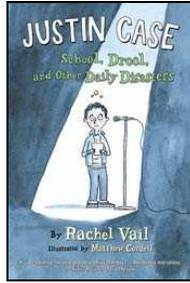


Discussion Guide: Justin Case: School, Drool, and Other Daily Disasters



JUSTIN CASE: SCHOOL, DROOL, AND OTHER DAILY DISASTERS

By Rachel Vail; Illustrated by Matthew Cordell

ISBN: 978-0-312-56357-8 (Trade Paperback)

ISBN: 978-0-312-53290-1 (Hardcover)

Grade Range: 2 to 4, Age Range: 7 to 9

It's the start of the school year, and nothing feels right to Justin. He didn't get the teacher he wanted, he's not in the same class as his best friend, and his little sister, Elizabeth, is starting kindergarten at his school. Elizabeth doesn't seem nervous at all. Justin is very nervous about third grade. And to top it off, he's lost his favorite stuffed animal, but he can't tell anyone, because technically, he's too old to still have stuffed animals. . . . Right?

Here is elementary school in all its complicated glory—the friendships, the fears, and the advanced math. As Justin bravely tries to step out of his shell, he will step into readers' hearts.

Questions for Discussion

1. Justin is described as a “worried kid.” What does it mean to be a worried kid? Do you have a lot of worries? What worries do you have? Do you know anyone you consider a worried kid? Do you know anybody who doesn't seem to worry much at all?
2. Justin's real name is Justin Krzeszewski (pronounced, She-shev-ski). Why is he nicknamed Justin Case? Do you have a nickname? If you could choose any nickname for yourself, what would it be?
3. Why are Justin and his friends disappointed that Ms. Termini is their teacher? Do you think this is fair? What do you think are important traits of a great teacher?
4. Montana C. and Justin are good friends. Why doesn't she invite him to her Halloween party? And why are they growing apart? (Justin even says he “hates/no thank you” Montana C.) Do you have boys/girls as friends? What are the best things about being friends with a boy/girl?
5. Is Xavier Schwartz a good friend to Justin? How is their friendship different at the beginning of the book and at the end?
6. Justin's parents own a candy store. Does Justin think the store is fun? Would you like it if your family owned a candy store? If not a candy store, what kind of store would be your dream business?



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7. Have you ever given a speech in front of your class? Why do you think Justin is so nervous when he has to speak? What are some good tips for speaking in public?
8. Justin and his mom run into one of his teachers, Ms. Burns, in the supermarket. Have you ever run into one of your teachers outside of school? Describe what happened and how you felt.
9. Elizabeth, Justin's little sister, seems very comfortable in kindergarten, while Justin is nervous in third grade. What are your thoughts on why school seems easier for Elizabeth?
10. Gym is challenging for Justin. Why? Different people have different talents in school and outside of school. Describe your talents, and then describe talents you would like to have.
11. Justin wants a dog so badly, but when Qwerty comes home, Justin is worried (and a little scared). Why? Have you ever wanted a pet badly? How did it turn out?
12. The subtitle of this book is *School, Drool, and Other Daily Disasters*. What would be the subtitle of your life story?

Praise for Justin Case: School, Drool, and other Daily Disasters

- ❖ A *Kirkus Reviews* Best Book of 2010
- ❖ An IndieBound Selection for Fall 2010
- ❖ A Junior Library Guild Selection

"The writing is sharp, unpredictably clever, and establishes third grade as a minefield of the absurd—which is to say, real life." —Avi, Newbery Medalist

"Vail employs easy, direct language in a rhythm and syntax that captures the essence of a charming, lovable and very believable boy. Readers transitioning to longer fiction will groan, sympathize and laugh out loud in delight. Absolutely marvelous." —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

"Honest and full of heart, *Justin Case* is a story for an oft-ignored segment of kids: the sensitive, introverted, and observant. The format will remind many readers of *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, but with fewer illustrations and a more reflective tone than Jeff Kinney's series. This is subtly satisfying storytelling." —*School Library Journal*

Rachel Vail is the author of numerous young adult novels, including *If We Kiss, Lucky, Gorgeous*, and *Brilliant*; and picture books, including *Sometimes I'm Bombaloo*, as well as *Piggy Bunny* and *Flabbersmashed About You* (both coming from Feiwel and Friends in 2012). She lives in New York City with her husband and sons. You can visit her online at rachelvail.com.

Matthew Cordell is the author and illustrator of the picture books *Trouble Gum* and *Another Brother*, also published by Feiwel and Friends. He lives outside of Chicago with his wife, author Julie Halpern, and their daughter. You can visit him online at matthewcordell.com.

