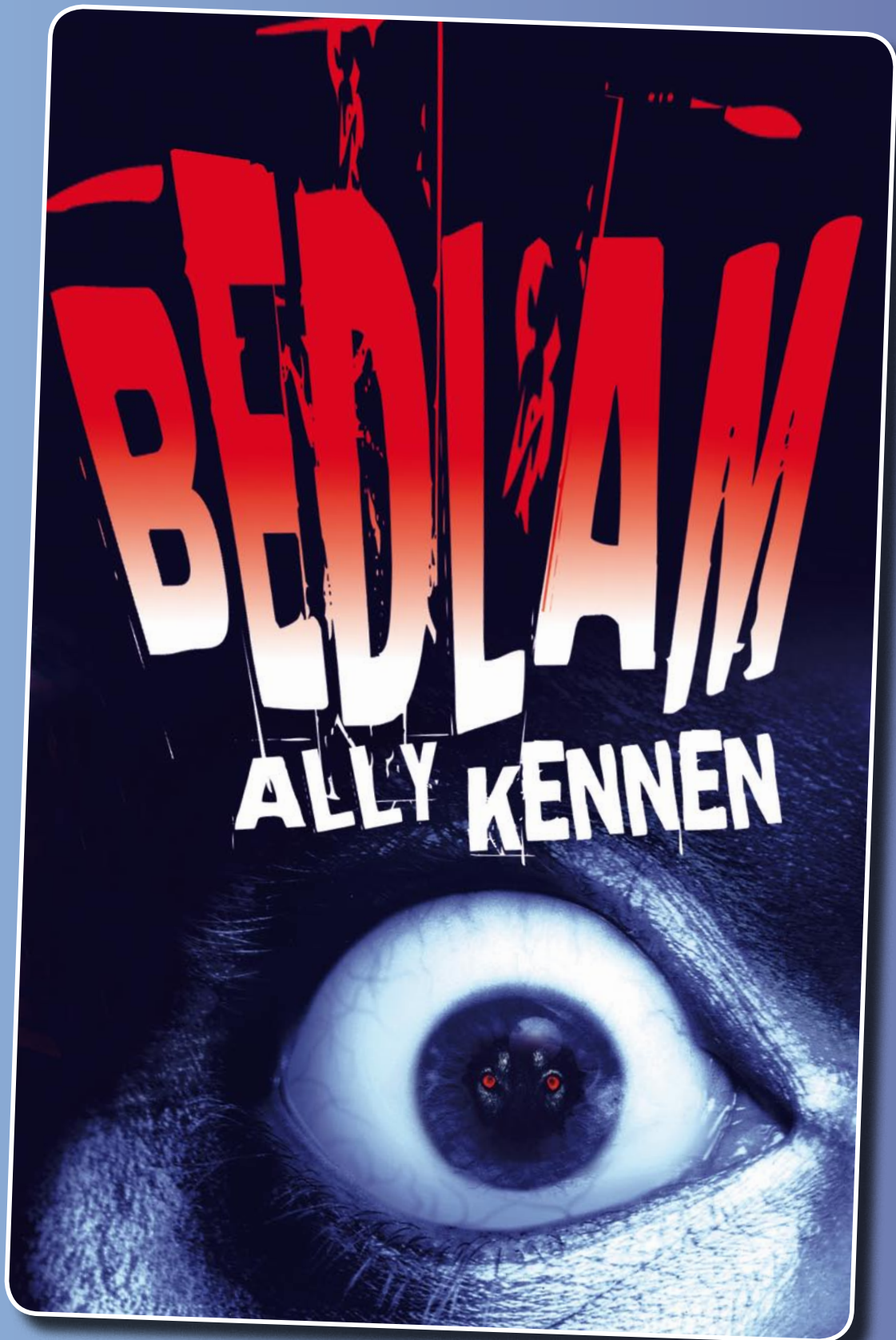


 SCHOLASTIC



BEDLAM Ally Kennen

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Getting children reading. Giving books to schools.

BEDLAM Reading Notes

The following activities address the QCA Assessment Focuses for Reading. These are used to formulate and assess the Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 NCTs. Many of the activities also address the Assessment Focuses for Writing, however the AF code at the start of each task/activity specifically refers to reading.

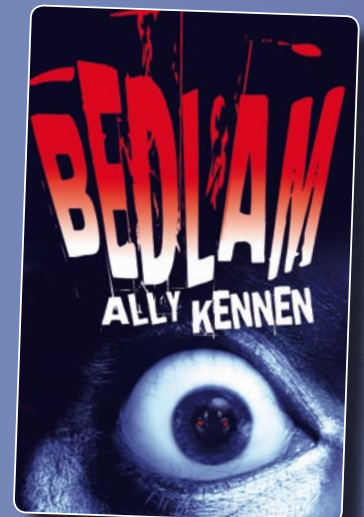
A reminder of the Assessment Focuses for Reading:

- **AF1** – use a range of strategies, including accurate decoding of text, to read for meaning.
- **AF2** – understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotation and reference to text.
- **AF3** – deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts.
- **AF4** – identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts, including grammatical and presentational features at text level.
- **AF5** – explain and comment on writers' uses of language, including grammatical and literary features at word and sentence level.
- **AF6** – identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints and the overall effect of the text on the reader.
- **AF7** – relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary tradition.

Following, you will find a child/pupil friendly version of the Assessment Focuses.

Assessment Focuses for Reading – or – how your work will be marked!

- **AF1** – You understand what the story is about and can explain the plot of the story in your writing or when you talk about the story.
- **AF2** – You can understand, describe, choose or find information, events or ideas from the story. In your writing or when you talk about the story you can use quotations and refer to the story.
- **AF3** – You can take events or ideas from the story and work out what they might mean or suggest how they will affect the characters and the storyline.
- **AF4** – You can identify and explain how the whole story and particular sections fit together. You can explain why the writer uses certain words, phrases or grammatical features to tell his story. You can explain why the pages are set out in a particular way.
- **AF5** – You can look at particular words, phrases and sentences and explain the writer's choices. You can explain and make suggestions about particular words, phrases and grammatical features.
- **AF6** – You can explain what the writer might want a reader to think about or learn from the story. You can describe how the story might affect you or other readers.
- **AF7** – You can compare this story to other similar stories. You understand how this story tells the reader about the world that we live in.



A reading guide based around QCA's Assessment Focuses for Reading.

Pre-reading activity:

- What does the word 'bedlam' mean? Find and write down a dictionary definition of the word.
- Find out about the history of the word – not just the meaning but where the word came from. As you read the story, think about the significance of the meaning and the history of the word.

AF2 – You can understand, describe, choose or find information, events or ideas from the story. In your writing or when you talk about the story you can use quotations and refer to the story.

- Read chapters 1 and 2. Lexi makes a bad start at her mother's but she is not the only character who makes mistakes here. Use the story to record quotations across chapters 1 and 2 which indicate to the reader that life is difficult for Lexi. You could start with Lexi's mother's comment at the opening to chapter 1, "You've put on so much weight, Lexi."
- Read chapters 3 to 5. Lexi's story begins in a very dramatic way – attacked by dogs, half drowned in a cellar. Choose one quotation of no more than 2 sentences from each chapter. Write the quotations out and explain which words and phrases the author has used to create tension and suspense.

AF3 – You can take events or ideas from the story and work out what they might mean or suggest how they will affect the characters and the storyline.

- In chapters 6 and 7 we are reminded about the mysterious man who saved Lexi's life. No one else in the story seems to be interested in him, except Lexi. Make a list of the ways that this character might affect the plot further. Use any clues that you might have noticed in the opening chapters.
- In chapter 9, Lexi finds out about the history of Beacon House Hospital. How does this

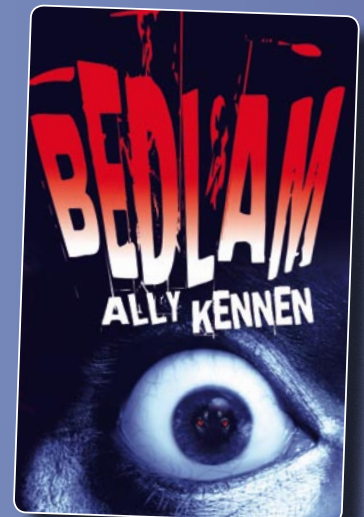
history fit with the title of the novel and important themes/events that have been introduced so far?

AF4 – You can identify and explain how the whole story and particular sections fit together. You can explain why the writer uses certain words, phrases or grammatical features to tell his story. You can explain why the pages are set out in a particular way.

- Look again at the dramatic events in chapters 11 and 12. Consider the reasons why Lexi wants the strange intruder to get away. Think carefully about why there is more than one reason!
- In chapter 15, Lexi says to Kos, "You're a bit of a mystery man, aren't you?" Given what you know of the story so far, write 3 paragraphs explaining how and why Kos lives in the ruins of Beacon House Hospital. How do you think the relationship between Lexi and Kos will develop?

AF5 – You can look at particular words, phrases and sentences and explain the writer's choices. You can explain and make suggestions about particular words, phrases and grammatical features.

- In chapters 16 to 18, Lexi discovers the truth about her father. Re-read these chapters and select the key quotations which reveal the truth. Look again at the language used here and explain how the author tries to capture Lexi's shock and disappointment.
- Look again at the last few pages of chapter 20 where Lexi's mother explains the truth about why she left Lexi, Devlin and their father. The author arouses our sympathy for Lexi's mother even though her



behaviour is wrong. Which words and phrases make you feel sympathy towards Lexi's mother? Why do you think the chapter ends on such a positive note?

AF6 – You can explain what the writer might want a reader to think about or learn from the story. You can describe how the story might affect you or other readers.

- Chapters 21 to 25 deal with the race to find Kos. Why do you think that Johnny Neasdon helps Lexi? How do you feel about the prison guards at Beacon House Hospital when Johnny recounts the story of "Mad-Bird" in chapter 24?
- How do you react to Lexi in these chapters? How would you describe her behaviour and what she is prepared to do for Kos? Create a spider diagram with Lexi in the middle. At the end of each 'leg' put an adjective to describe Lexi's behaviour here. Now find a quotation from these chapters to illustrate your adjective.

AF7 – You can compare this story to other similar stories. You understand how this story tells the reader about the world that we live in.

- The arrival of Alex and Lexi's mother, in chapters 27 and 28, saves the day for Kos and Lexi. What do you think Ally Kennen might be saying about the importance of family at the end of the novel?
- The novel has a positive ending although the mention of Sazanna in the last sentence reminds us of the difficult issues covered in the story. What ideas or issues do you think Ally Kennen wants us to think about at the end of the novel?
- How would you classify *Bedlam*? Compare the story to others that you have read. Does it fit into one genre or several? You might have read Ally Kennen's other novels: *Beast* and *Berserk*. How does *Bedlam* compare to these?

And finally ...

AF1 – You understand what the story is about and can explain the plot of the story in your writing or when you talk about the story.

- *Bedlam* deals with the different relationships that people have in their lives and how these change and develop. Look back at the changing relationship between Lexi and her mother. Create a time line and plot on it the key points of change in their relationship.
- The author deals with the difficult and controversial issue of asylum seekers. Explain how Ally Kennen uses the story of Nyasha Agruba and Kos to demonstrate the complexities of this matter.

