

## 8. BULLIES VICTIMS AND BYSTANDERS

### What to Do

Read the introduction and text excerpt below, then write your thoughts on the facing page.

Bullies and bullying behavior exist not only in schools but in other places as well. The act of bullying by its very nature implies there is someone (the bully) acting in a threatening or hostile way toward someone else (the victim). When bullying occurs it can happen in front of others who witness the event. As you read the following example of bullying on a school bus, think about how the witnesses are affected by the bully and if there is an adult who should be informed about the events.

#### A Bully on the Bus

"Hey four eyes!" Mike yelled from his seat in the back of the bus.

The bus swung into a wide turn away from the school and accelerated. Jeremy Passworth (who Mike calls "four eyes" or "worthless" depending on his mood) was sitting next to me, on the aisle. I looked out the window.

"Grab his glasses, somebody," Mike yelled.

"I'll get them," said Troy, who knelt on the seat in front of us so he could look at Jeremy. "Give me your glasses, four eyes," he said, "and we won't hurt you."

Jeremy sighed and handed his glasses to Troy. "Don't break them," Jeremy said meekly. Troy laughed and put the glasses on—upside down. "These are so thick they are pathetic," he said.

The bus driver yelled, "Sit down and face front." Troy ignored the driver. A lot of kids were kneeling on the seats or leaning out into the aisle to see what would happen. Once Mike threw a kid's homework out the bus window. Jeremy's glasses were his latest toy.

Troy folded the glasses and threw them back to Mike, but he didn't throw them hard enough, and they fell in the aisle. Mike pretended to step on them and picked them up. He threw them back to Troy who threw them to another kid. It was like a game of "keep away," only Jeremy wasn't trying. He had learned not to even try to get his glasses back once Mike and Troy had them.

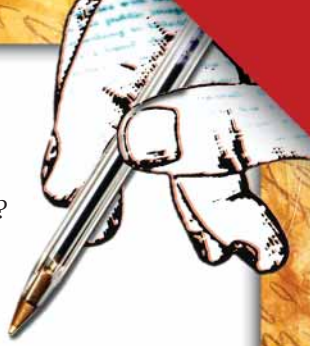
The first stop was Jeremy's. He stood up and hung his backpack over his shoulder. He started walking forward to get off the bus.

"Here," yelled Mike. He slid the glasses down the aisle just as Keara left her seat. She stepped on the glasses, and they made a sickening crunching noise.

I watched her pick up the broken glasses and carry them past the bus driver. She handed the glasses to Jeremy. He looked as if he was going to cry.

"It was an accident," Mike yelled out the window as the bus drove away. Almost everybody on the bus laughed.

### EXPLORE YOUR IDEAS

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1. Who are the bullies in this scene? How do you know?
  2. What choices does Jeremy make in this scene? What other choices could Jeremy have made?
  3. What choices does the narrator make in this scene?
  4. How do you think the narrator and Keara were affected by the bullying of Jeremy?
  5. What would have happened if Keara had told the bus driver about the bullying?