



Those Kids from Fawn Creek

ERIN ENTRADA KELLY

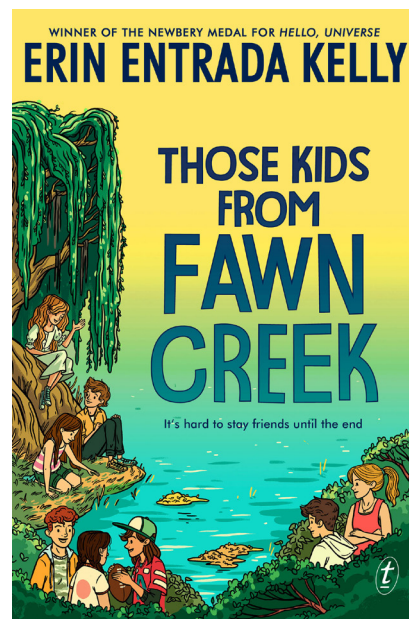
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Fiction

RECOMMENDED READING AGE: 8+

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CURRICULUM GUIDE

The following teaching guide has been designed to embrace shared curriculum values. Students are encouraged to communicate their understanding of a text through speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

The learning activities aim to encourage students to think critically, creatively and independently, to reflect on their learning and connect it to an audience, purpose and context. They encompass a range of forms with a focus on language, literature and literacy. Where appropriate, they promote the integration of ICT and life skills.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

New York Times–bestselling author Erin Entrada Kelly was awarded the Newbery Medal for *Hello, Universe* and a Newbery Honor for *We Dream of Space*. She is a professor of children's literature in the graduate fiction and publishing programs at Rosemont College,

Pennsylvania. She is also the author of *The Land of Forgotten Girls*, winner of the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature; *You You Go First*, a Spring 2018 Indie Next Pick; *Lalani of the Distant Sea*, an Indie Next Pick; and *Maybe Maybe Marisol Rainey*, which she also illustrated.

SYNOPSIS

Nothing new ever happens to anyone in Fawn Creek. So, when one day a new girl unexpectedly turns up in class telling stories about her worldly adventures, she immediately becomes the subject of everyone's attention.

Orchid is well-travelled, beautiful, and mysterious. The popular girls are immediately jealous. All of the cool boys develop instant crushes. And Greyson, who has never for a second felt as if he belongs in Fawn Creek, knows that he has to be her friend. Surprisingly, Orchid does befriend Greyson and his best friend Dorothy, and the three of them become thick as thieves. Orchid is nice to all the kids in their class, even the ones who don't deserve it. She brings Dorothy out of her shell, giving her the nickname 'Didi' and building her confidence through friendship. When he's around Orchid, Greyson feels like maybe he could be himself too, and finally follow his dream of designing and making clothes (not duck hunting with his dad).

But is Orchid too good to be true? Renni Dean, ex-Fawn Creek student and extra mean girl, doesn't like all of the attention Orchid's getting at her old school. And when Renni Dean doesn't like someone—well, all the kids at Fawn Creek know it's best not to upset her. But when Renni exposes Orchid at the local dance, the Fawn Creek kids surprise her, and themselves, by coming together to defend their new friend. Their loyalty will forever change their relationships with each other.

Those Kids from Fawn Creek is a book about being nice even when the world lets you down, and the enduring power of friendship.



BEFORE READING

1. Read the Austin Kleon quote that precedes the book—'Be nice. The world is a small town.' What does this mean to you? Why do you think it's especially important to be nice in a small town? As a group, discuss the themes that this quote suggests might arise in the novel.
2. This novel is about being new, and trying to fit in. Have you ever been the new kid somewhere? How did it feel? How did you settle in there?
3. As a group, read the blurb of the book. Who is the book about? How do you think the writer will manage to tell a story about so many kids?
2. Think about the way that Dorothy describes herself on p. 6—'Dorothy Doucet always sat in the furthest back chair, as if she wanted to disappear into the wall...' How do you think Dorothy feels about herself? On p. 51, Dorothy admits that she hates her name. Why do you think having a new name means so much to Dorothy? Do you think names are important?
3. Renni Dean doesn't appear in person until p. 32, but we already know exactly what kind of person she is by then. Make a list of all of the lines in the story that tell you something about her before she is introduced for the first time. What kind of person is she? Why do you think she behaves this way?

WHILE READING

1. 'On the day Orchid Mason walked through the door of Fawn Creek K-12, Greyson Broussard's right shoulder ached. A bruise would form there, he could tell.' (p. 1) What do you learn from the first two lines of the novel? What questions do you have about the story already?
2. What is the relationship between Greyson and Trevor? Why doesn't Greyson's dad intervene?
3. What kind of place is Fawn Creek? Does Greyson fit in there? Do you, like Greyson, have a place that you can let your mind drift to when you're feeling bad?
4. What does Greyson first notice about Orchid? Why is everyone so excited to have a new student in the class?
5. If Greyson could be honest, what do you think he would say he wants from his life?
6. When Orchid first arrives in the classroom, Dorothy thinks 'she is the girl in the fairy tale who drifts through a meadow and finds a prince. Or a spindle.' (p. 8) Consider this line against the whole story. What do you think Orchid has found?
7. How does Orchid react when Greyson asks her about her dad? (p. 49) What do you think this means?
8. How does Orchid's arrival change the way that Dorothy and Greyson see each other?
9. Why does Dorothy hate her name?
10. Who is the underdog in the story? How do the characters surprise you (and themselves)?

STYLE AND STRUCTURE

1. Erin Entrada Kelly shifts perspectives between different characters in the novel. How does she use this to reveal important information about each of the characters? Why do you think none of the chapters are written from Orchid's perspective? Choose one of the scenes in the book and try writing it from the perspective from a different character. Does this change what happens in the scene?
2. Even though Orchid's friends all come out to save her at the dance, she leaves without saying goodbye. Why do you think the author chooses to end the novel this way? How does it make you feel? Is it a happy ending or a sad one? What do you think she would have said if she'd stayed to say goodbye?
3. Orchid is an unreliable character—discuss the meaning of unreliable in this context. When do you start doubting her stories and why? Do you think she has a good reason for lying, or is Greyson right to be so angry at her? How does everyone else respond when they find out? Write about a time you've wished you could be someone else.

THEMES

Kindness

1. Would you describe Greyson's parents as unkind? Why do you think they take such a long time to accept him as he really is? Do you think that Trevor will ever accept his brother?
2. Orchid shows people how to be kind by being kind herself. She is kind when she refuses to call Lehigh 'Slowly'. What other ways does she demonstrate kindness? What effect does this have on the other characters in the book? Make a list of three kind things you've done this week.
3. Can you learn to be kind? At first Greyson thinks that Orchid is so wise because of her travels, but they turn out to be fake. So what experiences have taught Orchid to be kind?
4. What are some of the ways we can be kind? Janie is kind to her little sister when she teaches her how to play 'Mirror, Mirror'. What is the result of

AFTER READING

CHARACTERS

1. Greyson's best friend, Dorothy, describes him as being 'like a yellow rose. But not a fresh one. More like pressed petals.' (p. 7) What do you think she means by this? Is her description in line with the way others in his class see him?



this kindness? Why do you think Janie struggles to show this side of herself to other kids at school? Find another scene in the book where one of the characters shows unexpected kindness to another.

Change

1. 'In Fawn Creek, the air was hot and humid, the mosquitoes nipped your arms, and nothing ever changed.' (p. 2) Orchid is the first big change to happen in Fawn Creek. What other changes happen as a result of her arrival?
2. There are several moments in the book where Janie Crawford seems to want to change the way she behaves. And yet, at the end of the story, when she is confronting Orchid under the tree at the dance, she is unable to resist Renni. Why do you think this is? Is Janie capable of change? What do you think might happen to her after the story finishes?
3. Dorothy reflects on the way that friendships have changed between primary and middle school—kids who were once nice to her are so mean now. Why do you think this is? Is growing apart inevitable? How have your friendships changed over time?

Fitting In

1. How do we treat people who are different? How do you think it feels to be that person? How do each of the kids feel about the things that set them apart? How does their friendship with Orchid change the way they feel about themselves?
2. Is it better to be yourself or to fit in? Dorothy is worried when Greyson first shows her his drawing of the suit he wants to make for the dance—she's torn between supporting her friend and not wanting him to get laughed at. Is she right to be worried? Does it matter in the end?
3. Does Orchid ever really fit in at Fawn Creek? Why do you think she is always the outsider? Is this a bad thing?

RESPONDING

1. What is a **metaphor**? What is a **simile**? Why are they useful in creative writing? Make a list of the metaphors and similes used in the story. Dorothy uses plant metaphors to capture the way she sees all of the kids in their class, but she is unable to come up with one to describe herself. Why do you think this is? What plant do you think best captures her personality and why? Which metaphors or similes would you use to describe three of your friends?
2. Discuss the meaning of **empathy** in class. 'Last time I checked, I have two sons, not a son and a daughter.' (p. 2) How does Greyson feel when his dad says this to him? Write about a time that someone has made a joke that has made you feel bad. How can you use this experience to show empathy towards others?

3. Greyson dreams of getting out of Fawn Creek. What do you think his life will be like when he does? Write a postcard from future-Greyson to future-Dorothy. Where is he? Describe what he is doing in the future.

4. The book finishes with Orchid's 'I Am' poem. You can use her poem to make your own poem that describes who you are and what you want. Complete the sentences below to create your own poem:
'I Am,' by...

I am...
I wonder...
I hear...
I see...
I want...
I am (repeat the first line)

I pretend...
I feel...
I touch...
I worry...
I cry...
I am (repeat the first line)

I understand...
I say...
I dream...
I try...
I hope...
I am (repeat the first line)

5. Choose one of the characters and write a scene from their perspective set one week after the end of the novel. How have things changed? Is Fawn Creek better, or has everything just gone back to the way it was? Where do you think Orchid has ended up? Does she ever contact her friends at Fawn Creek again?