

# BOOKNOTES

READERS GUIDE

## thematic connections

Mystery & Suspense • Fairness,  
Justice & Equality • Poverty •  
Contemporary Issues/Social  
Problems • Making Choices

Grades 7 up

## about the book

It's 2035, and the gulf between wealthy and poor has widened. Kidnapping has become a booming business and Charity finds herself in a perplexing abduction.

In the year 2035, a vast socio-economic chasm exists between the haves and the have-nots. Thus, children of wealthy parents are schooled in established kidnapping rules. Charity Meyers has been trained how to act "appropriately" if she is kidnapped, but when it actually happens, nothing proceeds according to the protocol. She watches her father die in a helicopter crash, sees her beloved housekeeper chased into the woods, and witnesses her best friend risking her life trying to find her. But all is not what it seems, and when Charity discovers the true identity of her kidnapper, she is forced to make a life-changing decision.



Alfred A. Knopf HC: 978-0-375-83636-7 (0-375-83636-5)  
GLB: 978-0-375-93636-4 (0-375-93636-X)

"I believe that the rendering of useful service is the common duty of mankind and that only in the purifying fire of sacrifice is the dross of selfishness consumed and the greatness of the human soul set free."

—John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

## pre-reading activity

In *Taken*, people use cash due to the failure of technology to protect online credit. They put microchips into their children due to the failure of other technologies to keep them safe. Divide students into two groups and ask one group to explain how technology makes our lives safer and easier. Ask the other group to explain how technology contributes to our lack of safety and makes our lives more difficult. Then have the groups debate the issue. After the debate, have each student work with a partner to write and present a public service announcement for some aspect of technology and its benefits or dangers.

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# questions

- Charity looks at her vidscreen to read the papers she has written on “The World Credit Crash,” “Metric at Midnight, 2031,” and “The Kidnapping Industry.” Is it feasible that our society could birth such issues in just a few decades? What current news events could be a forerunner for these problems?
- Dessi confronts Charity about her relationship with Victoria and Albert, saying that they are nothing more than slaves to her. (pp. 46–48) He presents some valid arguments, but Charity defends her feelings for the most part. Does Dessi or Charity make the better argument? Why?
- On Kid-to-Kid Day, the children from the Highlands must have their ID cards checked. How do the ID cards protect the wealthy? Why are they difficult to obtain? Are there equivalent issues today?
- The children in the town of Mangrove do not openly welcome the kids from the Highlands. Why do the kids from Mangrove resent the Highlands kids? How could the Highlands kids have helped the situation? What do they do to make it worse? How does Mickie Meyers gloss over the town’s anger in her show?
- Dr. Meyers quotes John D. Rockefeller, Jr., several times in the book. “The rendering of useful service is the common duty of mankind. And only in the purifying fire of sacrifice is the dross of selfishness consumed.” (p. 101) How does this quote move Dr. Meyers to action? How does it help Charity make her decision to go with her father?

# for group discussion

- When Charity asks Albert what his real name is, he tells her Mantlé, which means liar. Why does he give himself this name? What is he lying about?
- Patience and Hopewell show amazing courage when they take to the streets of Mangrove to distribute fliers about Charity's kidnapping. Why would they knowingly put themselves in danger? What happens as a result of their bravery?
- Is the logic behind Dr. Meyers's plan to kidnap Charity valid? How would Mickie Meyers have reacted if he and Charity had simply disappeared?
- In the end, Dessi gets what he wants—an education to become a doctor. What does he have to relinquish in order to accept the offer? Does he “sell-out” to the masters? Why or why not?
- When Charity makes a break from her old life, leaving Victoria is the most emotionally difficult aspect. Why does Charity feel it necessary to say good-bye to Victoria? Is Victoria's reaction to Charity what you expected? Will they see each other in the future?

## a step further

Almost every character in *Taken* has a choice to make; they must all decide, “Does the end justify the means?” Ask students to select a character and chart the character's decisions. Ask them to determine if the character's motives justify his or her actions. Then ask the students to present a persuasive speech, assuming the voice of the character and convincing the others in the class to agree with them.

Most people neither have access to nor knowledge of the most advanced developments in technology. Ask students to research the future of technology and speculate how it will affect them personally—smart houses and cars, global tracking devices, vidscreens, and other devices. Have them make a visual aid to display a variety of technological advancements and explain how and when society will have access.

## related titles

### by theme



### Ostrich Eye

**Beth Cooley**

Divorce & Single Parent Families  
Family & Relationships  
Contemporary Issues/Social Problems  
Love & Romance

Grades 7 up

Laurel-Leaf PB: 978-0-440-23828-7

(0-440-23828-5)

Delacorte Press HC: 978-0-385-73106-5

(0-385-73106-X)



### After the First Death

**Robert Cormier**

Contemporary Issues/  
Social Problems • Making Choices  
Morals & Values in Conflict

Laurel-Leaf PB: 978-0-440-20835-8

(0-440-20835-1)



### Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy

**Gary D. Schmidt**

Fairness, Justice & Equality  
Courage & Honor

Yearling PB: 978-0-553-49495-2

(0-553-49495-3)



### The Gospel According to Larry

**Janet Tashjian**

Contemporary Issues/Social Problems  
Morals & Values in Conflict

Laurel-Leaf PB: 978-0-440-23792-1

(0-440-23792-0)

## about the author

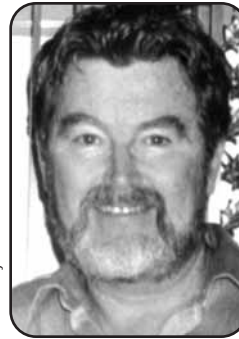


Photo by Pamela Bloor

**Edward Bloor** was born and raised in New Jersey. A former public school teacher, he has found time while working as a textbook editor at a major publishing house to pen four well-received novels for teen readers: *Crusader*, *Story Time*, *London Calling*, and his award-winning debut novel *Tangerine*. He lives in Florida with his wife, son, and daughter. Visit [www.edwardbloor.net](http://www.edwardbloor.net) for more information.

## internet resources

### Wikipedia: Kidnapping

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kidnap](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kidnap)  
Definition and scope of kidnapping

### CureZone.com

[curezone.com/art/read.asp?ID=146&db=1&CO=11](http://curezone.com/art/read.asp?ID=146&db=1&CO=11)  
An article about moving toward a cashless society

### Covert Action Quarterly

[mediafilter.org/CAQ/CAQ56border.html](http://mediafilter.org/CAQ/CAQ56border.html)  
Information about United States and Mexico border security

## on the web

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