

TWIN DAGGERS

MARCYKATE CONNOLLY

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE (2020-BLINK YA BOOKS)

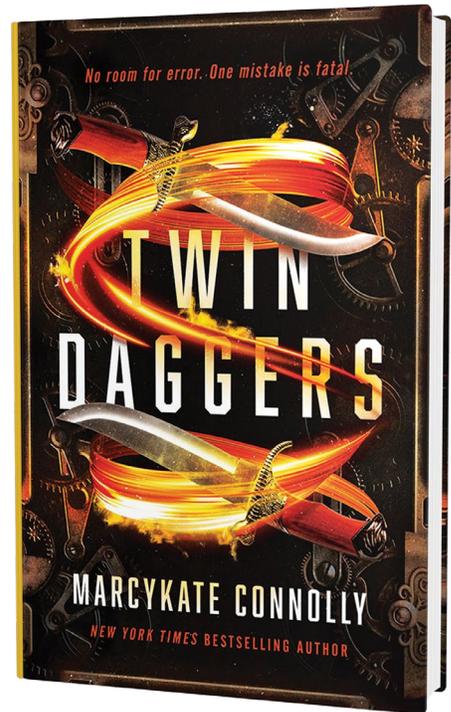
WRITTEN BY JENNIFER SNIADOCKI

Aissa's life is a web of carefully constructed lies. She and her twin sister, Zandria, are Magi spies, a magical people most believe to be extinct. And they're on a mission for revenge.

This action and adventure spy thriller—a fantasy spin on “Romeo and Juliet” from *New York Times* bestselling author MarcyKate Connolly—is perfect for fans of Marissa Meyer and Elly Blake and is about to become your new obsession!

By day, Aissa and Zandra play the role of normal young Technocrats eager to fulfill the duties of their new apprenticeships. By night, they plot their revenge to retake their city from the Technocrats. But then Aissa is given a new mission: find and kidnap the heir to the Technocrat throne, who is rumored to be one of the Heartless—a person born without a working heart who survives via a mechanical replacement—and has been hidden since birth.

Aissa is more likely to be caught than to be successful, but she's never been one to turn down an assignment, even if the hunt is complicated by a kind Technocrat researcher who is determined to find a cure for the Heartless. But when Zandria is captured by the Technocrats, Aissa will do anything to get her sister back. Even if it means abandoning all other loyalties and missions ... and risking everything by trusting her sworn enemies.



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.

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BEFORE READING

Students will participate in class discussions before reading *Twin Daggers*. Teachers will facilitate discussions and record questions/responses on a class bulletin board or in Google Classroom.

Look at the front and back covers of the book. Referring to the colors, images, and text, talk to a reading partner (or a small group) about what you predict will happen in the story according to your observations.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1]

If possible, students should read *Romeo and Juliet* or another work referring to relationships causing tragedy. Blinkyabooks.com suggests *Twin Daggers* is perfect for fans of Marissa Meyer and Elly Blake. What do we know about stories of tragedy that we can take into *Twin Daggers*?

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

Discuss the concept of twins and their dependence on each other, and/or how twins are thought to be stronger together. Write a few sentences about why you think the author chose twins for the main characters.

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

DURING READING

Students will keep a journal/interactive notebook to record thoughts, feelings, questions, and information while reading *Twin Daggers*. 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 to three questions to address for ongoing study.

CHAPTERS 1–4: THE ONE-HUNDRED-YEAR STRUGGLE—SETTING THE SCENE

Who is the narrator in this novel? How does this point of view draw the reader into the plot and setting of the story?

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

How does the flashback about the Techno-Magi wars help the reader gather needed information about the story? 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]

Describe the tunnels where the twins go at night. What is the purpose of the tunnels? What are the girls doing there? Why is the lost Magi library important?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Who is the visitor to the twin's home? What does he tell the family? How do you think these early descriptions of minor characters will impact the story as it unfolds?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4]

Everyone in the Armory has a code name. Explain how using code names might help, or hinder, Magi people living in Palnor. Use evidence from this section to explain your answer.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

CHAPTERS 5–11: APPRENTICESHIPS AND APPREHENSION

Compare and contrast Aissa's apprenticeship duties and Zandria's apprenticeship duties. Create a Venn diagram to discuss later. How does this comparison give clues to possible themes?

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

Write a sentence or two in your journal/notebook about how Aro adds suspense or increases tension for Aissa as the plot moves forward. Describe how Aro's character makes you feel.

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

Who are the Heartless? Why are they important to the central idea of the story?

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

Explain the meaning of the quote "Magic is a wild, living force, and we use it like a muscle" (page 54). How does this quote hint at the central idea of the story?

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

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Who is Darian? What is his relationship with the family?

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

Explain the relationship between Aro and Leon Salter. Make a statement about what this might mean for Aissa. Use evidence from the text to explain.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Compare and contrast the Binding Ritual with Aissa's statement, "Allowing yourself to be so vulnerable because of your dependence on another has long seemed foolish to me" (page 84). Also, add a note about Aissa's dependence on her twin, Zandria. What do you predict will happen because of this contradiction?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Compare the author's descriptions of the garden where Aissa and Aro eat lunch to the rest of the Technocrat surroundings. Why is this distinction important to the story?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

CHAPTERS 12-15: DUTY AND DANGER

Describe the fate of a Magi sympathizer. How is Vivienne's fate, specifically, a problem for Aissa?

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

Remy reveals a new assignment for Aissa. She tries to remind herself of her duties to her family and to the Magi people. "My mission here is to find the heir, and that means playing along so I can use Aro to reach that goal. I am his enemy. I am everything he hates" (page 120). Do you think Aissa is trying to convince herself, or the reader? Explain your thinking.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Zandria met someone who told her secret information, which she then reveals to Aissa. Who is he, and what is he doing with Zandria? Is he the Hidden Knife? Explain your thinking.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

CHAPTERS 16-20: HEARTLESS, HEARTS, AND HAVANI

In this section, Aissa finds out just how important her apprenticeship duties are. Write a 3-5 sentence summary about her realization.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

What is havani? How does this substance and the mention of a storm create a sense of mystery and danger in the story?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

How is Aro connected to the dying girl? Do you think she is the heir Aissa is looking for? Explain your thinking, using evidence from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Name one of the secrets Aro is keeping from the king and queen. Why is this important? Why would there be secrets among Technocrats? How does this create danger for Aro? Explain your thinking.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

Aissa has an "aha" moment on page 163 in *Twin Daggers*. What does she reveal to the reader? How is the revelation a clue that *Twin Daggers* and *Romeo and Juliet* are similar stories?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9]

CHAPTERS 21-26: TWIN TROUBLE

What happens to Zandria? Explain how this affects her twin, Aissa. How does this affect Remy? How does this affect you, as the reader?

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

Explain how Aissa's assignment has changed. Who does Papa ask for help? What do you predict will happen next with Aissa's mission?

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

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Name an inner conflict and an outer conflict for Aissa at this point in the story. How do these conflicts show the reader her changing character?

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

What happens when Remy and Aissa go to the Armory Council? Who do they see there? Why would this person be important?

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

At the end of this section, Aissa thinks, "Hope is a funny thing. I don't think I'll have a use for it anymore" (page 221). How does this line possibly foreshadow events to come? Explain.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9]

CHAPTERS 27-31: TWISTS

Remy and his father, Isaiah, talk. What is Remy's current duty to the Magi people? How is this scene revealed to the reader?

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

What does the concept of trust show the reader in *Twin Daggers*? How does this story continue to show a parallel to 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 many "hats" Darian Azul wears in this story. Why is this important for the reader to understand, about his purpose and his character?

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

Aissa's secrets have caught up with her, and she is discovered by Caden, the guard. What happens next? Why is that important for Aissa's changing character and role in the story?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9]

Explain Aissa's reflection about her own activities as a "twin dagger." How does Mama help her deal with the day's main event? How is Aissa's inner conflict holding her back from her duties as a Magi?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9]

Aro gives Aissa an invitation. How might this help, or hurt, Aissa's mission to save Zandria and the Magi people?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9]

Why are Aissa and Zandria called "twin daggers"? How will they help end the Technocrats' reign?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

CHAPTERS 32-33: MASKS REVEALED

Describe how the author shows the concept that costumes hide people "in plain sight." Describe the costumes Aissa and Aro wear. How could they be significant to the story?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9]

Explain how the language in this quote shows foreshadowing: "Love is not some tender thing; it is cruel and sharp and cuts far deeper than I ever dreamed" (page 264).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

In your journal/notebook, write a 3-5 sentence summary of the masquerade ball.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

What does Aissa find out about Aro? How is this significant to the theme of the story? How does the author use language to help the reader reflect on the choice Aissa has to make?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.9]

What happened to Mama and Papa? How did Aissa find out they were involved in a Binding Ritual? Use evidence 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 do you think the author uses a letter from Mama and Papa to explain what has happened? How does a letter help the reader know more? Do you think text in the form of a letter is effective here? Why or why not?

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

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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 34-37: LIES AND LESSONS

Aissa tells Remy about her parents. Review the concept of trust with a partner.

Why is Aro trustworthy at this point in the story?

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

The events in this section reveal many conflict resolutions—reveal that Aissa must come through on her mission. “Another lie. Another stab in my heart” (page 296). How do these events further confirm the theme of the story? Explain.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

What do the glass-and-steel boxes hold in the room where Darian performs the demonstration? What does Darian tell the audience?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

What happens to Remy and Aissa in this section? How will this affect Aissa's goals?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

What does Aissa learn about the Magi, as a people? What does she learn about herself? Explain how this knowledge 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]

CHAPTERS 38-41: THE END (?)

What does Darian Azul ask of Aissa? Do you think she will comply? Why or why not?

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3]

On page 332, hope is mentioned again. Look back over your notes from Chapters 21-26 and compare what Aissa said before to what she says now: “We slip out

of the room hand in hand. Something strange and new wriggles in my belly, something I didn't expect to ever feel again: real hope.” What is the significance of this mention? Explain your answer.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5]

What one, last thing does Aissa do for Aro? What happens next?

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

How do the Magi know their library still exists? What does Aissa find that will help her locate the Magi library?

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

How does the author let the reader know Aissa and Zandria will have a future in Palinor?

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

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:

FIRST AND LAST LINES:

In your journal/notebook, record the first paragraph of the book and last paragraph of the book and tell how you think the theme of the book is carried through the plot. (Note: You may refer to multiple themes.) What do you think emerges as the main theme/central idea of the story?

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

QUOTES:

Explain the meaning of the quote (page 54): “Magic is a wild, living force, and we use it like a muscle.” How does this quote hint at the central idea of the story? Find at least five other quotes that show the theme in *Twin Daggers*. (Include page numbers.)

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2]

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TWINS AS A TOPIC:

Discuss in class (or in a small group) the idea of twins and their dependence on each other, and/or how twins are thought to be stronger together. Now that you have read *Twin Daggers*, write a few sentences about why you think the author chose twins for the main characters. Has your answer changed since the beginning of the book? Explain.

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

READING ACTIVITIES:

Students will choose one project from the choices below—or create a project—to show understanding of the novel, *Twin Daggers*.

Re-create the parade scene (pages 28-31), focusing on two or three characters from the story, to act out in class. Write a short Readers Theater script to turn in with your presentation.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.a] [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.10]

Build a model mechanical heart like the ones the Heartless hospital orders from Leon Salter. Demonstrate how it would work. Suggest a possible way for the machine to work for many years, as required by the Technocrats.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.7]

Promotional materials for *Twin Daggers* refer to the story as an “action and adventure spy thriller—a fantasy spin on Romeo and Juliet from New York Times bestselling author MarcyKate Connolly” (Blinkyabooks.com) How does Shakespeare’s tragic story mirror the plot of *Twin Daggers*? Why would this be an important parallel? Explain, using evidence from both texts.

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

Create a Sketch Note poster using the main symbol of a heart. Show several ways a heart 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]

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]

THIS EDUCATOR'S GUIDE WAS CREATED BY JENNIFER SNIADOCKI.

Jennifer Sniadecki is currently a middle school teacher-librarian and a professional development presenter from South Bend, Indiana. She is an avid reader and will read anything her friends recommend. 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.