



Discussion Questions

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. The apothecary table in the Chocolate Cottage not only provides recipes and ingredients for the magical chocolates, it also gives Penelope and Ella gifts to help them find the answers they seek. Why do you think the table provides help when it does?
4. After Noah broke Penelope's heart when they were younger, she is convinced the Corazon hot chocolate was wrong. How does this belief affect her feelings toward him when he returns to town? How does it fuel Ella's desire to make sure Penelope will be happy when she's gone?
5. 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?
6. 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?

7. Penelope uses truth-telling chocolates on Noah to gauge his real feelings for her. Why do you think she stops short of forcing real truths from him? Do you think she would have believed him without the magic?
8. Ella finds a compass necklace that will lead her to people who will love her, and she is convinced Noah belongs with her and Penelope. Do you think she can sense on a biological level that he is her father, or is it just a seven-year-old's wishful thinking?
9. 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?
10. 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?
11. Sabina uses the Bittersweet truffles as a magical anti-depressant to trick her mind into believing her dead husband is still alive. Is it her right to self-medicate, even if it might leave her hurt or worse, or is Penelope's intervention the right course of action to ensure Sabina's safety?
12. Penelope tells Ella multiple times throughout the book that she can't use the magic for personal gain, yet she