



The Hunt for the Nightingale

By Sarah Ann Jukes, illustrated by Sharon King-Chai

Before reading the book

- What clues does the front cover give you about the book: its story, setting, intended audience (age, interests, personality)?
- Does the text on the back cover change your answers to the question above? Does it make you want to read the book or not? Why?

Read the book

- What does the opening letter tell you about Jasper? About his family? What do you think “a Better Place” means? What do you think Jasper thinks it means?
- What does the map tell you about the story?
- The first chapter often sets the tone of the book. How does the author do that here?
- Are the characters realistically portrayed? Are they believable? Describe each of them, including Rosie, in your own words. How do you feel about each of them?
- The book has been written from Jasper’s point of view, making it very personal. Imagine yourself as one of the other characters and write a diary entry about how you feel after your experience with Jasper from the character’s point of view.
- Why do you think the author chose to use excerpts from Jasper and Rosie’s *Book of Birds* as the chapter headings?
- Jasper focuses on birds and bird facts when he’s feeling overwhelmed. What do the other characters say works for them when they feel upset? What do you or could you do if you feel nervous or stressed?
- As Jasper’s journey progresses, he shares incidents from the past. How does the author use this technique to develop the characters and the plot?
- How is Jasper’s physical journey a metaphor for his growth? Could you call his journey a pilgrimage?
- Each of the people Jasper meets have experienced some sort of loss. Have you? How did you feel? What helped you feel better? What can you do if someone you know is experiencing a loss?





The Hunt for the Nightingale

By Sarah Ann Jukes, illustrated by Sharon King-Chai

- In what ways have things changed for the major characters a year later?
- What does the nightingale symbolize?
- Identify three major themes of the book and describe what the author was saying about each one.
- Can you find and cite any examples of humor in the book?
- This book has been called the author's "love letter to the natural world." Would you agree? Why or why not?
- Jasper suffers from anxiety and panic attacks. Learn more about them. Besides suggesting they reach out to a trusted grown-up, what might you do to help a friend who's feeling anxious or having a panic attack?

Activities

- Write and perform a TV broadcast about Jasper's disappearance and then another for after he's been found.
- Take a nature walk in a nearby park or wilderness area. Keep a notebook on what you see, hear, and smell. Include how your experiences made you feel.
- Madge offers Jasper some rules for engaging with cows. Write down your own list of rules for approaching an unfamiliar dog or encountering another animal you might find on a nature walk in your community.
- Make your own book of birds you may have seen in your neighborhood, park, zoo aviary, or might wish to see. Include sketches, facts, and how spotting them made or might make you feel. Choose another kind of animal if you'd prefer.
- The characters experience a lot of different feelings over the course of the book. Make a list of these feelings. Play a game of charades with a friend acting out the different feelings.
- Design a map of your neighborhood, a local park, or wildlife area.

