

# **A Snicker of Magic Study Guide**

## **A Snicker of Magic by Natalie Lloyd**

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# Plot Summary

"A Snicker of Magic" is a children's novel by Natalie Lloyd which follows the efforts of 11-year-old Felicity Juniper Pickle to restore hope to her family, restore magic to the town of Midnight Gulch, and encourage her family to finally settle down and call somewhere home. When the novel begins, Felicity, her sister, Frannie-Jo, their Mama, and their dog, Biscuit, arrive in Midnight Gulch, Tennessee, Mama's hometown. Mama tells her daughters that Midnight Gulch was once a place of magic, kept secret by the river, the trees, and the mountains around the town. This especially intrigues Felicity, who can sense magic in the air around her. Felicity is a collector of words, seeing them in the world all around her and writing them down. There are many good words she sees in Midnight Gulch.

At school, Felicity fast befriends and develops a crush on a wheelchair-bound boy named Jonah. Jonah reveals he is secretly "The Beedle", an anonymous part of a do-gooder network famous all over town and in the surrounding area. In class, Felicity's teacher, Miss Lawson, recounts the history of the town and the Threadbare Brothers, the musical stage name for Stone and Berry Weatherly. Miss Lawson reveals that the town was once home to great magic, but a rivalry that developed between the Brothers led to an epic duel which Stone lost. As a result, Stone was cursed with a wandering heart, leading him to leave Midnight Gulch. Without each other, neither brother could do magic anymore since it wasn't the same without the other. Over the next several years, the magic in the town died out as well. Now, only traces of magic remain. Miss Lawson announces that in the middle of September, a talent show, the Stoneberry Duel, will be held.

Felicity, who has already come to love Midnight Gulch, hopes that her mother – who moves them around from place to place every few weeks – will want to finally put down roots and stay. She hopes entering the contest will show her mother how much she wants to stay. Jonah agrees to help Felicity get ready for the show. In the meantime, he introduces her to Oliver Weatherly, owner of Dr. Zook's Ice Cream and grandson of Berry Weatherly, and the first Beedle of the Gulch. Oliver explains his late wife was named Eldee, and that "Beedle" is "Eldee" spelled backwards but with the B from his middle name. It was his wife who began doing good deeds that Oliver later continued, and which Jonah now carries on with a select few others. Oliver tells Felicity to always have all sides of a story.

As time passes, Felicity and Jonah uncover important information about the Weatherly Brothers. A woman named Florentine proves most helpful, explaining the real source of the duel was not money, fame, or wealth from their music careers, but a woman named Isabella – Florentine's grandmother. She has been carrying her grandmother's burden for years, hoping to exchange it for her grandmother's most sacred memory. Felicity later learns she is descended from Stone Weatherly, and that her family is cursed to always fail and wander thanks to the duel. This explains why her uncle, Boone, fails in all that he does; why her aunt, Cleo, has been unsuccessful in love and business; and

why Mama always wants to run. Felicity is given a locket passed down to the family from Stone which no one has ever been able to open.

At the talent show, Felicity overcomes her fear of public speaking to talk about the Weatherly Brothers, and how love, family, and home are beautiful and important things, and how love conquers all. It is then that the locket opens on its own, leading all the shadows of the audience members to dance, and leading the audience members to do the same. Inside the locket is Isabella's favorite memory, of her in an evening field with an unknown man. Felicity exchanges the locket with Florentine for her grandmother's burden – two jars containing the shadows of the Brothers Threadbare. The shadows are reunited, and the curse is broken. Mama decides she will stay in Midnight Gulch for good, which makes Felicity very happy, and reaffirms the power of love, family, and home to her.

# Chapters 1 – 6

## Summary

Chapter 1 – Eleven-year-old Felicity Juniper Pickle, her little sister Frannie Jo, their Mama, and their dog, Biscuit, arrive in Midnight Gulch, Tennessee. Mama tells Felicity that all the magic has gone out of the place, and that Midnight Gulch used to be a secret town, protected by a mountain, a river, and a forest. The town had to be secret, Mama explains, because all of the residents were magical. She says that they could do everything from catching stars in jars to dancing up sunflowers. Mama reveals she grew up in Midnight Gulch, but that by the time she was born, the magic had been long gone. As Felicity listens to the crickets, she can sense that there is still magic in the place welcoming her.

Chapter 2 – Felicity and Frannie Jo are both worried about the first day at their new school, Stoneberry Elementary. Mama tells her girls not to worry, because anything can happen in a town like Midnight Gulch. The girls hope this means they will be staying a while. It is as if Felicity can see the word “believe” in the morning sunlight, leading her to believe they will be staying a while. This also makes Felicity feel as if something wonderful will happen to her, even though she can’t explain what, why, or how. Felicity explains she is a word collector, and can see words in the world around her in different situations – such as believe. At school, to help relax Frannie, Felicity makes up a silly poem as they walk through the hall. She also reminds Frannie that, because the town used to be magical, maybe something magical will happen to them. Felicity goes on to explain that she loves words, but has trouble saying them to large groups of people. She also says that she didn’t know it then, but the Beedle was watching her.

Chapter 3 – When Felicity introduces herself to her sixth-grade class, she becomes nervous and stammers out her name as “Flea”. Miss Divinity Lawson, an energetic, young, sweet, and beautiful woman, quickly jumps in to introduce Felicity to the class instead. She explains to the class that everyone and everything in the world has a story to tell. Miss Lawson tells the class that Midnight Gulch is famous for two things: Dr. Zook’s Ice Cream Factory and its forty-five flavors of ice cream; and magic. Felicity is stunned and thrilled to hear this while the rest of the kids look bored because they have all heard this a thousand times before. Miss Lawson goes on to explain that on September 15, 1910, the musically magical Threadbare Brothers, Stone and Berry Weatherly, had a great duel. Miss Lawson leaves it up to the class to learn why they were called the Threadbare Brothers, and notes out of nowhere that “The Beedle” is the most magical thing in Midnight Gulch. Their music, Miss Lawson explains, could make nature dance and people happy.

Miss Lawson reveals that tours, fame, and money divided them, making them jealous of one another, and leading to the 1910 duel. The loser of the duel, it is explained, would had to leave town forever, cursed with a wandering heart, and could never do magic again. Miss Lawson reveals that it was Stone who lost the duel, but in reality, both



brothers lost the duel because Berry could not do magic without his brother. Miss Lawson reveals that eventually, both brothers left town, and slowly the magic faded away. Miss Lawson then announces a talent show called the Stoneberry Duel, set for September 15, featuring free ice cream, funnel cakes, and cotton candy. All talents are welcome. The grand prize is \$100 and a year's supply of Dr. Zook's ice cream. Felicity thinks about entering, but worries she'll mess up as she has speaking in public in the past. She wishes she could get rid of her bad memories. After class, Felicity receives a note from someone named "The Beedle", telling her to meet him at the yellow picnic table at the playground, to use the code word "pumpernickel", and that Felicity's time has come.

Chapter 4 – Lonely is the word on Felicity's mind at lunch, so she decides to write in her blue notebook. Someone calls out her name, which surprises her, but she sees no one looking at her. Her name is called out again, but still she sees no one look at her. She continues to feel lonely, wishing for a friend or a little magic.

Chapter 5 – After school, Felicity goes to the playground picnic table with a thin, blonde boy is sitting. Felicity delivers the code word. The boy introduces himself as Jonah Pickett, the Beedle. Jonah is wheelchair-bound, and heads to the bus with Felicity. There, Felicity happily sees that Frannie-Jo has already made a friend. Jonah explains "The Beedle" is his secret business name which must remain secret. Jonah says his family, like Felicity's, is busted up because his father is in the military and is currently serving overseas. Felicity doesn't know how Jonah knows about her family, but she says her father is only away on work. Jonah explains he knows about Felicity because his mom is a hairdresser, and does everyone's hair in Midnight Gulch, and so she learns about the people she works for. He also reveals his grandmother, Granny Effie, is a bounty hunter.

Jonah says he has a "know-how" about things, and knows something is bothering Felicity. He says he intends to fix it by helping Felicity to win the talent show. Felicity is terrified and says she has no real talent other than collecting words. She explains she can find, catch, and write down words, but has trouble saying them to others. Jonah promises to introduce Felicity to everyone to collect words. He explains it was he who called Felicity in the cafeteria, and that he would like to be her friend. Felicity is thrilled. Jonah encourages Felicity to talk to her Aunt Cleo about the Threadbare Brothers. Day Grissom, the bus driver who resembles Santa Claus, asks Felicity to say hello to Aunt Cleo for him when he learns that Felicity is Cleo's niece. Heading up the hill to Aunt Cleo's, Felicity and Frannie hear bluegrass music, which makes Felicity think "Threadbare".

Chapter 6 – Felicity and Frannie hang out with Aunt Cleo while Mama works a late shift at the ice cream factory. Felicity asks Aunt Cleo what she knows about the Brothers Threadbare, which causes Cleo to look at her suspiciously. She doesn't want to talk about it, so she only gives Felicity some basic details. She says that Stone played guitar while Berry played banjo, that some people believed the magic either came from the men or their instruments or both, and that Berry won the duel. Cleo goes on to say that the brothers were talented at all they did, noting that Berry was great at sewing while

sighing that Stone was an artist who painted and repainted beautiful pictures on the drugstore wall across the bridge into Midnight Gulch. The brothers, she explains, could walk right into the painting on the wall. That wall, she further explains, is known as “The Gallery”. She also believes the brothers both regretted the duel, but were always too proud to say sorry.

Felicity and Frannie then ask about their father, Roger Pickle. Cleo explains Roger was a talented musician who loved to sing and dance, and that he named Felicity “Felicity” because the word “felicity” means “intense happiness” which is what Roger felt the first time he held Felicity in his arms. Cleo explains Frannie Jo was named after both of her grandmothers, who were wild, wonderful, and unique. Felicity asks if her father will ever come back. Cleo says he might. As Felicity goes to sleep that night, she hopes her father will come home, and hopes that she is now truly at home herself.

## Analysis

“A Snicker of Magic” is a children’s novel by Natalie Lloyd which follows the efforts of 11-year-old Felicity Juniper Pickle to restore hope to her family, restore magic to the town of Midnight Gulch, and encourage her family to finally settle down and call somewhere home. Felicity hopes that Midnight Gulch will finally be that place. From the very start, the themes of family and magic are readily apparent. Felicity deeply loves her family, including Mama, even if she doesn’t like how much Mama moves them around. Still, it is apparent that the family will stay together no matter what hardships they endure in moving around so much. Love and loyalty for one another make this so.

The family’s arrival in Midnight Gulch comes with Mama’s explanation that the town used to be magical. The reader will note how Felicity’s arrival in Midnight Gulch almost seems magical in and of itself. Felicity herself is not without magic, as she sees words in the world around her. While it may not be regular magic, it is a kind of magic that enables Felicity to see the world in ways not everyone else does. This is a gift that Jonah recognizes quickly. Traces of magic can be seen in the 45 flavors of Dr. Zook’s Ice Cream, and the Gallery painting. (The reader should take special note of the Gallery painting for future chapters.) Magic also appears by way of Miss Lawson’s explanation of the Brothers Threadbare and their duel.

It is through Miss Lawson that the past becomes an important theme as well. This, as the reader notes, fills in many of the gaps about the mystery of the town’s past, and why the magic went away. The past has tremendous bearing on the present, for it was because of the duel between the Brothers that the magic nearly died. Curse with a wandering heart for losing the duel, Stone went on to leave the town, followed not long after by Berry. This ultimately led to the magic itself leaving as well. What is interesting to note is that Cleo explains she believes both brothers ultimately came to regret the duel, although both of them were unable to say they were sorry to the other.

The leaving of home by the Brothers stands in a mirrored contrast to how Felicity herself is seeking home. Home becomes an incredibly important theme in the novel as the plot



progresses, for home is something Felicity is desperately trying to find, and something that the Brothers themselves were cast out of by their own decisions. In this respect, Midnight Gulch resembles Eden, and the casting out of Adam and Eve. It is also apparent, through Cleo, that the Brothers – despite whatever disagreement they had – still loved one another. Beyond Cleo's belief that Stone and Berry regretted their duel and their disagreement, the reader should note that both men clearly felt lost without the other, for even in their hometown they couldn't feel at home. This is because there was a lack of love without the other brother. Love becomes an important theme in the novel as it progresses as well.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why have Felicity and her family come to Midnight Gulch? What is Felicity's reaction to Midnight Gulch? Why?

## **Discussion Question 2**

Why does Jonah befriend Felicity so quickly? How does Felicity respond to this? Why?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What information can be gathered about the Weatherly Brothers so far in the novel? Why does their story seem of such great interest to Felicity?

## **Vocabulary**

invisible, fluttered, homespun, nomads, charade, infinity, marvelous, jitters, commemorate, feisty, moniker, alias, frantically, ailing, triumphantly, kin, shabby, glorious



# Chapters 7 – 12

## Summary

Chapter 7 – Felicity and her family are staying with Aunt Cleo. Aunt Cleo requires that they attend church with her. Mama isn't thrilled about it, but agrees to go. They travel together to Friendship Community Church, Felicity is awed by the beauty of the church and the stained glass windows. She also hears the pastor talk about an unknown person called "The Beedle" who does good acts throughout town without expecting anything good in return. Felicity now knows why Jonah wants his secret name to remain a secret. During prayer time, Felicity prays to God for her loved ones and her new friend, Jonah. The pastor then speaks about felicity – true and intense joy and happiness – being essential to life. This catches Felicity's attention. The pastor urges the faithful to choose real joy in the coming week. After church, a woman named Ponder Waller, owner and operator of the pie shop on Main Street, says hello to Felicity and her family. Ponder explains that she was childhood friends with Mama, and talks about how much of an amazing artist Mama is.

At lunch, Aunt Cleo praises the work of the Beedle, who she says has been at it for 50 years, including tending to Abigail Honeycutt's grave. Felicity is stunned by this, finding it impossible to believe. Cleo says it is magic. Mama is then amused to learn that Day Grissom still has a crush on Cleo after so many years. At home, a box of dog biscuits, a coloring book, and a container of Dr. Zook's Hannah Banana Coconut ice cream is waiting for the Pickles tied up with a red silk ribbon and a note from the Beedle welcoming them home to Midnight Gulch. It makes Mama smile. Felicity says a quick prayer of thanks to God for Jonah for making Mama smile when Jonah didn't even know her. She hopes she can give something just as amazing back to Jonah.

Chapter 8 – On the bus on Monday, Felicity asks Jonah about how he has been serving the town for fifty years, but Jonah says he can't talk about it on the bus. Meanwhile, Day Grissom sings loudly because the bus radio is broken. Jonah says she wishes someone would repaint the Gallery, to get rid of all the graffiti that has built up over the years. Felicity says her mother has the talent to do it. Jonah thinks that if Felicity's mother sees her happy and performing in the talent show, it will convince her to stay. Jonah asks Felicity about the words she collects, and she explains she sees them everywhere in the world around her. She says she writes them down on her shoes and in her notebook. She explains the word she sees most often is "lonely". She says she sees the word "splendiferous" on Jonah. Jonah writes it down, asks Felicity to keep his first ever collected word, and causes Felicity to blush.

After school, Jonah brings Felicity to a large old mansion with the word "THREADBARE" on the front gate. There, Jonah yells "pumpernickel", and the gate opens. He explains the mansion is owned by Oliver, who also owns Dr. Zook's. Charlie Sue Hancock, a very sweet overweight white-haired lady who is Oliver's assistant, meets Jonah and Felicity at the front door. She hugs Felicity, telling her she is every bit



as adorable as Jonah described. This makes Felicity blush and makes her happy. Charlie Sue says Oliver has been refusing to send out orders of Blackberry Sunrise to stores beyond the town all day. Jonah explains this is because the ice cream can only be sold in Midnight Gulch because it is the factory's most popular flavor, and contains magic. Felicity and Jonah then wait to meet with Oliver in the boardroom. Jonah explains that for the past several years, he, his mom, and friends saved up old Coke and Pepsi cans to sell and use the money to build a small school in Haiti. Felicity is amazed. Jonah explains it is what led Oliver to appoint him the new Beedle. While they wait, they sample ice cream that Charlie Sue brings in. Oliver then arrives. He is a friendly old man who looks more like a grandpa and a cowboy than a millionaire. He reveals himself to be the grandson of Berry Weatherly, Oliver Weatherly, and the first Beedle of Midnight Gulch.

Chapter 9 – Oliver has Charlie Sue bring in Blackberry Sunrise ice cream, explaining the magic in the ice cream has to do with how the blackberries taste. If they taste sweet, a good memory is recalled, while if they taste sour, a bad memory is recalled. Oliver says as a child, he was very mean and unkind, doing things like killing doves for fun. He goes on to say that one day, a traveling female preacher named Eldee Mae Cotton drove into town in a red pickup truck from Knoxville, and spoke at the fairgrounds. Oliver remembers her being stunningly beautiful with a songbird voice. He remembers Eldee telling him that God hadn't forgotten about him, that hope was coming down. Oliver recounts how in the morning, he saw a hot-air balloon crash land, and a very old man get out. Oliver explains the old man was Stone, and that not anyone knows the story of how Stone came back to Midnight Gulch.

Chapter 10 – Oliver reveals that Stone could only stay a day due to the curse of the wandering heart, but in that time, Stone explained the true story behind the Brothers Threadbare. Oliver also reveals that Stone gave him his magical guitar to give to Berry if Berry was ever seen again. When Stone departed, Oliver explains, Stone gave him the best advice he had ever received – that words matter more than people know. Taking this advice to heart, Stone shaped up, began doing good things, and declared his love for Eldee and married her. That words can matter so much strikes at the heart of Felicity, who is amazed by the story and the advice. Oliver explains he and Eldee bought the ice cream factory from the former owners, the Honeycutts, and began leaving ice cream for people as a measure of goodwill which then turned into doing all sorts of good deeds for people. Oliver reveals that "Beedle" is "Eldee" spelled backwards with a "b" based on Oliver's own middle name. He credits his late wife with all the good ideas. Now, Jonah helps to carry on the Beedle work.

Oliver further explains that Stone will be forced to wander until things are made right as defined by the curse, in which amends are made and spoken. He reveals that the brothers were once mocked in a paper for their homemade, shabby clothing, but that the brothers embraced the name instead. A storm then comes outside, which means Charlie Sue will have to drive Jonah and Felicity home. Felicity then notices that a dove tattoo on Oliver's arm seems to have disappeared. She then realizes that it is September seventh in addition to the storm – both signs that, when taken together, always mean Mama is ready to pack up and leave town. Felicity begins to panic. At



home, Felicity is horrified to find her mom packing, speaking of a new job in Seattle. Felicity and Frannie say they can't possibly leave. Felicity goes on to say she can't leave because she is supposed to be reading a poem at the Stoneberry Duel talent show. This convinces Mama to decide to put off moving for a few more weeks, because it makes Mama very proud of Felicity. That night, Felicity and Frannie pray for a miracle.

Chapter 11 – Jonah tells Felicity not to worry about the talent show, and that he thinks something good will happen there. After school, Felicity and Frannie are told to take Biscuit for a walk because Biscuit has been very hyper all day, interrupting Cleo's quilt-making business. Outside, Biscuit takes off running but is caught by a kind man with a banjo. Cleo reveals the man to be her brother, Felicity and Frannie's Uncle Boone, who only comes around when he needs money, a place to stay, or has broken up with a girl. Boone, it is explained, used to be well-known as a singer-songwriter who still goes by the stage name "Boone Taylor". Felicity can see the word "failure" around Boone, while she can see the words "patch it" and "mend it" around Cleo's. Felicity then remembers she never heard the rest of the story about Stone and Berry.

Chapter 12 – Felicity and Frannie are thrilled to meet their new relative. Everyone goes down to Snapdragon Pond. Boone says he believes all the good music he had in him has gone out with the last girl. Cleo tells him there will be other songs, and Felicity agrees. Boone asks Felicity if she sees any words around him. Felicity tells him "new beginning". Boone explains he was similar to Felicity when he was younger, but it had to do with musical notes instead of words. At the pond, Cleo has everyone put on fake wings. Felicity is amazed by the beauty of the lake, and writes about it in her notebook. Mama and Felicity take a walk through the woods near the lake, and climb a tree.

Mama explains they are in part of the forest which helps to keep Midnight Gulch a secret. She also shows Felicity where the interstate can be seen in the distance. Mama explains she used to climb the tree as a girl to think about all the people on the highway and where they might be going. Felicity asks her mother why she hates it so much in Midnight Gulch, but Mama says she feels like she'll lose her mind if she doesn't keep moving, and that she has a rambling heart. Felicity doesn't think she has the same kind of rambling heart as her mother. She wants a place to call home. Back at the lake, Day Grissom says hello to Cleo, prompting Cleo to tell everyone they are leaving. Felicity waves hello. She notes that Day is smiling sadly. Felicity realizes all the wings they are wearing are broken.

## Analysis

As the novel continues, the friendship between Jonah and Felicity grows. It is clear the two have developed crushes on one another. It is also clear that Felicity has fallen in love with Midnight Gulch, a place where she feels she belongs and a place which holds such promise for her as home. Home now becomes a major motivating factor for Felicity, as she aspires to find a way to convince her mom to remain in Midnight Gulch. She determines that participating in the talent show – and thereby confronting her own fears of public speaking – will convince her mother to at least stay in town a little longer.



The reader will note that storms and sevens serve as symbols of bad luck for Felicity, as each time a storm or a seven – or both – occur, it means Mama is ready to leave town. Only through learning of her daughter's desire to be in the talent show and to confront her own worst fear does Mama consent to remaining in Midnight Gulch a few more weeks. As Mama explains to Felicity at the lake, Mama believes she has a rambling heart which makes it hard for her to stay in any one place for too long. Mama also makes the assumption that Felicity, too, has a rambling heart – but Felicity only wants a place to call home.

Family matters a great deal in this decision. Mama's genuine love and concern for Felicity, as well as Mama's pride in Felicity choosing to confront her closest-held and worst fear, demonstrates that Mama is willing to put aside whatever is bothering her for the sake of her family. Because of this, Felicity and Frannie are able to grow closer to their Aunt Cleo, and meet their Uncle Boone. Boone has returned to Midnight Gulch a broken man, for his music career has gone nowhere, his girl has left him, and he is out of money. It is heartening to Felicity to see the way her family members take care of one another, and she is thrilled to meet a new member of the family.

It is through Jonah and Oliver that Felicity learns more about the importance of words, the past, and how important a bearing the past has on the present. The Beedle came of Oliver's experiences with his late wife, a sweet, kind, deeply religious, and beautiful woman who always sought to do good. It is in her honor and the love of his fellow Midnight Gulchers that Oliver sought to carry on her work, ultimately bringing in Jonah and a select few to help. Love born in the past is crucial in the present. In the case of the Threadbare Brothers, Felicity learns that it wasn't a question of "what" caused their past duel, but a question of "who".

Recalling the past is often helped by the magic of Blackberry Sunrise ice cream, as Felicity and the reader come to learn. Sour bites of ice cream mean bad memories will be recalled, while sweet bites mean good memories will be recalled. The reader should also pay careful attention to the words that Felicity sees around her aunt and uncle – words which essentially point to forgiveness and amends – all drawing on the past. Cleo and Boone will have an important to play in coming chapters, but for now, Felicity poignantly notes that all the wings her family members are wearing appear broken.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Felicity hope that participating in the talent show will encourage her mother to stay longer? Does Felicity's plan work? Why or why not?

## Discussion Question 2

What important information does Felicity receive about the Threadbare Brothers from her conversation with Oliver? What important advice does she receive about the power of words? Why do these things affect Felicity so much?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Mama explain she always wants to leave whatever town she and her daughters move to? Why doesn't Felicity tell her mother the truth about her dislike of moving so much?

## Vocabulary

stipulation, anonymous, wondrous, ruckus, fickle, exaggerates, impractical, paradigm, cantankerous, elaboration, furiously, halcyon, serendipity, flabbergasted, align, superstitious, involuntary, velocity, peculiar, subterfuge

# Chapters 13 – 18

## Summary

Chapter 13 – Felicity and Jonah visit Dr. Zook's Dreamery Creamery, the only ice cream store in the world that carries all 45 Zook flavors. They eat ice cream and look across the street to Ponder's Pie Shop, which was once a pub called Poet & Pauper. The Ponders are descendants of the Smiths, who owned Poet & Pauper, which used to make pies with actual secrets baked into them, not merely written down and slipped inside. He explains that people still believe that some believe the pies still have a snicker of magic, or a small amount of magic, in them. For example, Mrs. Ponder's apple pies have been known to make people feel brave. Jonah believes Felicity's ability to see words is a snicker of magic. The only magic Felicity is interested in is the kind which will make her mom stay in Midnight Gulch.

They then see Elvis Phillips set up a karaoke radio on the street corner to begin performing Elvis Presley songs. Jonah wants to help Felicity believe in herself the same way as Elvis believes in himself. Jonah then tells Felicity to write down facts about herself. She does so, including a statement about how much she likes Jonah. Jonah has picked up a new set of banjo strings for Boone, and says they must do something nice for Cleo. For this, Jonah officially makes Felicity a Beedle. It makes her heart happy. Jonah then brings Felicity to meet Florentine, a thin, pretty woman with long, dark braids who is a poet and knows about Jonah's Beedle ways. Florentine tells Felicia that words and stories are peaceful things, and all they have to do is be turned loose. Felicia then hears wind chimes, feels a cool breeze, and thinks about the Brothers Threadbare.

Chapter 14 – Florentine then reveals her story to Felicity as she eats Blackberry Sunshine ice cream. Florentine says she was born in southern Georgia in a farmhouse believed to be magic. Florentine explains she was raised by her Granny Opal, and spent much of her time in a tree letting her heart live all over the world through stories. She could read other stories, she explains, but she never could tell her own. One day, Felicity says, she filled her backpack with books and the magic that burdened her family, and set off on her own to find her own story. The burdens, Florentine explains, keep the family women safe, but make them heavyhearted. Florentine explains went on to meet a sailor named Waylon Cooper, with whom she fell in love and who encouraged her to write down the poems she was beginning to come up with. Florentine reveals the burdens she has been carrying for the last ten years drove her away from Waylon, because she didn't want Waylon to have to carry them, too. Florentine explains that for Felicity to have her own stories, she's got to know her family's stories. If Florentine thinks Felicity is who she thinks she is, then Felicity has magic in her veins and stories worth telling.

Chapter 15 – Felicity relates Florentine's thoughts on family magic to Cleo and Boone. Boone is thrilled with the new strings for his banjo. Felicity asks about the family history





as a bad storm comes on. Cleo reluctantly recounts it, saying they are descended from the no-good Stone Weatherly. Cleo explains that before the duel, the Brothers contacted an old witch woman to create the curse. Stone, though he married and had kids, was cursed by the wandering heart that never let him stay in one place for long. This makes Felicity think of her mother. The banjo that Boone owns was once owned by the Brothers. Boone is stunned.

Cleo explains that their side of the family lived in Virginia, and that one day, Berry showed up looking for Stone. Unable to find Stone, Cleo says, Berry left his banjo for Stone, saying that it didn't sound right without Stone. Berry also left behind a locket, which reminded him of better times, Cleo reveals. No one has ever been able to open the locket. Felicity wonders if the curse has gone down through the family line, causing everyone to fail or wander. Mama then suddenly arrives home early, saying the factory sent everyone home due to a tornado warning. The family huddles in the bathroom together until the storm passes. Later, Felicity thinks she can hear wind-chime wind in the locket.

Chapter 16 – Felicity worries that the curse means she is already doomed to fail the Duel. Felicity meets Jonah at his mom's salon, Jewell Pickett's Lube & Dye. Jewell can do both car repairs and hair styles. All employees can do the same. Felicity sees a picture of Jonah's dad in the shop, and sees the word "hope" around it. Jonah introduces Felicity to Big Bruce and the elderly Rosie Walker, who was a famous country singer by the stage name of Ramblin' Rose. Rose explains she has achieved all of her dreams, but what is notable is that she achieved her dreams relatively late in life. Rose says she is proof it is never too late to take hold of a dream, and hers began in earnest when the Beedle left a guitar and a hundred-dollar bill on her porch. The guitar, she reveals, belonged to Stone Weatherly. She explains she achieved her dream when she was 57, ultimately coming to play at the Ryman, a church converted into a concert hall. Rose reveals she later stopped playing simply because she knew her time was up. Rose tells Felicity that music helped her put her words together, and that Felicity's words matter more than she knows and so she shouldn't waste them. Oliver then arrives with free ice cream for everyone, and seeks to tell the story of the witch of Midnight Gulch.

Chapter 17 – Oliver explains that of all the magical families that used to live in Midnight Gulch, the family that had the strangest and most exciting magic of all were the Thistles. The Thistle women were especially powerful, Oliver reveals, including Isabella Thistle. Isabella was intelligent, humorous, and plain-looking – and she managed to make both Stone and Berry fall in love with her, says Oliver. She in turn, he goes on, fell in love with each of them. The jealousy between the brothers, Oliver explains, did not come from fame or money but from wanting Isabella. While Oliver doesn't believe Isabella actually put a curse on them, the fact that the brothers believed it was enough to make it so. Everyone in the shop wishes the curse would have never even been contemplated. They also wish the Gallery wall would be fixed. Felicity then excitedly says her mother could do it. Everyone in the shop likes this idea. That night, Felicity tells Biscuit she intends to find a way to lift the curse and restore magic to Midnight Gulch.



Chapter 18 – When Felicity wakes up, Frannie notices a dove tattoo on Felicity’s arm – the same kind of tattoo that appeared and disappeared on Oliver’s arm. Felicity rushes over to see Oliver. Oliver explains the bird tattoo isn’t really a tattoo, but a magical indicator of hope, appearing on people who need hope in their lives. Oliver confirms the bird is a snicker of magic, and that Felicity must have something important worth saying for the bird to appear on her. Felicity later tells Jonah all about this. Jonah is thrilled. Jonah confesses that if Felicity didn’t want to do the duel, he would still be friends with her. This makes her happy. Jonah also explains that maybe they could figure out the curse on its own, together.

Felicity asks about Jonah’s father. Jonah explains his father’s name is Arly, and he left behind a giant jar full of 365 strips of paper – one for each day of his deployment – that Jonah would then remove one piece a day, so he could tell when his father would be home. That night, Boone has Felicity and their entire family dance to his music, which is coming through loud and clear again. It makes Felicity feel hopeful. That night, she writes a message of love on the dove and asks the dove to deliver the message to Arly from Jonah. Frannie watches this happen, and is amazed to see the bird’s wings flutter and then disappear. Felicity suddenly realizes she is on her own for the talent show.

## Analysis

Magic continues to be an important theme in this section of the novel. The traces of magic can be seen all over town – from the Gallery to the ice cream flavors of Dr. Zook to the town’s past, such as the pies at Poet & Pauper. There is sad magic in Florentine’s story, about carrying along her family’s burden like an actual, physical weight. Florentine’s own understanding of Felicity reveals that if Felicity is who Florentine thinks she is, then Felicity actually has magic in her blood. This would make sense given that Felicity is able to see words in the world around her in ways that other people can’t. These snickers of magic are also manifested in the magical tattoo dove that comes and goes as hope is needed – as symbolized by the bird’s appearance on Felicity’s arm, and by the locket that will not open. Indeed, as Felicity tells Biscuit, she intends to find a way to bring back the magic to Midnight Gulch.

The past remains absolutely crucial in this section of the novel as Felicity learns more about the past through Florentine. The reader should note very carefully that Florentine’s burdens are essential to her, the past, and her family – and that Florentine urges Felicity to learn more about her family and her family’s past as well. She learns that Cleo has nothing positive to say about their ancestor, Stone Weatherly. Felicity is not only stunned to learn that she is a descendant of Stone, but that Stone left behind the instrument that Boone now plays; and that a magical locket was also left behind which will not open until amends are made between the brothers. What is perhaps most stunning to Felicity about her family’s history is that Stone and Berry each attempted to apologize to the other, but missed the other instead. As a result, the curse prevailed. Felicity now begins to wonder if the curse has been passed down through the generations as well.





If this is the case, then the past has a tremendous bearing on the present in darkly magical ways. This would explain why, like Stone, Mama can never sit still for long. She is not blessed with a rambling heart, but is cursed with a wandering heart. Likewise, the love and professional lives of Boone and Cleo have also been impacted negatively by the duel, for just as their ancestor failed to win the duel, Boone and Cleo seem to be failing at almost everything they do in life. Yet, the reader should note that through all of these struggles, the family remains united and loyal to one another, forcing them to focus on love and family.

As Felicity learns, love was also something that both Threadbare Brothers had in their lives – but threw away over jealousy about a woman named Isabella Thistle. Both brothers fell in love with Isabella, only to fight over her instead. Rather than doing the honorable thing of competing for her hand, the Brothers grew jealous and went after each other, forgetting their love, sense of family, and the importance of the magic they shared between them. Only once they lost these things did the brother realize what they had actually had. Both had attempted to make amends at the same time, which meant that they missed the other instead. And now the missed chances of the past are deeply affecting the present, leading Felicity to believe she can put things back together.

## **Discussion Question 1**

What was the source of the fight between the Brothers Threadbare? Why did they choose to settle their disagreement in such a manner as a duel?

## **Discussion Question 2**

What is a snicker of magic? Where do snickers of magic still exist in town? What does this cause Felicity to believe?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What information does Felicity learn about herself, and her family's history? What does this lead Felicity to concluding that she can do? Why does she believe she can do this?

## **Vocabulary**

pauper, snicker, drawled, insecure, sanctuary, humdinger, prevailed, chatter, enchanting, notorious, gargantuan, perplexed, fantastical

# Chapters 19 – 24

## Summary

Chapter 19 – Felicity shows her poetry to Florentine, who tells Felicity the words are marvelous. Meanwhile, Mama considers what she'll paint on the Gallery. She feels as if all her creativity has been robbed by staying in one place for too long. Felicity begins telling Florentine about all the beautiful things her mother has made in the past, such as paper flowers and beautiful paintings. This encourages and motivates Mama to begin painting. It is then that Felicity realizes breaking the Weatherly curse will set her mother free forever. When Felicity goes to sit on a bench, Florentine tells her not to sit on Abigail Honeycutt, who is invisible. She tells Felicia to ask Oliver about this. On the way home, Boone sings and plays the banjo for Mama and Felicity. Mama finds it sweet and likes the fact that Felicity has a crush on Jonah. They remind Felicity she doesn't have to do the talent show to impress Jonah, but Felicity says that isn't why she is doing it. Mama and Boone then remind her there is no such thing as a curse. Felicity believes otherwise.

Chapter 20 – Jonah makes Boone a Beedle associate, and he, Felicity, Oliver, and Boone deliver a piano to Toast Terry, a classmate who loves to play piano. Felicity asks Oliver about Abigail Honeycutt being invisible. Oliver explains that Abigail was married to the richest and kindest man in town, Lionel. They had a son named Burl, and decided to build Dr. Zook's, Oliver reveals. The recipe for Blackberry Sunrise is from Abigail, Oliver says. Oliver explains that Burl was creative, and did not want to take over the ice cream factory. Burl wanted to move to New York instead, which caused big fights between him and his father, Oliver continues. Burl left for New York and was never seen again, after which time Abigail spent ten years on the bench by the Gallery crying and waiting for him to come home. Over time, Abigail's sadness made her invisible, eating away at her bit by bit, Oliver explains. Later, Jonah gives Felicity a carton of Blackberry Sunrise ice cream in preparation for the duel. It has the words "SWEET AMENDS" written on it, but Jonah denies writing this.

Chapter 21 – Mama's painting on the Gallery is a beautiful landscape of the river and the woods, but it doesn't seem to make Mama happy. She says it is all wrong. Felicity and Jonah commit to breaking the curse while watching Mama work. Boone, who is not far off, asks anyone if they hear a strange wind-chime sound. Felicity is stunned that Boone hears it, too. Boone and Elvis Phillips then decide to team up and do music together, attracting much attention in town. It is revealed then that Day and Cleo used to play music together back in the day. Among those who turn out to hear Boone and Elvis is Rosie. Boone is thrilled to meet her in person, having been a huge fan of hers. As Boone and Elvis play the old mountain folk tune "Fair and Tender Ladies", the Weatherly locket that Felicity has taken to wearing begins moving and shimmering. She and Jonah are stunned and realize that "Fair and Tender Ladies" was the Threadbare Brothers' favorite song.



Chapter 22 – The day before the Duel, Jewell styles Felicity’s hair. Felicity confesses to Jewell that she overheard Mama talking on the phone about moving to Seattle. Jewell tells Felicity everything will work out fine. It is then that Jewell reveals to Felicity and Jonah that Florentine came in for a hair appointment the day before, during which time Florentine explained her great-grandmother was Isabella Thistle. Florentine believes if she can find the perfect memory Isabella left behind from the burdens Isabella stole, Florentine can lay down her own burdens once and for all. Jonah and Felicity believe Florentine can help break the curse, but they cannot find her anywhere.

Chapter 23 – At home, Felicity compliments Mama’s progress on the Gallery. She tells Mama to take all the time she needs to finish it. Mama reveals they’ll be leaving the day after the Duel. Felicity feels horrible about this. Day Grissom suddenly appears on the patio to sing a song for Cleo. He then declares he is sorry for all their bickering twenty years before, and that he still loves her. It is then that Felicity and her family realize Cleo is still in love with Day as well. Felicity, meanwhile, begins practicing her poetry reading, and asks Boone to play the banjo while she practices to relax her. Taking a break, Felicity decides to eat the Blackberry Sunrise ice cream, and begins to recall bittersweet memories of her father. She remembers how she watched her father leave by bus. It causes Felicity to cry, and Mama to hug her.

Chapter 24 – Felicity goes to find Jonah to tell him about her memory of her father before the Duel the next morning. She wears a pink dress hand-made by Cleo. Jonah tells her she looks pretty as they head into the school auditorium. The sign for the Duel says, “MAGIC HAPPENS HERE”. The room is filling up with people from town, including her family. Felicity is growing more and more nervous. It is then that Felicity realizes she has forgotten her blue notebook and her poems. She then learns her Uncle Boone has been asked to play the guitar for Rose, because Rose says she can’t play since she just got her nails done. It is then that Felicity realizes that Boone also has his banjo, which means both Threadbare Brothers instruments are in the same room for the first time in a hundred years. She then realizes the locket and her sweet amends are all in the same room as well, meaning that she is connected to all of them.

## Analysis

As the novel continues, Felicity learns much more about the past – and nearly all of the final pieces of the puzzle of the Threadbare Brothers fall into place. As it turns out, Florentine is the descendant of Isabella – and the burdens that Florentine now carries were Isabella’s. Families must pay for the choices of their ancestors by carrying the burdens of their lives with them. The same is true of Felicity and her family, who are set to wander and fail at everything they do until amends can be made by undoing these burdens.

The reader should note carefully that, in Chapter 24, Felicity realizes the guitar, banjo, and locket – in addition to her sweet amends – are all in the same room at the same time for the first time in a hundred years. The past has now returned, literally, to the present, meaning that Felicity has an unprecedented chance to make things right



through her words. Likewise, the reader will recall how when the favorite song of the Brothers is played, the locket shimmers and moves magically. It is no accident that all these things are aligning, or that a magically-memorable carton of ice cream is given to Felicity with the words “SWEET AMENDS” on it.

This is incredibly important for Felicity not only because she has a chance to set the past right, or to make the present right for her family, but because home is at stake. Felicity cannot imagine living anywhere other than Midnight Gulch. Every part of it is magical to her – both the parts that are genuinely magic, and the parts that are so good they might as well be magic. These thoughts swell inside Felicity as she prepares for the show. It should be noted here that Felicity has forgotten her blue notebook – meaning that she does not have the words she intended to speak written down on paper in front of her. What she will do is not revealed until the final section of the novel.

Meanwhile, Mama has been working on the Gallery. The painting Mama does is of all the things that surround the Gulch – including the river, the trees, and the mountains. As the reader notes, interestingly enough, Mama is unhappy with the painting because she believes it is missing something. What this is, she does not know. Felicity looks upon the painting as a sign that her mother might want to stay in Midnight Gulch forever, but this is not the case. As Mama later explains, she and the family will be packing up and leaving the day after the duel. Felicity deeply loves her mother and deeply values her family, so she does not wish to directly challenge her mother.

## **Discussion Question 1**

Why does Felicity believe that she will be able to make the sweet amends needed to bring peace to the past and the present? How does she hope to do this?

## **Discussion Question 2**

While Mama insists on the family packing up and leaving Midnight Gulch, Felicity does not stand up to her mother and tell her she is happy where they are. Why?

## **Discussion Question 3**

What important pieces of the past does Felicity realize have come together just prior to the talent show? Why is this so important?

## **Vocabulary**

fizzle, pendant, gnarly, unsavory, hindsight, persistent, affirmation, scampered, socializing, gravelly, stalwart

# Chapters 25 – Epilogue

## Summary

Chapter 25 – Felicity’s turn on stage comes. She begins stuttering, leading Boone to head out on stage with her to strum along with her. She focuses on her family in the audience, she realizes that the chords in the curse are aligning due to the instruments, the locket, her words, and both halves of the family being in the audience. Instead of reciting poetry, Felicity speaks beautifully about the falling out the Brothers Threadbare had, and how in the end, they didn’t care about who they actually were anymore. Felicity speaks about how curses have no power over people if love is present, because love is magic and real love can make up for a lifetime of mistakes. She speaks about how much she loves her family, and how much they have taught her to love.

Boone and Toast begin playing the guitar and the banjo, and magic sweeps in on the auditorium to the delight of everyone inside. The shadows of Day and Cleo run away together. The shadows of everyone begin dancing and having fun, leading the people of the shadows to dance and have fun as well. It is then that Felicity panics because she doesn’t see her mom anywhere in the audience. It is then that Jonah points out the locket has opened. Inside is a scene of Florentine in a beautiful evening meadow meeting a man in a brown suit. It is her perfect memory. Felicity and Jonah realize they must now find Florentine. Meanwhile, Day changes the sign to the Duel to read “MAGIC STILL HAPPENS HERE”.

Chapter 26 – Felicity, Cleo, Day, Frannie, Boone, Jonah, and Toast drive out to find Mama, who they discover has been crying and painting the Gallery. Still, she is smiling. Mama explain she knows how to fix the Gallery, and fix everything. It is then that Felicity sees Florentine across the street, and runs over to see her. She then trades Florentine the locket for Florentine’s bag of burdens. Florentine is stunned by the locket. Inside the bag are two jars, totally dark on the inside. Both have riddles on the lids which say there is still magic in the air, and that a way to peace is being found. They are signed by Isabella.

Chapter 27 – It is nearing dawn when Felicity has the family pile back into their van to head to the Gallery. Felicity carries along the dark jars, she says, as a snicker of magic and a symbolic observance. A group of people have assembled at Abigail Honeycutt’s bench and in front of the Gallery, including Jonah and his mom, and Rosie Walker. Mama reveals her finished painting of Midnight Gulch was missing something important – her family. Felicity and her family have been painted into the mural, as well as the Threadbare balloon. Felicity then directs Boone and Miss Rosie to play “Fair and Tender Ladies”. She and Jonah then open the jars, which spill out two shadows of men. The shadows climb the wall to the hot air balloon, wave to everyone, and then depart the painting. It is then that a bus drops off Jonah’s dad, who has come home from being deployed. Florentine then takes the bus to find Waylon. It is then that Felicity’s mom tells her they are now home in Midnight Gulch.



Epilogue – Midnight Gulch becomes famous once again in the days after the Duel. Cleo's quilting business takes off, and she dates Day. Day goes from being a school bus driver to a magical tour bus driver. Meanwhile, Boone and Miss Lawson have begun seeing each other romantically. Felicity continues to write and to grow closer to Jonah. She truly believes there is magic in the world if people simply look to find it. Every so often, the shadow of a hot air balloon passes over, and Felicity and Jonah are always thrilled to see it.

## Analysis

As the novel ends, the heartache of the past is undone by Felicity's sweet amends through her beautiful words. Felicity speaks well of love, family, and home – all important themes in the novel, and goes on to speak about how important love in and of itself is for everything that it touches. She speaks about how love can heal mistakes of the past, and these words, spoken of love from the heart, begin the process of amends. Accompanied by the music talents of Boone and Toast, the shadows of the room start to magically dance as magic returns to Midnight Gulch. Love is magical itself.

As it is revealed, the burdens of Isabella that Florentine now carries are the shadows, or souls, of the brokenhearted Weatherly Brothers. The burden that Isabella carried was heartache herself, of the feud between the brothers that she unintentionally caused. The burden is exchanged with Felicity for the locket, which contains Isabella's best memory, of a summer evening field with one of the brothers – but which brother is unknown and never revealed because it is no longer relevant to the present, and because it no longer matters in that the brothers have put the past behind them. This is for the best, because the shadows of the brothers themselves make peace and reunite when their souls are released from the burden jars. Magically, these two shadows set off in the balloon that Mama has painted onto the Gallery. Family is finally reunited through love, and the curse is broken through love.

In the end, love conquers all – including the curse, and Mama's desire to pack up and move once again. At long last, Mama decides that her hometown is home enough for herself and her family. As a result, Felicity and her family will not be moving – and this makes Felicity's dream of a home come true. Mama's rambling heart is settled just as the past has been settled. The breaking of the curse not only means that magic returns to the Gulch, but that Felicity's own family has stopped suffering. Boone has begun a romance with Miss Lawson, while Aunt Cleo has rekindled her romance with Day Grissom and has been very successful with her quilt business. Meanwhile, the Brothers Threadbare enjoy being reunited in the afterlife, as the shadow of their magical balloon sometimes passes over the Gulch.

## Discussion Question 1

What is the burden that Isabella originally carried, and which Florentine now carries? Why did Isabella originally take on this burden to carry?



## Discussion Question 2

What is Isabella's best memory? Why is the other person in the memory left unidentified?

## Discussion Question 3

With the curse broken, how do the lives of Felicity and her family improve? Do you believe this is a matter of the curse actually being broken, or a matter of love simply being stronger than magic or any beliefs about curses, or something else entirely? Explain.

## Vocabulary

frantically, symbolic, pendant, despair, slung



# Characters

## Felicity

Felicity Juniper Pickle is the main character and narrator of the novel, “A Snicker of Magic”. Eleven years old, Felicity is a sweet, warm, and sensitive girl who pays careful attention to the world around her. This is because she collects words, which she senses and sees around people, places, and things. She spends much of her time writing down these words, thoughts, feelings, and poetry in a blue notebook she is never without, but has great trouble speaking to big groups of people. Felicity is the daughter of Mama, older sister of Frannie, and niece of Aunt Cleo and Uncle Boone. Felicity comes to Midnight Gulch as the latest of stops in a series of moves Mama makes, and falls in love with the town immediately. She wants it to become her home.

In Midnight Gulch, Felicity quickly befriends and develops a crush on Jonah, who helps her to adapt to life in Midnight Gulch, shows her the ropes, and supports her decision to participate in the Duel talent show. Felicity comes to learn through the novel that she is descended from Stone Weatherly, and that she has the chance to break the family curse through her performance at the talent show. With great courage, Felicity overcomes her fear of public speaking by addressing the audience about the Threadbare Brothers, and the importance of home, family, and love, the last of which conquers all. Felicity manages to break the curse by reuniting the shadows of the Brothers, undoing the burden Florentine carries, and convincing her mother to stay in Midnight Gulch.

## Jonah

Jonah is a kind, thoughtful, and friendly 11-year-old boy who quickly befriends and develops a crush on Felicity. Wheelchair-bound, Jonah pays careful attention to the world around him rather than just walking through it. He senses sadness in Felicity, which is among the reasons he first reaches out to her. Jonah also reveals early on that he is the Beedle, part of a select group of people who do anonymous good deeds throughout town. Jonah brings Felicity into this group, as well as Uncle Boone. Jonah also proves to be not only a great source of support and encouragement, but a great source of information as well about the history of the town and the history of the Threadbare Brothers.

## Mama

Mama, Holly Harness, is the mother of Felicity and Frannie, and is the younger sister of Cleo and Boone. Having grown up in Midnight Gulch, Mama has been deeply affected by the family curse, having what she considers to be a rambling heart which causes restlessness. As a result, for years Mama has packed up her little family and moved them from place to place every few weeks. She simply cannot sit still, and believes



being stuck in the same place for too long damages her creative talent. Mama is ultimately chosen to repair and repaint the Gallery, which she does. Her work proves to be magical, as the hot air balloon she paints in her landscape carries the reconciled Weatherly Brothers away. Mama ultimately decides that Midnight Gulch is the place to call home.

## **Aunt Cleo**

Aunt Cleo Harness is the aunt of Felicity and Frannie, and is the older sister of Boone and Mama. Cleo is kind and a little rough around the edges, always unafraid to speak her mind or to light up a cigarette. She knows all about her family's history, but is reluctant to tell Felicity about it because so much of the past is painful for Cleo, including her own failed quilt business and her own failed relationship with Day Grissom. As the novel unfolds, Cleo opens up to Felicity, and reconnects with Day. It is also through Cleo that Felicity's faith in God grows, as Cleo brings Felicity to church with her.

## **Uncle Boone**

Uncle Boone is the uncle of Felicity and Frannie, is the older brother of Mama, and the younger brother of Cleo. Boone has endured a failed music career, has had his heart broken by too many girls to count, and fails at everything he does according to the family curse. Boone is later inducted into the Beedle circle to help deliver musical instruments to good people in need, and later helps Felicity to relax during her talent show performance. Boone's playing of beautiful, old music that the Weather Brothers loved helps lead to the breaking of the curse. By the end of the novel, he is writing beautiful new music of his own, and is dating Miss Lawson.

## **Oliver Weatherly**

Oliver Weatherly is the elderly, friendly, and kind owner of Dr. Zook's Ice Cream Factory. He is a descendent of Berry Weatherly. Oliver is incredibly rich but does not behave like it. He wears rustic, country clothing and gives out free ice cream wherever he goes. He is the original Beedle, having drawn inspiration from the good deeds and good soul of his beautiful late wife, Eldee. Oliver also becomes an important source of information for Felicity about the Weatherly Brothers, magic, and the curse.

## **Florentine**

Florentine Thistle is the granddaughter of Isabella Thistle, and the woman who has carried on Isabella's burdens. She has come to Midnight Gulch looking to exchange the burden for her grandmother's best memory. She befriends Felicity, and later learns that Felicity's family has long kept Isabella's best memory. The memory and the burden are



exchanged, freeing Florentine to pursue love and her own life while the curse on the Weatherly family is broken.

## **Miss Lawson**

Miss Divinity Lawson is a bright, energetic, and beautiful young woman and schoolteacher. She teaches Felicity in class, and is the first real source of information that Felicity has about the history of the Threadbare Brothers and their duel. She is also the organizer of the Stoneberry Duel, the student talent show to be held on September 15. Miss Lawson later ends up dating Boone.

## **The Weatherly Brothers**

The Weatherly Brothers, Stone and Berry, are natives of Midnight Gulch, and are the most famous residents ever of the town. They were known for their amazing musical talent, adopting the stage name “The Threadbare Brothers” and the “Brothers Threadbare” after a reviewer mocked their homespun clothing. The brothers, inseparable, soon became famous and rich, but ultimately became divided when both fell in love with Isabella. They magically dueled over her in 1910, resulting in the placing of a curse on Stone, the loser, who was chased away with a wandering heart. Both Berry and Stone soon regretted the duel, and spent much of their lives looking for one another, but missing one another in the process. Their attempts to make up with one another were never successful, leading them to becoming Isabella’s burden, united only after death by Felicity.

## **Isabella Thistle**

Isabella Thistle is the most infamous resident of Midnight Gulch, slandered as a “witch woman” for her placing of a curse on the Brothers Threadbare at their request for the duel. Isabella was a kind but plain young woman who fell in love with both brothers, and regretted driving them apart. As a result, the brothers became her burden, which her descendants carried on.

# Symbols and Symbolism

## Words

Words are collected by Felicity throughout the novel and are written down on her shoes and in her blue notebook. Words are noted by Oliver and others as being intensely powerful things that have the power to change the world. Felicity comes to understand this as her spoken words make amends between the shadow-souls of the Brothers Threadbare, and break the century-old curse that has plagued her family.

## Blue notebook

A blue notebook is carried by Felicity throughout the novel. It is into the blue notebook that Felicity scribbles the words she collects in addition to her thoughts, feelings, and poetry. Felicity is never without the notebook, for it allows her to express herself in writing because she has trouble speaking in public. Ironically, on the day of the talent show, Felicity forgets her notebook at home, meaning she must speak from the heart instead of the page at the talent show.

## Dr. Zook's Ice Cream

Dr. Zook's Ice Cream is an ice cream factory and brand of ice cream first developed by the Honeycutts, then sold to the Smiths, then sold to Oliver Weatherly who currently owns and operates the business. Dr. Zook's Ice Cream is known for how delicious it is. There are 45 unique and flavor-bending flavors, which are sold in the town's Dreamery Creamery factory store, and which are given out freely to residents of town by Oliver himself.

## Blackberry Sunrise

Blackberry Sunrise is one of the 45 flavors of ice cream manufactured by Dr. Zook's. It is the most magical, most flavorful, and most popular ice cream flavor sold by Dr. Zook's. Blackberry Sunrise was a recipe developed by Eldee, Oliver's wife, and is only sold in Midnight Gulch because it has snickers of magic in it. When eaten, the ice cream helps people recall memories. Sweet bites of Blackberry Sunrise mean the eater will have good memories, while sour bites mean the eater will have bad memories.

## Locket

Isabella's locket is a magical locket worn around the neck that contains Isabella's most beautiful memory. The memory is of Isabella and an unidentified Weatherly brother in an evening field. The identity of the brother does not matter because the memory no longer

matters to the Weatherlys, as they have since moved beyond the sadness of the past. The locket is passed down through the Harness side of the family until Felicity exchanges it with Florentine for Isabella's burden.

## **Guitar**

A magical guitar is played by Stone Weatherly for the Threadbare Brothers musical duo. Stone is very talented at the guitar, but following the duel with his brother, he stops playing because all the love and magic has gone out of him. He only returns to Midnight Gulch once in order to leave his guitar behind for Berry because the music no longer matters without his brother. The guitar is later passed down to Rosie, who has Boone play it during the talent show. The guitar helps conjure magic to open the locket and allows Felicity to speak of love, family, forgiveness, and home.

## **Banjo**

A magical banjo is played by Berry Weatherly for the Threadbare Brothers musical duo. Berry is very talented at the banjo, but following the duel with his brother, he stops playing because all the love and magic have gone out of him. He only leaves Midnight Gulch in order to leave his banjo for Stone because the music no longer matters without his brother. The banjo is later passed down to Boone, who has Toast play it during the talent show. The banjo helps conjure magic to open the locket and allows Felicity to speak of love, family, forgiveness, and home.

## **Sweet amends**

Sweet amends are the powerful words that Felicity speaks at the talent show. The words are words of love, forgiveness, family, and home. Felicity speaks poignantly of how love conquers everything, including the mistakes of the past. These words move the town, help bring magic back to the town, and create a path for the brothers to finally reunite after death and break the curse upon them.

## **The burden**

Isabella's burden is the knowledge that she unintentionally ruined the relationship between Stone and Berry Weatherly when she fell in love with both of them, and both of them fought over her. As a part of the curse, Isabella carried their shadow-souls around in two jars for the rest of her life. It was a burden passed down through her family until the burden was exchanged for Isabella's best memory by Florentine in Midnight Gulch. Coupled with Felicity's sweet amends, the brothers are reunited, the curse is broken, and the burden is lifted.

## Dove tattoo

A dove tattoo magically appears on Oliver Weatherly, courtesy of his late wife Eldee, who always spoke of God and hope. The dove itself represents hope, and magically appears and disappears on people as they need it. The dove tattoo appears on Felicity a short time before the talent show to give her hope. Felicity sends the dove to Jonah's father to bring him comfort and hope from Jonah.

# Settings

## Midnight Gulch

Midnight Gulch is a quaint, several-hundred years-old valley town in rural Tennessee surrounded by mountains, a river, and a forest which are meant to protect its magical secrets. The town has long been home to magical families and magical talents, the most famous of which are the Threadbare Brothers, and the most infamous of which is Isabella Thistle. Midnight Gulch was stripped of its magic following the tragic duel between the Threadbare Brothers, and so now only contains snickers of magic.

Midnight Gulch is also the birthplace of Dr. Zook's Ice Cream, and is the hometown of Mama, Aunt Cleo, and Uncle Boone, and is the town to which Felicity, Frannie, and Mama move when the novel begins. Felicity falls in love with the place quickly, including its unique history, magic, and people. She decides she will do whatever she must to make Midnight Gulch her permanent home.

## Stoneberry Elementary

Stoneberry Elementary is the local elementary school in Midnight Gulch, serving students up through sixth grade. Miss Lawson teaches school at Stoneberry Elementary, and Stoneberry Elementary is where Felicity and Frannie attend class. Stoneberry Elementary is built on the land on which Stone and Berry Weatherly had their duel, and so the school's auditorium becomes host to the Stoneberry Duel Talent Show. It is in this duel that Felicity seeks to perform and reunite the Brothers Threadbare.

## The Gallery

The Gallery is a massive wall painting on the side of the drugstore, and is the first thing visible when visitors or locals drive into Midnight Gulch across the river. The painting was first conceived of and painted by Stone who worked and reworked the painting over the years. As such, the painting itself was magical and sometimes changed on its own as well. Since the departure of Stone, the Gallery fell into disrepair, being scribbled over in graffiti. Mama is selected to repaint the Gallery, which she does to include a beautiful landscape of the world around Midnight Gulch. Still, Mama contends, something is missing. She ultimately includes herself and her family in the painting, as well as the hot air balloon belonging to Stone, saying that their family was missing from the Gulch. At the end of the novel, the Brothers Threadbare reunite in shadow-soul form and fly away in the hot air balloon.

## **Threadbare Mansion**

Threadbare Mansion is located just outside of Midnight Gulch. It is a massive estate formerly belonging to the Threadbare Brothers, and is currently owned and lived in by Oliver Weatherly. Jonah and Felicity are frequent guests at Threadbare Manor, where Felicity learns much more about Oliver, the Beedle operation, and the Threadbare Brothers themselves. The house is full of important artifacts and information about Stone and Berry Weatherly, and is where Felicity begins to understand much more about her family's past.

## **Seattle**

Seattle is a coastal city in the state of Washington on the American northern Pacific coast. It is to Seattle that Mama seeks to move the family from Midnight Gulch, based on the curse of her rambling heart. Seattle becomes an enemy city for Felicity, and becomes a great source of motivation for her to figure out a way to stay in Midnight Gulch.

# Themes and Motifs

## Love

Love is an important theme in the novel “A Snicker of Magic” by Natalie Lloyd. Love comes in all different shapes and forms, but it is especially love in general and romantic love that play an important part in the plot. (While familial love will be dealt with briefly in this section, see the theme “Family” for a greater exploration of family love.)

Much of the novel’s backstory is built around love. Stone and Berry Weatherly were once very close brothers whose lives were made better by the other, as well as by the music that they made. Their wealth and fame never got in the way of their love for one another as brothers, but romantic love did. Both brothers fell in love romantically with Isabella, while Isabella fell in love with both brothers romantically as well. As a result, the brothers became jealous of the other, and ultimately challenged one another to a duel over Isabella. Stone lost the duel, and was forced to leave town due to the loser’s curse which gave him a wandering heart.

Isabella’s own life slowly crumbled, as she felt she was responsible for driving the brothers apart due to her love. As a result, she carried around the guilt, manifested as the shadow-souls of the brothers long after they died, as her burden. Isabella’s burden meant that the successive women of her family had difficulty finding romantic love. Love, too, was difficult to find for both brothers’ descendants, but especially for Stone’s. Aunt Cleo has had a difficult time of romantic love, rekindling her love for Day only as the curse begins to break. Boone has been unable to find a girl to call his own, and only after the curse is broken does he romantically fall for Miss Lawson.

For Felicity, love in general is a powerful thing – whether it is love itself, love of home, love of family, or love of others. She says as much during her time in the talent show. She explains to everyone in the audience that love is the most powerful thing possible in the world, because it can make a lifetime of mistakes right. Love is what makes a place a home, no matter where that place is. Love conquers all, even curses real or imagined – and love helps Mama to understand that love and home are missing from her own life. As a result of Felicity’s speech on love, everything bad from the past of Midnight Gulch relating to the Brothers Threadbare is made right. Love itself, as a result, proves to be a kind of magic of its own.

## Family

Family is an important theme in the novel “A Snicker of Magic” by Natalie Lloyd. Family, thematically, involves the love, compassion, loyalty, encouragement, and support of and between individuals who may or may not be blood-related, but who act in accord with the traditional family unit. Family proves to be tremendously influential to the past and to the plot of the novel, and to Felicity’s life as well.





When the novel begins, Felicity moves around frequently with her immediate family – Mama, Frannie-Jo, and Biscuit. Felicity does this unhappily, but out of a sense of love and loyalty to her family and her Mama, who clearly has a wandering heart. Even when Felicity falls in love with Midnight Gulch and doesn't want to leave, she refuses to openly challenge her mother over leaving. The extended family that Felicity had found in Midnight Gulch – including Aunt Cleo and Uncle Boone – are more reasons why Felicity does not want to leave the place. Cleo and Boone themselves come to take comfort in Felicity, Mama, and Frannie, for as Felicity notes, they all have broken wings. They care for, and encourage one another in their darkest moments and celebrate with one another in their happiest moments and successes.

As Felicity learns, her family is affected by the curse of the Threadbare Brothers, for their jealousy over a woman destroyed the love and loyalty of their family. As Felicity discovers, she is related to Oliver Weatherly, for both Oliver and herself are descendants of the Brothers. As such, the actions of the family in the past now affect the lives of the family in the present, and Felicia makes bold steps to lift the curse from her family. As a result, the lives of all of her family members – including herself – improve. Cleo reignites an old romance, while Boone appears to find true love. Mama herself finally settles down, cured of her rambling heart.

It is not only Felicity's family that must carry on the actions of ancestors. Florentine has chosen to carry on the burdens of her own family – burdens that were once Isabella's. These burdens keep the women of the family safe, but make love difficult to have. As a result, Florentine is unable to find love even with the man with whom she is in love. Felicity seeks to undo the burden of Isabella, which turns out to be regret and guilt for having unintentionally driven apart the Brothers Threadbare. Only when the family burden is lifted does Florentine have the freedom to follow her heart.

## Home

Home is an important theme in the novel "A Snicker of Magic" by Natalie Lloyd. Home is explored in the novel in several ways, and becomes something that Felicity consciously seeks, and something that Mama subconsciously seeks without realizing. Home therefore influences the novel's plot in important ways.

When Felicity first arrives in Midnight Gulch, she is tired of moving so often, and longs for a single, stable place to call home. She quickly falls in love with everything about Midnight Gulch, and prays that Midnight Gulch will finally be the place she can call home. Mama, cursed with a wandering heart, does not want to stay more than a few weeks. Mama's constant moving is reflected in her unhappiness with the Gallery painting of Midnight Gulch she does, saying it is missing something. The constant moving and the unhappiness with the painting are both symbolic of Mama's search for something – and what that something is, is home.

While Felicity and her mother are seeking home, in the past, their ancestors cast themselves out of their home. Stone and Berry, who dueled over Isabella, wrecked their



brotherhood and their lives by choosing to fight rather than accept. As a result of the curse, Stone was driven away from home and forced to travel the country with a restless heart. Though Berry was not cursed by the curse directly, he was cursed indirectly. Without his brother in his life, Berry left home because home no longer felt like home without Stone. As a result, both brothers spent their lives, like Adam and Eve, trying to find a way back into Eden – Midnight Gulch – but were never able to do so until Felicity broke the curse.

As Felicity later comes to realize, home happens wherever there are people brave enough to love one another. Home is all about love. It isn't the place that makes home, home, after all. This means that, although she would rather stay in Midnight Gulch, and convince her mom to make the place her home, she is willing to go wherever her mom will go because she loves her mom. Mama, however, comes to realize that the only thing not making Midnight Gulch home is having her and her family in it. As a result of this, and the breaking of the curse, Mama decides Midnight Gulch will be home once and for all.

## Magic

Magic is an important theme in the novel "A Snicker of Magic" by Natalie Lloyd. Magic, the use of words, items, or gestures to create supernatural responses, incidents, and actions, is believed to have been common in Midnight Gulch in the past, but now is seen as largely gone. Felicity determines through the course of the novel that she will fully restore magic to Midnight Gulch.

As Felicity learns from Miss Lawson, Oliver, Jonah, and others, magic was once in great supply in Midnight Gulch. Each family had magical talents, ranging from the secret-absorbing pies of the Smiths to the Gallery wall as it had been painted by Stone to the music that Stone and his brother, Berry, created. Stone and Berry became the most famous magical residents of Midnight Gulch, for their music united everyone and made them dance and made them happy. However, the ruining of the brotherhood between Stone and Berry led to first Stone, and then Berry leaving Midnight Gulch. With them went the magic.

In the present day, Jonah explains, only snickers - or small amount of magic - remain. These snickers of magic are seen in different ways and in different places. Blackberry Sunrise ice cream magically helps people to recall both good and bad memories depending on the taste of each spoonful of ice cream. The pies from Ponder's Pie Shop have been known to make people feel different things depending on the kind of pies they eat, such as feeling courageous. The dove tattoo that appears on Felicity's arm appears and disappears on people as they need hope in town. The magical sound of wind-chimes can always be heard by Felicity when she draws closer to breaking the curse of the Threadbare Brothers.

As Felicity learns, not all magic is good. Some magic is bad, and some magic is sad. The decision of Stone and Berry to curse the loser of their duel is an instance of bad

magic, for the curse carried on down through the family lines. The burden that Isabella bore, and her later descendants came to bear, is sad. But the breaking of the curse and the lifting of the burden is magical, for the shadow-souls of the brothers are reunited, the shadows and people of Midnight Gulch dance once more, and the brothers leave town in a balloon through Mama's Gallery painting. To this day, the magical shadow of a balloon can be seen over town sometimes.

## The Past

The past is an important theme in the novel "A Snicker of Magic" by Natalie Lloyd. The past is essentially a person or a place's history. The past always has tremendous influence and bearing on the present, especially for the characters in the novel. By seeking to uncover the past, Felicity hopes to be able to change the present.

When Felicity arrives in Midnight Gulch, she learns from Mama, Oliver, Jonah, and others that the town used to be a very magical place, but that the magic had mostly gone by the time Mama was born. This is due to the curse and duel of the Brothers Threadbare over a woman which occurred a hundred years before. The curse unleashed by the brothers on each other carried down through their family lines to the present, affecting the lives of Felicity, Mama, Boone, and Cleo in very negative ways. Florentine was also given to bear the burden of her grandmother's part in the duel and the curse, unintentional though it was. Felicity seeks to undo the curse and the burden by shattering them with love and exchanging them for a good memory, which proves not only successful, but crucial because it brings back the magic to town.

The past of Felicity and her family also matter tremendously in the present. As a result of the curse, Felicity's mother has been beset by a rambling heart, meaning she can never stay in the same place for more than a few weeks – which in turn means that Felicity and her sister are constantly uprooted and forced to move. This creates a deep yearning in Felicity for a place to call home. Aunt Cleo's past romance with Day Grissom did not work out, while her attempts at building a quilt business have nearly all failed. Boone, meanwhile, has been unable to have a sustained, successful music career, and Boone has also been unable to keep a girlfriend.

Felicity also learns that each of the people in the town have their own stories as well. Dr. Zook's Ice Cream factory was originally developed by the Honeycutts, who hoped that it would be passed onto their son, who then rejected it in favor of moving to New York. As a result, the boy's mother became brokenhearted and simply faded away into nothing. Oliver recounts a childhood experience with a then-very old Stone, who came back to town looking for Berry. Jonah is hurting because his father is away from home on military deployment. Rosie achieved her dreams of musical stardom relatively late in life compared to most in the business, leading her to inspire Boone in the present. All of these – and other – past histories form the unique story that is Midnight Gulch.

# Styles

## Point of View

Natalie Lloyd tells her novel “A Snicker of Magic” in the first-person, limited-omniscient perspective from the point of view of main character, Felicity. Felicity explains early on in the novel that she has difficulty speaking the words she collects, thinks, and feels, so she scribbles them down in a notebook. That Felicity should tell her own story is important because the reader becomes a close friend of sorts, understanding firsthand the things that Felicity thinks and feels but cannot always say out loud. The limited-omniscient aspect of the novel means that the reader will only learn about, and discover things as Felicity learns about and discovers them, rather than knowing everything all at once. This creates a sense of mystery, and further adds to the intrigue about the many past mysteries relating to the Threadbare Brothers that Felicity seeks to uncover.

## Language and Meaning

Natalie Lloyd tells her novel “A Snicker of Magic” in language that is simple and straightforward, but with the appearance of unique and important words. This is done for at least three reasons. First, the story is told in the first-person narrative mode by Felicity, an 11-year-old girl. It is therefore natural that the language used would be reflective of both Felicity’s age and level of education. Secondly, the story is geared toward an audience of children and preteens. It is only natural therein that the language used is reflective of both the age range and level of education of the target audience. This makes the story easily readable and accessible to readers. Third, the unique and important words that are found throughout the novel – words such as splendiferous, splendidly, wondrous, cantankerous, flabbergasted, and so on – are reflective of Felicity’s love of collecting words.

## Structure

Natalie Lloyd divides her novel “A Snicker of Magic” into 28 chronological, linear, numbered chapters, with the final chapter taking the form of an epilogue that occurs months later. The first 27 chapters of the novel recount Felicity’s efforts to uncover the past, solve the mystery of the Threadbare curse, and find a home, while the epilogue explains what happened as a result of Felicity’s breaking of the curse and lifting of Florentine’s burden. This simple and straightforward approach to the novel’s structure is consistent with the age range of the target audience, and allows readers to easily follow the plot of the novel.

## Quotes

They say all the magic is gone out of this place.

-- Mama (Chapter 1 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** When Felicity arrives in Midnight Gulch, her mother explains to her that all of the magic has gone out of the place. Mama explains that the town had to be kept secret since the people who lived there had magic in their veins, but no longer. This creates a setting from which Felicity will seek to restore the magic to Midnight Gulch, and creates the course the novel's plot will follow.

Anything can happen in a town like this.

-- Mama (Chapter 2 paragraph 5)

**Importance:** On their first day of school, Felicity and Frannie Jo are nervous. Their mother tells them not to be nervous because anything can happen in a town like Midnight Gulch. The girls, used to traveling a lot, hope this means that they will be able to stay in Midnight Gulch for a while. This demonstrates just how much the family has been moving around, and demonstrates how much the girls want to finally settle down. It also serves as a good omen for the amazing things that will happen in Midnight Gulch.

I knew something wonderful was about to happen to me. I didn't know what, or why, or how. But I believed.

-- Felicity (Chapter 2 paragraph 10)

**Importance:** When Mama tells the girls that anything can happen in Midnight Gulch, the girls hope this means they will be staying a while. Felicity loves to collect words, including words she visualizes in the world around her. Mama's revelation that they may just be staying a while makes Felicity see the word "believe" in the sunlight, because Felicity believes something good will end up happening in Midnight Gulch. This serves as a good omen for things to come.

Stone Weatherly stayed for a day and told me stories... and then he told me the real story of the Brothers Threadbare and why they quarreled... or who they quarreled over, I guess I should say.

-- Oliver Weatherly (Chapter 10 paragraph 11)

**Importance:** Oliver recounts a story to Felicity involving the day-long return of Stone to Midnight Gulch. Oliver explains that Stone was looking to make things right with Berry, but was unable to do so because Berry was gone. Oliver then reveals that the true cause for the duel occurred because of a woman.

Your words matter more than you know.

-- Stone Weatherly quoted by Oliver Weatherly (Chapter 10 paragraph 21)

**Importance:** Oliver reveals that when Stone departed Midnight Gulch after his hot-air



balloon visit, he gave him this advice – that words mattered more than he could know. It is the best advice Oliver ever received, for it led to his declaration of love for, and marriage to, Eldee. The words related to Oliver by Stone about words mattering also strikes Felicity deeply, because words mean so much to her. Words will also come to be the reason that Felicity is able to convince her mother to stay longer in Midnight Gulch.

Something good will happen at the duel. Trust me.

-- Jonah (Chapter 11 paragraph 3)

**Importance:** Felicity is worried about participating in the talent show. Jonah tells her something good will happen at the show, which at first seems nothing more than encouragement on Jonah's part. But as the reader comes to learn, something good does come from the talent show duel. Jonah's words are not merely emotional support, but a prediction of good.

Won't do you much good trying to find your own story if you don't know theirs.

-- Florentine (Chapter 14 paragraph 53)

**Importance:** To help Felicity tell her own story, Jonah brings her to meet Florentine. Like Felicity, Florentine had difficulty telling her own story when she was younger, but over time, she learned to share her words. A large part of that for Florentine is knowing about herself and her family – where she came from. Florentine encourages Felicity to learn more about her own family and their stories as well.

You got magic in your veins, Felicity Pickle.

-- Florentine (Chapter 14 paragraph 55)

**Importance:** Florentine asks Felicity about her family history. Felicity explains she is a Pickle and her mother's family are Harnesses. While Florentine doesn't say clearly what she knows, she does say that if Felicity's people are who Florentine thinks they are, then Felicity definitely has magic in her veins. This is incredibly important to Felicity, who feels more confident as a result.

There's an itty-bitty bit of Threadbare in me somewhere, which means I'm cursed to fail everything I try.

-- Felicity (Chapter 16 paragraph 8)

**Importance:** Felicity learns that she is descended from Stone Weatherly, and believes that she and her family are cursed as a result of the duel the Threadbare Brothers had back in 1915. She believes this is why her mother never wants to stay in the same place, and why Felicity herself fails at speaking in public. She believes she is doomed to fail the school talent show from the start due to the family curse.

Your words matter more than you know.

-- Rose Walker (Chapter 16 paragraph 103)

**Importance:** While visiting Jonah's mom's salon and mechanic shop, Felicity gets to



meet Rose. Rose is a famous singer who achieved her dream at the age of 57, later in life than most. Rose explains that it is never too late to chase a dream, and that the words Felicity has inside her are worth getting out. This is more than mere encouragement. Felicity's words are the key to breaking the curse of the Brothers Threadbare.

The guitar. The banjo. The locket. My sweet amends. They were all connected. I was connected to all of them.

-- Felicity (Chapter 24 paragraph 81)

**Importance:** As Felicity prepares to participate in the duel, she realizes that it is the first time in a hundred years that the locket, the guitar, and the banjo will be in the same room. It is like the brothers and Isabella have been reunited through the things they left behind. And Felicity realizes that this is the good thing that Jonah has spoken of. It is Felicity who will be able to use her words to heal a century of hurt.

And if you say 'I love you,' and you mean it, then love makes up for a whole lifetime of mistakes. That's some kind of magic.

-- Felicity (Chapter 25 paragraph 45)

**Importance:** Although she has forgotten her poetry, Felicity speaks from the heart about family, forgiveness, mistakes, and love. Her words prove to be the sweet amends that bring back together the Threadbare Brothers. They also soothe the people in the audience, and bring back magic to the town. Magic is magic, true enough, explains Felicity – but the real magic in life is love because it is such a powerful and transformative thing.

Home isn't just a house or a city or a place; home is what happens when you're brave enough to love people.

-- Felicity (Chapter 27 paragraph 61)

**Importance:** Love continues to be the greatest form of magic of all, Felicity believes. Her mother finally decides it is time to find a place to call home, and that place is Midnight Gulch. Home is more than just a place, but is where love exists and where people are brave enough to love one another. There is no shortage of family or love in Midnight Gulch, and that makes Midnight Gulch home.