

NATALIE LLOYD

*New York Times* Bestselling Author of *A Snicker of Magic*



DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY GUIDE



# INTRODUCTION

Hello, friends!

I'm thrilled your readers are discovering *Hummingbird* together!

I've done my best to compile questions and enrichment ideas for the book that you are welcome to use with your students as you read. But please know: 1) these are only ideas and 2) whatever you expand on (or do instead!) is also a perfectly wonderful way to help readers forge an even deeper connection to the story! It's quite intimidating to create resource ideas for a group of professionals like you. You know your readers, and their hearts, best of all. But I do hope some of these ideas and conversation starters can make your time together more meaningful.

Thank you for believing this book is worth sharing. When I decided to write a character who shares my disability, I didn't know all the ways Olive (and her adventures) would unravel my heart. I hope, in part, the story feels like a love letter to the adults in my life—my family, teachers, librarians—who loved me and always held space for me. Until I was grown, I didn't really consider all the extra planning and preparation my teachers and librarians must have done so that I could feel like a seamless part of the classroom. Thank you for the work you do to make every student—in every body—feel welcome. You are the magic makers. It's an honor to be a tiny part of that magic this semester.

Until then, happy hummingbird hunting!

—Natalie



## About the Book and Author

### THE HUMMINGBIRD BOOK TRAILER

Check out this book trailer for *Hummingbird* created by Scholastic bookfairs. It's spoiler-free, so feel free to share to help students get excited about the book!



Scan for trailer (or visit <http://tinyurl.com/mtjkf25f>)

### MEET NATALIE

Natalie Lloyd is the *New York Times* bestselling author of novels for young readers. Her books include *A Snicker of Magic*, *The Key to Extraordinary*, The Problim Children series, *Over the Moon*, and *Hummingbird*, which have won accolades from Entertainment Weekly, Junior Library Guild, SIBA, Amazon, and Bank Street College of Education, among others. Natalie writes in the shadows beside a sunny window in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She loves adventuring with her husband, Justin, and their dogs.



Learn more at: [NatalieLloyd.com](http://NatalieLloyd.com)


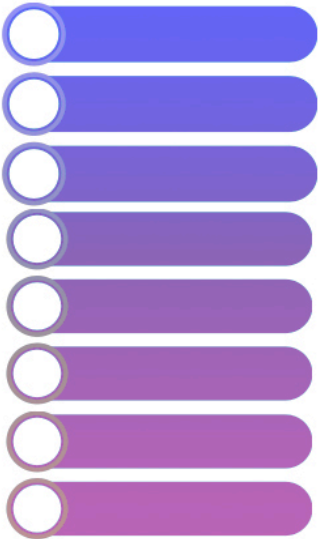
# Ready, Set, Soar!


## STORY CONNECTION BOOKMARKS

Print out one of these bookmarks (or just make one of your own!). When you find a place in the book where you share a connection with Olive (or with something happening in the story), note it on your bookmark! Especially if you think that might be fun to discuss later.





For example, have you felt the same way Olive does about attending school (nervous and excited at the same time)? Or can you relate to how Hatch wants to be alone? Or how much Dylan loves theater? Or maybe you read a line in the story and you like the way it's written. Jot down the page number on your bookmark!

*Story Connections*






*Story Connections*

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*“My bones are fragile.  
But I am not.”*





# Discussion Guide

1. In Chapter One, we're introduced to the main character, Olive Martin. How would you describe her personality? Do the two of you have anything in common? How are you different?
2. We also meet one of Olive's favorite family members—Uncle Dash. Why do you think Uncle Dash might be nervous about attending a big social event (like church)? Have you ever been nervous in a big group of people before?
3. Olive says a heart is her “signature symbol.” She likes to always be wearing a heart somewhere on her clothes. Do you have anything like that in your life—a symbol, an animal, a character, or even a color—that you're drawn to? Why do you think you connect with it?
4. Why do you think Olive's mom was upset when the lady at church prays for Olive to be healed? (P.24 for Mama's answer)
5. Chapter Three of Hummingbird is written entirely in verse. Why do you think Natalie (the author) chose to write some passages in verse and some as standard text?
6. Why do you think Olive loves Dolly Parton? Why do you think people sometimes connect to celebrities, or admire them?
7. In Chapter 6, Olive tells the reader the name of her physical disability. She was born with a condition called osteogenesis imperfecta, which causes brittle bones. Knowing this, why do you think Olive's parents are concerned about sending her to Macklemore? Would you be nervous about living your day-to-day life if you had bones that broke easily?
8. In Chapter 8, we meet Mr. Watson—Olive's new teacher. Why does her interaction with him go so well? How is her interaction with Mr. Watson different from interactions with other adults she meets (like Ms. Pigeon or the lady at church)?

Why do you think Olive feels instantly comfortable around him? Are there grown-ups in your life who you have a special connection with?

9. In Chapter 9, Mr Watson tells his students *The Tale of Twig Moody*. This is the first time we see a story within a story in this novel. The Appalachian Mountains—where Olive is from—are full of great storytellers. And they are full of people who still pass down stories—not just written, but orally. Why is it important to pass down stories? Do you have any family stories that have been passed down to you?
10. Why do you think Olive feels left out in the school cafeteria, even though the Maddies are sitting with her?
11. In Chapter 15, the Reverse Cursed Mirror, we learn why Olive hates attending PE class. Also, we see how Olive sometimes feel insecure in her body. Do you think everybody has insecurities about their bodies? Do you agree when Olive says “a body is the least important thing about a person”?
12. The library is probably the most magical place in Macklemore. Have you ever been in a space that felt magical? (Or use your imagination! Writing prompt: If you could turn your one spot in your school into a magical place, what features and creatures would you add?)
13. In chapter Nineteen, Olive says: “Every true birder knows that each flock has a family name. A flock of pigeons is called a kit. A group of peacocks is called a muster. My favorite family group belongs to starlings; they’re called a murmuration when they’re all together.” Just for fun, try thinking up a name for your “flock”—either your family or a group of friends. Here’s a format you can use if you need it:

My family’s last name is \_\_\_\_\_ and if we were birds we’d be a flock of \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

Or: My best friends are \_\_\_\_\_ and if we were birds, we’d be a flock of \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

*Here’s mine: My family’s last name is **Lloyd** and if we were birds we’d be*



*a flock of Loudly's because we love to laugh and have fun when we're together.*

14. Olive's dad, Jupiter, lives in a yurt. If you don't know what that is, take a second to Google a yurt. Would you live in one of these? Or camp in one? What are other kinds of dwellings people call home that look different from yours? (**Writing activity:** write about your home making sure to use at least two of your five senses. What does home feel like to you? What does it sound like? What's your favorite smell that reminds you of home?)
15. In Chapter 21, we hear another story within a story. This time we hear from Luther Frye, an old war veteran who talks about a special memory with his brother. Have you ever asked the older people in your life to share stories? (See Writing Activities for another fun exercise!)
16. In Chapter 22, Olive is at play practice. The theater kids are doing a play about Emily Dickinson. On Page 232, what do you think The Bird of Joy (aka: Dylan) means when he says: "My wings are whatever I want them to be. So are yours."
17. In Chapter 25, Mama says, "Nerves aren't a bad thing. All they do is show you how much something matters." Do you agree with mama? What makes you nervous? Do you think nerves are good, bad, or neutral?
18. In Chapter 27, Hatch says: "Mr Watson says everybody is a storyteller... no matter what kind of job you have or what do, we all tell stories, whether we realize it or not." Do you agree with Hatch that everybody—not just writers—are storytellers?
19. In chapter 27, Olive talks about how she never sees anybody "like her" in a movie. Even though Olive can imagine herself as any character (like all of us can when we read!), she's realized that she's never actually seen anybody with brittle bones. Or very few people using a wheelchair. Why do you think it's important to Olive, to see someone in a film who looks like her? What other areas of representation would you like to see in TV, movies, or books?

20. When Olive and Jupiter dance, he plays the song “Eleanor” by the Avett Brothers on the record player. This song is special for Jupiter because it makes him think of Olive. Do you have any songs with special memories?
21. Chapter 29 is told mostly in verse—why do you think that’s the way the story is shared here?
22. In Chapter 31, we finally meet the famous Grandpa Goad! Did it surprise you to know Grandpa Goad also has OI? What do you think he means when he says: “Birds are born with wings. The rest of us have to find our wings as we go.”
23. How do you imagine Hatch finding—and interacting—with the Hummingbird? (**Writing Activity:** Pretend you are Hatch Malone! Write a first person account of what it was like, and what you wished for, when you saw the hummingbird.)
24. What do you think Olive means when she declares: “My bones are fragile. But I am not.”
25. Why do you think the author picked a hummingbird as the magical creature in this book? How might a hummingbird be a metaphor for Olive and her journey?





## Writing Activities

### MY ONE WISH

In *Hummingbird*, Olive, Grace and Hatch (and... pretty much the whole town) go in search of a mythical bird who can grant a wish. Take some time to write about what your one wish would be if you found the Hummingbird.

**WRITING PROMPT:** *If I found the hummingbird, I would wish for ...*

### A POEM OF MY OWN

Using some of the passages of verse in *Hummingbird*, encourage readers to explore other kinds of poetry they might enjoy reading and writing.

### THE MEMORY BIRDS & ME (CHAPTER 26)

Imagine you're in the grove where the memory birds rest! If you saw some of your most meaningful memories bubbled in their nests, what would they be?

**ART ACTIVITY:** Draw a tree and add circles to the branches. Write, or draw, some of your favorite memories in the bubbles. *(See the next page for a template you are welcome to use!)*





# Creative Research Projects

## ADOPT A BIRD

Pretend Grandpa Goad needs your help on his next research project! First, decide on a bird to “adopt.” (Alternately, unusual names of birds could be listed on pieces of paper, then drawn by students!)

**Research to discover the following information:**

- Bird’s Name:
- Their song sounds like:
- Three (real) fun facts:

***Now. Have a little fun with this!*** Pretend your bird is magical. What are three fictional facts or abilities you could make up about your bird? (This is a fun way to add magic to your own story and writing! You can use real animals, people, and places... and add a few magical details of your own to make it unique!) **For discussion or further writing:** How could you include your magical bird in a story of your own?

## THE STORY SWAPPER

Even though Grace and Olive initially seek out Luther Frye to get some hummingbird intel, they enjoy hearing his story about his big brother.

Is there a grown up in your life whose life you’d like to know more about? Consider asking them for an interview!

Pick three of these questions to ask them (or think of three questions of your own!):

1. *What was happening in the world when you were my age?*

2. *What's the best thing you've ever eaten?* (I know this might seem like a weird question, but people tend to attach lots of memories to food and smells. So you might get an interesting story!)
3. *What has been the best day of your life so far?*
4. *What's the best advice someone has ever given you?*
5. *What advice do you wish you could give yourself when you were a kid?*
6. *What is the most memorable place you have traveled?*

**WRITING PROMPT:** Write a paragraph about the person you interviewed, why you picked them, and what you learned from hearing their story.

## EMILY VS. THE SWIFTIES

Olive connects to this line in an Emily Dickinson poem: *Hope is a thing with feathers that perches in the soul*. Even though Emily Dickinson wrote in the 1800's, lines from her poems are still beloved by people all over the world. Some poems, songs and stories have incredible staying power. Maybe more importantly, the same line, lyric, or story can mean something different to each person.

What is your favorite line in a poem or song? Write the lyric, what it means to you, and why it matters in your life now.

## Just for Fun

### HUMMINGBIRD BINGO

Utilizing the template below (or you are welcome make your own), readers can be on the hunt for various characters and words as they read the story.

# Hummingbird Bingo

See if you can spot these words, phrases,  
and people as you read the story!

<b>Fish Sticks</b> page _____	<b>Dolly Parton</b> page _____	<b>The Laundry Bird</b>
<b>Golden Freckle</b> page _____		<b>Twig Moody</b> page _____
<b>Chris the Nurse</b> page _____	<b>Gnome</b> page _____	<b>Apple Fritter</b> page _____