

READING GROUP GUIDE

ONCE UPON A FAMILY

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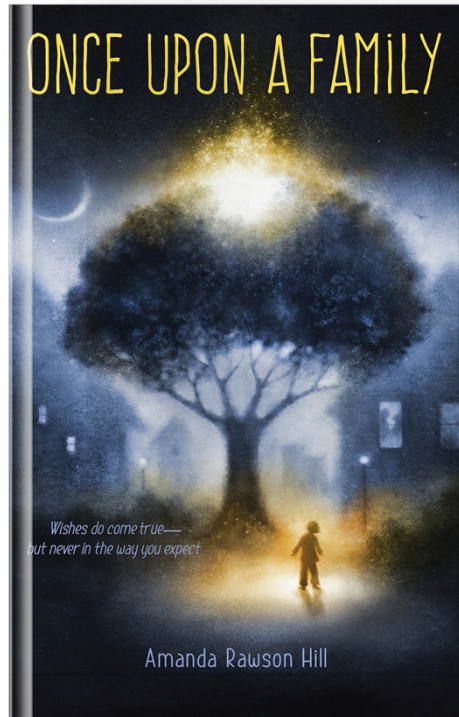
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Grades: 3-7

Ages: 8-12



ABOUT THE BOOK

If you could make a wish, what would you wish for? This novel exploring what it means to become a blended family—with a dash of magic—is perfect for fans of Rebecca Stead’s *The List of Things That Will Not Change* and *The Anti-Book* by Raphael Simon.

11-year-old Winnie feels stuck. She’s alone in a new town with a mom who doesn’t seem to notice how miserable Winnie’s new stepbrother and stepfather make her. One night, when Winnie makes a hasty wish, she nearly gets sideswiped by an odd bird, leading her to a strange oak tree with even stranger glowing leaves. Investigating the tree, Winnie discovers a nest of golden eggs with wishes inscribed on the shells. After Winnie accidentally breaks two of the eggs, the wishes come true. Winnie’s determined to get her old life back and begins sneaking back to the tree to grant her own wishes. But when she realizes the wishes are coming true in unexpected and terrible ways, Winnie must find a way to fix everything. . . .

ASTRA BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Winnie's mom tells her to be careful of the story she tells herself. Have you ever told yourself a story about something in your life? Did you get the story right or were there things you were wrong about?
2. Winnie named her anxiety Eustace Clarence Scrubbs, a silly name that makes her anxiety a little less scary. Is there a problem in your life that you could give a name to? What would you name it and why?
3. Winnie views herself and the people around her as different fairytale characters. If you were a fairytale character, who do you think you'd be and why?
4. If you found a wish egg, what would you wish for? Why?
5. Winnie realizes that Jeff is more than just lines of computer code. There are stories in there too. Winnie is not just a princess either. Sometimes she is a knight and sometimes she even acts like a villain. People are many different things. If you were to make a list of all the different kinds of things you are, what would you include?
6. Winnie changes her opinion about other people in the story. Have you ever changed your mind about someone? What happened?
7. Winnie and her mom love to travel to different places. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?
8. At the end of the story, Winnie finally realizes that she doesn't have to listen to the things Eustace tells her and that the people around her are worth trying to resist his lies and anger. Do you ever have thoughts about yourself or the world that aren't true? What do you do to remember the truth?
9. Winnie's mom says that "happily ever after" takes a lot of work every day and Jeff says that love is like sunflower seeds. The more you plant, the more you'll grow. Do you think these statements are true? Why? Do you have any examples?
10. At the end of the book, Winnie says that "happily ever after" feels an awful lot like a fresh start. What do you think she means by that? Do you think this is true?