

A Whiff of Magic

By Elana Rubinstein | Illustrated by Jennifer Naalchigar

READING GUIDE

About the Book

Peer pressure, popularity, and baking a proper cheesecake—Saralee Siegel has a lot on her mind in this sixth book of the popular series.

When Saralee isn't invited to a classmate's birthday party, she devises a plan to use her smell powers to boost her popularity at school. However, the plan backfires horribly, embarrassing her best friend, Harold. How can Saralee make it right? On the eve of Shavuot, Saralee uses the power of stories, her new smell-a-vision ability, and her signature Shavuot cheesecake to apologize to Harold.

Elana Rubinstein is the author of the Saralee Siegel chapter book series, including *Once Upon an Apple Cake*, A National Jewish Book Award Finalist; *Starlight Soup*; *A Donut in Time*; *The Royal Recipe*; and *The Secret of the Scent Map*. She is an early childhood educator living in Fairfax, Virginia.

Jennifer Naalchigar is a British-Japanese illustrator. After working as an Art Buyer for Oxford University Press, she decided that illustration was the career for her. Jen's client list includes HarperCollins, Hachette, Oxford University Press, Pearson, Random House Children's Books, Reycraft books and Scholastic. She lives in Hertfordshire, England.



Key Themes:

Kindness, Peer pressure, Popularity, Shavuot

ISBN 978-1-68115-717-7

Ages 6–8 years

Use these questions to preface and conclude a reading of this book with children. Encourage them to share their observations as you read the book together, and take time to linger on pages or spreads that generate more discussion.

Before Reading

- What do you know about magic?
- Do you believe in magic? Why or why not?
- If you could have a superpower, what would it be and why?

While Reading

- After reading chapter 2
 - Can you describe a memory you'd like to revisit?
- After reading chapter 4
 - Describe a time you felt left out. How did you overcome those feelings? What are ways to make sure others don't feel left out?
- After reading chapter 11
 - At times, we have friends who are not always friends with each other, but we like them both. What are some ideas on how to navigate spending time with all of them?

After Reading

- Share a time when you had a hard time speaking with someone. What did you do to overcome that? Have you ever written a letter, like Saralee did with Harold?
- What smells make you think of stories from your past?
- Saralee was always able to go to Zadie (her grandpa) for support and advice. Who are the people that you can always depend on to support you? How do they help you? Are you a support person for someone else?

Optional: Extension Activity

Saralee was able to use her smelling powers to create the smell-a-vision cheesecakes—bringing her storytelling to another level. What story would you like to tell others? Write it down. What type of smells and/or tastes do you think would complement your story? What foods would have those smells and tastes? Make or purchase that food for someone to eat while you tell them your story. Do you think this helped the telling of your story? Ask the listener why or why not.

Discussion Questions by Heather Erez, RJE