

A D A M R A P P

### About the Author

Adam Rapp is the author of *Punkzilla*, a Michael L. Printz Honor Book; *Under the Wolf*, *Under the Dog*, winner of a Schneider Family Book Award; and *33 Snowfish*, chosen by *Booklist* as one of the 50 Best YA Books of All Time. His plays include *Red Light Winter*, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama. A director of films and plays as well as a musician, Adam Rapp lives in New York City.

#### Common Core Connections

This discussion guide, which can be used with large or small groups, will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL), as well as the speaking and listening standards for comprehension and collaboration and for presentation of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL). Questions can also be used as writing prompts for independent work.



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HC: 978-0-7636-6756-6 • Also available as an e-book and in audio

### About the Book

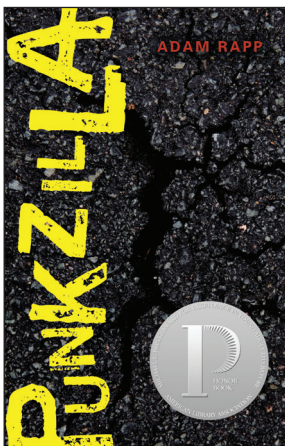
In his astonishing new novel, award-winning author and acclaimed playwright Adam Rapp takes readers to a small town in southern Illinois where the very big Corinthia Bledsoe—all 287 pounds and seven feet, four inches of her—is a high school junior and a force of nature. She's recently become a seer into the future, too. Her prediction that three tornados will hit the high school (and leave a cow standing upright in the gymnasium's center court) is completely, and shockingly, accurate. But no one, not even Corinthia, can foresee all the new storms that are coming her way—or just how entangled she and her family will become in the lives of others.

## Discussion Questions

1. “It sounds like you have a gift,” Dr. Flung says to Corinthia, referring to her ability to see into the future. “A lot of good it’s done me,” Corinthia replies (page 298). What do you think? Do you envy Corinthia’s gift? Or do you pity her?
2. The physical differences between Corinthia and Billy Ball couldn’t be more obvious: she is a very tall girl, while he is a very short boy. But what common challenges do the pair share? Why do you think the author tells both of their stories?
3. Channing Bledsoe is Corinthia’s football hero brother. Do you believe, as his sister does, that “Channing is a boy-man trapped by his own beauty” (page 90)? Why does he come to his sister’s room on the night before the tornados hit? Where do you think he goes after the storm?
4. Marlene Bledsoe regularly, and secretly, travels to Louisville to participate in a support group for the parents of physically deformed children. Yet when she finally shares her own story, she speaks only about her son, not her daughter. Why can’t she talk about Corinthia? Why does she hand Corinthia the program for *The Beautiful Apocalypse*?
5. Billy’s mother alerted the school when she decided her son’s “obsession with Native American culture was starting to border on disturbing” (page 116). Why is Billy so interested in Native American practices and teachings? Is his life being enhanced by his interest, or is it being harmed?
6. *Fum* is meant to be a taunt. How does Corinthia turn the word into a badge of honor? Why does she use it as part of her stage name?
7. Corinthia isn’t the only character in *Fum* with a strange name. Why do you think uncommon names are so common in the town of Lugo, Illinois? What is your favorite name in the book? Why?
8. The children in town enjoy dressing up like monsters for Halloween, but they and their older siblings also taunt Corinthia for being so big. What is the difference between make-believe scary creatures and real-life people with unusual bodies? Why do some of the characters seem to consider the former fun and the latter repellent?
9. Standing in line with Corinthia’s father at *The Beautiful Apocalypse*, Russell says, “I guess dread is sort of addictive” (page 391). What does he mean by that? Do you agree? Why?
10. What attracts Corinthia to Lavert Birdsong? What does the gravely ill ex-convict add to her life? Why does she carry out his final wish? Would you?
11. The language in *Fum* is strikingly vivid, especially the physical descriptions. “If you’re going to describe something,” Billy writes in his diary, “then really describe it in painstaking detail” (page 149). Find some favorite examples of “painstaking detail.” Discuss how these details deepen your understanding of the characters and shape the mood of the novel.

12. Billy is making up a list of names. Why did news of that list alarm guidance counselor Denton Smock? Did it initially alarm you, too? What is the real purpose of Billy's list? Did it do any good? Why does Billy walk into the woods after setting his plan in motion?
13. At the very end of *Fum*, Corinthia tells her father: "I've never been happier" (page 400). Do you believe her? Why?
14. "I realized about halfway through the process," Adam Rapp says about *Fum*, "that I was writing a kind of brutalist fable." Compare *Fum* to traditional fables and folklore. In what ways does it resemble such tales as "Hansel and Gretel" or "Little Red Riding Hood"?
15. *Fum* opens with a quote from *Saint Joan*, a play by George Bernard Shaw. If you aren't familiar with Joan of Arc, do a little research about this medieval French heroine. Why do you think the author selected this quote? Who are the saints in *Fum*? How are they treated by the world?

## ALSO BY ADAM RAPP

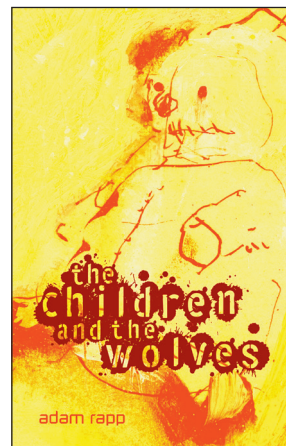


### ***Punkzilla***

HC: 978-0-7636-3031-7  
 PB: 978-0-7636-5297-5  
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 and in audio

**A Michael L. Printz  
 Honor Book**

★ **Booklist**



### ***The Children and the Wolves***

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★ **Kirkus Reviews**  
 ★ **Booklist**

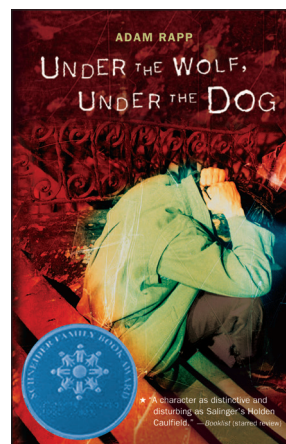


### ***33 Snowfish***

PB: 978-0-7636-2917-5  
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**A Booklist 50 Best  
 YA Books of All Time  
 Selection**

★ **Booklist**



### ***Under the Wolf, Under the Dog***

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