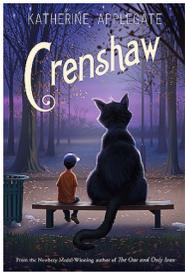


Books by the Stack



Crenshaw by Katherine Applegate

Jackson and his family have fallen on hard times. There's no more money for rent. And not much for food, either. Crenshaw is a cat. He's large, he's outspoken, and he's imaginary. He has come back into Jackson's life to help him. But is an imaginary friend enough to save this family from losing everything?

Why you'll like it: family, friendship, magical

About the Author: Katherine Applegate was born in Michigan on July 19, 1956. She writes science fiction, young adult romances, and pop-up books. She is the author of the Making Waves, Making Out, and Roscoe Riley Rules series. She writes the Animorphs, Everworld, and Remnants series under the pen name K. A. Applegate. She also writes under the pen names of C. Archer, Catherine Kendall and Elizabeth Benning.

Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss Jackson's statement: "Stories are lies, when you get right down to it. And I don't like being lied to." (p. 9) Why doesn't Jackson like made-up stories? Why is it so important for him to have a logical explanation for everything that happens?
2. When are the times in Jackson's life that Crenshaw appears? Which events occur that create a need for Jackson to have Crenshaw in his life? Discuss Jackson's comment about the name Crenshaw: "It felt like a blank piece of paper before you draw on it." (p. 27)
3. Why does Jackson feel different from the other members of his family? Describe scenes in the story where Jackson feels separate from them. Identify times in the story when Jackson realizes how important his family is to him.
4. Compare Crenshaw and Aretha in the way they behave. Can Aretha see Crenshaw the way Jackson can? Does she sense whenever he is around, or does Jackson imagine that she does?
5. What is the difference between Jackson's reaction to Crenshaw when he appeared the first time and when he appears now? Why does Jackson keep telling him to leave? What is he afraid of when Crenshaw is there? What does Crenshaw mean when he says: "Imaginary friends don't come of their own volition. We are invited." (p. 76)
6. When did Crenshaw go away in Jackson's life earlier? Why has he never told Marisol about Crenshaw and about his family's problems? Why does he tell her now?
7. Discuss the theme of friendship in this book. How did Jackson and Marisol become friends? What are the experiences and beliefs that they have in common? What are their differences? How does their friendship help each of them?
8. Why does Jackson steal the dog cookie? How does he feel about the few times that he has stolen from a store? Why does he feel worse about lying than stealing? What makes him ask Crenshaw: "Are you my conscience?" (p. 196)

9. Discuss the theme of magic in this story. What is the meaning of “magic” in the context of Jackson’s life? Why did he want to reveal how the magician’s tricks worked at school? Discuss Marisol’s comment: “Just enjoy the magic while you can, okay?” (p. 160)

10. Jackson sometimes feels as if he is the most grown-up member of his family. Identify times in the story when he does appear to act more grown-up than his parents. Identify places in the story when his parents are in charge of the situation.

(Questions provided by publisher)



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