

The Wycherleys

by Annaliese Avery

Educational Resource

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Major themes

Magic
Autonomy
Family legacy
Love and loyalty
Societal expectations
Individuality/rebellion
Mystery
Power
Trust
Secrecy



About the Author

Annaliese Avery is a former library manager and children's book editor who lives in Suffolk, England. She has an MA in creative writing and a life long interest in physics and astronomy and in 2017 she founded an astronomical society.



Fall head over broomstick in love with this swoon-worthy, witchy romantic fantasy, perfect for fans of *Twin Crowns*, *Divine Rivals* and Stephanie Garber.

For the Kingdom. For the magic. And for love . . .

Seventeen-year-old Aurelia Wycherley is entering her debutante season as a witch. Aurelia should be excited about finding the perfect match to tether her magic to. But her magic is cursed – dark, dangerous, and not the kind that her peers want to match with – and, without a tether, she faces losing her magic completely.

But when Aurelia learns that enigmatic, aloof Jules, a member of arch enemy family the Nightlys, is searching for a way that a witch can keep their magic without tethering, she realises he may be her only hope. A forbidden alliance is formed . . . but as they navigate the Magical Season with its glamoured balls and perilous trials, they uncover dark forces that threaten their families and the magical world they live in.

Expect family secrets, generational curses, forbidden romance, gorgeous ballgowns, bribery, extortion, trespass, magic and kissing . . . lots of kissing.

Discussion topics and activities:

- Give students a list of statements to discuss or place on a “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” spectrum. For example:
 - Tradition should always be followed.
 - Power should be shared equally.
 - You should never go against your family’s wishes.
 - You have to conform to fit in.

Students should discuss why they feel the way they do, and revisit the same statements after reading *The Wycherleys*.

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- Discuss or journal:
 - What do we mean when we talk about a “curse” in a fantasy novel?
 - Are there things in real life that feel like “curses” (e.g. stereotypes, expectations, legacies)?
 - Can people change or escape the things they’ve inherited?
- Ask students to brainstorm examples of stories where two people fall in love despite being from rival groups (e.g. *Romeo and Juliet*, *Zuko and Katara* fan theories, *West Side Story*). Then discuss as a whole class:
 - Why are these stories so compelling?
 - What challenges do the characters usually face?
 - How might a magical feud complicate things further?
- Prompt: Have you ever felt pressure to be or act a certain way because of your family, friends, or anyone else? This can be anonymous or shared voluntarily, and opens up a personal connection to Aurelia's situation.
- In *The Wycherleys*, Aurelia is determined not to tether her magic. What does this decision say about her character? Do you think she’s right to fight against the tradition, even if it means risking everything?

Discussion topics and activities:

- The story explores the idea of inherited curses and legacies. How do family history and expectations shape Aurelia's life? Can we ever truly break away from the past?
- The Nightly and Wycherley families have been enemies for generations. What does the novel say about prejudice and grudges? How do Aurelia and Jules challenge these patterns?
- The society in the book expects witches to follow strict rules about power and relationships. Can you see any parallels between this magical society and our own world's expectations of young people?
- Jules and Aurelia come from very different backgrounds, but they grow to trust each other. What helps them move past their differences? What does their relationship teach us about empathy and open-mindedness?
- The idea of choice is central to the story—especially the right to choose your own path. Why do you think this is such an important message for a teenage audience? Have you ever felt pressured to follow a path that didn't feel right for you?
- There's a strong theme of power—who has it, how it's controlled, and who decides who deserves it. How does the book challenge traditional ideas about who should hold power?
- Mystery plays a big role in the book, with secrets hidden by the Royal Magical Council. What did you think of this element of the story? How did the mystery add to your understanding of the characters and the world?
- Appearance is used to mark Aurelia as "other"—especially her white hair and stormy eyes. What does this say about how society treats people who are different?

Discussion topics and activities:

- The Wycherleys* intertwines personal growth, societal critique, and magical intrigue, offering readers a multifaceted exploration of its central themes. Find quotes in the book that offer a perspective on the below themes:

Theme	Quote	Page number
Magic	Example: "My magic rose in me, lifting me into the air. The power strummed through me and I felt more alive than ever; connected to the world and everything in it."	Page 1
Autonomy	Example: "And most importantly because it is my magic, Ms Wycherley, and I can do with it whatever I please. I can have control over it just as you are seeking control over yours, so stop looking at me like that!"	Page 98
Family legacy		
Love and loyalty		
Societal expectations and individuality / rebellion		
Mystery and secrecy		
Power		
Trust		

Discussion topics and activities:

- Imagine you are a reporter for *The Magical Times* newspaper, writing an exclusive interview with Aurelia Wycherley after the events of the book. Write at least 5 Q&As that explore her experiences, choices, and what she learned. Your interview should include:
 - A question about the curse and how it shaped her identity
 - A question about her decision not to tether her magic
 - A question about her relationship with Jules Nightly
 - A question about the society's expectations and whether she thinks change is possible
 - At least one creative or humorous question (ie. "Would you ever attend another magical ball?")
- After the events of the book, imagine Aurelia has been invited to write a letter to the Royal Magical Council suggesting how the rules about tethering and magic should change. Write the letter from Aurelia's point of view. In 250–300 words, include:
 - A clear argument about why the current system is unfair or outdated
 - References to events or people (ie. other witches who suffered from the rules)
 - A proposed alternative system
 - A powerful closing line urging the council to act
- Draw or collage what your own personal magic would look like if it didn't have to be tethered to anyone else. What colours, shapes, or symbols represent your inner power and freedom? Optional: Add one word or phrase that captures your magic's essence.
- The ending raises questions about change and what comes next. What do you think happens after the book ends? How might the world change as a result of Aurelia's choices?
- How does Aurelia redefine what it means to be powerful in a society that tries to control magic and the people who wield it?
- The Wycherley and Nightly families have been caught up in a generational feud. What does the story suggest about forgiveness, breaking cycles, and creating your own path?
- If you lived in the magical world of *The Wycherleys*, would you choose to tether your magic or risk losing it to stay free? Why?