

**FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX**  
**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

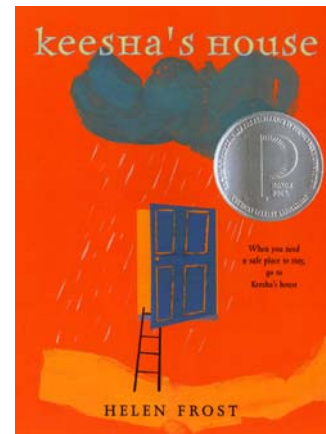
**KEESHA'S HOUSE**

by Helen Frost

**A MICHAEL L. PRINTZ HONOR BOOK**  
**AN ALA BEST BOOK FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

**Reading Level**

Grades 7 up



**About the Novel**

When they're forced to leave home, Stephie, Jason, Dontay, Carmen, Harris, and Katie find their way to Keesha's house, a safe place with doors that lock and a warm kitchen. The teens are each facing an issue that is raising difficulties in their lives: an unexpected pregnancy, addiction, homosexuality, abuse, or abandonment. In a series of poems, their stories emerge and interweave. An author's note explains the poetic forms used, the sestina and the sonnet.

**Discussion Questions**

1. When reading the book, were you aware of the poetic forms being used? Whether or not you were conscious of it, how did the rhythm and line breaks affect your reading of the book?
2. Did you begin to recognize and differentiate between the individual voices?
3. The author has divided the book into eight parts. Why do you think she did that? How would you define the mood in each part? Describe how the mood changes as the book progresses.
4. You learn that the house is really Joe's. Why does it become known as Keesha's house?
5. Look for dynamic and static characters in the book (those who change as opposed to those who don't). Select and compare three or four of the characters. What difficulty is each facing? How has it affected his/her life? Imagine what might become of the character in the future.
6. Choose a poem from the book that you enjoy, and explore it in depth. What is the poetic form? What is the rhyme scheme? Does the author use imagery, metaphor, simile, or dialect in the poem?
7. Select an excerpt to read as a monologue, or, with a group, act out a part of the book as a play.



**About the Author**

Helen Frost was born in 1949 in South Dakota, the fifth of ten children. She has been writing and working with young people since she was a teenager. She has taught writing at all levels, preschool through university, including four years as an elementary school teacher in Alaska and six years in a violence-prevention program for at-risk youth. She currently lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana, with her family.

**For more information on Helen Frost**

***Web site:***

*[www.fsgkidsbooks.com](http://www.fsgkidsbooks.com)*

Includes a biography of the author and additional information about her books as well as excerpts.

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Author's note

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