

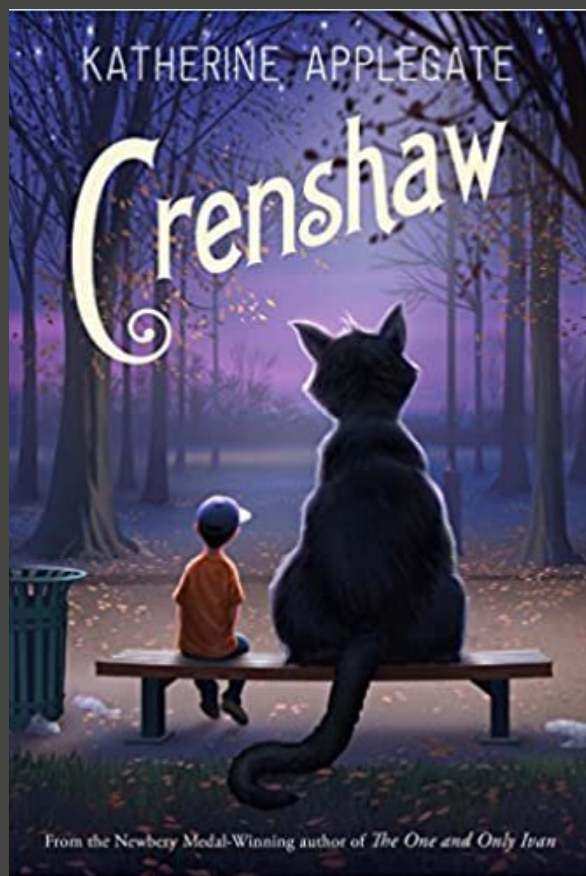
Community Matters Family Book Club

Discussion Guide

Monthly Book Pick:

Crenshaw

by Katherine Applegate



This Month's Theme: Houselessness

This October we will discuss housing insecurity. Use this guide, along with Katherine Applegate's novel Crenshaw to explore the ways houselessness affects children, families and the community. Like any book club, please navigate these conversations with patience and kindness. Our intent is to better understand ourselves and the world around us.

Sincerely,

Michelle, Jenny, Mary, Tiffany, Christina, Sam
The Community Matters Planning Team

Season Dates and Times

Thursday, October 14th @ 6 pm CST

Thursday, November 18th @ 6 pm CST



Conversation Starters



Photo of Author Katherine Applegate

What surprised you about this book?

What is houselessness?

Jackson reads a lot about animals. He tells us vampire bats share with unlucky bats who are hungry by puking warm blood into their mouths.

- Is this cool or gross?
- Did you have a favorite fact about animals you learned from reading Crenshaw?

Themes

- Hunger
- Shelters
- Asking for Help
- Parents Failing
- Stealing
- Running Away
- Kids Taking Care of Kids/The Oldest Kid Code
- Government Assistance
- Medical Disability

Discussion Questions

1. Jackson's parents face the possibility of having to move out of their house. Where would you go if you couldn't live in your house anymore? What would you do if you were Jackson and you knew that money was tight?
2. When Jackson's parents announce a yard sale, they tell him and Robin to set aside their keepsakes. What kinds of keepsakes would you save? Why do you think keepsakes might be important to them right now?
3. Do you sometimes struggle with asking for help? When do you know you can't do something on your own?

Discussion Questions: Continued...

4. Jackson once shoplifted jars of baby food to feed his little sister, Robin. Do you think Jackson did a 'bad thing?' Why or why not?
5. Why does Jackson feel worse about lying than stealing?
6. Jackson and Robin play "cereal ball" to forget about being hungry. Do you ever do anything to forget about your own problems?
7. What did you learn about homelessness from this book? Do you have different feelings about homelessness after reading? What could you do to help families experiencing homelessness in our area?
8. Discuss Jackson's statement: "Stories are lies, when you get right down to it. And I don't like being lied to." Why doesn't Jackson like made-up stories? Why is it so important for him to have a logical explanation for everything that happens?
9. Crenshaw still appears to Jackson even though Jackson doesn't have much of an imagination. Why do you think the cat shows up? Would you deny it if you kept seeing something no one else could see? Why or why not?
10. If an imaginary animal appeared to you, what animal do you want to appear?

Additional Resources

[Call 211](#)

[U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)
www.hud.gov

[National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)
endhomelessness.org/how-to-get-help-experiencing-homelsness

[WIC](#)
www.fns.usda.gov/wic

[The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)
(SNAP) 1-800-221-5689

