



QUAKING

BY KATHRYN ERSKINE

PHILOMEL BOOKS

Don't call her Matilda. Her name is Matt. And don't even think about getting close to her. She doesn't need anyone. Can't you tell by looking at her, dressed all in black with a spider painted on her face and her ice-cold stare? But most of all, do not bully her. She has been through it all already.

But everything changes for fourteen-year-old Matt when she moves in with peaceful Quakers Sam and Jessica Fox, who are active in the movement against the war in the Middle East. Soon, conflict arises in town over the war, and suddenly, no one is safe. Matt fears for her safety and the safety of her new family. Could the boy who terrorizes her at school be behind it all? And how can she save the family she is actually growing to love when her fear always leaves her quaking?

LET'S TALK ABOUT *QUAKING*

1. How would you describe Matt when she first comes to live with the Foxes?
2. Describe Matt's appearance. What does this say about her personality?
3. Her real name is Matilda. Why do you think she wants to be called Matt?
4. On the surface, Matt seems very different from the Foxes. But we learn that they are not as different as they seem. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?
5. The Rat induces extreme fear in Matt. What is it about him and what he does that scare her so much?
6. Why are the LifeSavers so important to Matt?
7. Matt tells Jessica that she hates cheese. Why does she do this?
8. In the beginning of the book, Matt assumes that Sam is not smart. Why do you think she makes this assumption? What causes her to change her mind?

9. Jessica slowly earns the respect of Matt. How does she do this? What about Jessica does Matt come to admire?
10. What significance does the apple crisp have for Matt?
11. What does Maggie Mahone's shawl represent to Matt?
12. What is the purpose of the Blob? Why do you think Matt is so disgusted by him? What makes her come around?
13. What role do the invisible characters (Matt's mother, Matt's father, George Fox, Fatima) play in the story?
14. Matt finds a lot of strength throughout the book. How does she find this strength?
15. Matt tells Mr. Morehead that she is a Quaker. Do you think she is a Quaker? Why do you think she tells him this?
16. In the Meeting House, Matt is distracted by a bird. What do you think is the significance of this bird?
17. Before reading this book, what did you know or think of Quakers? How have your ideas changed?
18. Violence is a major theme in *Quaking*. How does violence affect each of the major characters? Think of Matt, Sam, Jessica, even the Rat and Mr. Morehead.
19. How do you think you'd handle being in Matt's situation? What would you do? Who or what would you turn to for help?
20. Imagine Matt five years from the end of the book. Where do you see her?

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A PLAYLIST FOR *QUAKING*

1. Blondie, Heart of Glass
2. Sheryl Crow, The First Cut is the Deepest
3. Eurythmics, Sweet Dreams
4. John McCutcheon, Follow the Light
5. Diana Ross & the Supremes, You Can't Hurry Love
6. Sade, Smooth Operator
7. U2, I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For
8. Vaughn Brothers, Tick Tock

QUAKER MEETING SONGS:

1. Simple Gifts
2. Vine and Fig Tree
3. Walk in the Light (George Fox song)
4. You Shall Go Out with Joy