



RIGHT AS RAIN

by Lindsey Stoddard

★ “Honest, gut-wrenching, and hopeful.”

—*School Library Journal* (starred review)

Grades 3–7

Themes: Grief, Guilt, Family Dynamics, Bullying, Fitting In

About the Book

It's been almost a year since Rain's brother Guthrie died, and her parents still don't know it was all Rain's fault. In fact, no one does—Rain buried her secret deep, no matter how heavy it weighs on her heart. So when her mom suggests moving the family from Vermont to New York City, Rain agrees. But life in the big city is different. She's never seen so many people in one place—or felt more like an outsider. With her parents fighting more than ever and the anniversary of Guthrie's death approaching, Rain is determined to keep her big secret close to her heart. But even she knows that when you bury things deep, they grow up twice as tall.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do Rain and her parents move to New York City? How does Rain feel about it, and why? Compare and contrast her life in Vermont with her life in New York
2. Describe each of Rain's parents and how they are dealing with what happened to Guthrie. What has happened to the parents' relationship with each other? How does Rain try to fix it and why does she blame herself?
3. Describe Frankie's personality including her strengths. Why is she unfriendly to Rain at first? What causes them to grow closer? Explain who Reggie is and why she's important to the story.
4. How does Amelia make Rain feel welcome at school? What kind of person is she? How does stuttering affect her and how does she deal with it? Why does she agree to run in the relay? Discuss whether it was a good decision for her, and why or why not.
5. Why does running matter so much to Rain? How does she feel when she runs? What role does running play in the plot? Talk about the positive effects on her of participating on the track team.
6. Rain reads *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate. Why does the book appeal to her so strongly? When does she feel like a “one and only” and when does that feeling go away? How does reading *The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander help her?
7. Although Rain's very comfortable with numbers, at first, she's uncomfortable writing poetry. Why do you think that's the case? Why does it change? How does poetry become important to her?
8. The community service requirement leads Rain to the church and to Ms. Dacie's. Who does she meet and what does she do at each place? Explain how Rain and the others set about trying to save Ms. Dacie's.
9. We find out slowly what happened to Guthrie, and Rain's role in it. Explain what happened and why she feels guilty. How does she end up feeling better about it? Discuss why the author chose to reveal that part of the story slowly.
10. The phrase “Change is hard” comes up several times throughout the novel. Relate this observation to different characters and how it's true for them. Talk about what Rain learns about change throughout the novel, citing specific examples.

Extension Activities

Appealing to the Senses. The author brings Vermont and especially New York City to life with vivid descriptions of sights, sounds, smells, and even tastes. Have each student identify words throughout the book that convey the setting and consider how the words evoke their senses. Then, have students write a few paragraphs that vividly convey a place in their own life.

Welcome! Rain is struck by the welcome sign on Ms. Dacie's door. Ask students to think about how the symbols and words on the sign create a welcoming environment. Then students should work in pairs to create a Welcome sign for their classroom or another room in the school such as the library or school office. When they've completed their signs, have them explain their choices to the class.

