

# Crenshaw

**Applegate, K.**

When Jackson's parents fall on hard times the family must move out of their house, sell their belongings, and live in their van until his parents can get back on their feet. As 4th-grader Jackson tries to cope with this situation, his imaginary friend Crenshaw a giant cat-reappears in his life to help him through these troubled times. This realistic portrayal of poverty, hunger, homelessness, and resiliency is discussed in an accurate and realistic way from the point of view of a young boy, and will appeal to students of a similar age.

**Collections:** ARC-BC

**Subjects:** English Language Arts

Grades 3-6

**Evaluation Date:** Apr 2017



[ARC-BC](#)



Social Considerations

# Resource Evaluation

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## CURRICULUM FIT

### Does the resource support BC curriculum?



Extensively

This novel could be used in a Language Arts program as part of a literature circle or as a teacher read-aloud. The story could be used in creative writing lessons and involve the creation of an imaginary friend. It could also be used to help discuss the topic of homelessness.

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## SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

This novel would best be used in a Language Arts program. It could be read independently and followed up with discussions, or read as a whole class to discuss arising issues or questions that may come up.

## SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Gender Roles, Identity & Sexual Orientation

When the male characters are discussing sex, there are a fair number of stereotypically teenage thoughts. They talk about "getting laid" and how it fixes problems. The female characters are discussed in terms of their sexuality. Amanda is referred to as popular because she "puts out", and her clothes are referred to as "slutty" and "sluttier". Charlie refers to one of the females in terms of her "sweet, sweet ass". Charlie asks about Violet, and asks Finch, "Did you hit that? " When the males are talking, the females are often objectified.

### Belief System

Sierra's father worries she may "throw away a first-class education. . . for some touchy-feely hippie nonsense" at an art school ("artsy-fartsy schools for fruits and nuts who didn't know how to think"). Sierra's mother claims "there is more creativity in one single classroom in that school than in all of" Sierra's current school "put together. " Sierra's father asks, "Do you want her to learn that if your rights are threatened you just run away to the happy, feel-good flower children and make beaded necklaces and sandals all day? " Sierra says of the art school, "They knew what it meant to be a community. In a real community you didn't destroy a member of the community just to uphold a policy. "

### Socio-Economic

Discusses the issue of homelessness of a young family. Representations are accurate and seem realistic.

### Ethical and Legal

Jackson steals food for his dog and sister.

### **Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning?**



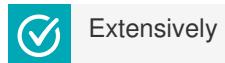
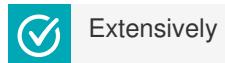
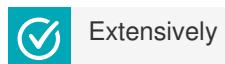
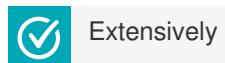
Extensively

The topic of homelessness is discussed in an accurate and realistic way from the point of view of a young boy. The parents are positive and optimistic in dealing with the hard times that have fallen upon them.

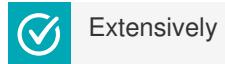
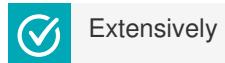
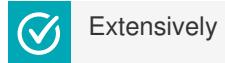
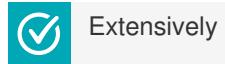
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## GENERAL CONTENT

### Content

**Is the resource engaging?****Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?****Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?****Is the content relevant and important for student broad understandings?**

### Audience

**Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?****Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?****Is the level of detail appropriate?****Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?**

The content of this novel is engaging and appropriate for the intended grade level. Content could extend to middle school grades. Story can be read aloud to support students who are not reading at grade level.

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## TECHNICAL DESIGN

### Is the resource easy to use?



Extensively

### Is the location of illustrations appropriate?



Extensively

### Is the use of font, text size and presentation suitable?



Extensively

The novel is easy to read, with adequate text size and font style.

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**PRINT NOVEL****Does the text show insight into the complexity of the human condition?**

Extensively

**Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?**

Extensively

**To what degree is this text stylistically rich?**

Moderately

**Plot description**

This is a story about family, friendship, and how a child's resilience can help him to overcome a difficult time in his life. A boy and his family undergo hard economic times because of sickness and layoffs. They need to sell their belongings, move out of their home, and live in their van until the parents can get the family back on their feet. During these hard times, 4th grader Jackson's imaginary friend "Crenshaw", a giant cat, starts to show up in his life again. An honest portrayal of homelessness is reflected in this novel.

**Genre**

- Other
- Family Life

**Literary Highlights**

- Well-developed themes

**Type**

- Novel

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**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS****Reading Level**

- At intended grade level(s)

Katherine Applegate is a Newberry Medal-Winning author.

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**GRADES AND SUBJECTS****Subjects**

- English Language Arts: 3-6

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**ADDITIONAL INFO****Copyright**

2015

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