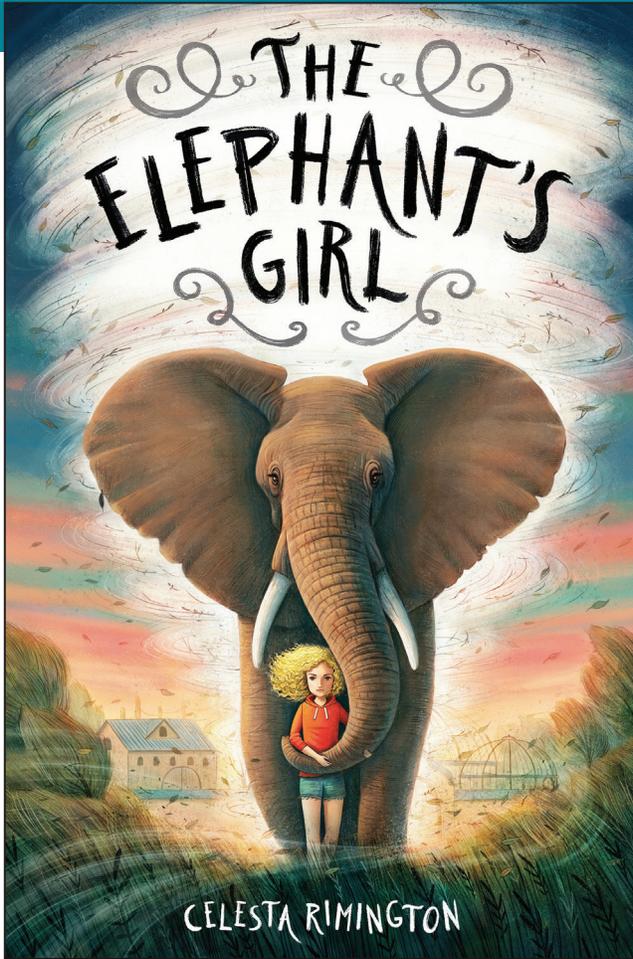


Curriculum Guide



Crown Books for Young Readers hardcover 978-0-593-12122-1
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THE ELEPHANT'S GIRL

BY Celesta Rimmington

"The wind and I have a complicated relationship."

AN ELEPHANT NEVER FORGETS, but Lexington Willow can't remember what happened before a tornado swept her away when she was a toddler. All she knows is that

it landed her near an enclosure in a Nebraska zoo; and there an elephant named Nyah protected her from the storm. With no trace of her birth family, Lex grew up at the zoo with Nyah and her elephant family; her foster father, Roger; her best friend, Fisher; and the wind whispering in her ear.

Now that she's twelve, Lex is finally old enough to help with the elephants. But during their first training session, Nyah sends her a telepathic image of the woods outside the zoo. Despite the wind's protests, Lex decides to investigate Nyah's message and gets wrapped up in an adventure involving ghosts, lost treasure, and a puzzle that might be the key to finding her family. As she hunts for answers, Lex must summon the courage to leave the secure borders of the zoo to discover who she really is—and why the tornado brought her here all those years ago.

"This story of friendship includes magical realism, mystery, and adventure that is sure to capture young readers' attention. Perfect for fans of Kate DiCamillo." —SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL

"Poignant." —KIRKUS REVIEWS

A 2021-2022 Volunteer State Book Award Nominee
A 2021-2022 Bluebonnet Master List Selection
A 2022 Sequoyah Book Awards Master List Selection
A Reading the West Book Award Winner

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Common Core State Standards are noted throughout.
For more information, visit corestandards.org.

Discussion Questions

Discussion questions reference **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3**

- 🌀 What details do you notice on the book cover? What do you predict this book will be about?
- 🌀 From whose point of view is this story told? What questions arise for you after reading the first chapter of the novel?
- 🌀 Lexington Willow knows a lot about elephants. How did she gain her knowledge? Cite examples from the text to support your opinion.
- 🌀 What do Nyah and Lex have in common? How are they different? Why do you think Nyah can communicate with Lex? Why would Lex be afraid to tell Thomas or Fisher about the images Nyah is sending to her?
- 🌀 How does Lex feel when Fisher tells her he's going to baseball practice every day during the summer and then off to a special baseball camp for several weeks? What had Lex expected for their summer to be like?
- 🌀 Do you think Miss Amanda is a ghost? What makes Lex trust Miss Amanda? How is the passage of time different when Lex is with Miss Amanda? What important meeting does Lex miss?
- 🌀 What experience did Mrs. Leigh have with a ghost when she was young?
- 🌀 When Lex tells Fisher the whole story about Nyah's vision, meeting Miss Amanda, and the change in the appearance of the trailer when he sees it, it doesn't take much convincing for Fisher to believe Lex. Why do you think that is?
- 🌀 Miss Amanda tells Lex about a hidden treasure. What steps do Lex and Fisher take to search the gift shop?
- 🌀 What punishment does Lex receive for her role in breaking into the gift shop and damaging the floor? What new zoo policy does Mr. Bixly put in place after the incident? How does Lex react to each?
- 🌀 What does Lex learn about Miss Amanda from Isabel, the gift shop manager? Describe the old letter that Isabel shares with Lex.
- 🌀 Describe what happens when Lex leaves the zoo to watch Fisher's baseball practice. How does she feel about the girls on the bus? What happens in the stands with the girls? Why does Lex leave without telling Fisher?
- 🌀 What does Lex learn about the Fenn Circus when she next meets with Miss Amanda?

- 🌀 How does Fisher react when Lex explains why she left the baseball field without telling him? Does their relationship change at this point? How does Lex feel about what she's done?
- 🌀 What does Lex learn about the passenger car on the zoo train? What do you think has happened to the box Roger found when he restored the car?
- 🌀 What “rules” does Lex break over the course of the story? How does she feel about her behavior?
- 🌀 Why does Lex follow Mr. Bixly after Miss Amanda's trailer has been towed? What does Fisher's desire to catch up with her say about their friendship? How do the two get the box from Mr. Bixly?
- 🌀 Themes of being lost and found and of family run through this novel. How do these themes resonate with each of the main characters?

Activities for Students

All About Elephants

Elephants are fascinating animals. Research Asian and/or African elephants and create a poster report to describe facts about their behavior, diet, communication, and physical characteristics. Illustrate your report with drawings and images clipped from magazines or websites.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2

Map the Zoo

Create a map of Lexington Zoo based on the descriptions found in the novel. Include the main entrance, the Old County Bank building where Lex and Roger live, the Elephant Barn and yard, the gift shop, the Wild Eats Café, the Leigh's house, the train station, Lex's treehouse, and any other significant points of interest.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1

Design a Logo

With the Fenn fortune, Lex establishes the Amanda Holtz Elephant Sanctuary at the Lexington Zoo. Design a logo for the new sanctuary.

Novel Glossary

The Elephant's Girl is filled with rich vocabulary. Look through the book and select 7-10 words that are unfamiliar or interesting to you. Organize the words alphabetically and supply a definition for each word gleaned either from context clues in the story or from looking the word up in a dictionary.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.4.C

Writing Exercises

Character Study

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell is assigned to Lexington by her teacher, Mrs. Leigh. If you haven't yet read the novel, do so. After reading it, write an essay comparing and contrasting Karana and Lexington. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.9**

Opinion Piece

Zoos play an important role in educating the public about animals and threats to their survival and they provide a safe environment for endangered species threatened by poaching and habitat destruction. Animals in captivity suffer from stress, boredom, and confinement; they should be free to live in the wild. Which statement do you believe is true? Write an essay stating your opinion and cite clear examples to support your position.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1

Point of View

When Lex first meets Miss Amanda, she loses track of time and misses her daily lunch with Roger at the Wild Eats Café. Write a new scene for the novel from Roger's point of view as he waits for Lex to arrive. Describe the café setting. How does Roger feel as time passes, and Lex still doesn't appear? Who does Roger talk with? Use descriptive language and sensory details to make the scene come alive. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3**

Newspaper Article

Write a newspaper article describing the creation of the Amanda Holtz Elephant Sanctuary at Lexington Zoo and the discoveries about Lex's birth family and the Fenn fortune. Remember that a newspaper article is fact based and addresses five key questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1

Paragraph or Essay Prompts

- 🌀 The novel begins and ends with a terrible storm. How do the two storms shape Lexington's destiny? Describe Lex's relationship with the wind over the course of the story. Is it a friend or foe?
- 🌀 How do supernatural elements such as ghosts and telepathic communication work within this novel? Could the story be told without these devices?
- 🌀 It's said that an elephant never forgets. How does Nyah's long memory help Lex to discover the truth about her history before coming to the zoo?
- 🌀 Lex and Roger have a special bond, which Lex tests at several points. How does their relationship change over the course of the novel? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3**

Name: _____

Elephant Word Search



The elephant herds of Lexington Zoo and Fenn Circus are their own type of family. Can you find the elephants' names hidden in the letters below?

Q K Z P Q D O U T S G H O M B
Y M Z A H C V U P N T N T F L
Z S A G U K T W Z I Y A Z Q A
E A J D C H O Y Y A I Z R L P
M R K J E X D O H I A H S A F
D H I J S B D Z X E Q G X Q X
V P H A H I R F F W D T Q D T
L W B Y Z I Q W S L Z H T F P
E N W M A X U C N J U U E Z G
G H F D I S B C B N G D I V U
N D N K U U D K P C X G Q D J
Z E D H D G Y P S Y F S X J G
T V F C H E Z E E V C N Z G L
D F A L O G M J K V F U U J Y
C P C T K N S K S P B X K O W

ASHA

GYPSY

JAZZ

NYAH

STAR

TENDAI

ZAIRE

If you got to name an elephant, what would you call him or her? _____

Name: _____

Character Word Scramble

Unscramble the letters to reveal main characters from *The Elephant's Girl*.

NNTXOLIGE

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

SRIHEF

--	--	--	--	--	--

EGROR

--	--	--	--	--	--

ISMS MDANAA

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

RM BYILX

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

MSR GLIHE

--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

HYNA

--	--	--	--

BONUS!

Take the letters that appear in circles and unscramble them to answer this question:

Which other character in the novel only converses with Lex?

--	--	--

W			
---	--	--	--