

The MAGNIFICENT Mya Tibbs



SPIRIT
WEEK
SHOWDOWN

CRYSTAL ALLEN

Educators' Guide





ABOUT THE BOOK

Nine-year-old Mya Tibbs is boot-scootin' excited for the best week of the whole school year—SPIRIT WEEK! She and her megapopular best friend, Naomi Jackson, even made a pinky promise to be Spirit Week partners so they can win the big prize: special VIP tickets to the Fall Festival! But when the partner picking goes horribly wrong, Mya gets paired with Mean Connie Tate—the biggest bully in school—And she can't get out of it.

Good gravy.

Now Naomi is friend-ending mad at Mya for breaking a promise—even though Mya couldn't help it—and everyone at school is calling Mya names. Can Mya work with Mean Connie to win the VIP tickets and get her best friend back?



A 2017–2018 Texas Bluebonnet Award Nominee!

CHAPTERS 1–5

FOCUS ACTIVITY: Think of a time when you were partnered with someone you didn't know well and didn't want to work with at that time. Write about what would be the biggest challenges of that partnership. Which of your strengths would help you work with that partner? How would you work out any problems that could come up with your partner?

SETTING A PURPOSE: Read to find out about the school VIP contest for Spirit Week. Find out what the winning partners will receive.

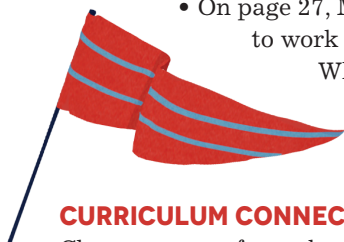
ACTIVE READING: What kind of person is Mya Tibbs? You can learn about her personal qualities from what she says and thinks, and from what other characters say about her. Make a web diagram recording Mya's personal qualities including both the positive and negative as you learn about her from these chapters.

PERSONAL RESPONSES:

- On page 7, Nugget becomes upset when the boys call him “Word Nerd Nugget.” How would your advice to Nugget be different from what Mya's response was to the situation?
- Mya tells everyone her vest is from the shop at the Cowgirl Hall of Fame, when it really came from Billy Bob's dollar store. Why might this be so important to Mya?

ANALYZING LITERATURE:

- What is Mya's attitude towards her best friend, Naomi? How do you know?
 - On page 27, Mya knew she was not supposed to work the mechanical bull, Buttercup. Why did Mya decide to put Naomi on the bull?
- On page 29, Mya became upset with the mechanical bull and what happened to Naomi during her ride. How do you know that Mya is upset?
- Mya refers to Nugget as the biggest jerk in Bluebonnet on page 34. What did Nugget do to deserve that reputation?
- Mya wants to trade partners but Connie refuses. Predict: What do you think might happen if they become partners?



CURRICULUM CONNECTION—POINT OF VIEW: The reader learns what Mya thinks and feels about the events in the story. Choose a scene from chapters 1–5 and retell it from the viewpoint of a different character. Example: Tell about Naomi's ride on the bull from her point of view.

CHAPTERS 6-10

FOCUS ACTIVITY: Have you ever felt like someone made you do something you didn't want to do? Think about and then write about that time and how you felt about the problem. Explain: Did you do what you wanted to do or what others wanted you to do?

SETTING A PURPOSE: Mya fears her friendship with Naomi might be over. Read to find out what happens.

ACTIVE READING: As we read these chapters, the author shares both positive and negative personal qualities about Naomi. Make a T-chart comparing her positive and negative qualities. Think about her friendship with Mya. Think about what personal qualities you look for in your own friends.

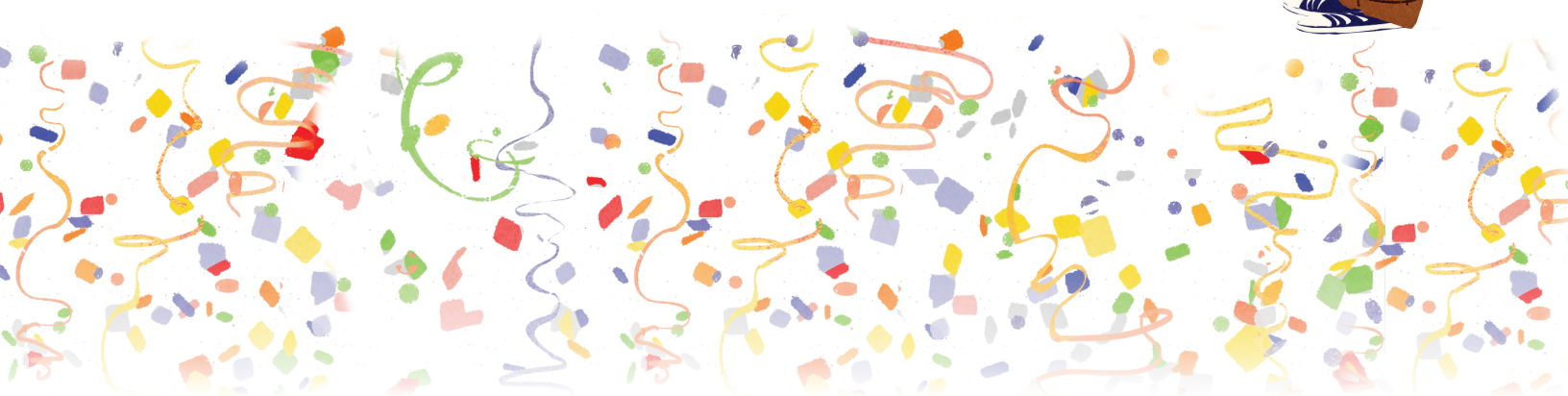
PERSONAL RESPONSES:

- On page 44, Mrs. Davis says "Friendship is like two people lost in the woods. You have to work your way through it." What do you think she is saying to Mya and Connie about working together on the Spirit Week project?
- At the end of Chapter 7, Mya's day has gone from being her best day to her worst day. What advice would you give her to work out the problems with Starr, Skye, and Naomi?
- In Chapter 8 we learn Solo is helping Nugget play basketball. In return, Nugget is doing Solo's math homework. Some people might believe this is a fair deal while others consider it cheating. Which is your belief? Write an explanation to your parents to explain your reasoning.
- On page 70, Connie helps Mya create a rodeo display. How have your feelings changed about Connie?
- We read earlier in the book that Mya uses her hair braids as a calendar. What do you think it means when she asks for, "one big fat ponytail" on page 77.
- Mya has a pair of cowboy boots with horseshoes on the sides. She considers these boots to be her good luck charm. Do you believe in luck? What do you do to bring good luck for yourself?

ANALYZING LITERATURE:

- On page 62, Connie makes a surprising confession. She states, "I don't like to fight." Why is this a surprising statement from Connie?
- Bullying is a major theme throughout the book. What evidence has the author given to support this theme?
- How does the author show us that Mya's opinion about Connie's behavior is changing?
- The author has repeated the term "Taradiddle" in several different chapters. In your own words, please explain what the author means by "Taradiddle."
- Mya's mom has a totally different opinion about Connie than Mya has. Can you find any evidence in the text that there may be a different side to Connie?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION—THEMES: One major theme in this book is the effects of bullying others. Explain another theme you see included in this story.

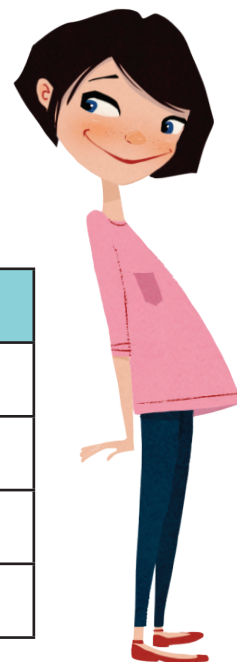


CHAPTERS 11-15

FOCUS ACTIVITY: Think about the friends in your life and who is important to you. Think about what friendship means to you. Draw a picture of your circle of friends and then write what friendship means to you. Turn and share with your partner or your group.

SETTING A PURPOSE: Mya and her partner must work together if they want to win the contest for the VIP tickets. Read to find out which of their costumes might have won points so they can reach their goal.

ACTIVE READING: Besides Mya, her friends and brother have conflicts or struggles within this story, too. Think about the other characters and how they might solve their problems. What advice would you give to help them? Fill in the chart below about problems and solutions.



CHARACTER	STRUGGLE / PROBLEM	ADVICE / SOLUTION
NAOMI		
NUGGET		
SKYE		
STARR		

PERSONAL RESPONSES:

- On page 83, Connie and Mya are walking to their class and everyone is pointing and laughing. Why do you think this might make them uncomfortable?
- There is a competition in the cafeteria between Solo and Fish eating hotdogs. What else might they be competing for?
- In chapter 12, Mya felt guilty about double-crossing her partner, Connie. Which do you think is worse, having to prove to someone you are their best friend, or double-crossing your partner? Explain your choice.
- Why might Naomi want to hear terrible things about Connie from Mya on page 94?
- On pages 98-99 Mya realizes her mom is awesome and she lists her reasons. Think about one of your parents and share how they are awesome.
- Wearing a Humpty Dumpty costume, Mr. Winky, the principal, participates in Spirit Week just like the students. How does your principal participate with students at your school?

ANALYZING LITERATURE:

- Starr and Skye have different feelings towards Mya. What actions tell the reader this is true?
- On page 88, Mya thinks, "It hurts to lose your best friend, and when you do, you'll do anything to get them back." How does this quote relate to Mya's feelings?
- In Chapter 12, the author includes the song lyrics: "You done stomped on my heart and smashed that sucker flat." How do these lyrics relate to the Mya and the story?
- How are the friendships between Solo and Nugget and Naomi and Mya alike?
- In Chapter 14, Connie tells May that Naomi doesn't like her, she only likes Nugget. The author has given the readers clues throughout the story that this might be true. Think back and find at least two clues the author uses.
- Connie finally addresses her as Mya instead of Tibbs. Why do you think that is? What does that mean for both Connie and Mya?
- Naomi makes a false accusation about Connie's drawing while Mya was singing during the competition. Mya is worried about Connie and decides to follow her. What does that say about the change in the friendship between Connie and Mya?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION—PROBLEM/SOLUTIONS: At the end of chapter 13, Mya wants to win the VIP tickets and give them to Naomi so she will like her again. Her idea won't hurt Connie, but it would prove that Mya was Naomi's best friend. Does this really solve some of Mya's problems with both Naomi and Connie? What might be a better solution you could suggest to Mya?

CHAPTERS 16-22

FOCUS ACTIVITY: Do you think there is a difference between a lie and a fib? Discuss in a small group. Think of an example from real life or something you have read or seen when telling a lie leads to deeper trouble. Describe the situation and discuss ways the person might have avoided the trouble without telling a lie.

SETTING A PURPOSE: Read to discover Connie's biggest secrets and the test for friendship Mya creates for Naomi.

ACTIVE READING: In these chapters the reader will notice the rising action occurring within the plot. The rising action leads to the greatest turning point in the story called, the climax. Make a rising action chart showing the rising concerns of Mya dealing with Connie and Naomi during chapters 16-22.

PERSONAL RESPONSES:

- Why would Connie not want to share her talents in art with everyone? Why does she keep her art ability a secret?
- In Chapter 17, Naomi confesses to Mya that she will never be her best friend again because she has lost her chance to be on television. How would you feel if your best friend said that to you?
- Mya tests Naomi's sincerity by telling her she will make Nugget like her. After reading Naomi's response on page 134, what would you do? What would you think?
- On page 136, Mya realizes the meaning of a fake friendship. Can you explain fake friendship in your own words and give an example from your own life?
- After reading chapter 18 and learning about the superheroes on the walls of Connie's secret art room, which superhero is most like you? Which superhero would you want to be and why?
- What was the biggest surprise to Mya while visiting Connie's apartment? What would be a surprise if someone came into your home for the first time?
- In chapter 22, we learn that a parent knows when something is wrong with one of their children. Was there a time you didn't tell your parents something, but they found out anyway?

ANALYZING LITERATURE:

- Many secrets are told in this section of the story. What was the author's purpose in waiting so long to tell these secrets about the different characters?
- In Chapter 19, Nugget becomes upset with Mya for double-crossing Connie. What does this tell us about Nugget's character?
- On page 151, the author compares the mood to a storm brewing as the dark clouds fill the sky and the wind whistles. Connie is ready to share a secret about Naomi. Why could that be like a storm coming?
- Why did Naomi start the rumors about Connie at the new school?
- How and why did Connie lose her scholarship to the private school?
- In this section, we find out that Naomi knew about Connie's talent for drawing. Why did Naomi tell everyone that Connie had cheated with the drawing?
- The author writes on page 158, "How can one person be so ugly to so many people and still win beauty contests?" Which character is this statement about?
- Red carpet is a symbol for royalty. Mya uses and refers to her red bathroom carpet many times in the book. Why does she think Connie deserves to walk the red carpet on page 158?
- In chapter 21 Mya wants to tell her parents about what she did to Connie. Why does she decide not to tell them?



CURRICULUM CONNECTION—AGAIN AND AGAIN: We as readers should recognize when an author repeats something over and over again, and we should wonder why the author repeats him or herself.* Again and Again means bringing up or repeating the same image, phrase or ideas throughout the book. Why do you think the author brings the idea of Mya doing horrible things to Connie up throughout the book?

With a partner, make a quick list of the horrible things Mya has done to Connie throughout the book.

CHAPTERS 23–28

FOCUS ACTIVITY: When we finished chapter 22, Mya was going to handle Naomi as superhero Animasia, guardian over all animals in the Secret Woods. If this situation was happening to you, what would you do to stop Naomi from saying terrible things? Come up with a plan and share with a friend.

SETTING A PURPOSE: Somehow Mya and Connie must become best friends, but how will they do that? Will Fish and Nugget become best friends once again? Who will win those VIP tickets in the fourth grade? Read to discover the solutions to many problems.

ACTIVE READING: In these final chapters we reach the climax: a turning point when things change or a problem is solved. As you read ask yourself: because this event happened, has everything changed? Has a problem been solved? Read and discover the climax of this story. Write a few sentences identifying the climax and what changes it caused for the characters and the ending of the story.

PERSONAL RESPONSES:

- On page 176, the author uses the term “full of baloney.” What does it really mean? Have you ever heard this saying before?
- In chapter 23 Mya gives away another secret! She tells everyone about Connie’s secret art room. Why do you think Mya did that when Connie asked her not to tell anyone?
- Mya performs her rope trick to stop Naomi. What performance event did she copy from the rodeo?
- On page 183, where you surprised who stood up for Mya and Connie against Solo? Who did you think should have stood up for them? How would you have stood up against Solo?
- Mya is sent to the office for bullying. Do you agree or disagree with her punishment at school? Explain and support your answer.
- Who in your family disciplines you when you have done something wrong? Why was it important to Mya that her dad hugged her the same way he did yesterday? What would that mean to you?
- In chapter 26, Mya receives a huge surprise as she looks at her cabinet at school. What is the biggest surprise you have received from a friend? How did it make you feel?
- On page 216, Connie is surprised when she earns a VIP ticket. Do you think she deserved this special ticket for sharing her creativity at the school? Explain your answer.
- In the last chapter, both Connie and Fish volunteer to help at the store. Tell about a time when one of your friends helped you.

ANALYZING LITERATURE:

- In chapter 23, Connie and Naomi are both dressed as angels. Mya explains that it is a coincidence that they are both wearing the same costume. What exactly is a coincidence?
- On page 185 the author uses a simile to compare Naomi to a squirming worm on a fishing hook. Why does an author use similes in their writing? How does it help you visualize what is happening in the story?
- Mr. Winky is shocked that Mya is in his office for bullying. He says, “But here you are, dressed like a superhero, yet behaving like a villain.” What do you think Mr. Winky really means by saying that to Mya?
- On page 196 Mya states, “The way I see it, tomorrow doesn’t matter. I lost everything I cared about today.” What was the number one thing you think she cared about and why?
- At the end of the story, what has Nugget finally learned about Solo?
- At the end of the story, how does the author let you know that Mya and Connie are best friends?
- How has Mya’s opinion about her friends changed throughout the course of the story?
- Even though both Connie and Fish have VIP tickets, they both chose to help Mya and Nugget at the store. What do these actions tell the reader?

CURRICULUM CONNECTION—THE CONCLUSION: The author has shown the reader how characters have grown into becoming better friends to others. Which friendship do you think has grown the most throughout the story? Be sure to back up your claim with evidence from the story.