

AN ANCIENT PROPHECY. AN UNBEARABLE COST.

EDUCATOR GUIDE

HEARTLESS HEIRS

MARCYKATE CONNOLLY

NEW YORK TIMES
BESTSELLING AUTHOR

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Heartless Heirs by MarcyKate Connolly

Educator's Guide (2021-BlinkYA Books)

Written by Jennifer Sniadecki

From *New York Times* bestselling author MarcyKate Connolly comes the sequel to *Twin Daggers*, which follows Aissa and Zandria on their mission to understand their unique magical bloodline, as well as unite the Magi and Technocrats before their sworn enemy can turn the simmering hate between the two peoples into an all-out war.

Aissa has never felt so trapped and alone even with her sister and friend by her side. Zandria—once her other half—has become cold and inflexible after her time in the Technocrats' dungeon. Their friend Remy may still side with his father, a Magi leader who refuses to believe his spymaster has turned traitor. And Aissa herself is now an enemy of her Magi people after falling in love with—and binding her heart to—Aro, a Techno prince who puts all their lives at stake.

Aissa is determined to uncover the secrets of the Alchemist Alliance that created her and Zandria's unique magical powers ... as well as learn whether the Alliance's research holds the key to healing the rift between the Magi and Technocrats after centuries of war. But with her people preparing for battle, it will take more than lost spells and hidden secrets to accomplish her goal. Especially as the bond between her and Aro grows deeper and threatens everything Aissa has ever believed.

Before Reading: Students will participate in class discussions before reading *Heartless Heirs*. Teachers will facilitate discussions and record questions/responses on a class bulletin board, Padlet, Jamboard, or in Google Classroom.

Look at the front and back covers of the book. How is this title related to *Twin Daggers*, the first book in the duology, according to your observations?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9]

What do you know about stories in a series? What do you know about duologies? How might that knowledge help you get started when reading *Heartless Heirs*? (If possible, students should read *Twin Daggers* first.)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9]

Promotional materials for *Heartless Heirs* refer to the story as “combining fantasy and magic with a storyline that focuses on social issues.” What social issues might be proffered in the book? Explain your thinking. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] **NOTE:** Check out this question again at the end of the book. How has your thinking changed?

During Reading: Students will keep a journal/interactive notebook to record thoughts, feelings, questions, and information while reading *Heartless Heirs*. Teachers will facilitate discussions with students by conferring with readers, leading small and large group meetings, and assessing learning. For each reading section below, students should choose two questions to address for ongoing study and reflection.

NOTE: While reading *Heartless Heirs*, keep a list of characters introduced and how they interact with Aissa and Zandria. As the story moves along, note the importance of the characters and their words, actions, and motivations. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

NOTE: While reading *Heartless Heirs*, it may be helpful to keep a journal page of vocabulary words, such as what the Magi spells are called and multiple-meaning words, like *heartless*. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4]

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Chapters 1-6 (Pages 1-48): An Hour Later...

Read pages 1 - 4. Then create a double-entry journal: Make a list of what you have learned about the plot “an hour later” (where *Twin Daggers’* story left off) on one side of the journal page, and list what questions you have on the other side of the page. Keep this page handy for future discussions. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

How do the flashbacks about the Technocrats and Magi Wars and continued struggles help the reader gather needed information about the plot? Use a specific example from this section to explain your thinking. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.6]

Keep track of (and discuss) the points of view of Remy and Aissa regarding HOPE for finding the lost Magi library and other Magi people, holding secrets that the friends need. (p.31 - Remy says, “...we shouldn’t waste an ounce of hope on any of them surviving...”) (p. 32 - Aissa replies, “We have to believe in something. Otherwise, we have nothing.”) [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Who is Darian Azul? What has he done with the Magi Chambers? How will Darian’s actions affect the story as it moves forward? Use evidence from the text to explain your thinking. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Chapters 7-11 (Pages 49-86): The Sanctuary

Who is Catoria? What does she show the others? Why do Aissa and the others need Catoria to be an ally for them? Explain, using details from the text. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

What is the **Heartsong**? How does this foreshadowing scene give clues to possible plot events in the future? [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

Who is Anassa Viscuso? Why is her journal important to the twins? Use evidence from the text to support your answers. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

On page 73, readers learn of an important alchemical recipe. Explain what this is and why it matters. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

What are **runes**? How do the twins use the runes? Explain. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4]

Why did Aissa’s dream of being attacked lead to her waking up with blood on her? What happened to Aro? Why are Aro and Aissa important to each other, and to the story? Write a summary of what you learned about them in this section. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.6]

Chapters 12-16 (Pages 87-121): Return to Palinor

As the group heads back to Palinor, they find out that Isaiah (Remy’s father) is alive. What is he doing now? Write a few details in your journal to discuss later. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

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The concept of *trust* continues to lead the plot forward and also builds suspense in *Heartless Heirs*. Make a list of at least 3 characters in this section - discuss who each trusts, and why, and add what you predict will be an outcome for each character in later chapters.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

Isaiah doesn't believe his son, Remy's warning about Darian. The king and queen do not believe their son, Aro. How are Isaiah, Darian, and the king and queen living the idea of being "heartless?" Explain with specific page numbers and examples from the text. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

What is the fatal mistake that the Alchemist Alliance made in the past that drives the long-lasting struggle between the Magi and the Technocrats? How is this mistake a key part of the theme of *Heartless Heirs*? [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

Aissa is determined to know more about the Magi and Technocrats' history. What does she find out? Use your knowledge of the Magi-Techno struggles and the characters to help you write at least 3 details in your journal and predict what may happen in future chapters. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.6]

Where do you think the map, found at the Sanctuary, will lead? Explain, using details from the text. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Chapters 17-19 (Pages 122-141): Meeting More Magi

Who is Owen Heldreth? How are Owen and Aro alike? How are they different? [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

What can Owen do that even the twins cannot do? How do you think Owen will help the Magi as the plot moves forward? Explain your thinking. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

The runes wall in the Sanctuary magically opens. What four bloodlines does it reveal? What might this have to do with the theme of *Heartless Heirs*? [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Write a summary about finding the daggers at the back of Queen Egeria's tomb. What do you think this means for Aissa and her sister? Explain. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Chapters 20-24 (Pages 142-180): Gathering Allies

Aro and Catoria work to "create a batch of alchemicals that will counteract the ones Darian put in the water." (p. 142) What are these alchemicals supposed to do? How can this help the Magi and Technocrats to form a new Alchemist Alliance? [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

Write in your journal the following vocabulary words and define them: *scrying*, *Anvil*, *castellum*. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4]

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What is Darian Azul doing with Magi prisoners in the palace basement? How does this affect the group of growing allies? [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2\]](#)
[\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#)

Aro and Aissa travel to a beautiful tunnel with glow beetles and other life. Why? What does this preservation of nature have to do with the Magi and Technocrats? Explain your answers using details from the text.
[\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.7\]](#)

In your journal, write down the three main parts of “the plan” for a future Palinar. Discuss how each part will help the Magi and Technocrats end their struggle.
[\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.6\]](#)

What happened to Vivienne that turned her into an ally? Predict how Viv will help Aissa and Zandria using details from this section. [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#)

**Chapters 25-30 (Pages 181-224):
The Battle for the Heartsong**

Anassa’s journal is falling apart, but a paper found hidden in the cover might be the key to bringing the Magi and Technocrats together. How? Explain using details from this section. [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2\]](#)

What does the continued concept of *trust* show the reader in *Heartless Heirs*? How does this story continue to show a parallel to works of Shakespeare, such as *Romeo and Juliet*? [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9\]](#)

Explain the use of disguises in the story. Why is this important for the reader to understand the purpose of changing appearances? [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2\]](#)
[\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

Explain how Leon Salter becomes an ally for the Magi and what he can do to help them. How will they help end the Technocrats’ reign of *heartless* terror? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#)
[\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

Why is the treasury room in the palace important? Explain. What does Aro find out about access to the treasury room? How does this knowledge affect Aro?
[\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

Chapters 31-33 (Pages 225-251): All Eyes on Isaiah

What does Aissa find out about Isaiah and Darian? How is this significant to the theme of the story?
[\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#)

Why do Remy and Zandria leave the area with Isaiah? How does this affect Aissa? How do the characters’ actions build suspense/tension at this point in the story?
[\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

What is Isaiah planning to do, as a Magi leader? Why is this important to the story? [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#)

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In your journal/notebook, track your identified theme. How can you use the information in this section to confirm the theme of the story? Explain. [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2\]](#)

Chapters 34-36 (Pages 252-278):

The Magi Spy and the Lies

What does Aissa learn about the concept of *hope*? What does she learn about herself? (p. 263 -- “For the first time in days, there’s a smile on my lips and hope in my heart.”) Explain how this knowledge might lead to the conclusion of the story. [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

Why is the 10-year-old boy, Sol, important to Aissa’s plans? What does Aissa do for Sol? Explain. [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#)

Who meets with the king and queen? Why? What will this mean for the Alliance? Explain using specific details from the text. [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

Define the following terms about spells: *ampleo*, *somnis*, *explosi*. Tell how each helps the Magi in their quest to bring the Magi and Technocrats together. [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4\]](#)

Chapters 37-38 (Pages 279-296):

Twin Daggers Reunite

Aissa and Zandria are reunited in the battle against Darian. How are the twins stronger together? What can they do now that they couldn’t while they were apart? Use at least 3 details from this section to explain. [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

Where is Aro? Why did he leave the group? Discuss the danger Aro is in and predict how he may be saved. Write a summary of your knowledge as the reader. [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

Who does Aissa disguise herself as when she enters the king and queen’s chambers? How does this scene build suspense that will lead to the conclusion of the story? [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

What is significant about the wine that the king and queen drink? What does Aissa discover about the royals’ plans for Palinor? How is this “Shakespearian” in its concept? [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9\]](#)

Chapters 39-42 (297-339):

The Battle for the Throne

What does Aissa do with her new-found knowledge of the power of the Magi? How does she help Aro to understand the choices she has made? [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

What does Aro decide about his future? How will this choice lead to a new type of government in Palinor? [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#) [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9\]](#)

How does the author let the reader know that Aissa and Zandria will have a future in Palinor? [\[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5\]](#)

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Is the ending satisfying for *you*, the reader? Explain why or why not, using relevant evidence from the text to explain. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

After Reading:

Quotes:

What do you think emerges as the main theme/central idea of *Heartless Heirs*?

Find at least five (5) quotes that show the theme in *Heartless Heirs*. (Include page numbers.) [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2]

Bonding Rituals as a Topic:

Discuss in class (or a small group) the idea of *bonding rituals* in history and peoples' interdependence on each other. Now that you have read *Heartless Heirs*, write a few sentences about why you think the author chose bonding rituals to help build the world of Palinoor. Explain. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9]

Reading Activities: Students will choose **ONE** project from the choices below - or create a project - to show understanding of the novel, *Heartless Heirs*.

Some say that *Twin Daggers* and *Heartless Heirs* could be restructured into a movie script. Write a short screenplay/scene using a chapter from *Heartless Heirs* as your source and specify three actors you might cast as characters in your scene. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.10] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.5]

Create a family tree for BOTH the Donovan family (Aissa and Zandria) **and** the royal family of Palinoor (Aro's family). Discuss how the two families may have been intertwined throughout history. How did these two families affect the Magi/Technocrats Wars? [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9]

Promotional materials for *Heartless Heirs* refer to the story as "combining fantasy and magic with a storyline that focuses on social issues." What social issues are proffered in the book? Explain, using evidence from the text. Then create a video book talk or book trailer for the book. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.5]

Create a Sketch Note poster using the main symbol of a heart. Show several ways the word, *heartless*, is the key to the central idea of the story. Use evidence from the text in your creation. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.7] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.5]

Create a One-Pager (a creative summary using words and sketches) for the novel including the following information:

- * an image representative of the novel's theme(s),
- * the title and the author's name in a conspicuous area,
- * two quotes from the text that represent the author's style of writing,
- * a sketch to relate the setting to the mood of the story,
- * an image or text that describes the changes of the main character over the course of the plot and one other choice character's development, and
- * a personal connection to the text. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1; RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2; W.9-10.4; W.9-10.9]

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About the Author:

MarcyKate Connolly is a *New York Times* Bestselling children's book author and nonprofit marketing professional living in New England with her family and a grumble of pugs. She can be lured out from her writing cave with the promise of caffeine and new books. *Twin Daggers* is her debut young adult novel, and she's also the author of several middle grade fantasy novels including *Monstrous and Ravenous*, and the *Shadow Weaver* series. You can visit her online at www.marcykate.com.

This Educator's Guide was created by Jennifer Sniadecki.

Jennifer Sniadecki is currently a middle school teacher-librarian, writer, and a professional development presenter from South Bend, Indiana. She is an avid reader and loves drama and adventure stories. Jennifer's current passion is promoting her favorite authors' upcoming books. Check out her posts on Twitter (@jdsniadecki) or follow her blog at www.readingteacherwrites.com.