

Smudge Episode 6

K-3 Teacher Guide

Integrating SEL, ELA, and Creative Expression



Overview

In Episode 6, the Inkompletes leave the Weaver with a map to the Storyteller. Hocus offers a shortcut, but our inkomplete friends remember that his help has caused trouble before. Because they are worried about Iggy, they agree to travel with him, even though Hocus has not clearly explained what he wants in return.

Their trip takes a wild turn when walking cottages called Barnivores block the road. After a crash in Neverwood, the group finds a traveling carnival full of unfinished characters. The friends separate to explore. Fleck enters a tent of boasting heroes, where she is mocked for trying to mount a rescue plan after facing Calumbra. Eager to prove herself, she shows them the map, and the crowd begins to move toward her.



Overview continued



Meanwhile, Calumbra steals ink from Iggy to restore his pages. Conflicting versions of Calumbra appear before he draws them back into himself.

In the House of Mirrors, Smudge sees different possible versions of themselves. A cracked mirror pulls them into a frightening scene in which Edgar has written them as a baker even as Smudge insists that they are an author. Spinks pulls Smudge out of the mirror and helps them leave.

The friends escape the carnival with Hocus in a stolen balloon ship, heading toward the Whispering Dunes.

In the end: Iggy still needs help, the Storyteller has not been found, and the friends have new questions about whom to trust.

Key themes

Having a voice: Smudge wants others to listen to who they are and what they hope to become.

Trust and careful choices: A friendly offer can still leave important questions unanswered. The group must think about Hocus's actions as well as his promises.



Being brave without proving it: Fleck wants to be believed. The scene invites students to consider how teasing can push someone into a hasty choice.

Caring through actions: Spinks notices that Smudge needs help, pulls them to safety, and helps Fleck board the balloon.

Staying connected: Exploring is exciting, but when the friends lose track of one another after they separate at the carnival, problems ensue.

Learning paths

Teachers can use three paths to connect Episode 6 with classroom learning. Choose a few goals that fit your students and the time available.

SEL

- Name feelings such as worry, excitement, embarrassment, and relief, using clues from characters' faces, words, and actions.
- Practice speaking up about names, interests, and hopes while listening respectfully to others.
- Discuss ways to ask for help, respond to teasing, and make a plan before acting.

ELA

- Identify characters, settings, and important events; retell the friends' journey in order.
- Connect a character's choice with what happens next and support an answer with an episode detail.
- Explore words such as shortcut, trust, boast, reflection, and rescue through the episode's situations.

Creative expression

- Imagine a Barnivore and describe how its house and animal features work together.
- Tell, draw, or dictate a possible next scene that grows from the episode's ending.

Grade adjustment: For K-1, invite pointing, acting, drawing, and oral responses. For grades 2-3, add a short explanation using "I think ___ because ___."



Pre watch discussion

Keep this conversation to about five minutes. Choose two or three prompts. Students may talk about an imaginary character rather than share a personal experience.

- A shortcut is a different way that might be quicker. What questions could you ask before choosing a shortcut?
- What is something you enjoy doing or hope to learn? How could someone show that they are listening to you?
- If someone laughs at a character and says, "You can't do that," what could the character do next? Who could help?
- The friends have a map and want to help Iggy. What plan might help them stay together when they enter a new place?



During watch discussion



Choose one or two pauses so the story can keep moving. Use the scene cues below; no timestamps are needed.

When Fleck hands Hocus the map: Why do the friends agree to go with Hocus? How can you tell they are still unsure? What could they ask him before leaving?

When the friends separate at the carnival: Fleck wants everyone to stick together. What do the others do? What might make it harder to help one another now?

During watch discussion continued

After Fleck shows the heroes her map: How do you think Fleck feels when the others laugh? What does she do to prove herself? What else could she try?

After Spinks pulls Smudge out of the mirror: What happened to Smudge in the mirror? What does Spinks do when he sees that Smudge is upset?

Teacher guidance: The tower and mirror scenes may feel intense. Briefly name what happened, invite students to name the character's feelings, and allow students to listen without answering. Explain that the mirror shows a strange story experience; it does not prove what the real Edgar is doing.



Post watch discussion

Use partner talk or a whole-class conversation. Ask students to point to something they saw or heard when explaining an answer.

- Smudge says, "I AM an author." Why is being heard so important to them? What could a caring listener say in response?
- The heroes tell stories about being brave, but they laugh at Fleck. Spinks quietly helps his friends. Which actions show caring? Can a helpful action be heroic?
- Hocus gets the group moving again, but Spinks questions how he got the balloon. What questions would you still want to ask Hocus?



Post watch discussion continued



- The friends care about Iggy and want to hurry. How could they care about him while also making a careful plan? In our world, whom could a student ask for help?
- Where are the friends going at the end? What do they still need to do? Make one prediction and tell which detail gave you the idea.

Keep the meaning clear: There is nothing wrong with being a baker. Smudge is upset because the future in the mirror was chosen for them without listening to what they wanted.

Character profiles

Smudge

A curious Inkomplete who knows they want to be an author. Smudge explores the House of Mirrors but rejects the versions that do not feel right. Inside the cracked mirror, they speak up when Edgar appears to choose a different future for them. They are still shaken after Spinks helps them out.



Fleck and Stitch

Fleck: The group's protective leader. She questions Hocus, checks on her friends after the crash, and asks them to stay together. When the heroes mock her, she reveals the map to prove she is telling the truth. Her experience shows that even a capable leader can make a hasty choice when embarrassed.

Stitch: Fleck's living scarf and companion. Stitch helps identify the Lantern of Lament on the map and comforts Fleck when the group scatters at the carnival. Support can be shown without words.



Character profiles continued

Dot

A knowledgeable friend who recognizes a landmark on the map and is fascinated by the Barnivores. Her worry about Iggy helps persuade the group to accept Hocus's offer. At the carnival she explores on her own and later leaves a fortune-teller's tent looking dazed, with a card in her hand. We do not learn what she was told.



Hocus

A playful guide whose offers come with unanswered questions. He promises a shortcut, loses the way after the crash, and finds a balloon for the group's escape. His remark about leaving a note suggests he took it without permission. The episode leaves his larger plans uncertain.



Spinks

A skeptical but loyal friend who questions Hocus and follows the smell of funnel cakes into the carnival. He also notices when his friends need him: he rescues Smudge from the mirror and helps Fleck reach the balloon.

Character profiles continued

Iggy and Calumbra

Iggy and Calumbra: Iggy remains Calumbra's prisoner. Calumbra takes Iggy's ink to restore his pages and says he has another purpose for the Storyteller. Iggy challenges him, even though he is frightened and weak. His friends have not rescued him yet.



Edgar and Clarissa

Edgar and Clarissa in the mirror: These versions of the authors appear inside Smudge's mirror experience. They discuss a story that makes Smudge a baker, but they cannot hear Smudge objecting. Their appearance here does not establish what the real Edgar and Clarissa have chosen.



The heroes

The heroes in the tent:

Adventurers who boast about their victories. They refuse to believe Fleck and ridicule her rescue plan. Their behavior gives students a chance to compare looking heroic with treating others kindly.



Plot breakdown Introduction and rising action

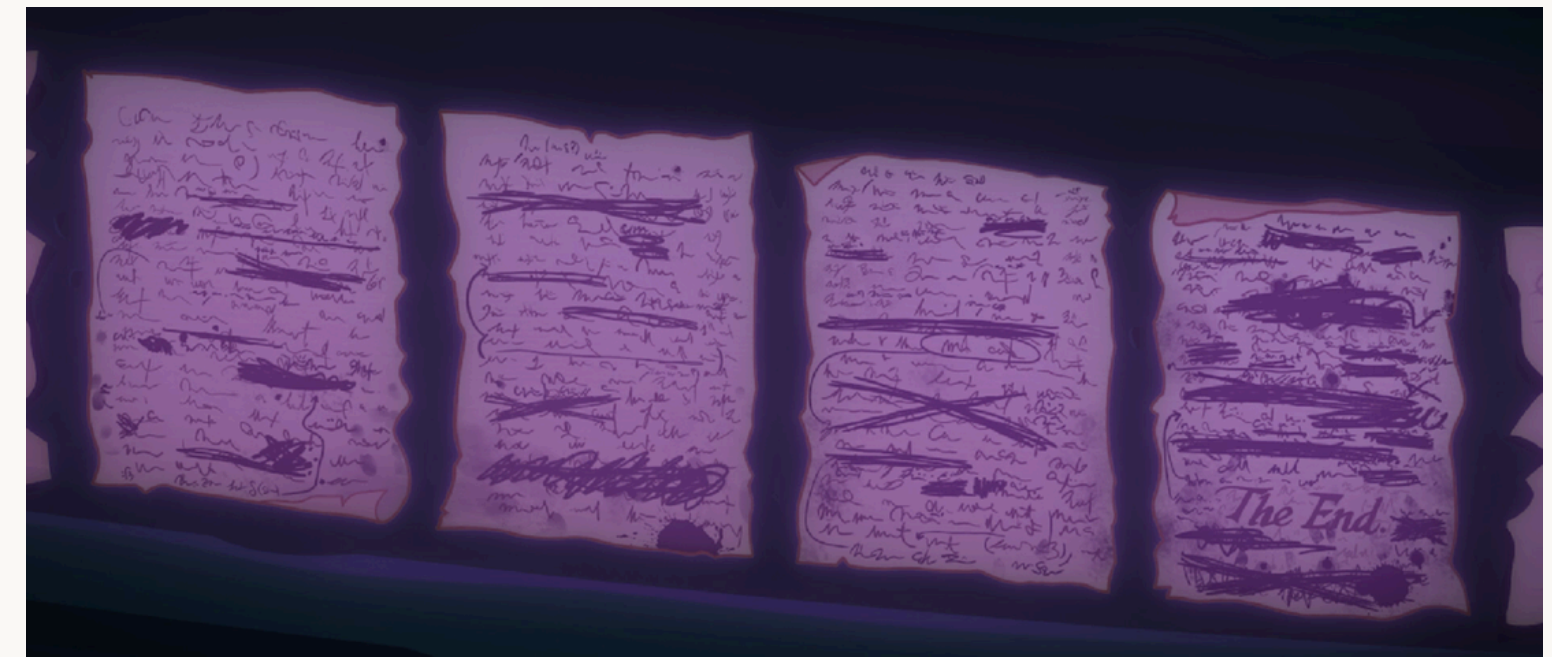
Introduction

Outside the Weaver's lair, Hocus meets the Inkompletes and warns that they are being followed. The friends have the Weaver's map, but the route looks long. Worried that Iggy may not have time to wait, they reluctantly accept Hocus's offer of a shortcut. Hocus says he has terms, but puts off explaining them.



Rising action

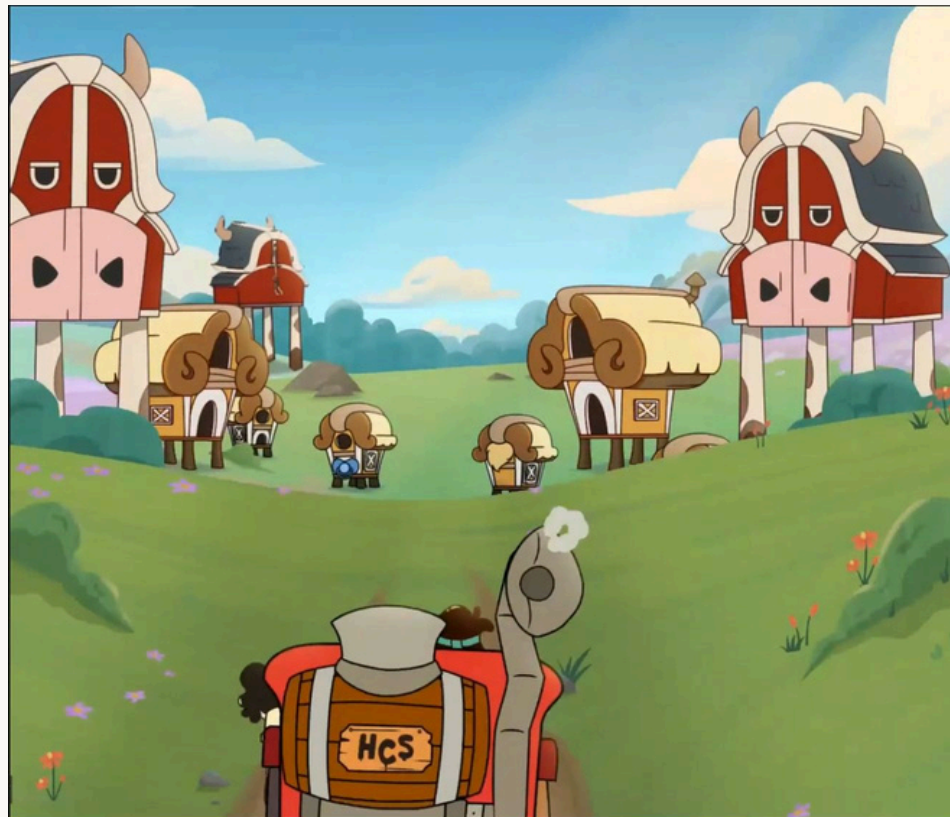
In Calumbra's tower, and inkomplete named Bob has no ink left to give. Calumbra takes ink from Iggy and finishes restoring his pages. Different versions of Calumbra appear, speak, and merge back into him. The scene leaves the result of this change uncertain.



Plot breakdown Rising action continued

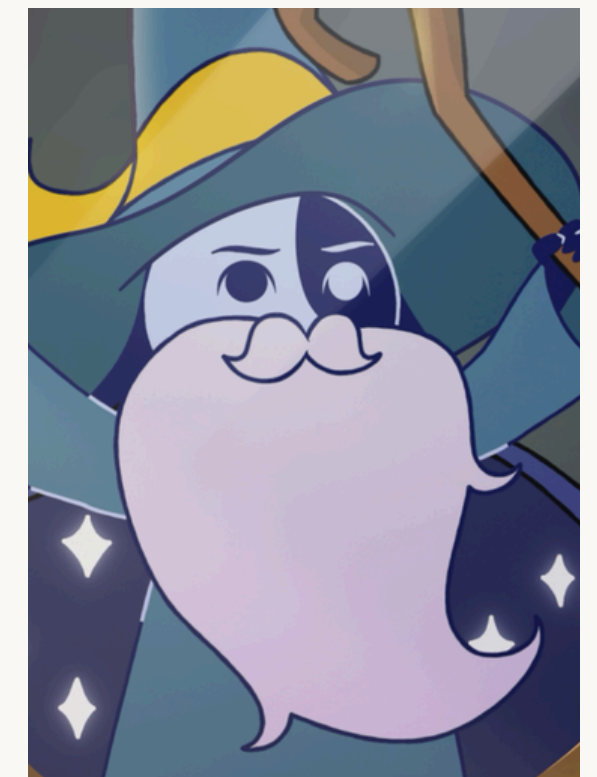
On the journey, Barnivores block the mountain road.

Hocus drives through smoke, swerves to avoid a rock, and crashes into Neverwood. Spinks follows the smell of funnel cakes to a carnival. Hocus goes to find transportation while the friends separate to explore.



Fleck enters the heroes' tent and tells the adventurers she faced Calumbra.

They call her a liar and mock her plan to find the Storyteller. She reveals the map, and the crowd moves toward her. Smudge enters the House of Mirrors and passes reflections of themselves as a mighty hero, a wizard, and a dark, caped figure.



Plot breakdown Climax and cliffhanger

1

Climax

A cracked mirror draws Smudge into a scene with Edgar and Clarissa. Edgar has written a story called The Happy Baker. Smudge objects that they are an author, but the authors cannot hear them. When Edgar places the story in the World Book, Smudge is pulled into a bakery. Their wish to choose their own future becomes the center of the conflict.

2

Falling action

Spinks pulls Smudge out of the mirror and guides them toward the group's new ride. Dot emerges from a fortune-teller's tent holding a card. Hocus is waiting with a balloon, and Fleck runs toward them with the heroes in pursuit.



3

Resolution and cliffhanger

The friends board the balloon and escape. Hocus announces that they are heading for the Whispering Dunes, then quietly doubts that they will find what they want there. The immediate chase ends, but the larger story remains open: Iggy is still captive, the Storyteller has not been found, and Smudge is left unsettled by the mirror.