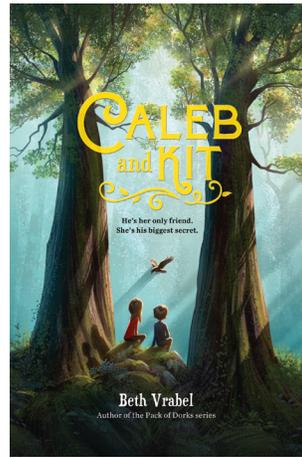




## RUNNING PRESS KIDS STUDY GUIDE

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Grade Level: 3 - 6  
Created by Joie Formando



## CALEB AND KIT by Beth Vrabel

**T**welve-year-old Caleb is shorter, frailer, and more protected than most kids his age. That's because he has cystic fibrosis, a diagnosis meaning lungs that fill with mucus and a shortened lifespan. Caleb tries not to let his disorder define him, but it can be hard with an overprotective mom and a perfect big brother. Then Caleb meets Kit—a vibrant, independent, and free girl—and his world changes instantly. Kit reads Caleb's palm and tells him they are destined to become friends. She calls birds down from the sky and turns every day into an adventure. Her magic is contagious, and soon Caleb feels like he can ignore his cystic fibrosis and question the order in his life. But being Kit's friend also means embracing deception and danger. When the magic of their private world starts to crumble, Caleb must decide whether to cling to their secret—or let someone else in.

### CHAPTERS 1-3

**1.** Judge a book by its cover! What do you think will happen in Caleb and Kit based on just the cover?

**2.** On p. 8, Caleb describes the trees in the woods behind his house as “buddies.” They twist and curve away from each other in order to share the sunlight:

*“They could stick close, but if they do, eventually one will struggle to tower over the other, keeping the weaker, unluckier one in the shade. Instead, if they are really friends, they’ll bend apart. I wondered if it hurt, twisting away from your friend like that.”*

Have you ever had to “bend away” from a friend before? What was that experience like?

**3.** “Getting lost means you get to have an adventure” (p. 13). Have you ever gotten lost? Describe what it felt like the moment you knew you were lost. Now take that memory and replace it with a feeling of possibility - of adventure. Create a new story to describe your experience.

**4.** Using the description Caleb gave on pages 15-16, draw Kit's house. Add your own additions to her home based on your

impression of Kit so far. (Example: Caleb thought Kit was an angel – add dazzling gold paint to the porch or mud splatter on the front doors.)

**5.** Should we be mad at Brad for protecting Caleb during recess? Was Brad being a good friend?

**6.** Why do you think Caleb gets angry when he discovers that his brother is applying for an internship with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation?

**7.** Think about Caleb's characteristics. Using these clues, what do you know about cystic fibrosis so far? What *don't* you know about this genetic disease?

To learn more, visit the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation online: [www.cff.org](http://www.cff.org). Click on the “Life with CF” tab at the top of the site to learn more about Caleb's daily life and treatments.

**8.** Do you know anyone who has cystic fibrosis? What are a few ways you can support those who may have this genetic disease?

## CHAPTERS 4-7

**1.** Think of a time when Caleb’s mom’s “Ten Minute Rule” would come in handy. What would you use it for? How would it help you to “move onward and upward?”

**2.** In chapter four, we meet Caleb’s dad for the first time. What is your first impression of him? Describe him in four words.

**3.** “*Your old stick-in-the-mud Dad insisted on genetic testing to make sure I’m not a carrier before we started trying. The news came back last month. I’m perfectly healthy, and our baby will be, too!*” (p. 80).

How do you think Caleb feels about the news his father and Kristie gave him? How do you think they should have told Caleb and Patrick about starting a family?

**4.** We don’t know much about Kit so far. Write a paragraph predicting her story.

Questions to consider: Why does she go to the woods every day? Where are her parents? Why is she allowed to “do what she wants?”

**5.** “*I wanted to be like Kit, to see stories everywhere. I wanted to make up a new world, one where I wasn’t sick and she was magic. I wanted that more than anything*” (p. 100).

How important do you think Caleb’s new friendship is with Kit? Do you have a friend like Kit (or Caleb)? Describe what their friendship means to you.

## CHAPTERS 8-11

**1.** Caleb’s dad tried to start a tradition with Patrick by buying him a Gatorade after his track meets. Do you have any traditions with your family? Draw a picture of your favorite family tradition. In a few sentences, explain the tradition and why it’s your favorite.

**2.** Caleb has said several hurtful things to his mom, Patrick, Kristie, and Shelly but has not apologized. What do you think is causing Caleb’s poor attitude?

**3.** Do you think Caleb will give Kit his mom’s *World of the Faerie* book? Have you ever taken something without asking first?

**4.** Caleb and Kit both have many secrets. Why is Kit still wearing the same clothes from the last time Caleb saw her? Why do you think Caleb hasn’t told his mom about being friends with Kit?

## CHAPTERS 10-13

**1.** Kit finally told Caleb about her mom. How different are Caleb and Kit’s relationships with their mothers?

**2.** Caleb’s lies are starting to catch up to him. What happens the more you lie? Has this ever happened to you? What is a consequence of lying?

**3.** Caleb sees himself as Brad’s sidekick, like Bucky to Captain America. What is so bad about being a sidekick? Have you ever felt this way about yourself? Make a list of Sidekick Characteristics and Superhero Characteristics. Are there many similarities? Are there many differences?

**4.** Derek’s story about Hank and the baby bird is amazing! Have you ever cared for a baby animal? Describe your experience.

## CHAPTERS 14-17

**1.** Caleb made the news for the second time this summer – what do you think about the “really horrible thing” Caleb did in the barn? Do you think he and Kit will confess to their crimes?

**2.** “*My head swam, trying to make sense of everything she told me, trying to separate stories from truth, and I couldn’t. I couldn’t find the spot where one stopped and the other started.*” (p. 218)

Kit truly believes in the fairies and the stories her grandmother told her. Make a prediction of what will happen to Kit by the end of this story.

**3.** What have you learned from Caleb’s character? What have you learned from Kit?

**4.** What is the moral of *Caleb and Kit*? What do you think is the most important thing about this novel?

**5.** Writing Exercise: Fast forward one year and write a short story about our two protagonists. What is Caleb up to? Are he and Shelly still friends? Do you think Kit is enjoying life with her new family? Do you think Caleb and Kit have spoken to each other?

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3**

Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).  
Craft and Structure:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4**

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

**Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.10**

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

**STANDARDS FOR WRITING:**

**Text Types and Purposes:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1**

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3**

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

**Range of Writing:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.10**

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING:**

**Comprehension and Collaboration:**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1**

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2**

Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.3**

Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.