

A Study Guide for The Infinity Year of Avalon James

Written by Dana Middleton
Published by Feiwel & Friends (hardcover)
Published by Square Fish (paperback)
Imprints of Macmillan Publishing



About the Book

Avalon James and Atticus Brightwell have a secret--one that they aren't allowed to discuss with anyone. This secret is shared between two best friends. When you and your best friend turn ten years old magical things are said to happen. You both will receive some kind of magical power. It can be a power you can call on time and time again. Or it can be a power that comes once when you need it most. It's your Infinity Year and the possibilities are endless.

The past year hasn't been great with her family being torn apart and bullying at school, so Avalon is depending on her magical ability to appear soon and help. With the clock ticking and her eleventh birthday approaching, which would be the end of her powers, Avalon's hopes are running high. Will she and Atticus get the powers they so desperately want and need?

Age Range: 8 and up

Grade Level: 3rd and up

Length: 214 pages

About the Author

Dana Middleton grew up in Georgia before moving to Los Angeles to work in film, television and theatre. She was a producer of an Academy Award-nominated short film, and is also a recipient of a Los Angeles Theatre Ovation Award. Her debut children's book, *The Infinity Year of Avalon James*, was nominated for the Young Hoosier Book Award (2018-19) and selected for the Oregon Battle of the Books (2018-19). *Open If You Dare* is her second middle grade novel.



Discussion Questions

- Early in the story, Avalon tells us about the meaning of the Infinity Year. What is the importance of her discovering this with her best friend Atticus?
- Discuss how Avalon's relationship with Elena started out wrong in the second grade and how the gang of 3 reinforces Avalon's thoughts about Elena and her bossiness.
- Describe some issues that Avalon and Atticus face as they begin the school year? Why is Atticus concerned about Avalon being in another classroom?
- Describe how Avalon first meets Harinder Singh and what they have in common.
- Explain how Pop Pop knows about the Infinity Year and how he shares this information with Avalon and Atticus.
- When Avalon first learns that she has Mrs. Jackson as a teacher, she is upset. Discuss how and why her feelings change about Mrs. Jackson. Give some examples. (Chapters 4, 5 & 6)
- How does the author build suspense around the things that will happen to Avalon on Halloween?
- Explain how Mae becomes Avalon's hero during their family tree presentation. (Chapter 8)
- Describe the circumstances that lead to Atticus telling Avalon his secret and why shaking pinky fingers is so important.
- Avalon and Atticus have been waiting a long time to discover their magical powers. Describe how Marmalade leads Atticus to find his.
- Throughout the story Mrs. Brightwell is aware that her son Atticus and Avalon are best friends. Why do you think that Mrs. Brightwell doesn't like Avalon?
- In Chapter 13, Avalon attends Mae's birthday party. How does this lead to Avalon revealing Atticus's secret?
- Describe the trip to the zoo and the resulting consequences for Avalon. Was this a just punishment? Why or why not?
- Explain why Avalon watches Atticus's birthday party from an upstairs window. How does this lead to Avalon finding her infinity power?
- Why do you think that Elena keeps trying to bully Avalon? How did you feel when Mrs. Jackson takes Elena to the principal's office?
- When Avalon turned 11, her Infinity Year was over. What were the two unexpected gifts that she received and why were they so important?

Extended Activities

In *The Infinity Year of Avalon James*, author Dana Middleton explores a variety of themes such as family, friendship, loyalty and bullying. Take one of these themes and write an informative essay about how this brought about change in one of the characters and, perhaps, in you.

Do a family tree of your family and see how far you can go back. Ask your relatives about who came before you. Collect old photos (or copies of photos) and see if, like Avalon and Mae, you are surprised and maybe fascinated by who you discover.