



Shakespeare Bats Cleanup

By Ron Koertge

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"This funny and poignant novel celebrates the power of writing to help young people make sense of their lives and unlock and confront their problems." - SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL (starred review)

When MVP Kevin Boland gets the news that he has mono and won't be seeing a baseball field for a while, he suddenly finds himself scrawling a poem down the middle of a page in his journal. To get some help, he cops a poetry book from his dad's den - and before Kevin knows it, he's writing in verse about stuff like, Will his jock friends give up on him? What's the deal with girlfriends? Surprisingly enough, after his health improves, he keeps on writing, about the smart-talking Latina girl who thinks poets are cool, and even about his mother, whose death is a still-tender loss. Written in free verse with examples of several poetic forms slipped into the mix, including a sonnet, haiku, pastoral, and even a pantoum, this funny, poignant story by a master of dialogue is an English teacher's dream - sure to hook poetry lovers, baseball fanatics, mono recoverers, and everyone in between.

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Shakespeare Bats Cleanup By Ron Koertge Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 6-9-Like his earlier *The Brimstone Journals* (Candlewick, 2001), Koertge writes this novel in highly accessible free verse. Fourteen-year-old Kevin Boland is an MVP first baseman whose whole life revolves around baseball. Diagnosed with mono, he is forced to stay at home for months while he recuperates. Bored, Kevin borrows his father's book of poetry and starts writing his own. At first, he just has fun imitating haiku and sonnets, but he soon begins writing insightful verse, both funny and serious, in which he records his candid observations about life in junior high, romance, his dreams of baseball stardom, and his grief over the recent death of his mother. This funny and poignant novel celebrates the power of writing to help young people make sense of their lives and unlock and confront their problems. The cover will lead readers to believe that this is about baseball, but they will quickly realize there is much, much more to this finely crafted story.

Edward Sullivan, White Pine School, TN

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 7-10. Koertge has written a standout among the growing number of young adult novels told through verse. Faced with months at home because of a bout of mono, 14-year-old Kevin Boland begins to write poems, using a book from his father's collection to guide him. He writes about such things as the recent death of his mother, his love of baseball, and his make-out sessions with girls. When he recovers, he continues his writing habit and finds a new girlfriend, experimenting with different forms of poetry along the way, including free verse, haiku, sonnets, ballads, and even a sestina. Koertge does an excellent job of creating the authentic voice of a teenage boy exclusively through poems. The poems are funny, touching, and always energetic, and they show both Kevin's growing love for poetry and his struggles as a writer. Several of his attempts at difficult forms break apart in the middle, and some poems have rough edges, giving an extra dose of realism to the somewhat artificial concept of the book. Readers will find themselves identifying with Kevin and perhaps come to understand his attraction to poetry. *Todd Morning*

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From the Author

RON KOERTGE: "I find it funny that kids will willingly follow the rules in any game, but if you give them rules for writing poetry, they rebel!"

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Quentin Ryan:

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Mary Fleeman:

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Willie Coffey:

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