

Teacher's Discussion Guide: Genie Meanie

By Mahtab Narsimhan

Synopsis: Eight-year-old Kiara discovers a genie in a garam masala bottle left by her grandmother. She hopes the genie will help her deal with Matt, a bully, but the genie is on vacation and more interested in being served than granting wishes. Kiara learns to stand up for herself with the help of her best friend, Bai.

Themes: Bullying, friendship, loyalty, inner strength, cultural differences, problem-solving, and magical realism.

Discussion Questions:

1. Bullying:

- How does Matt bully Kiara and Bai?
- How does bullying make Kiara feel?
- What are some strategies Kiara could use to deal with Matt?
- Why is it important to stand up to bullying?
- *Curriculum Link:* Social-Emotional Learning, Language Arts

2. Friendship:

- How does Kiara's friendship with Bai help her?
- What qualities make Bai a good friend?
- How can friends support each other in difficult situations?
- *Curriculum Link:* Social-Emotional Learning, Language Arts

3. Cultural Differences:

- How do Kiara and Bai's different cultural backgrounds (Indian and Chinese) enrich their friendship?
- How do they tease each other lightheartedly about their cultures?
- Why is it important to respect and appreciate cultural differences?
- *Curriculum Link:* Social Studies, Language Arts

4. The Genie:

- What are Kiara's expectations of the genie?
- How does the genie defy those expectations?
- What role does the genie ultimately play in Kiara's journey?
- *Curriculum Link:* Language Arts

5. Inner Strength:

- How does Kiara discover her own inner strength?
- What does Kiara learn about solving her own problems?
- How can we find strength within ourselves?
- *Curriculum Link:* Social-Emotional Learning, Language Arts



Curriculum Links:

- **Language Arts:** Reading comprehension, character analysis, creative writing, narrative perspective, oral storytelling.
- **Social Studies:** Cultural studies, understanding diversity.
- **Social-Emotional Learning:** Empathy, conflict resolution, self-esteem, managing emotions, healthy relationships.

Extension Activities:

1. **Role-Playing:** Have students act out different scenarios involving bullying, practicing assertive communication and conflict resolution skills.
 - *Curriculum Link:* Social-Emotional Learning, Language Arts, Drama
2. **Character Analysis:** Ask students to write diary entries from Kiara's perspective at different points in the story, exploring her feelings and motivations.
 - *Curriculum Link:* Language Arts, Social-Emotional Learning
3. **Cultural Sharing:** Have students share aspects of their own cultures with the class, promoting understanding and appreciation of diversity.
 - *Curriculum Link:* Social Studies, Language Arts
4. **Creative Writing:** Encourage students to write their own stories featuring a character who discovers their inner strength.
 - *Curriculum Link:* Language Arts
5. **Discussion Circle:** Facilitate a class discussion about bullying, its impact, and strategies for creating a more inclusive and supportive school environment.
 - *Curriculum Link:* Social-Emotional Learning, Language Arts

This guide is designed to be adaptable. Select the discussion questions and activities that best suit your students' needs and learning objectives.