

educator's guide

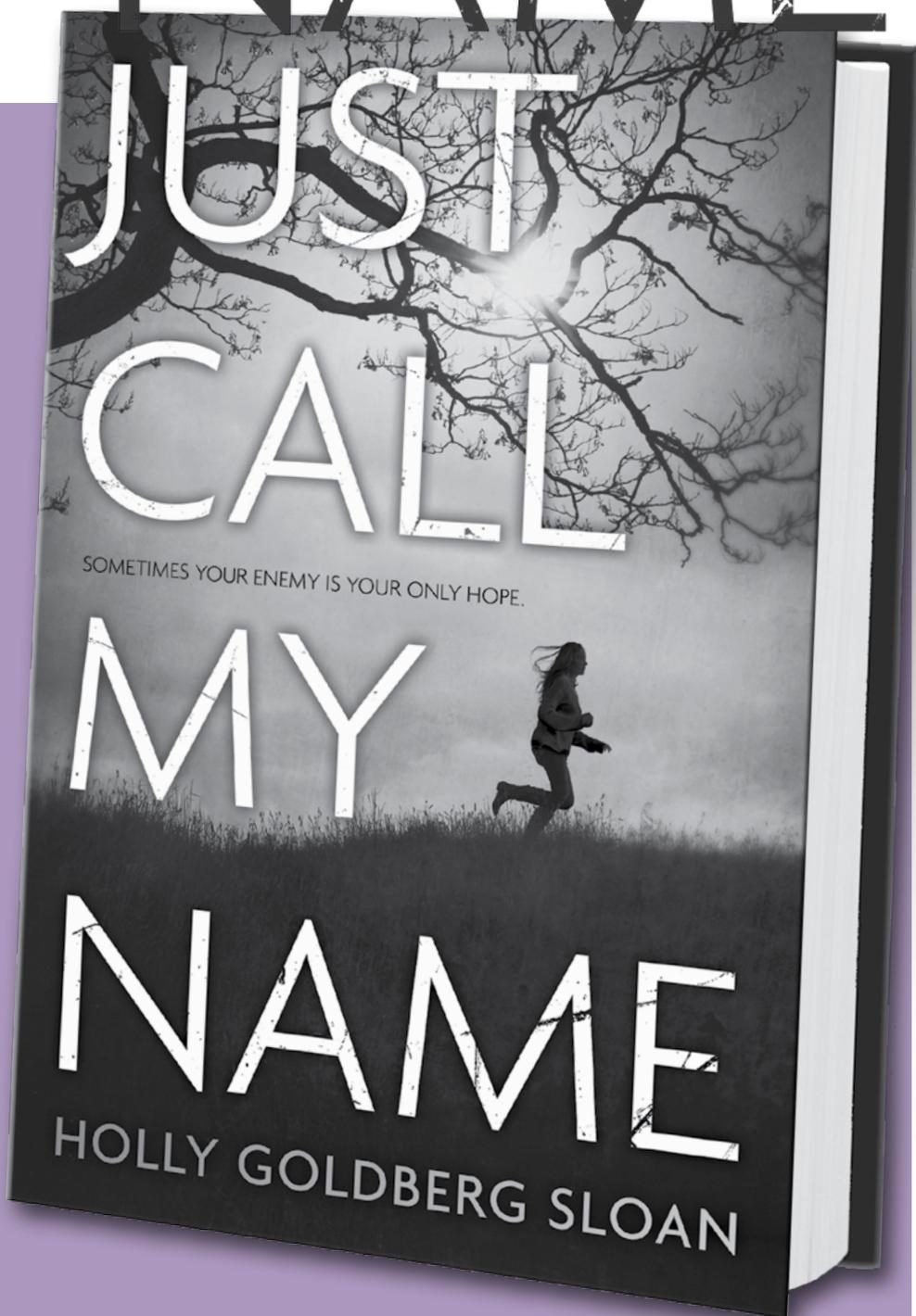
# JUST CALL MY NAME

## Curriculum connections

- ❖ Friendship
- ❖ Relationships
- ❖ Emotional Health

**Ages: 12 & Up**

By  
**Holly  
Goldberg  
Sloan**



## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

**Focus:** families, homelessness, analyzing themes, personal response to literature

### Language Arts

It is often said that we are born into one family, but we eventually find or create our own families. Holly Goldberg Sloan examines both the families we are born into and the families that we find in *Just Call My Name*. Destiny, Sam, and Riddle are from broken families, but find families with the Bells and with each other.

Design a family tree that includes both the family you were born into and the family that you found or created. Include stepfamilies, friends, teachers, coaches, neighbors, or anyone else that you consider family. Decorate your family tree with photos, quotes, illustrations, and personal artifacts. On the back of your family tree, describe why you consider these people part of your found family.

### Art

Holly Goldberg Sloan explores several universal concepts in *Just Call My Name* including:

- Love
- Trust
- Family
- Honor

Select one of these themes (or choose your own). Design a creative piece such as a collage, poem, song, or video that expresses your definition of this concept and your personal experiences.

Select one of the four main teens in *Just Call My Name*: Emily, Sam, Bobby, or Destiny. Create a similar art piece portraying their definition of this concept. Use your impressions of the character and text evidence to support your creation.

### Social Studies

According to the National Health Care for the Homeless Council (nhchc.org), a homeless individual is defined as “an individual who lacks a stable primary residence.” This may include families and children who may live in shelters, abandoned houses and buildings, vehicles, or “double up” with friends or family members because they do not have a permanent home.

According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, one in 45 children experience homelessness in America each year (familyhomelessness.org). Some homeless children, like Sam, Riddle, and Destiny, come from dysfunctional homes with parents who could not care for them properly, but other factors influence family and child homelessness including job loss, health issues, and the death of one or more caregivers.

Investigate issues that relate to homelessness and create a presentation sharing your findings. The goal of your presentation should be to increase awareness of homelessness, address misconceptions, and provide information and support to members of your school community.

### In creating your presentation consider:

How does legislation like the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the HEARTH Act protect and provide for homeless individuals?

What factors may cause families and children to become homeless?

What services does your local community provide to support homeless children and their families?

Talk with counselors, nurses, teachers, and administrators at your school. What is your district or school’s plan to identify and care for homeless students and families in your area?

What services might homeless students at your school require? What resources are in place? What resources are still needed?

What surprised you about your investigations?

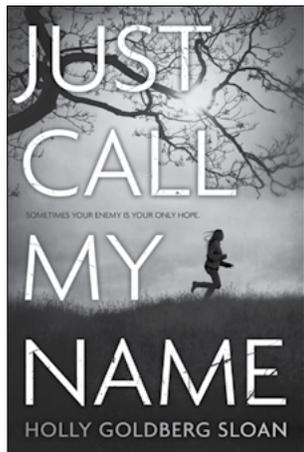
What questions do you still have?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Focus:** character traits and motivations, personal response to literature

1. Although they welcome him eagerly into their lives, Sam remains wary of the Bells and their “motives” for taking in Riddle and him. Why is Sam so suspicious of his new life with the Bells?
2. How does Clarence’s behavior in prison reveal that he suffers from mental illness?
3. How do Clarence’s interactions with his public defender set the wheels in motion for his escape plan?
4. Emily and Sam are moving from adolescence into adulthood. What challenges do they face as they make this transition into adult life? How are these challenges similar to yours and how are they different?
5. Emily and Jared Bell seem ordinary when compared to Sam, Riddle, Destiny and even Bobby Ellis. How does their normalcy appeal to the other children in the story?
6. Jared feels overlooked by Emily and his parents because the Border brothers have come into their lives, thinking, “That happens to really happy people. They don’t notice the little things (p.81).” What “little things” are the Bells overlooking? What little things have you overlooked when you were happy?
7. A foil in literature is a character who contrasts with another character (often the protagonist) to highlight the other character’s qualities. Bobby Ellis and Destiny Verbeck appear as foils to Sam and Emily. Compare and contrast either Sam and Bobby or Emily and Destiny. What characteristics do these people share? How do they differ?
8. What positive qualities do you see in Bobby and Destiny that the Emily and Sam do not appreciate in the beginning of the book?
9. Why do Emily and Sam seem so insecure in their relationship? Have you ever felt insecure about a romantic relationship or friendship? What did you do to work through this insecurity? What advice would you give Emily and Sam?
10. Sam says, “Destiny was not what she appeared to be and that was unsettling (p. 109).” Why does Sam think that Destiny is trouble for him?
11. Emily remains protective of Sam and sees her family and herself as stronger than Sam and Riddle. After Sam arranges her new job to suit his own agenda, Emily rethinks this viewpoint, wondering, “It was possible that the strong weren’t really that strong. And perhaps, the weak were tougher than it seemed.” Who would you identify as strong or weak characters in *Just Call My Name*? Identify one strong character and one weak character in the book and explain why you feel this way about each.
12. Why does Destiny laugh when Sam tells her that he loves Emily and that he’s part of a family now?
13. Clarence is a career criminal who eluded capture for years and successfully committed many crimes. During his escape, Clarence employs his experiences as a thief and his personality to help him get away and track down the boys—tricking the guard, the man selling a gun, and Lindy Braverman, the woman he romances and robs. Identify four skills or qualities that Clarence employs in his escape. Do you find any of these talents admirable? Why or why not?
14. Holly Goldberg Sloan creates well-developed minor characters like Bitzie Evans, Denny Piercey, Lindy Braverman, and K.B. Walton. Why does she invest so much effort in these minor characters? Select one minor character (one listed or another of your choice) and explain why this person is important to the story.
15. Although Sam and Bobby join forces to rescue Emily, it is ultimately Destiny and Emily who save themselves. Why is this important for both the girls and the boys in the story? Predict how this event might change the relationship between:
  - Sam and Bobby
  - Sam and Destiny
  - Sam and Emily
  - Emily and Destiny
  - Emily and Bobby
  - Bobby and Destiny
16. Thinking about Destiny, Emily compares her to new shoes, thinking, “...new shoes hurt at first. And so, she decided, did some new people. Even ones you wanted around. Even ones that saved your life.” Who is someone in your life that “hurt like new shoes” when you first met them, but you appreciate them more now? What brought about this change in your feelings toward them?

## about the book



### *Just Call My Name*

HC 978-0-316-12281-8

Also available as an e-book

**TRUST IS THE HARDEST THING TO FIND...  
AND THE EASIEST THING TO LOSE.**

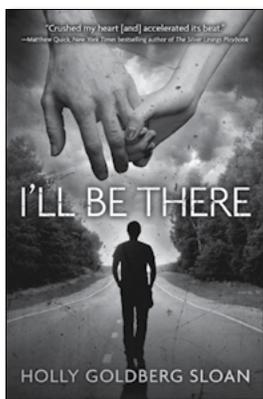
Emily Bell has it all—or so she thinks.

She's in love with a boy named Sam, and this summer is destined to be the best time they've ever known. No one suspects that Sam's violent father, who blames the Bell family for his incarceration, is planning a jailbreak.

While he plots his revenge, Sam and Emily's idyllic romance is under fire from a charismatic new girl in town with her sights set on Sam, and Emily begins to question the loyalty of the person she thought she could trust most. But when true danger comes knocking, her only hope for survival may be from the most unexpected place.

The happily-ever-after of Holly Goldberg Sloan's acclaimed debut, *I'll Be There*, is turned on its head in this riveting, emotional drama about friends, enemies, and how those roles can shift in a matter of moments.

## also by *Holly Goldberg Sloan*



### *I'll Be There*

HC 978-0-316-12279-5

PB 978-0-316-12276-4

Also available as an e-book

★ “[A] life-affirming exploration of the subtleties of love, compassion, and relationships....Like the song it was named for, this book is hard to get out of your head.”

— *The Horn Book*, starred review

★ “Illustrates how we are all connected in big and small, positive and negative ways....[This] riveting story will keep readers interested and guessing until the end.”

— *School Library Journal*, starred review

★ “Sloan builds characters rich with depth and realism....A terrific read, quick to capture the audience, this book will make readers sing the melody in their hearts.”

— VOYA, starred review

## about the author



Holly Goldberg Sloan is the author of the acclaimed *I'll Be There*, which was published in 21 languages around the world, and *Counting by 7s*, a *New York Times* bestseller, an IndieBound bestseller, an NPR Best Book of the Year, a *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year, and an Amazon Best Book of the Year. She has also written and directed a number of successful family feature films. Holly was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and spent her childhood living in California; the Netherlands; Istanbul; Washington, DC; and Oregon. The mother of two sons, she lives with her husband in Santa Monica, California.

Her website is [HollyGoldbergSloan.com](http://HollyGoldbergSloan.com) and her Twitter handle is [@HGoldbergSloan](https://twitter.com/HGoldbergSloan).

