

THE RISE OF NICHOLAS^{THE} NOBLE

By Chanda A. Bell



Family Discussion Guide

Explore themes of courage, identity, loyalty and the Spirit of Christmas in this epic origin story of Santa Claus, perfect for middle grade readers and families reading together.



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THE ELF ON THE SHELF®
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About the Book

The Rise of Nicholas the Noble takes readers deep into the heart of the North Pole, long before Santa was Santa. Shipwrecked in the Arctic with his loyal dog, Barry, twelve-year-old Nicholas discovers a hidden world filled with ancient elves, magical creatures and the mysterious power of the Lumistella Stone, a fragment of the Christmas star that crashed to One True North. As he uncovers the secrets of this mysterious kingdom and the Spirit of Christmas, Nicholas must choose whether he will rise to defend it — even when the cost is high.

Told with humor, heart, and lots of action, this story is about friendship, identity, bravery and what it means to become someone worthy of legend.



About the Author

Chanda A. Bell is a bestselling author, publisher and the creative force behind *The Elf on the Shelf*® and the expansive Santaverse™ storytelling universe. She is the co-founder of The Lumistella Company, where she has helped build one of the most iconic and beloved holiday traditions in modern history, *The Elf on the Shelf: A Christmas Tradition*. With a gift for blending wonder, warmth and worldbuilding, Chanda has also authored multiple books that bring Santa's North Pole to life—including the *Elf Pets* series; *Extraordinary Noorah: Santa's Magical Arctic Fox*; *Little Grunt: A SnoBiggie Yeti Story* and *How Old is Santa Claus?*, a 2025 holiday picture book released in partnership with HarperCollins Children's Books.



With *The Rise of Nicholas the Noble*, Chanda opens the door to the origin of Santa himself, blending classic fantasy with rich emotional storytelling.

Pre-Reading Family Activity

Before starting the book, ask your child:

- What do you already know about Santa Claus/Saint Nicholas?
- Have you ever wondered how Santa became Santa?

Keep track of your family's questions as you read the book. Revisit them after you finish reading the book!



Family Discussion Questions:

1. What emotions does Nicholas experience after becoming shipwrecked? How does he respond to fear or uncertainty?
2. What are some examples of Nicholas showing bravery even when he doesn't feel brave?
3. What makes Nicholas "noble"? Is it something he's born with or something he earns?
4. Nicholas didn't expect to become part of something magical. He just tried to do the right thing. What are some small things we can do each day that make the world feel more magical for others?
5. Barry, Nicholas' dog, is more than just a pet. He's a brave and loving friend. Can you think of someone in your life (or even a pet!) who always stays by your side? What makes that kind of friendship special?
6. Throughout the book, Nicholas has to make hard choices even when he feels scared. What's something brave you have done, even if it felt small?
7. One True North is a hidden world filled with magical beings, snow-crafted wonders and special secrets. Which magical creature would you like to be and what would you use your powers to do?
8. Fisbee tells the story from his own point of view and sometimes talks directly to us as readers. What did you like about having Fisbee as a narrator?
9. Kendor, Noorah, Delshimerry and others all have unique personalities, but they work together. What are some things that make you unique?
10. Nicholas didn't become Santa all at once. He had to grow, learn and believe. What are some things you're learning to grow into? How do the people around you help you become your best self?
11. Some characters in the story make sacrifices to protect something important. What does it mean to put others first? Can you think of a time someone did something kind for you even if it wasn't easy?
12. In this story, magic is real but it often shows up through love, hope and belief. What do you believe makes the holiday season magical? What's something your family does that makes this time of year feel extra special?
13. What did you find most surprising about the origin of Santa Claus in this version?
14. What do you think happens next in the Santaverse? Would you want to read more stories set in this world?



Activities & Prompts for Families

Explore & Create:



- Map It Out: Create your own illustrated map of One True North and label key locations.
- Create a Magical Companion: If you had a magical creature like Barry or Noorah, what would it be? What would its special ability be?
- Design Your Medallion: Just like Fisbee's Lumistella star medal, design a medal that represents courage or kindness.

Writing Prompts:



- Write a journal entry from Nicholas' point of view the night he arrives at One True North.
- Imagine you're a new character in Santaverse. What's your story? What do you protect?

Deeper Dive Topics:



- The Arctic: What is real about the Arctic setting, and what is fantasy?
- Christmas Traditions: How do different cultures celebrate the ideas of generosity and spirit? What are some different views around the world about Saint Nicholas?
- Stars, Stones and Celestial Wonders: What is a meteor, and how is it different from a shooting star or comet? Have people in history ever believed that magical things could fall from the sky? Are there myths or folktales from other cultures that explain stars or magical objects from space?