



Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Secrets of Magnolia Moon

Edwina Wyatt
Katherine Quinn
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Magnolia Moon is nine years old, likes Greek mythology, her best friend Imogen May (who understands the importance of questions like, "If you could be one fruit, any fruit, what would you be?"), wishing trees, and speaking crows. She knows instinctively that buffadillos are armadillos crossed with buffalos and believes there are walramingos living in her garden. She's also the kind of person who can be entrusted with a great many secrets.

Each chapter in this novel, which captures Magnolia's year of being nine and ends on Chapter Almost 10, reveals a secret that Magnolia is keeping. But the novel also chronicles a year of change for Magnolia. From her best friend moving to the birth of her little brother Finnegan, Magnolia navigates every challenge and secret that comes her way with the kind of authenticity and innocence that comes from being nine years wise.

Autho/Illustrator Information:

A trained lawyer and high school teacher, Edwina Wyatt now writes from her home on the south coast of New South Wales, where she lives with her husband and two children. She is the author of multiple CBCA award-winning picture books. This is her debut novel.

Katherine Quinn is a New Zealand illustrator and surface pattern textile designer based in Hawkes Bay. She works in both traditional and digital illustration, and her work often focuses on long-limbed, big-eyed girls with a touch of innocence and a sense of adventure. This is her debut children's book.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:
• Ages 6-10

Key Learning Areas:
• English

Example of:
• Fiction

Themes/Ideas:
• Secrets
• Friends
• Family
• Goals



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Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before reading

Before reading *The Secrets of Magnolia Moon*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the story to see if your predictions were correct.

Exploring the text

What are the themes in this novel? As a class or in small groups identify and list the themes. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.

Each chapter is a story of one of Magnolia's adventures, with its own orientation, complication and resolution. Divide the class into 10 groups and assign each group a chapter from the book. On a large sheet of paper, have the group write the words 'orientation', 'complication' and 'resolution' and mind map the parts of their chapter that apply to each.

Edwina Wyatt uses a number of literary devices throughout the story. What is the definition of each device? How do these devices make the story more interesting for the reader? Can you find other examples of them in *The Secrets of Magnolia Moon* and other books? Write a short story using as many of these devices as you can.

- Personification – "It was the moon that kissed her first" (p5)
- Metaphor – "a dark cloud of hair" (p6)
- Simile – "It made her pyjamas all patchy like the coat of a giraffe" (p16)
- Repetition – "Snip, snip, snip went the scissors" (p108)

Keep a vocab journal while reading *The Secrets of Magnolia Moon*. Collect words that you are unfamiliar with or that you find interesting, record the page number and find the definition for each.

How does Magnolia feel about Imogen May moving away? How does she make a new friend at school?

Who is "the angel" and why is Magnolia so interested in him? How does her interest play out in the story?

Why do you think Magnolia lies to the hairdresser? How does the lie make her feel? How does she resolve this situation?

Responding to the text

Write another chapter about Magnolia's adventures that could be included in the story. Think about a problem that Magnolia could solve in a creative way. Draw some illustrations to include with your story.

Magnolia and her classmates are asked to write three goals they would like to achieve that year on a strip of paper. Write your own three goals and come up with plans for how you are going to achieve them. They could be short term goals like joining an after-school activity group or long term goals like learning a new skill or getting certain job when you finish school.

Magnolia's friend, Imogen May, moves away, meaning they can't see each other every day like they used to. One way the two girls could keep in touch is writing letters. Pair up with other student in your class, another class or another school and become pen pals. Write each other letters back and forth. Some ideas to help you get started are: tell your pen pal about a book that you have read; write a short story; recount a fun outing you've had with friends or family; ask your pen pal questions about their interests; etc.

Other Great Titles From Walker Books:



Mika and Max
Laura Bloom
9781760651145 PB
Classroom ideas available



Hapless Hero Henrie
Petra James
illus. by A. Yi
9781760650834 PB
Classroom ideas available



Dream Riders: Frankie
Laura Bloom and Jesse Blackadder
9781760650513 PB
Classroom ideas available



Dream Riders: Storm
Laura Bloom and Jesse Blackadder
9781760650537 PB
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