

# HOLIDAY HOUSE

## READING GROUP

### GUIDE



## Table Titans Club

by Scott Kurtz

A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

★“A must-read.”—*Booklist*, Starred Review

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Growing pains, game-play adventure, and twenty-sided dice abound in this new graphic novel series about a middle school *Dungeons & Dragons* club from an Eisner and Harvey Award-winning cartoonist.

Valeria Winters has an easier time finding trouble than making friends. A fantasy-obsessed nerd with the legendary confidence—and temper—of a Valkyrie, Val promises her mom that things will be different at her new school. As if by fate, she meets the Table Titans right away—Alan, Andrew, and Darius, who run the school’s tabletop gaming club. Finally, Val has found her own adventuring party! And even better . . . a place where she belongs.

So when the future of the club is threatened, Val makes it her personal quest to save the Table Titans. She’ll have to roll a natural twenty in charisma to keep her new friends together.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Take a close look at the first page of Chapter One. Why are Valeria’s eyes looking up? Who do you think is speaking to her? Discuss the possible reasons Valeria needs a fresh start.
- In the last panel, Valeria says, “Again” (p. 1). What does this reveal about Valeria? Note the advice that her mother gives her on page 3. In the bottom frame, her mother says, “And be yourself!” (p. 3). In what way is this a contradiction to her mother’s advice?
- Valeria Winters fantasizes to cope with being a new student at Peter Van Pelt Middle School. How do the colors change when Valeria is fantasizing? What is symbolic about the dark colors?
- Mrs. Donnelly, the school administrator, points out Valeria’s previous behavioral problems. How does Valeria’s first day of school offer a hint about her past issues? At what point in the novel does Valeria begin to feel that she belongs? How does this change her behavior?

- Valeria’s strengths are Headstrong, Stalwart, and Loyal. Her flaws, Short Temper and Daydreamer. Cite times in the book that these character traits are evident.
- Discuss why Andrew invites Valeria to the Table Titans Club. How does Alan react when he hears that Valeria has been invited? Why is she a good candidate for membership? What is Darius’s role in the squabble? At what point does Valeria become an important member of the Titans?
- Describe Kate. How is she quick to report to the other kids what she observed about Valeria? Explain the reaction of the other students. Explain why Valeria’s membership in the Titans makes Kate jealous. Explain why Darius says, “[Kate] cares too much about what other people think” (p. 104).
- Mr. Khoo is the sponsor of the Table Titans Club. How do the club members react when they find out that he will no longer sponsor the club? He thinks Mr. Bitner, the wrestling coach, will be the perfect sponsor. What do the club members feel about this choice? How does Mr. Khoo shut down the negative talk about Coach Bitner? Mr. Khoo says that the coach is competitive and passionate. How are these good qualities for the Titans?
- Discuss the deal cut between the Titans and Coach Bitner. None of the boys make the cut. Why does Valeria agree to wrestle Teemo? How does he try to intimidate her? What qualities does Coach Bitner see in Valeria? What is Mrs. Winters’s reaction when she learns that Valeria has joined the wrestling team? Explain why Coach Bitner tries to walk out on the deal with the Titans. How does Val find the courage to confront him?
- What happens when Valeria and Kate are suspended for fighting? Why does Coach Bitner intervene? Explain what he means when he says, “You’re both Cavaliers. Start acting like it” (p. 152).
- Val says that she will tell her mom what happened because they don’t keep secrets from each other. How does Kate respond to this remark? At what point do Val and Kate call a truce? What is Kate’s role in getting Val a second chance on the wrestling team?
- Theme is the overall meaning of a work of literature. What is the theme or themes in this novel? Defend your thoughts. The climax of a novel is the high point or the turning point. Indicate the panel that is the climax of the book. Genre is a category of literature. In what two genres does this novel belong?

## ABOUT THE CREATOR



Photo credit: Scott Kurtz

**Scott Kurtz** is an Eisner and Harvey Award–winning cartoonist who helped pioneer webcomics with his daily feature, *PvP*. Since then, Scott has gone on to produce podcasts, animated series, live roleplaying events, the middle grade comics series *Table Titans Club* and much more. Scott can be found hiding from the coronavirus in the Pacific Northwest but occasionally leaves his studio to enjoy the dog park or visit his family. Find him @pvponline and @tabletitans. Visit his website at [ToonHoundStudios.com](http://ToonHoundStudios.com).