



## TEEN SERVICES COMMUNITY SERVICE TEEN BOOK REVIEW

# *Solo* By Kwame Alexander and Mary Rand Hess Reviewed by Dan Yankow

**Name:** Dan Yankow

**Grade:** 11

**Book Title:** Solo

**Author:** Kwame Alexander and Mary Rand Hess

**Number of Pages:** 457

**Rating (on a scale of 1-5):** 5/5

### Character List:

- **Blade Morrison:** The son of washed-up rock and roll star Rutherford Morrison. Despite not wanting to be like his father, he is a guitar player and a singer, just like his father. When his Hollywood life starts to fall apart because of his father's antics, he goes to Africa to seek a new beginning and his long-lost family.
- **Rutherford Morrison:** Blade's father. A former rock star turned alcoholic. He deeply cares for the people in his life, although the way that he shows his affection is questionable. When he acts out and causes his son's life to fall apart, he vows to patch up their relationship.
- **Storm Morrison:** Blade's older sister. She aspires to be like her father and avidly follows in his footsteps, creating mixtapes, hosting huge parties, and making her own music. When Blade leaves on his journey of self-realization, she keeps him updated on their father's road to sobriety.
- **Joy:** An African woman that is the first to greet Blade upon coming to Africa. She is an independent woman that has several jobs in the village that she lives in. She knows what Blade is looking for and how to get to it.
- **Sunny Morrison:** Blade's mother. The person that Blade was closest to in his family, before she tragically died because of an allergic reaction while Rutherford was performing. Before she died, she wrote a letter to Blade many years ago that holds the secrets to Blade's past.

### Review:

Blade Morrison has a life that many 17-year-olds can only dream of. He has a huge house, he can make friends with a strum on his guitar, he has a beautiful girlfriend, he is salutatorian, and he is the son of famous rock star Rutherford Morrison. However, Rutherford is in and out of rehab and jail, which makes Blade's relationship with his girlfriend, Chapel, forbidden because of her harsh parents. Just like his parents and his sister, Blade embraces the musical blood that courses through his veins, but he hates the paparazzi that make his life someone else's entertainment. When his sister unveils the secret of Blade's past out of pure rage, he goes searching for answers about his unclear past. Now, he must abandon his girl, his family, and his Hollywood life to go all the way across the world to search for the only real family he has left.

This book has a style unlike anything that has ever been written before. Unlike most books, this book is written in stanzas, just like lyrics to a song. Due to this writing style, the reader feels deeply immersed into the story that the book

tells, about grief, loss, and the value of family. This book is not afraid to kill off characters, no matter what age they are or what significance they have to the story. Although this book is aimed toward the teen demographic, it is great for anyone who really doesn't know where their life is going and feel lost. If I had to pick one problem that I had with the book, it is that the writing style causes the book to go very fast. A lot of the exposition goes very fast and we only have a small amount of time to get to know these characters. Despite this, *Solo* is different from any book that I have ever read. The journey that Blade goes on is an emotional ride, and one of the best books written in 2017.