

The Storyteller's Almanac

Discussion Guide and Activities for At-Home Learning

Age range: 6 and up Grade level: 1st and up

Created by Elise Hurst

OBJECTIVE

Engage your students with playful ways to expand their imaginations, freely explore ideas, and share their extraordinary stories.

SUMMARY

The Storyteller's Almanac is a guide into your own world of endless discovery and growth.

With more than 50 intricate and intriguing illustrations filled with curious characters and unusual lands, the stories inside the book are infinite because you get to be the storyteller.

Building on the fantastical worlds of her wildly popular title *The Storyteller's Handbook*, Elise Hurst inspires students to interpret the images in their own unique ways. Using the illustrations as a starting point, readers will naturally engage their own ideas, experiences, and imaginations for countless storytelling opportunities. Each page offers an opportunity for conversation and connection. Students will feel encouraged to tell their own stories and to showcase their creative imaginations.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Stories invite adventure into our lives. They let us experience new places, different times, and even characters only found in our imagination. *The Storyteller's Almanac* encourages our stories to come alive, to follow the unexpected path, and to discover what lives within us.

Hurst's dreamlike illustrations open new ways of storytelling and creative thinking. Each page holds endless possibilities. In fact, there's a new adventure waiting for us every time we open the book! Follow a detail you hadn't noticed before. Look deeply into one character and imagine what their story is. What events took place for the scene to happen? What lies beyond the illustration that you can't see? Each page is an invitation to wonder without any pressure to "get it right."

Storytelling is a powerful way to strengthen real-life skills too. Whether you're following the activities below or creating completely new ways to use this book, know that your world is expanding all around you, both on and off the page.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think Elise Hurst left out words to go with the illustrations? Try creating words of your own. How many different captions can you make for one scene? Maybe come up with a line of dialogue, or describe a sound, scent, feeling, or thought that a character might be experiencing.
- Take a look at the scavenger hunt at the back of the book. How many items can you find in the pages? What might you add to the list that you see in the illustrations? Can you find the same item on another page, and how is it different?
- Flip to one of your favorite pages from the book and tell a story about it. How might you tell another, completely different story for that same illustration?
- Why is it important to practice imagining new ideas?
- Try imagining a character from one page and have them wander into a different illustration. What happens?
- How many different emotions do you feel when you look at the pages in this book? What sparked each emotion? Was it a detail, the colors, or shadows?
- There are some pages in the book with special messages, like this one, “All seasons have their purpose. After the long dark of winter, when the frosts thaw and the sun rises, life will return renewed.” What do you think that passage means?
- Compare the first and last illustrations in the book. What differences do you notice? What similarities?
- If you could add one more picture to this book, what would it look like?

ACTIVITIES

Create Your Own Mythical Character

Invite your students to make up a brand-new creature inspired by the imaginative characters in the book!

Draw a scaly dragon, a fox with a feather cap... whatever your imagination sees. Decorate it with sequins, beads,

leaves, or whatever inspires you.

Can you make it move or come to life? Make up a story about your new character and the adventures it goes on.



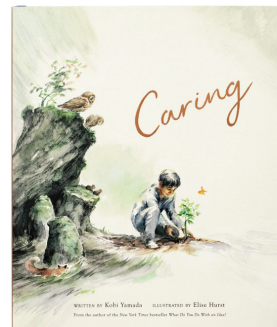
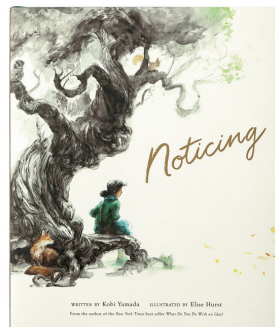
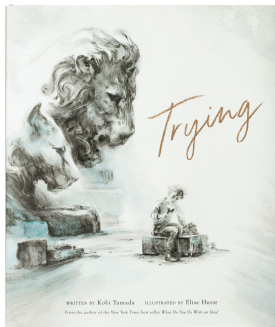
Tell a Story in Four Seasons

Ask your students to choose one illustration from the book and imagine what the natural elements are like in the scene. What changes occur through the four seasons: spring, summer, fall, and winter? How do the characters in the scene adapt to the changing weather? If the setting is by the water, imagine something being washed up by a storm or high tide. What would happen if there was snow or torrential rain? Would wildflowers grow? A magical forest spring up? Does the water drain away to reveal a secret, underground lake? What animals might be attracted there? Students can either write down their thoughts and stories or share them out loud.

Make an Imagination Collection

New ideas and stories pop up at any time of day. Create special containers with your students to hold their budding thoughts! Decorate jars with thin paper and glue or wrap boxes and cut a hole in the top to slip pieces of paper into. You can label them with the student's name or "My Imagination Collection." Invite your students to jot down their story beginnings, even unfinished snippets of ideas, and save them in their containers. You never know what or when a new idea sparks a new story.

Interested in more stories from Elise Hurst? Check out her other books:



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