

# The Girl Who Stole an Elephant

## Discussion Notes



- The story starts with a chase scene. How does this set the tone for the rest of the book? How does this make you, the reader, feel?
- Neel doesn't finish his sentence when he says '*He will have your father –*'. What effect does this have on Chaya? How do you think the sentence might have finished?
- Why does no one seem to think Chaya could have stolen the jewels?
- Neel confesses to stealing the jewels and is sentenced to death. What do you think is running through Chaya's mind when her father tells her this?
- Nour says to Chaya that she '*can't expect people to help if you don't tell them things*'. Do you agree with this? Why / why not?
- The escape from the prison is very intense and it seems at times that Chaya and Neel won't make it. How does the author manage to build this tension?
- Why do you think Chaya doesn't want to accept Nour's help? You could also discuss why you think Nour wants to help.
- Chaya leaves a note for her father in case something goes wrong. Can you imagine what he might be thinking when he reads it?
- Chaya says that she steals to help other people. Discuss what you think about this. Is it right?
- Nour reveals why she joined Chaya and Neel in the jungle. What do you think about her reasoning? Does this make sense to you?
- During the chase scenes, Chaya, Neel and Nour make decisions quickly without much thought. What are some of the outcomes of their decisions?
- What does Chaya learn about friendship throughout the story?
- Why do you think the bandits assume that Neel is the 'mastermind'? How do you think this makes Chaya feel?
- Discuss what everyone thought about the twist when the group meet 'Sena'. Did anyone expect this?
- Think of a few words to describe each of the main characters in the story. What do they each bring to the group?
- Chaya means shadow, and Nour means light. Why do you think the author chose these names?
- The King thinks that you must rule with an 'iron fist' but his people are suffering under his rule. What do you think makes a good ruler?
- What lessons do you think the main characters have learnt from their experience in the story? What have you learnt?

# *The Girl Who Stole an Elephant*

## *Activity Ideas*



### *SETTING THE SCENE*

The book is set in Sri Lanka and most of the story takes place in the jungle. Have a go at drawing a scene from the book based on the description given. For example, when the children first ride into the jungle, when they encounter the bandits or a scene from inside the palace.

### *QUICK DECISIONS*

The group have to make a lot of quick decisions. Choose one of the decisions they make and write an alternative version of the chapter. Make a different decision for them. How different might the outcome have been? For example, when they chose to side with the bandits, or jump into the waterfall.

### *CHARACTER INTERVIEWS*

Did the book leave you with any questions? Take it in turns to act as one of the main characters from the book and have the rest of the group ask any unanswered questions. For example, what happened once the book ended? What happened to the King? Why did Neel always try to protect Chaya? Try and put yourself into the mindset of the character and get creative with your answers!

### *ANANDA'S STORY*

Ananda plays a big role in the group's escape and journey but we never get to hear from the elephant. Write a short piece from Ananda's point of view. How does he feel about Chaya, Nour and Neel? What does he think about being in the jungle after spending his life as the King's elephant?

### *MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE*

In the book, the characters have to choose who to side with and at the end they convince the people to stop following the King. Write and perform a speech convincing people to support Princess Leela. Use persuasive techniques such as emotive language and facts.