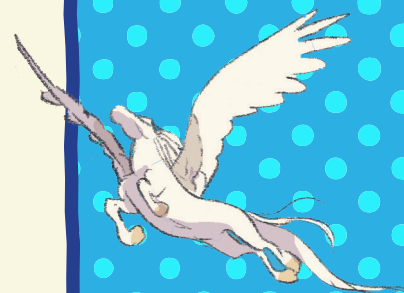
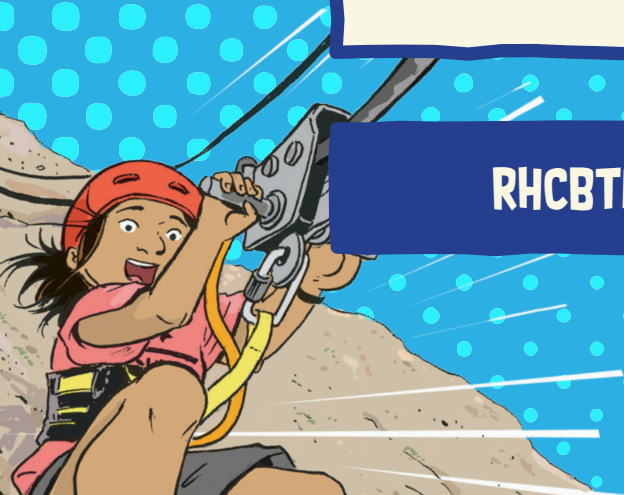


A GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUB GUIDE



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START A GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUB AT YOUR SCHOOL OR LIBRARY

Interested in starting a graphic novel book club at your library but not sure where to start? This guide includes general tips for getting started plus title-specific discussion questions to help make your first book club meeting a success!

This guide was created by Tina Lerno. Tina is a librarian for the city of Los Angeles and part of the library's digital content team. Before becoming a librarian, Tina earned a degree in art from UCLA and worked in the world of television animation doing color design on shows such as *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, *Jackie Chan Adventures*, and *The Boondocks*. Tina is the past chair of the Great Graphic Novels for Teens committee for YALSA and past co-chair of the Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table conference and conventions planning committee. She has advocated for comics at San Diego Comic-Con, New York Comic Con, and Los Angeles Comic Con, where she spoke about the need for comics advocacy in libraries.

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

- **Think of your goals for the discussions and be prepared to scale back if the kids aren't as engaged as you would like.**
- **Set ground rules for the discussion. Does everyone get a turn to answer each question?**
- **Be prepared to answer all the questions yourself.**
- **Always keep the sessions short—an hour or less.**
- **Jot down notes as you read to help remember the story.**
- **Have a portion of the time dedicated to a more physical activity such as drawing or acting out a scene from the story.**

**NEED HELP
PICKING YOUR
FIRST BOOK?
READ ON FOR
SOME IDEAS!**



A SONG FOR YOU AND I



ABOUT THE BOOK

Rowan knows exactly what they want: to be a ranger, protecting their village alongside their trusted flying horse Kes. But when Rowan's eagerness to show off their worth gets Kes injured, Rowan is suddenly unsure if they're capable of being the protector they've always dreamed of becoming.

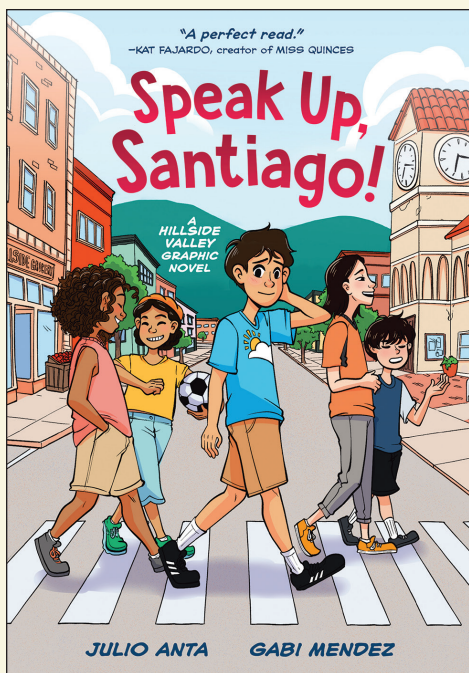
With Kes needing to heal, Rowan is assigned a slow and winding expedition across the outlying lands. Paired with a lackadasical sheep header Leone, Rowan only finds frustration as they seem to fail even the simplest tasks. But Leone's own struggles, and endless support, brings a new possibility to Rowan. Could their unlikely friendship be something more? And if it is, will Rowan be able to leave Leone behind to pursue being a ranger once Kes is healed?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Human-animal relationships play a significant role in *A Song for You and I*. Have you ever had a pet or service animal that played a big part in your life? How did they help you?
2. If you could design an animal companion, what would that look like to you?
3. Rowan overhears the teachers talking about them and then is reprimanded. Do you think the teachers were too harsh?
4. Rowan changes quite a bit throughout the book, from their appearance to their very name. How would you feel if you knew someone was going through these changes?
5. What could you do to support a friend going through something similar?
6. Leone plays a musical instrument but hesitates to perform in front of others. What would you say to a friend who has a similar fear?
7. What comes to mind when you hear the word *shy*? Is it a fair or helpful label?
8. Rowan acts on impulse a lot. Is this a good way to make decisions? How could a more thoughtful approach change the outcome of certain situations?
9. This book contains many beautiful images, some without any text at all. Does this help with the storytelling or make it confusing?

SPEAK UP, SANTIAGO!

NEW
SERIES



ABOUT THE BOOK

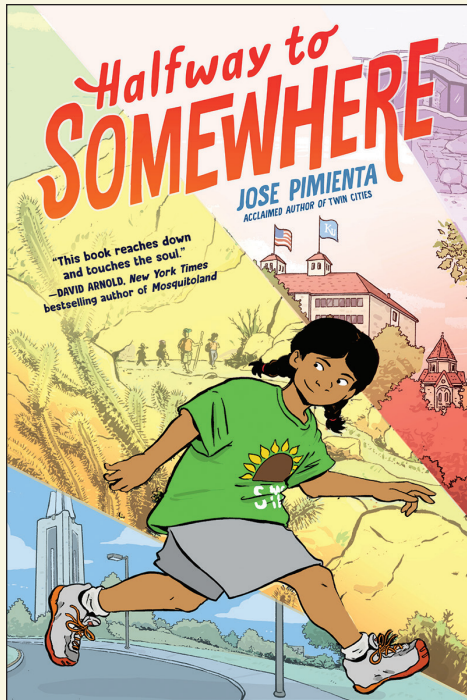
Santi is excited to spend the summer in Hillside Valley, meeting the local kids, eating his Abuela's delicious food, and exploring!

There's just one problem—Santi doesn't speak Spanish that well and it feels like everyone he meets in Hillside does. There's Sol (she's a soccer player who really loves books), Willie, (the artist), Alejandro (Santi's unofficial tour guide!), and Nico (Alejandro's brother and blue belt in karate). In between all of their adventures in Hillside, Santi can't help but worry about his Spanish—what if he can't keep up?! Does that mean he's not Colombian enough? Will Santi find his confidence and his voice? Or will his worries cost him his new friendships . . . and the chance to play in Hillside's summer soccer tournament?!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Santiago spends a month with his grandmother in the countryside. Does that sound exciting or a little scary to you?
2. Besides language, what are some other ways to feel close to distant family members?
3. What are different ways people can express their feelings?
4. Santiago quickly meets a group of kids his age, thanks to his dad. How do you feel about meeting new people?
5. Santiago is hard on himself when learning a new language. What advice would you give to someone in his situation?
6. Santiago overhears his Abuela talking and laughing about him and feels hurt. What else could he have done in that moment?
7. What should his grandmother have done differently?
8. Have you ever overheard a relative say something about you? How did you handle it?
9. Do you agree with how the issue of gossip was handled in the story?
10. Santiago lashes out at his new friends, and they pull away. What could he have done instead?
11. This book is part of a series. Which characters would you like to see more of in future books?

HALFWAY TO SOMEWHERE



ABOUT THE BOOK

Ave thought moving to Kansas would be boring and flat after enjoying the mountains and trails in Mexico, but at least they would have their family with them. Unfortunately, while Ave, their mom, and their younger brother are relocating to the US, Ave's father and older sister will be staying in Mexico . . . permanently. Their parents are getting a divorce.

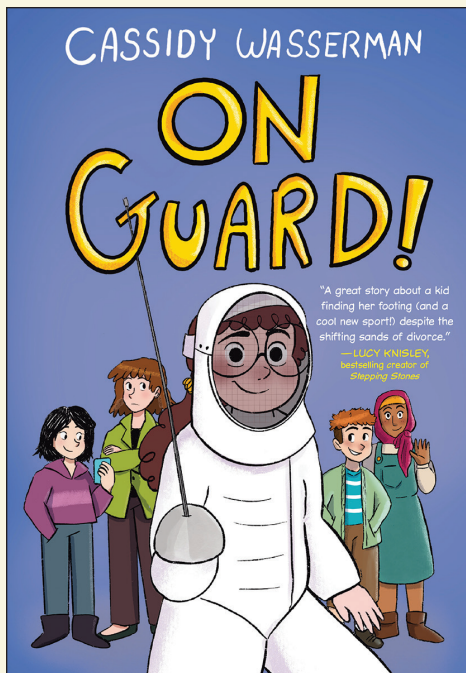
As if learning a whole new language wasn't hard enough, Ave has to figure out a new family dynamic . . . and what this means for them as they start middle school with no friends.

Jose Pimienta's stunningly illustrated and thought-provoking middle-grade graphic novel is about exploring identity, understanding family, making friends with a language barrier, and above all else, learning what truly makes a place a home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Halfway to Somewhere* opens with Ave moving with half their family to a new house in Kansas. They FaceTime with their older sibling to keep in touch. Is using devices and social media a good communication method?
2. We learn alongside Ave that their father has separated from their mother. Why do you think Ave was so upset with the news?
3. How would you feel about a secret like that being kept from you?
4. Do you think parents should always share big family decisions with their children?
5. What might be a reason for not telling their kids everything?
6. Ave uses running as a way to deal with stress. What can you think of as ways to improve your mood when stressed?
7. Ave often feels caught between cultures and languages, too much of one and not enough of another. What ideas do you have for feeling more in harmony with yourself?
8. Ramon has a much easier time making friends and "fitting in." Why do you think it's so much easier for him than for Ave?
9. When Ave gets angry, they can't control their emotions, so they lash out, leading to bad outcomes. What could they be doing differently?
10. Is it okay to express your anger or only "softer" emotions?
11. Do you think Ave has a good relationship with their family? What could they do to improve it?
12. Ave is constantly late! What are some ideas you might have for better time management?

ON GUARD!



ABOUT THE BOOK

Grace isn't ready for a new school year. Her best friend Ava dropped her at the end of last year, the dust is still settling from her parents' messy divorce, and things are not going well between Grace and her mom.

Mothers and daughters are always so close in movies. But that's never been Grace and her mom. So now Grace has no friends and no hobbies (band was Ava's thing), and home feels even more complicated than school. There's not a single place Grace can just relax. Until she sees the school's fencing club practicing. They look so sure of themselves. So steady. It may not solve everything . . . but could this be a place Grace can finally belong and be herself?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In *On Guard!*, Grace joins the fencing club without knowing how to fence. Would you ever join a club or activity you know nothing about?
2. Fencing is a sport that requires focus, patience, and strategy. What skills do you think Grace learns through fencing that help her outside of the sport?
3. Grace becomes more confident through her fencing club. Have you ever tried something new that helped you feel more confident?
4. Grace has a difficult relationship with her mom. Why do you think that is?
5. The author notes that TV shows often only portray happy mother-daughter relationships. Do you think TV and social media make real-life relationships seem harder in comparison?
6. Could Grace have done anything differently to improve her relationship with her mom?
7. There's a moment when Grace's mom hits her. This is a serious issue. How do you think Grace felt in that moment, and what could she do to get help or support?
8. Grace also struggles with her friendship with Ava. What advice would you give her?
9. What are some ways to repair a friendship that's drifted apart?
10. By the end of *On Guard!*, Grace starts to understand herself better. What do you think are some important things she learns about her identity?