



## THE RECESS QUEEN

By Alexis O'Neill

Mean Jean is the Recess Queen and she rules the playground with an iron fist. No one dares to question her power until a new girl named Katie Sue comes to school. Not only is Katie Sue not intimidated by Mean Jean, she actually asks Mean Jean to jump rope with her. When the two girls become friends, the playground is once again safe for all.



**WITS Connection:** Ignore, Seek help

### Questions and Activities

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#### PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. From the cover of the book, what inferences or predictions can you make about the main character?
2. What do we know about queens?
3. How would you expect a recess queen to behave?



#### POST-READING QUESTIONS

1. Why did the recess queen act the way she did? What can cause people to act in certain ways? *The recess queen was lonely, and she didn't have any friends. Sometimes people act differently when they are hurting or when they are not comfortable in certain situations.*
2. Do people sometimes act one way when they feel another? *Yes, especially when they wish to cover up their feelings.*
3. Why did the other children allow Mean Jean to act the way she did? *They were fearful.*
4. What do you notice about the size of Mean Jean compared to everyone else in the story? Why did the illustrator make Mean Jean so large? *Sometimes people and circumstances appear larger than they really are.*
5. What happens to the size of Mean Jean near the end of the story? *She appears smaller.*
6. How many sounds can you identify in the story? *Buzz, bang, hiss, slammer, hammer, howl, growl.*
7. How was Katie Sue's behaviour different from the others? *She was not fearful of the recess queen and had a strategy to deal with behaviours she did not like.*
8. What did the skipping rope symbolize? *An invitation to make a friend by participating in a fun activity.*
9. What is social responsibility? What are some examples of how we can act socially responsible?



#### POST-READING ACTIVITIES

- Divide the class into three groups. One group will write a list of words that describe how it feels to be around someone like Mean Jean. The second group will

write a list of words that describe how Mean Jean might feel when she is being mean. The third group writes a list of words describing how Katie Sue felt on the playground. Ask the groups to read their lists aloud. Are there any words that are in more than one list? How does this happen?

- This story has a happy ending, but not all children will react the way Mean Jean did toward Katie Sue. Ask students to discuss other ways to handle someone like Mean Jean. Do they think an adult can help?
- Have the children write stories about a situation that either happened to them or to someone they know involving a person like Mean Jean. *Note: Students should not use the real name of any person.* Ask the children to draw four to ten pictures illustrating the events in their stories. Write captions under each picture and then staple them together in the order they occurred to make a book.

## Notes: