



## EXPLORING *RHYME SCHEMER* THROUGH DISCUSSION AND WRITING

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Describe Kevin's attitude toward school and toward his classmates. What accounts for his behavior? Is he a sympathetic character? Why or why not?
- Discuss Kevin's relationship to his brothers. Which brother understands Kevin the best? Cite evidence from the story to support your answer.
- How would you characterize the school principal? Does he respond appropriately? Why or why not? What questions could he ask that would help him better understand the dynamics between the boys?
- Both Kevin's parents are doctors. Discuss their relationship with Kevin. Do they understand his feelings? Why or why not? Use details from the story to support your answer.
- Why does Kevin's mother insist that the entire family attend a dinner with her boss? What happens at the dinner and how is Kevin "saved"?
- What happens to Kevin's notebook and how does Robin get his hands on it? Why does Robin blackmail Kevin with it?
- When one of the band members from Petey's band asks about using Kevin's poetry, what is Kevin's response? Why does Petey not invite Kevin to be a part of the band?
- Who is Kelly and how does she respond to the conflict between Robin and Kevin? Why does Kevin stick up for her?
- Explain the conflict between Kevin and Robin. Discuss how it unfolds and changes throughout the story. How would you describe their relationship at the end of the story? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.



## DISCUSSION AND WRITING (Continued...)

- Choose a scene to which you have a particularly strong reaction. Summarize the scene. Then discuss how the characters respond to the events. How does the scene move the plot forward?
- Compare and contrast Mrs. Little, the librarian, with Kevin’s mother. How would you describe each of them? How does Mrs. Little assist Kevin?
- What role does Giant James play in the story? How would the story be different if he were “written out” of the text? What would be lost if he were removed?
- The final fight scene between Kevin and Robin is pivotal. Describe what takes place during this scene. How does Mrs. Little become involved? How is the tension between Robin and Kevin finally resolved? Is Kevin genuinely sorry about his role in their conflict? What about Robin?
- Identify one important theme in the story and explain how it develops throughout. How do the characters respond to the theme? How does the theme advance the plot?
- Figurative language is language that appeals to the senses. Identify a particularly descriptive passage in the story and discuss what impact it has on readers. For example, does it appeal to the sense of sight? What about the senses of touch, smell, hearing, or taste?



\*\*These discussion questions align with the following ELA Common Core Standards: RL.5.1, RL.6.1, RL.7.1, RL.5.2, RL.6.2, RL.7.2, RL.5.3, RL.6.3, RL.7.3, RL.5.4, RL.6.4, RL.7.4, RL.5.5, RL.6.5, RL.7.5, RL.5.5, RL.6.6, RL.7.6, SL.5.1, SL.6.1, SL.7.1

## WRITING AND SPEAKING CONNECTIONS

### WRITING POETRY

Write a short poem inspired by one of Kevin’s poems in the book. You might, for example write in free verse, like Kevin, or use a rhyme scheme of your choice.

### APPEALING TO THE SENSES: DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

The author uses figurative language— descriptive words that appeal to the human senses. Try your hand at writing a paragraph (or a poem) paying particular attention to word choice. Choose words that appeal to at least one of the five senses.

### RECITING **POETRY**

Choose a favorite poem to read aloud in a small group or to the larger class. Practice reading the poem ahead of time before reading to the group.

### CONNECTING WITH SOCIAL ISSUES

Bullying is an apparent theme in *Rhyme Schemer*. Discuss possible motives behind both Kevin’s and Robin’s behavior. How might a class create an inclusive classroom environment that shows mutual respect and care for fellow classmates? Discuss the difference between tolerance and respect.

## WRITING AND SPEAKING (Continued...)

### RESEARCHING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Using the Internet, read about several bullying instances that have had serious implications. Share your stories in small groups. Brainstorm steps students can take to help classmates who are being bullied and share these ideas with the class. Which steps are most realistic?

### WRITING INFORMATIONAL ESSAYS

Based on your research above and any additional information you may locate that is helpful, write an informational essay that offers suggestions for middle school students who witness bullying and/or are being bullied.

### JOURNALING

Pair up with a classmate and pretend to be any two characters in the story. You might, for example, assume the identities of Robin and Kevin meeting in the principal's office after the final fight scene. Then journal with one another. You might also assume the identity of Kelly and Kevin and do the same.

These activities align with the following ELA Common Core Standards: SL.5.1, SL.6.1, SL.7.1, W.5.2, W.6.2, W.7.2, W.5.3, W.6.3, W.7.3, Wx.5.4, W.6.4, W.7.4, W.5.7, W.6.7, W.7.7, W.5.10, W.6.10, W.7.10

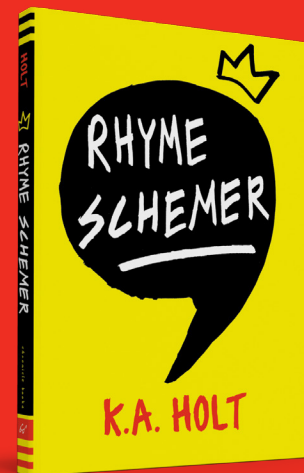


### ABOUT THE BOOK

Kevin Jamison's family is too busy with their own lives to pay any attention to him. A gifted poet who hates school, Kevin spends his time bullying his classmates and planting poetry that upsets his teachers around school. When Robin, one of his victims, discovers Kevin's lost poetry notebook, he uses it as a weapon against Kevin. Tables turn. Kevin gets suspended and is forced to serve detention with the school librarian. Observant and insightful, the librarian sets out to help Kevin, but he has to accept her assistance.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**K.A. Holt** is the author of several middle grade novels in verse including *Brains for Lunch*, which received a starred review in *Publisher's Weekly* and was highlighted on the Texas Library Association's Annotated Lone Star Reading List for 2011. She lives in Austin, TX with her husband and three children.



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