



Quiz Queens

K. L. Denman

Reading level: 3.2

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Book Summary

Jane has no interest in boys. Her mom, Sherry, has brought home so many creeps over the years that Jane has decided to focus for the next five years on her studies. Her best friend, boy-crazy Kiara, is obsessed with online quizzes and convinces Jane to help her create a questionnaire that will determine whether muscular Liam or Omar with the cute eyes is her true soul mate. Their friendship is tested when the answers come back with a surprising third option, the quiet and awkward Javier. Jane fails to reveal the results, which leads to some heated words being exchanged and long-held resentments (and possible secret crushes) being revealed. One of the besties will have to swallow her pride to make the first move and try to repair the damage.

Author Biography

K. L. Denman was born in Calgary, Alberta, and spent her childhood in a house one street away from the open prairie. When she was 11, her family moved to Delta, British Columbia, and she got to know life on the West Coast of Canada: tides, clam digging, rain gear, green grass year-round and enormous trees. It was there that Kim and her sisters got their first pony. She continued to live near Vancouver, British Columbia, for many years while finishing school, attending college, and eventually getting married and starting a family. She always loved writing and when her teen children and their friends provided inspiration and re-kindled memories of this challenging passage, writing for teens became an irresistible venture.

Today she lives on a small farm on British Columbia's Sunshine Coast with her family: people, two dogs, three cats, two horses and an elderly mule. When she's not writing or caring for critters, she's reading, growing vegetables, taking pictures or volunteering with therapeutic riding.

Connecting to the Text***Character and Novel Study***

To engage students with the main characters in *Quiz Queens*, use the following as large group discussion topics, individual novel study or paragraph-writing exercises.

1. Consider the passage about the coyote spirit totem in chapter 1. As you read the novel, do you think parts of the “coyote wisdom” and “spirit messages” come true for Kiara and Jane? Give an example of a trick that led to a lesson, or a truth revealed behind an illusion.
2. Jane says, “Thanks to Sherry, my mother—or *no* thanks to her—I feel done with personal growth already” (ch. 1). Because of her mom, Jane has had to grow up fast.
 - ♦ Jane has lots of experience other kids might not have. What skills has she developed? (e.g., organization, time management, decision making, planning, shopping.)
 - ♦ There are other areas of personal growth Jane should work on. What things could she consider? (e.g., new friendships, boys, taking time for herself, goals that include fun.)
3. Jane calls Sherry “a mess” and “pathetic,” because Sherry puts guys before anything else, even Jane’s wellbeing. Do you think Kiara does the same thing to Jane? Consider that Kiara got Jane to develop a “professional” quiz to get Kiara a boyfriend in chapter 2 and got her to trick Mrs. Peebles into collecting surveys.
4. In chapter 10, Ms. Kalkat asks the class to list negative and positive behaviors. Make a similar list for Jane, Sherry and Kiara, including at least one positive and negative item for each, and describe their behaviors or actions that demonstrate this.

Theme

Theme, the broad idea of the story, can sometimes be revealed in the lessons learned by the characters. A prominent theme in *Quiz Queens* is personal growth. Encourage students to compare how the characters behave at the start of the novel to how they behave at the end of the novel, and identify potential new areas of development. In what ways did the characters grow, and how might they continue to grow? What do you think the future holds for them? Prompts are below.

- *Sherry*: Early on, she keeps falling for the same type of guy, uses Jane as an excuse to call in sick to work, buys things she can’t afford, and tells men Jane is her sister.
- *Jane*: Early on, she doesn’t seem to ever have fun, thinks boyfriends are dangerous, losers, and just plain difficult, and she resents her mother. Her life goal is to be respected and have a big salary so she won’t “end up like [her] mother” (ch. 3).

The Writer’s Craft

1. Writers use literary devices to make our reading experience fun and engaging. One example is alliteration, where the first letter or sound of a word is repeated in sentences or phrases. Ask students to find an example of alliteration. They may discover these:

- ch. 3 Ms. Kalkat passes out detentions like *pigeons pass poop*.
 ch. 3 *My face flames*, and I turn away—*fast*.
 ch. 4 She *bounces* up and down. “You’re the *best bestie* ever, Jane.”
2. Metaphors and similes connect ideas, giving us “pictures” that expand our understanding of scenes and characters. There are good examples in the first paragraphs of chapters 9, 10 and 11. Discuss the connections being made and how they lend meaning to the text. Further examples are below.
- ◆ What is Javier compared to in chapter 6 after Kiara says, “That guy needs help”?
 - ◆ In chapter 10, how is Kiara’s face and demeanor described in the sentence that begins, “If her face was a light...”?
 - ◆ How is Jane feeling about herself in the last paragraph of chapter 10?

Building Vocabulary

The following words/terms are used in the novel in the context of Jane and Kiara trying personality quizzes.

accurate	decide	multiple choice	question
anonymous	illusion	personal growth	results
answers	instinct	personality	soul connection

Invite students to answer a question below, incorporating at least two vocabulary words into their responses.

- Jane thinks the online quizzes are “garbage,” and Kiara thinks they’re true and fun. What do you think? Garbage, true, fun—or all three? Can they sometimes be useful?
- Describe what happened when Kiara got Jane to create a “professional” quiz so Kiara could decide on a boyfriend. What was Jane’s “coyote idea”?
- Compare a multiple choice quiz at school to a multiple choice online personality quiz. How are they similar and different?

Connecting to the Curriculum

Creative Writing

1. Ask students to imagine they’re interviewing Jane at the end of the novel. Draft a really hard hitting question for Jane—and then answer it as Jane. Or have students exchange their tough questions with each other, and then compare answers. Ideas, to get started:
- ◆ *Kiara says you let Sherry affect you too much. How would your life be different if you didn’t? If you truly just accepted Sherry the way she is?*
 - ◆ *What if college life consumes Sherry the way guys did before? How will you react?*
 - ◆ *In many ways, being at Kiara’s house provides you with the family atmosphere you miss because Sherry doesn’t provide it. What would happen for you if Kiara moved?*

2. At the start and end of the novel, Jane considers her relationship with Kiara. In chapter 1, Jane seems frustrated and bored with Kiara, but by chapter 14, Jane sees Kiara as her comfortable “bestie.” Write a journal entry where Jane reflects on this. Why did her thinking about Kiara change?

Personal Planning

- Jane likes to think things through and Kiara follows her instincts. Which style do you prefer, or do you use both? Use the topics below for discussion or writing exercises, while making connections to the novel. **Prompt:** Jane is organized, a planner, responsible, serious and in control. Kiara acts on instinct, is impulsive, cheerful and loves fun.
 - ◆ Describe Jane’s personality. Are you like or unlike Jane? For example, *Jane said the online personality quizzes are garbage. I feel the same way. I don’t think they’re real or that we should take them seriously; I like to feel in control, like Jane does.*
 - ◆ Describe Kiara’s personality. Are you like or unlike Kiara? For example, *I like how Kiara uses the quizzes to learn more about herself; We’re the same age; I like learning about what I like and don’t like, and how I feel about things; Sometimes I put off things I don’t want to take seriously, and just have fun instead.*
- Encourage students to design a “Friendship Quiz” like the one in chapter 11, working with a partner or groups of three. Ask each group to exchange their quizzes with another, and then discuss results. When it comes to friendship, what’s important to you?
- An important part of personal growth is learning to work and get along with others, and interacting face to face with people. Use the following activity to practice these skills. Once complete, ask students to debrief the experience. What was comfortable for them, or difficult? What skills do they need to develop?
 - Ask students to think of an interesting question they’d like to ask another person. (Students can develop their own or choose one from chapter 3.)
 - Each student should interview five people, ask them their question, and record responses. Ask students to seek clarification beyond simple answers. For example, if the question is, *What’s your favorite movie?* ask, *Why is it your favorite? What’s special about it?* (Ideas for interviewees: family, friends, teachers, coach, etc.)
 - Ask students to report on their findings with the class. Did any of the five interviewees answer with the same response? Did any answers surprise you?

Art

As an art project, ask students to choose a quote from the novel that resonates with them, or which describes a key realization for a character. Ideas are below. Why is the quote important or meaningful? What medium or imagery will you use to convey this?

- ch. 4 *It’s about time I stood up for myself.* (Jane)
 ch. 5 *Find out who you are and do it on purpose.* (Dolly Parton)
 ch. 6 *If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.* (Benjamin Franklin)
 ch. 7 *The only reason I stayed friends with you so long is I felt sorry for you.* (Kiara)
 ch. 9 *There it is. The plain ugly truth. I came along and ruined her life.* (Jane)