



READING GROUP GUIDE

A story of love, hot chocolate, and one little girl's wish for her mother that will melt your heart.

1. Sweets like chocolate and pie have been often used in fiction as a vehicle for magic. Why do you think food has this appeal and what food would you choose to have magical qualities?
2. When the book starts, Penelope has made a tough decision about how her daughter will spend her last few months. What do you think of her choice to let Ella stop her treatments and instead focus on completing her ever-growing bucket list?
3. Fate is a central theme in the book. Do you believe fate is predestined or that our choices lead us to where we're supposed to be? How would Penelope's life have changed if she had told Noah she was pregnant instead of letting him leave town? Would they even be the same people without those years apart?
4. The magic creates a moral gray area for Penelope and her mom. Their chocolates alter people's moods, open hearts to the idea of love, and allow fate to be changed. They even erase the memories of two teens who try to steal magic from the shop. What responsibility do Penelope and Sabina have to their friends and neighbors regarding the effects of their chocolates?
5. How does the belief in magic fuel the characters' decisions? What do they do because of the magic that they wouldn't do in a non-magical world? How does it change them?
6. Penelope has kept Ella from knowing her father's side of the family her entire life, despite them living in Malarkey. As a mother, how could she justify doing this? What would you have done in her position?

Twice the Spice Brownies

Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon of cocoa powder
- 4 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate
- 1/2 cup butter (1 stick)
- 4 tablespoons of extra virgin coconut oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon espresso powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ancho pepper
- 1 cup all-purpose flour

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Line a 9 x 13 baking pan with foil, wrapping the ends of the foil over the sides of the pan. Spray the foil with non-stick cooking spray and sprinkle the cocoa powder on the bottom and sides of the pan.
- In a microwave-safe bowl, add the chocolate, butter, and coconut oil. Microwave on high for 2 minutes, stirring halfway through. Remove and stir the mixture until smooth.
- Stir in the sugar and let cool for a few moments. Then add the eggs and vanilla into the chocolate. (You can mix a few spoonfuls of the chocolate mixture into the beaten eggs first to make sure they don't scramble when combined.)
- Add cinnamon, espresso powder, cayenne powder, ancho powder, and flour. Mix thoroughly.
- Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes. You want them to be fudgey when they come out of the oven. (Use a toothpick to test consistency.)
- Once completely cooled, lift the foil edges to remove the brownies from the pan. Place them on a cutting board and cut to the desired size. You can drizzle with melted dark chocolate and sprinkle with sea salt if desired.

For more recipes and inspiration from the book:
<https://www.pinterest.com/sbcrispell/dreaming-in-chocolate-novel-inspiration/>

Stories with a pinch of **MAGIC**
and a dash of **LOVE**.

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