

The background of the entire image is white, decorated with several splatters of bright yellow paint. Within these splatters are three green circular objects, possibly marbles or beads, which are partially covered by the yellow paint. One splatter is in the top right corner, another is in the middle left, and a third is in the bottom left corner.

**THIS IS NOT A DRILL**

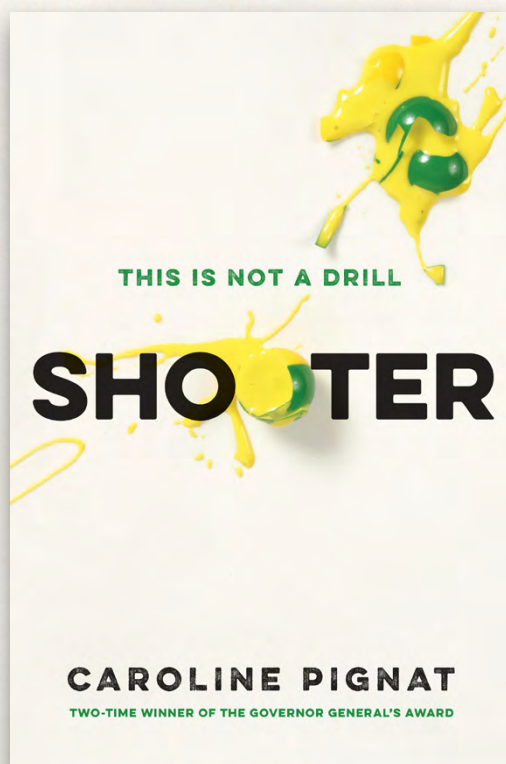
# **SHOOTER**

**CAROLINE PIGNAT**

**TWO-TIME WINNER OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S AWARD**

**EDUCATORS' GUIDE**





## ABOUT THE BOOK

### *The Breakfast Club* meets *We Need to Talk About Kevin*

A lockdown catches five twelfth grade students by surprise and throws them together in the only unlocked room on that empty third floor wing: the boys' washroom. They sit in silence, judging each other by what they see, by the stories they've heard over the years. Stuck here with them — could anything be worse?

There's **ALICE**: an introverted writer, trapped in the role of big sister to her older autistic brother, **NOAH**.

**ISABELLE**: the popular, high-achieving, student council president, whose greatest performance is her everyday life.

**HOGAN**: an ex-football player with a troubled past and a hopeless future.

**XANDER**: that socially awkward guy hiding behind the camera, whose candid pictures of school life, especially those of Isabelle, have brought him more trouble than answers.

Told in five unique voices through prose, poetry, text messages, journals, and homework assignments, each student reveals pieces of their true story as they wait for the drill to end. But this modern-day *Breakfast Club* takes a twist when Isabelle gets a text that changes everything: **NOT A DRILL!! Shooter in the school!**

Suddenly, the bathroom doesn't seem so safe anymore. Especially when they learn that one of them knows more about the shooter than they realized...

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**CAROLINE PIGNAT** is the award-winning author of seven YA novels. She is a two-time winner of the Governor General's Award (*The Gospel Truth* in 2015 and *Greener Grass* in 2009). *Shooter* won the Ontario Library Association's Red Maple Award as well as the John Spray Mystery Award, and was a MYRCA Honour Book. A high school teacher, she lives in Ottawa with her family.



This guide was created by **KATHLEEN ODEAN**, a school librarian for more than fifteen years who now gives professional development workshops for educators on new children's and young adult books. She chaired the 2002 Newbery Award Committee and served on earlier Caldecott, Newbery and Notable Children's Books Committees.

**SHOOTER**

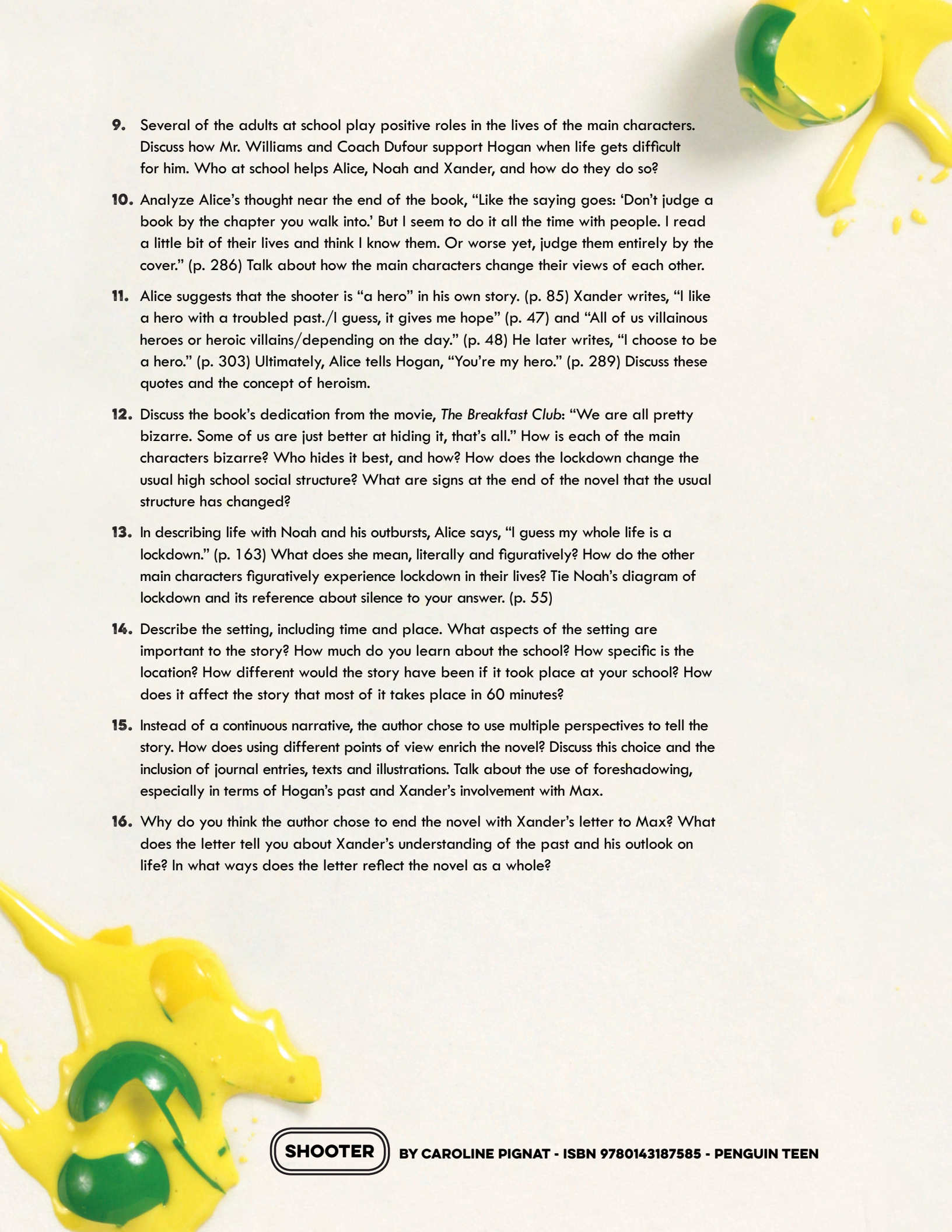
BY CAROLINE PIGNAT - ISBN 9780143187585 - PENGUIN TEEN



CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.2,  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.3, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.9-12.5,  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-8.6, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.7-12.1

1. Describe Alice, her personality, her home situation and her interests. Why does she say, "Most of my life I've felt invisible?" (p. 18) How does being related to Noah make her visible? What is her relationship with Noah like? Talk about Gran and her role in Alice's life.
2. Discuss Noah and his situation at school. How do his teachers help him? How do Alice and Gran help him? What role does the movie *The Lion King* play in his life? What does he need in order to stay calm? What are some ways in which Noah and Xander are alike?
3. From the start, it's clear that Hogan considers himself worthless. "There's no redeeming me," he says early on. (p. 9) Why does he feel this way? What was his relationship with his brother like? Why do others perceive Hogan as violent? How does he change in the course of the story?
4. Sibling relationships are central to Alice and Hogan. What is similar about their relationships with their brothers? What is different? How does Hogan interact with Noah, and what does it tell you about Hogan? How does Noah help bring Alice and Hogan together by the end?
5. What is your first impression of Isabelle, and why? Why does she try so hard to be successful? Describe her relationship with her mother and when it seems to change. How and why is she dismissive of Alice, Hogan and Xander? Discuss her DREX trip and the fact that she has cut herself. What happens with Bri and Darren, and how does Isabelle feel about it?
6. What makes the social aspects of school so difficult for Xander? What are his strengths? Talk about his home life and his feelings about his parents. How would he like his life to be different? What are Social Autopsies and how does he use them?
7. Discuss how Xander equates himself with his camera, including his observation, "Like me, it can endure a lot of things." (pp. 37–38) He also says that his dad left him and the camera behind. Why does Xander love photography, and how is it useful to him? Why do you think he's so good at it? What kind of photographs does he take, and why does Isabelle reject them for the yearbook?
8. The reader sees Max mostly through Xander's eyes. Why is their relationship so important to Xander? How does Max treat him? When does Xander start to see the relationship more clearly? What do you think Max's motivation was for the pranks he plays and the violence he ultimately commits?



- 
9. Several of the adults at school play positive roles in the lives of the main characters. Discuss how Mr. Williams and Coach Dufour support Hogan when life gets difficult for him. Who at school helps Alice, Noah and Xander, and how do they do so?
  10. Analyze Alice's thought near the end of the book, "Like the saying goes: 'Don't judge a book by the chapter you walk into.' But I seem to do it all the time with people. I read a little bit of their lives and think I know them. Or worse yet, judge them entirely by the cover." (p. 286) Talk about how the main characters change their views of each other.
  11. Alice suggests that the shooter is "a hero" in his own story. (p. 85) Xander writes, "I like a hero with a troubled past./I guess, it gives me hope" (p. 47) and "All of us villainous heroes or heroic villains/depending on the day." (p. 48) He later writes, "I choose to be a hero." (p. 303) Ultimately, Alice tells Hogan, "You're my hero." (p. 289) Discuss these quotes and the concept of heroism.
  12. Discuss the book's dedication from the movie, *The Breakfast Club*: "We are all pretty bizarre. Some of us are just better at hiding it, that's all." How is each of the main characters bizarre? Who hides it best, and how? How does the lockdown change the usual high school social structure? What are signs at the end of the novel that the usual structure has changed?
  13. In describing life with Noah and his outbursts, Alice says, "I guess my whole life is a lockdown." (p. 163) What does she mean, literally and figuratively? How do the other main characters figuratively experience lockdown in their lives? Tie Noah's diagram of lockdown and its reference about silence to your answer. (p. 55)
  14. Describe the setting, including time and place. What aspects of the setting are important to the story? How much do you learn about the school? How specific is the location? How different would the story have been if it took place at your school? How does it affect the story that most of it takes place in 60 minutes?
  15. Instead of a continuous narrative, the author chose to use multiple perspectives to tell the story. How does using different points of view enrich the novel? Discuss this choice and the inclusion of journal entries, texts and illustrations. Talk about the use of foreshadowing, especially in terms of Hogan's past and Xander's involvement with Max.
  16. Why do you think the author chose to end the novel with Xander's letter to Max? What does the letter tell you about Xander's understanding of the past and his outlook on life? In what ways does the letter reflect the novel as a whole?



# ACTIVITIES

## IT TAKES COURAGE

In his letter to Max, Xander writes, “It takes courage to risk being different — but I think it’s worth it. It’s so worth it. Because what makes us different is what makes us powerful. And what we choose to do with that power can make us heroes.” (p. 303) Write an essay about this quotation, tying it to the novel, your own life and people you consider courageous in everyday life, public life or history.

**CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.2, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.7-12.1**

## TEN YEARS LATER

Imagine that it’s the tenth high school reunion for the novel’s main characters. What are they like now? What have they done in the past ten years? Work in groups of four to create a skit in which Alice, Hogan, Isabelle and Xander meet at the reunion and convey the changes in their lives. Act out the skit for your classmates.

**CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.3,  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.7-12.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.7-12.3**

## THE HERO JOURNEY

Alice refers to the Hero’s Journey taught in her writing class, a traditional story structure or archetype in which a hero goes on a journey, overcomes obstacles, completes a mission, and returns home. Research this concept or draw on what you already know about it, and write an essay applying it to one of the main characters in the novel.

**CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.3,  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.7-12.2, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.W.7-12.7**

## POPCORN AND COMPARISONS

*The Breakfast Club* is a 1985 movie about five high school students brought together in Saturday detention. As a class or individually, watch the movie after you’ve read *Shooter*. Have a class discussion comparing the movie to the novel in terms of themes, structure and characters. Compare the differences between a story conveyed in a film and one conveyed in print, noting the strengths and drawbacks of each medium.

**CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.2,  
CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.3, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.7-12.1**

## PARENTING 101

Consider the parents of the main characters and the ways that they didn’t come through for their children as well as the ways, if any, that they did. Meet in small groups and discuss the challenges of parenting. Make a list of what you think makes a good parent and another list of the difficulties and challenges of parenting. Discuss whether it’s right to hold parents responsible for their children’s actions, as happened to Max’s mother.

**CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.1, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL.7-12.3, CCSS.ELA- Literacy.SL.7-12.1**