

2021

Review: Crenshaw

Rachel Schwedt

Liberty University, reschwed@liberty.edu

Janice A. DeLong

jadelong@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ages10-12>



Part of the [Comparative Literature Commons](#), and the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Schwedt, Rachel and DeLong, Janice A., "Review: Crenshaw" (2021). *Ages 10-12*. 3.

<https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ages10-12/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Children's Book Reviews at Scholars Crossing. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ages 10-12 by an authorized administrator of Scholars Crossing. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu.

Crenshaw

By Katherine Applegate

Feiwel and Friends, 2015

DESCRIPTION:

Jackson, an upcoming 5th grader who wants to be a scientist someday, likes facts – especially nature facts. When a large purple surf-boarding cat invades his world, he is not happy. Especially when only he and his little sister can see it. The cat first appeared right after first grade, and Jackson named him Crenshaw. This was when his family lost their house and had to live in their van for several months. After the family was finally able to move into an apartment, Crenshaw disappeared, but now that Jackson's father's MS is getting worse; he has lost his construction job. On top of that, his mother has lost her teaching position, and the family is again strapped for money. Even with his mother working more than one part-time job, food is short and his parents begin to sell their possessions to cover expenses. Jackson is worried that they will have to go back to living in their van. He isn't sure whether Crenshaw is real or a figment of his imagination, but the cat refuses to disappear, and Jackson needs someone he can talk to about his worries. The worst part is that his parents are not talking about it and with his penchant for facts, Jackson is upset. When his parents agree to talk about their situation openly, anxiety is eased for Jackson and his little sister. Though they do have to give up their apartment, an opportunity opens for his father to work in a music store in exchange for housing in the building.

CRITIQUE:

Though dealing with a weighty, frightening subject, the introduction of a large, purple, surfboarding cat with his humorous comments allows for a lightening of the mood of this story. Using short chapters, the author gives the reader a child's eye-view of economic distress. Going back and forth between the family's past brush with homelessness and their present crisis allows for an understanding of Jackson's growing panic and his desire for stability. Although the parents work hard at being positive, what the children want is open and honest communication. Crenshaw, with his outspoken ways is the voice of reason, helping Jackson to work things out in his mind and urging him toward talking things out with his parents.

RELATED SUBJECTS:

Brother-sister relationships, Cats, Friendship, Imaginary friends, Parent-child relationships, Poverty

CHARACTER THEMES

Coping, Fairness, Family love, Honesty, Hope, Perseverance, Resourcefulness, Sacrifice, Survival (emotional), Thrift, Trustworthiness, Understanding

AWARDS:

Alaska Battle of the Books, Amazon Best Children's Book of the Year, Best Children's Books of the Year (Bank Street), Charlie May Simon Children's Book Award, Charlotte Huck Award (NCTE), Cybils Award, E. B. White Read Aloud Honor Award, Grand Canyon Reader Award, Magnolia Award (MS), NYPL's 100 Titles for Reading and Sharing, North Carolina Children's Book Award, Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People, Read Alouds Too-Good-To Miss, Texas Bluebonnet Award, Young Hoosier Award (IN)