

TEACHING GUIDE

HUNTED

By Cheryl Rainfield

About the Book:

In a society where those with paranormal powers are feared and oppressed, Caitlyn is on the run. In spite of all she's been taught, she lets down her guard and finds both a true friend and a boy she falls hard for. But when the person she most wants to trust tempts her with a plot to avenge the wrongs Paras have suffered, she must decide how much she's willing to risk for what's right.

About the Author:

Whether writing fantasy or realistic fiction, Cheryl Rainfield writes from the heart. In *Hunted*, she draws on her experiences as a ritual abuse survivor to show what it's like to live with oppression, torture, and threats – and to show how to break free. She is also the author of *Scars*, an edgy, realistic, and hopeful novel about a teen survivor of sexual abuse who uses self-harm to cope. For more about Cheryl Rainfield and her work, including free resources, visit www.CherylRainfield.com and her blog www.CherylRainfield.com/blog.



Thematic Connections:

- Oppression
- Trust
- Bigotry
- Courage
- Power
- Control
- Revenge



Before Reading

Write about one or more of the following questions in your journal:

- What do you think causes one person to oppress another? What do you think causes one group to oppress another group? Include examples as you explore these questions.
- How do you know whom to trust? Have there been times when you've been betrayed by someone you thought you could trust?
- What does it mean to be a bigot? In what ways do you think people justify their bigotry?
- Why do you think people fear those who are different?
- Under what circumstances is revenge justified?
- How do you know when you're truly in control of a situation? When is control necessary, and when does control go too far?
- Explore the connections between power and control. Are there instances where you could have one without the other?
- What constitutes courage? Describe the most courageous person you know.



Discussion Guide

Knowledge:

- Whom does the government require to register?
- What is Para Cleansing Day?
- Where do Caitlyn and her mom decide to live?
- What is Teen Para?
- Who is Daniel?
- Who is Rachel?
- What first attracts Caitlyn to Alex?
- For Caitlyn, what is the best part of the motel?
- Who is Mrs. Vespa?
- Where does Daniel first reveal himself to Caitlyn?
- What happens to Paul?
- Who is Netta?
- What happens to Caitlyn's nose when she pushes her powers too hard?
- Who is Ilene?
- What does Daniel do to Alex?

- Who is Mr. Temple?
- Where is the key to the auditorium hidden?
- Who is Emily?
- When reporters descend after the fire, whom does Caitlyn reach for in her mind, begging her to come to the school?
- Who helps Caitlyn to convince her mother to let her stay one more day?
- Where in the school does Caitlyn hide from the ParaTroopers as she tries to turn Daniel's thoughts?
- Who is the Para-Reaper?

Understanding:

- What is a Government Para, also known as a Para-slave? How does Caitlyn sense them?
- Why are Caitlyn and her mother on the run?
- What led to the death of Caitlyn's father?
- What do Caitlyn and her mother do to try to blend in?
- What is the Underground?
- What does Caitlyn's anonymizer do?
- What makes Caitlyn think there's a "rat"?
- How does Becca treat Caitlyn?
- Paul is a telekinetic. What does that mean he can do?
- Why is Rachel sometimes persecuted?
- Who does John turn out to be?
- What family situation caused Becca to hate Paras?
- What does Caitlyn discover about Mr. Arnold that makes her feel sympathy for him?
- Why does Caitlyn keep the secret about Daniel from her mother for so long?
- Before Caitlyn, why has Alex shielded himself from relationships?
- What hand sign is used for a Para?
- What does Daniel teach Caitlyn to do?
- What does Daniel want from Caitlyn?
- What is Daniel's ultimate goal?
- What caused Caitlyn's mother to lose access to her Para gift?
- How does Caitlyn explain sensing the fire to the authorities?
- What is Daniel's goal in setting up the auditorium fire?
- How does Caitlyn's mother discover that Daniel is alive?
- What is the Authority?
- Why does Caitlyn ask for her mother's copper necklace?
- In what way have books strengthened Mrs. Vespa?
- Why did Daniel put a block of cobalt in Caitlyn's backpack?
- As Caitlyn and Daniel battle in their minds, why are people around them growing weak?

- What does Caitlyn discover about Becca, Daniel, and Mr. Temple?
- What causes the gashes on Caitlyn's skin?
- Ilene offers serum to Caitlyn. What does it do?
- Describe one of the memories Caitlyn finds in Daniel's mind.
- How does Caitlyn's mother contribute to her success with Daniel?

Application:

- Compare and contrast the government portrayed in the book with the government in our society. Include your observations on the attitudes of citizens toward the government.
- Discuss at least three ways change could come to a society like the one described in the book. Which way do you think is best, and why?
- Caitlyn says, "You don't feel much like living if you can't be yourself." Use examples from the book and from your own life to discuss this problem as well as its solution.
- In today's society, would you like to have Caitlyn's Para gift? Why or why not?
- Putting thoughts in someone else's head makes Caitlyn uneasy. Under what circumstances, if any, would this sort of mind control be justified? Explain.
- "Sometimes you have to make sacrifices for the greater good," Daniel says. Explain how he applies this concept, and then discuss under what circumstances you might agree.
- Discuss at least two instances in which Rachel stands by Caitlyn in spite of the risk. In what situations should loyalty prevail over personal safety?
- Daniel tells Becca to think angry thoughts around Caitlyn because this is a telepath's greatest vulnerability. Is this true for Normals, too? Why or why not? Use at least one example from your own experience to defend your position.
- What happens when Caitlyn reveals she is Teen Para? Under what circumstances is it good to reveal a secret? Use at least one "real life" example to explain.
- Though the government in the book is oppressive, individuals are still allowed to openly protest. How does this affect the outcome of the story? How important is the right to protest? Include at least one "real life" example in your discussion.

Analysis:

- Analyze Caitlyn's paranormal powers. Discuss at least three. What do they allow her to do that others can't?
- What are the limitations on Caitlyn's paranormal powers? Discuss at least three.
- Why does Caitlyn say her mother is worse than a Normal?

- What is the role of the ParaTroopers? Without them, would the Paras still be oppressed? Why or why not?
- There are other Paras at Caitlyn's school. Why don't they befriend each other?
- How does the motel owner change? What factors do you think contribute to her change?
- "Normals are devious," Caitlyn says early in the book. What does this tell you about her and about the situation she's in?
- In what ways does Daniel stir up hatred of Paras? Why does he do this when he's a Para himself?
- Caitlyn says Daniel fights with a sword, while all she has is a shield. Explain how she fights with a shield.
- How do Rachel's experiences as a queer teen help her understand Caitlyn's situation?

Synthesis:

- What reasons do Normals give for regulating and oppressing Paras?
- What does Caitlyn mean when she says she feels "like a visitor in my own life"?
- Besides oppression, what are the disadvantages of Caitlyn's Paranormal gift? Discuss at least three.
- How did the riots contribute to the oppression of Paras?
- What do you think Caitlyn most fears? Defend your answer.
- "Why do Normals hate us so much?" Caitlyn asks. Provide at least three reasons in answer to her question.
- Caitlyn's mother says Caitlyn's father was a hero. In what ways is Caitlyn also a hero? Name at least three.
- Describe how Alex's attitude toward Paras shifts.
- How far in the future do you think this story occurs? Give at least three pieces of evidence to support your position.

Evaluation:

- How likely is the book's premise involving Paras and Normals? Use at least three examples from the book to defend your position.
- When Caitlyn defaces the poster, is she being courageous or foolish? Explain your position.
- Do you agree with Caitlyn's decision to hold back information from her mother? Why or why not? Use specific examples from the book to support your position.
- What factors caused Daniel to turn toward evil? Discuss at least two. Do you agree that these factors would cause such a change? Why or why not?

- By the end of the book, Caitlyn and her mom agree that Daniel is not the same person anymore. What caused him to change? Do you think these forces are strong enough to cause so much change? What hope is there for Daniel?
- Why do you think Daniel was willing to hurt even his own sister to achieve his goal? Do you find this realistic? Include at least one “real life” example to support your position.



Projects

- **Euphemisms:** Euphemisms like “cleansing” are often used in oppressive situations. Working either individually or in a group, list the euphemisms in this story and research euphemisms in real-life oppressive societies, such as Hitler’s Germany and the Soviet regime. Prepare a visual that summarizes your findings and present to the class.
- **Handbook:** Writing as Caitlyn, revise and expand the Para Survival Handbook (see the link below under Hunted Goodies). Include an “advanced” section with at least four examples from *Hunted*.
- **Music:** Research the German song “Die Gedanken sind Frei” (“My Thoughts are Free”). Play the recording and discuss the lyrics and history with your class. Apply the lyrics to the situation in *Hunted*. To what extent are thoughts free in this story? Are the thoughts of some people more free than others? How do Caitlyn’s apprehensions about mind control relate to this song?
- **Logic:** Daniel rationalizes his lust for power, convincing himself that the evil he pursues is actually good. Chart the reasons he gives to justify his actions, and show what’s wrong with each of them. Show also how forces other than logic influence his thinking. You might also include information on the Stockholm Syndrome.
- **Research:** Working individually or in a group, research an oppressive society from recent history, such as Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, South African apartheid, or Iraq under Hussein. Chart examples of how oppression was accomplished in the society alongside similar examples from the book. For instance, the book mentions “cleansing.” Was there also a form of “cleansing” in the society you researched? Present your findings to the class.
- **Research:** In her note at the end of the book, the author explains that her experiences as a survivor of ritual abuse helped shape parts of the story. Using the resources provided in the book, research ritual abuse. Then

consider which elements of this oppressive practice are evident in the story. Present your findings to the class.

- **Journal:** Taking the point of view of either Caitlyn, her mother, her brother, or her father, write a first-person account of what happened on the day Caitlyn's father was killed.
- **Letter:** Caitlyn wonders how Normals can trust each other without truly being with each other the way Paras can. Write her a letter in which you explain how Normals can trust each other. Include an example from your own experience and also one from the book.
- **Nominate:** Nominate Caitlyn for a heroism award. Include specific reasons and examples from the story.
- **Create:** In the final scene, Para supporters gather with signs. Make at least three signs that you think would be most effective in swaying public opinion toward Paras. Use lettering and design for maximum effect.
- **Journal:** Revisit your prewriting. What new thoughts do you have after reading the book? Include examples to show how your thinking has changed.



Author Interview

Q. In writing the book, you drew on your experiences as a survivor of ritual abuse. In what ways can the process of writing about an experience help with healing? Are there reasons why you chose fiction over nonfiction to tell this part of your story?

A. Writing can help healing in so many ways. When you write, you get out onto paper what you've been through—you delve into the emotion of it and how it impacted you, including everything you saw and felt and thought and did—and this helps you process what happened. It also helps getting it outside of yourself, so it's not just trapped inside your head. In a way writing is like being heard—even more so when you share it with someone—and we all need to be heard, especially about painful things. When you write about a painful experience, you can also change the ending. I've done that in all my books so far—created a happier ending, where the abusers got some kind of appropriate response, and the survivor or wronged person got some kind of justice. In writing, I can save people who I couldn't save before, and I can also give some hardened people a bit more insight. It's very therapeutic, and I think it helps encourage hope and healing.



I think fiction makes it easier for many people to hear about and have compassion for others who've gone through extreme painful or traumatic experiences, experiences that people might not otherwise fully understand, or might judge. I think fiction helps encourage greater compassion and understanding about painful experiences without appearing to teach, without readers feeling like they're learning or being lectured to, because in fiction, you can get right inside the character's emotions and experiences. Fiction is a fantastic way to help others "walk a mile in someone else's shoes." And at the same time, fiction can encourage, inspire, and bring hope. I try to help people understand some of the things I've been through, things I know others have been through as well, all while telling an entertaining and compelling story, and staying true to my heart.

The torture and abuse I went through is so extreme and horrific that I try to put only fragments of that experience into each of my books. I don't want to overwhelm readers or turn them away. I would like to someday write a novel that encompasses more of the ritual abuse and cult experience, but I'm not yet sure how to do that in a way that people can hear. But I put a lot more of my experience of ritual abuse and torture into HUNTED than I have into any other book so far, and for me, that was a powerful thing. It's a powerful, healing thing to be heard.

Q. In the video on your website

(<http://www.cherylrainfield.com/bookGoodies.php?title=HUNTED>), you explain that you wished for paranormal powers as a way to know what was coming and possibly lessen the hurt. Do you still wish you had those powers? What downside do you see to paranormal abilities?

- A.** Writing HUNTED helped me see how hard having telepathy and empathy could be. I think in some ways I'm a lot like Caitlyn—I am very sensitive to people's emotions (I had to be, to survive the abuse), and I sometimes find that overwhelming. I always want to save or help someone in distress, the way I wanted to when other kids were being tortured or abused with me. Like Caitlyn, I've always tried to fight back against oppression. But when people around me have strong emotions or reactions, even if they're suppressing them, I am impacted, and that can sometimes be debilitating, as Caitlyn found. I don't think I want or need telepathy any more, since I'm no longer being abused or tortured. I think I'd rather have the ability to heal. (smiling)

I think paranormal abilities would take a lot of emotional, mental, and psychic energy, and they would especially take a toll on those who push themselves hard the way Caitlyn does. It would be important to find a way to rejuvenate, just as it is for each of us “Normals.” And then, of course, there’s societal judgment, or just dealing with other people’s reactions. It’s hard to be different, especially if people aren’t accepting or are judgmental.

Q. What hope do you see for someone like Daniel?

I think it depends on the individual: their past experience, how much vulnerability and compassion they still have inside them, and how hard they’ve shut themselves off from that. When the person is part of a cult and has moved from being tortured, abused, and mind-controlled to doing that to others, there is less and less hope. If that person enjoys hurting and controlling others, then there’s even less hope. But if that person has held on to who they really are inside rather than who their abusers tried to make them become, then there is hope. I believe that we make choices about how we act—whether or not to abuse or control others, whether or not to have compassion, whether or not to help make the world a better place.

I hope that someone like Daniel would reach deep inside himself and remember how he was wounded; remember how truly, wrenchingly horrible that was; and realize that he doesn’t want to inflict that on anyone else, no matter what the reasoning. And I hope that someone like Daniel would work to free himself, to get himself safe, and to find compassion not only for others but also for himself.



HUNTED Goodies

Download a free short story tie-in to HUNTED—PinPoint: A HUNTED Bonus Short Story: <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/98175>

You can download more HUNTED goodies here:
<http://www.cherylrainfield.com/hunted-goodies.html>

Including a Postcard short story, a questionnaire, a Para Survival Handbook, a ParaWatch Guide, a “newspaper article,” the book trailer, and more.