. Ketchup so important to Iris? How did Mr. Ketchup help her?
- 11 Compare the character of Magnolia at the beginning and end of the book. In what ways does she change throughout the story? What important lessons does she learn about herself and others?



# EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

## DESIGN-A-SOCK

Magnolia and Iris were able to find the owners of several different socks using clues from the socks’ designs, textures, and even smells. Design a sock that gives a clue about your identity and include details about its material, shape, size, feel, and other qualities, as well as how and when you might use it. Explain how it represents you.



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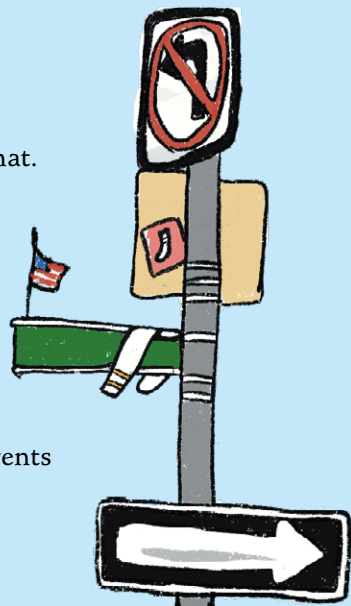
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## EXPLORING THE SETTING: THE BIG APPLE

Magnolia and her friends travel around New York City looking for the owners of the lost socks at the laundromat. Create a pictorial map of the city based on their adventures. Pictorial maps should capture the feel of place rather than geographical accuracy. To make the map, think about what characterizes New York City to Magnolia and sketch illustrations to show why she loves her city. You might include characters from the story, shops, landmarks, animals, food, and even events or memories in your map.



## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

### A PLACE TO REMEMBER

Magnolia and her mother recreate the Californian beach for Iris in a creative way, using kitty litter, Taiwanese sausage, and an audio clip of ocean sounds. Picture your own favorite place and imagine how you could recreate it with materials accessible to you. Think outside

the box by imagining how you can repurpose everyday objects in creative ways. What special items, decorations, sounds, or foods would you include to recreate the right environment and ambience?



### CHINESE LAUNDRIES: GET A LOAD OF HISTORY

Bing Qi Ling Bubbles Laundromat is the Wu's family business and an important part of the local community. Chinese laundries hold a significant place in American history, as they symbolize the Chinese community in early American society and have been sites of Asian American resistance against racism and discrimination. Continue your learning by researching the history of Chinese laundries and jotting down your findings to the questions below.

