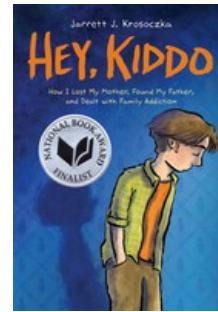


Discussion Questions for "Hey, Kiddo"

The following questions can be used to facilitate group discussions on the 2020 Teen All Iowa Reads selection, *Hey, Kiddo* by Jarrett J. Krosoczka.



1. What surprised you most about this story?
2. Jarrett calls Chapter One *Family Histories*. He starts with the story of his grandparents, which he goes into some detail about. But he skips most of his mother's childhood. Why do you think that it is?
3. What are the differences in how Shirl looks and acts on pg. 37, when she first hears of Leslie's pregnancy, and pg. 39, when she holds Jarrett for the first time?
4. How would you describe Jarrett's memories of his time living with his mother in the house on Bauer Street?
5. Jarrett describes Shirl telling him about his room originally being remodeled for her as "She often reminded me of that over the years. Not in a mean way, just in a Shirley kind of way." (p. 68) Using what we've learned about Shirl so far in the story, from both the things characters have told us and Jarrett's illustrations have shown us, what do you think this means? What do you think it tells us about Shirl?
6. When Jarrett describes the fights his grandparents have he says, "But it was nothing like the fights they used to get into – or so I was told." (p. 77) Do you think this tells us anything about what it was like for Jarrett's mom Leslie while she was growing up?
7. How do you think this story would be different if someone else were telling it? (Joe? Shirl? Jarrett's father? Someone else?) What would stay the same?
8. Whether you read the graphic memoir or listened to the audiobook, how did you like the format of this book? How did it influence your understanding of Jarrett's story? Do you think Jarrett could have told this story any other way? Why or why not?
9. Like we did before, let's look at the differences in Shirl's face on pg. 98 and 99, during the period she is clashing with Holly. What does Jarrett tell us through illustrations about Shirl and her feelings and reactions?
10. Look at some of Jarrett's nightmares (p. 48-49, p.126-127). How do they change over time? What do you think they might represent in his life?
11. When Jarrett's grandparents tell him about his mother's addiction, he says "It didn't change my circumstances, but it shifted my perspective." (p. 138) What do you think he means? Why do you think that panel is followed by examples of anti-drug PSAs? Whose perspective are those told from? How might messages like that impact or sound to people, like Jarrett, with family members dealing with addiction?
12. Telling Pat the truth about his Mom is hard for Jarrett. Does Pat respond the way you thought he would? Have you ever told a friend a hard or big secret? How did they respond?
13. By eighth grade a lot has changed for Jarrett. How has his relationship with his Mom changed? What's it like when he visits her this time? (p. 168)
14. Why doesn't Jarrett want his grandparents to come to his eighth-grade graduation?
15. What changes when Jarrett gets his first cartoon published in the local paper? (p. 202) What are some ways art, and art class, shape his life in high school?
16. Jarrett says, "But now that I am in my teens, I fill sketchbooks just to deal with life. To survive." (p. 216). What are some things you do or share to help you "deal with life"?
17. On pg. 218-219 we see some of Jarrett's actual drawings from this time in his life. Previously in the book, he has described and drawn some of the nightmares he has experienced in his earlier life. Does anything in these sketches – or any other sketches Jarrett makes in high school – remind you of his nightmares?
18. Before he leaves for the night, Joe tells Jarrett "Don't forget your last name." (p. 234) What does he really mean? Can you think of some ways this phrase echo throughout the whole book, not just this one night out?
19. Why does Jarrett hesitate to tell Joe and Shirl he got a letter back from his father? Why does he decide to eventually meet with his father?
20. When Jarrett gets out of the car to meet his father (p. 285) do you notice anything different about how he has drawn himself? What about the color scheme in the book? Has it changed as well?
21. What does Jarrett realize about Joe and Shirl at his high school graduation? What do you feel like you have learned about them through this story?

22. How did your feelings about the adults in Jarrett's life change throughout the course of this book? How do you think the art impacted this?
23. What suggestions do you have for how the library could better support kids or teens in situations like Jarrett's? What suggestions do you have for how your community could better support kids and teens in situations like Jarrett's?