

# A Teacher's Guide to **WANT TO GO PRIVATE?**

Written By Sarah Darer Littman



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## **Kudos for Want to Go Private?**

“WANT TO GO PRIVATE? is a bold investigation of a potentially lethal, if common mixture for teen girls: emotional immaturity, technology and emerging sexuality.”  
~ **LA Times**

“Fast paced and very suspenseful! Abby's world feels dangerously real.”  
~ **Jay Asher**, New York Times bestselling author of *Thirteen Reasons Why*

“A harrowing cautionary tale about the dangers that lurk online...Littman demonstrates how easy it is to fall under the sway of a charming predator.”  
~ **Publishers Weekly**

## Story Summary

When Abby meets Luke online, she can't believe her luck. He's nice. He's funny. He listens to her *and* he thinks she's pretty. He even gets jealous of other guys, which is adorable. Without Luke, Abby's not sure how she'd make it through her first year of high school. Everyone, including her mom and her best friend, Faith, tells Abby that if she just made more of an effort, she'd be having fun instead of dreading each and every day as if it's a prison sentence. But there's nothing fun about being the lowest link in the social food chain.

Abby knows she's not supposed to chat with random guys online. But Luke isn't random, and he isn't a stranger. Best of all, he loves her. So what if she never goes out with her friends anymore and her grades are slipping? All she needs is Luke. Luke is her secret, and she's his—it's perfect that way. So when Luke suggests that they meet each other in person, Abby agrees. And then she's gone. Missing. Without a trace. And everyone is left to put together the pieces. If they don't, they'll never see Abby again.

## About the Author



Photo by Grenex Media

Sarah Darer Littman's widely praised first novel, *Confessions of a Closet Catholic*, won the 2006 Sydney Taylor Book Award. She is also the author of *Purge* and *Life, After*. In her "grown up" life, Sarah is a columnist for Hearst newspapers and the online site CT News Junkie. She lives in Connecticut with her family. Visit her online at: [www.sarahdarerlittman.com](http://www.sarahdarerlittman.com).

## Teacher's Guide Contents

### 1. Pre-Reading Activities

Activities and discussion starters to activate students' prior knowledge.

### 2. Chapter Guides

Chapter guides may be used to encourage whole class discussions, lead teacher-guided reading groups, or to provide structure for students working either in cooperative small groups or independently. **The guide is not meant to be assigned to students in its entirety.**

Each chapter guide includes:

- ▶ **Vocabulary** that might be new for your students, especially for ELL students (English Languages Learners). Choose a few words from each list and guide students in using context clues to infer meanings.
- ▶ **Discussion Starters** inspired by Bloom's Taxonomy that lead students from basic comprehension to higher level thinking skills.
- ▶ **Predicting** where students are invited to make predictions based on their analysis of the characters' traits in the story.

**The chapter guides address the following curriculum standards:**

#### *Students will:*

- √ Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- √ Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- √ Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- √ Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings
- √ Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it, and manipulate time create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

√ Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare)

√ Demonstrate the responsible and legal use of computers and other technologies, recognizing the attendant social and ethical issues.

### 3. Culminating Activities

Following the chapter guides, you'll find suggested culminating projects that address the eight multiple intelligences identified by Dr. Howard Gardner: Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Logical-Mathematical, Musical, Naturalistic, Verbal-Linguistic and Visual-Spatial. Consider having students choose a culminating activity that best matches their learning styles.

### 4. Author Interview with SARAH DARER LITTMAN

## Pre-Reading

1. Look at the title and cover. Who might be asking these questions? How do the nature of the questions change from the first to the last?

2. Read the book's cover blurb. What is this story about? Make a t-chart with the background knowledge you'll bring to the story and questions you have before reading (see below):

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>What I already know about Internet Safety:</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Questions and predictions I have about the story:</i></p>

3. Have you ever “met” someone online? What was your experience like?

4. What Internet rules does your family have at home? Rate each rule on the following scale:

Ridiculous	Fair Enough	Necessary

5. What would you say to a friend who's connected with someone online and wants to meet him or her in person? Is there a safe way to do this?

## Chapter 1

### August 31

#### Word Study

clique	ambivalent	PSAT	tag-team
pleading	magnanimous	accentuate	umpteenth
bemused	haphazard	vulnerable	verdict
DNA	ragged on	dampener	customary
appraising	emo	finagle	rummaging
potential	putrid	accessorize	nun's habit

#### Discussion Starters

1. How do Abby and Faith feel about starting high school? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Abby react when Faith gives her a make-over? (*comprehension*)
3. What do you do to get ready for the first day of school? How do your routines and feelings compare with Abby's? (*application*)
4. Why does Abby prefer ChezTeen.com to Facebook? What does her preference reveal about her personality? (*analysis*)
5. Should Abby and Faith have interacted with BlueSkyBoi in the chat room? Rewrite the chat and insert your own screen name. What would you have said (both before and after you learned that BlueSkyBoi was out of high school)? (*synthesis*)
6. Abby asks Faith, "Why can't you all just like me for who I am?" How does Faith reply? Do you think Faith is being a good friend to Abby? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

How will Abby's first day of school go? Describe both positive and negative things that might happen.

## Chapter 2 September 1

### Word Study

extract	sweltering	bane of my existence	PDA (public display of affection)
plankton	gullible	dapple	dust motes
mimic	expand your horizons	to major in	hideously
lectures	pervert	extracurricular	transcript

### Discussion Starters

1. Who does Abby meet in the registration line? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Abby's first day of high school go? (*comprehension*)
3. Abby says she can be anyone she wants online since no one really knows who she is. What would you change about yourself in an anonymous situation? What would you keep the same? (*application*)
4. How does Abby's family affect her sense of self worth? (*analysis*)
5. When Abby's dad leaves her room after their "heart-to-heart," she says, "...I'm left at my desk wanting ...something, I don't know what. Something more." Pretend to log back on to ChezTeen as Abby and chat with Luke about what this "something more" might be. (*synthesis*)
6. How does Luke make Abby feel? Why do you think he chose her as his "soul mate" instead of Faith? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

Will Abby tell anyone about Luke? Why or why not?

## Chapter 3

### October 3

#### Word Study

persuade	urges	incentive	surreptitiously
hassling	pathetically lame	ogle	queasy
sorely tempted	bile	extract	to project
radiate	supernatural	grimace	pursue
humiliating	oblivious	inflict bodily harm	discreetly

#### Discussion Starters

1. What happened when Abby tried to say her lines at the audition? (*knowledge*)
2. Why did Abby agree to try out for the play with Faith? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a time when you did something just to please a friend. If you had it to do over again, what would you change? (*application*)
4. Why do you think Abby finds it so easy to open up to Luke? What would Faith do if Abby talked as honestly with her? (*analysis*)
5. What might have happened if Abby had told Faith she wasn't going to try out for the play? Write or role play this conversation between the two friends. (*synthesis*)
6. Is Faith a good friend to Abby? Could Grace be a good friend? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will Abby become part of the play in some way? How will her friendship with Faith be affected by the outcome of the auditions?

## Chapter 4

### October 4, Evening

#### Word Study

bickering	financial	shoo-in	fury
stern	sacred ritual	swoon	fiasco
betrayal	acoustic	disloyal	persuaded
present company excluded	illusion	possessive	reinvigorated
heaves	plead	persuasion barrages	casting
elaborate	inevitable	entitled	fast and furious

#### Discussion Starters

1. How does Abby's family react to the news about her fainting spell? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Abby decide to do about the play? (*comprehension*)
3. Write or talk about a time when you and a friend grew apart. What advice would you give Abby about her friendship with Faith? (*application*)
4. Abby thinks Luke's jealousy of other guys is flattering. Do you agree? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. When Abby's mom comes into the room, Abby minimizes her chat screen so her mother can't see what she's doing. What would have happened if her mother had seen what was happening? Answer from the points of view of Abby, Luke and Abby's mom. (*synthesis*)
6. Abby feels betrayed by Faith, yet she worries that she is betraying Faith by confiding in Luke. In your opinion, who has betrayed whom? Why? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

At the end of the chapter, Abby wonders what Luke was going to say. What do you think he was about to say?

## Chapter 5

### October 6

#### Word Study

characteristic	reproduction	mime
bearable	warped	sue me
emerging	urging	longing

#### Discussion Starters

1. Why can't Abby concentrate during science class? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Abby feel about her lab partner, Billy? (*comprehension*)
3. List ways you can tell if someone is making up an excuse, as Abby does with Faith. Does Abby demonstrate any of these? Do you think Faith suspects that Abby is hiding something? (*application*)
4. Why doesn't Abby accept Faith's invitation for a sleepover? Is it a good reason? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. Abby's inner struggle over whether or not to accept Faith's invitation is an example of a type of conflict called *character vs. self*. What might happen in the rest of the book that would be an example of this type of conflict? (*synthesis*)
6. Abby says that she and Billy are lab partners only because they were "the biggest losers in the room" after everyone chose lab partners. Do you think Abby is a loser? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

What happened to Luke? What will he say when he comes back online?

## Chapter 6

### October 7

#### Word Study

Petri dishes	nominate	flunky
surreptitiously	mute	dazed
hubbub	periodically	gullible

#### Discussion Starters

1. What happens in science class? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Abby hesitate to say yes to Billy? (*comprehension*)
3. Abby is surprised by how easy it's become to lie to Faith. Tell or write about a time when you lied to a friend. Was it easy? Why or why not? What advice would you give to Abby about lying to Faith? (*application*)
4. Why does Abby feel so upset about not hearing from Luke? How does this reflect on how she feels about herself? (*analysis*)
5. Abby doesn't feel as if she can talk to Luke about Billy, because Luke would "take it badly." Write or act out an online chat that shows what might happen if Abby did tell Luke. (*synthesis*)
6. Is Luke good for Abby's self-esteem? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will Abby go through with her date with Billy? If not, why? If so, how will it go?

## Chapter 7

### October 9

#### Word Study

terminal	obsessively	evolved	modest
interject	sarcastic	aimlessly	entwined
precaution	Cro-Magnon era	interrogating	a conscious effort
beckoning	compelled	intentionally	stalker

#### Discussion Starters

1. Why doesn't Abby want to go out with Billy? (*knowledge*)
2. How did Abby's feelings for Billy change over the course of their date? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a time when you did something against your better judgment. How did it turn out? What did you learn about yourself? (*application*)
4. Why doesn't Abby check her computer right away after she gets home from her date with Billy? (*analysis*)
5. How does the anonymity of the Internet affect Abby's decisions and actions? Compare her feelings about intimacy with Billy and with Luke. (*synthesis*)
6. What do Abby's instincts tell her about Luke? Give an example from the text. Why doesn't she listen to her doubts? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

What will happen now that Luke knows Abby's address? What will Abby say to Billy when she sees him next? How will she act?

## Chapter 8 October 10

### Word Study

pew	ibuprofen	pounces
crestfallen	punctual	camisole
uncalled for	the plague	to blot out

### Discussion Starters

1. Why does Abby stay offline all day Sunday? (*knowledge*)
2. What happens when Abby runs into Billy outside of class? (*comprehension*)
3. Abby isn't comfortable with Luke's request. Tell or write about a time when you did something even though you didn't want to. Why did you do it? How would you handle the situation if you had it to do over? (*application*)
4. How does Abby react when Nick asks for her homework? Why has her attitude towards him changed so drastically? (*analysis*)
5. Abby says that Luke watches her "like a hawk watching a mouse it's going to eat for dinner." Why do you think she uses this simile? What simile would she use to describe the way Billy looks at her? What about Nick as he waits for her to hand over her homework? (*synthesis*)
6. Abby compares Luke to a drug, saying, "I craved talking to him, and when I wasn't talking to him I was thinking about the last time we chatted or the next time I'd be able to chat with him." Is Luke like a drug for Abby? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

### Predict

In church, Abby regrets sending Luke her photo. How will she feel when she reflects on this last video session?

## Chapter 9

### October 13

#### Word Study

epic proportions	wavering
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#### Discussion Starters

1. What dreams does Abby have about her future with Luke? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Abby react when Amanda Armitage and her friends laugh at her in the hallway? (*comprehension*)
3. How does Luke convince Abby to do things she would never normally do? How do people get you to do things you're unsure of? (*application*)
4. Why doesn't Abby break things off with Billy? (*analysis*)
5. Make a list of the ways Abby has changed since she's met Luke. How many are positive changes, and how many are negative? What would Abby say if you showed her the list? How might she have made the positive changes if she had never met Luke? (*synthesis*)
6. Luke and Abby claim they love each other. Do you agree? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will Abby tell Billy now that she only wants to be friends? Why or why not?

## Chapter 10

### October 14

#### Word Study

bourgeois	homage	material goods	subtitles
to the infinite power	flaunt	dejection	corny
doorjamb	erupting	snitch	civil

#### Discussion Starters

1. What news does Faith have for Abby? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Abby's science teacher, Ms. Forcier, say to Abby? How does Abby react? (*comprehension*)
3. Abby says, "I wonder what Faith would think of Luke if I told her the truth. I'm not sure I want to know." Write or act out what Faith would say if Abby were to tell her about Luke. (*application*)
4. When Lily asks about the new red cell phone, Abby thinks, "It's incredible how Lily thinks the worst about me, when I'm like twenty times more responsible than she is." Discuss the irony of this statement. (*analysis*)
5. Faith misses Abby, but doesn't realize that anything serious is going on. At what point will Faith become suspicious? When Abby fainted at school, Faith broke her promise to Abby not to tell anyone. What will Faith do if she realizes what's happening with Luke? (*synthesis*)
6. Abby's mom is angry when Abby says that she left her cell phone in her locker at school. Abby says, "Why are you making such a big deal out of this? I leave my phone in my locker one time and you're acting like I've committed this huge crime!" Do you agree that Abby's mom is making a big deal out of nothing? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will Abby's grades continue to fall? Will her parents find out about the test grade? If so, what will the consequences be?

## Chapter 11

### December 1

#### Word Study

ritual	obsessed	pallor	inhabited
props	miffed	saunters	precaution
confiscate	ballistic	perspective	pleading

#### Discussion Starters

1. What is Luke's plan? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Abby agree to meet Luke? (*comprehension*)
3. When Abby gets a poor grade on her math test, her teacher is worried. Abby thinks, "Being smart is what I have. It's what I do. And now I'm screwing up in what's supposed to be my best class?" What is it that you "have" or "do?" If you were going through the same situation as Abby, what would be a red flag for those close to you? (*application*)
4. Luke knows that Abby has a big test the next day. How do his words of love contrast with his actions? (*analysis*)
5. Review the conversation at the end of the chapter between Abby and her mom. What could her mom have said that might have changed Abby's mind about going away with Luke? (*synthesis*)
6. Luke tells Abby that running away for a few days will put her poor math grade in perspective for her parents. Abby thinks, "Maybe if I just go away with him for a few days, they'll be more chill when I come back." Do you agree with this reasoning? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

What will happen when Abby meets Luke? What will her first impressions be?

## Chapter 12

### December 6

#### Word Study

fitfully	initial encounter	provokes
careen	intellectual	hordes
confide	intently	surreptitiously

#### Discussion Starters

1. Where does Luke initially ask Abby to meet him? Where do they actually meet? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Abby decide to sit with Faith on the bus? (*comprehension*)
3. Make a list of warning signs about Luke that Abby has either missed or ignored. Put a star next to the one that seems the most obvious. Compare your answers with those of your classmates. (*application*)
4. When Abby thinks about how her parents will react when she returns home, she says, "They'll realize that they need to start treating me like a grown-up instead of a little kid. They'll realize they need to start treating me the way Luke does." Discuss the irony of these statements. (*analysis*)
5. List the following characters on a sheet of paper: Abby's father, Abby's mother, Lily, Faith, Billy, and Grace. Come up with one line that each of them might say when they find out that Abby is missing. Read the lines to your classmates and see if they can guess whose line is whose. (*synthesis*)
6. When Faith tells Abby that she misses her, Abby thinks, "I feel like telling her that I've been here all along, that it's her who's been off doing all these other things and leaving me behind." Is this a fair assessment? How would Faith evaluate their friendship at this point? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

What will happen to Abby? Will Samantha's mother come forward as a witness to help find Abby?

## Chapter 13

### Lily ~ December 6, 10:00 p.m.

#### Word Study

blaring	multi-task	distress	muttering
disobedient	deflate	paled	antagonize
procedure	snooped	nerve-wracking	devoid
entwined	devoted	frantic	tremor
psychic	Martha Stewart	engaging	forensic

#### Discussion Starters

1. When does Lily first sense that something is wrong? (*knowledge*)
2. What do Lily's parents do that clue her in that something is seriously wrong? (*comprehension*)
3. How do the contents of Lily's and Abby's desk drawers reflect their personalities? At home, make of list of the things in your drawer at home. What do the contents and their arrangement (messy? neat?) say about you? (*application*)
4. According to Lily, what is her dad's opinion of her and of Abby? How would Abby describe his opinions? (*analysis*)
5. How would Abby react if she knew how worried Lily is? Role-play a conversation between the sisters if Abby were to come home the next morning. (*synthesis*)
6. Lily is reluctant to give her passwords to her parents. Do you think it's a good idea? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

How will Abby's disappearance change Lily's attitude about her sister?

## Chapter 14

### Faith ~ December 6, 11:30 p.m.

#### Word Study

visualize	iffy	fully functional
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#### Discussion Starters

1. Why is Faith nervous about talking to the police? (*knowledge*)
2. Why does Faith make a list in the middle of the night? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a friendship that has faded over time. Why have you lost touch with this friend? What reasons might your friend give? (*application*)
4. Faith notes some differences in Abby's behavior on the day she disappeared. Compare how Faith might have explained these behaviors before and after Abby's disappearance. (*analysis*)
5. Faith called Abby "thoughtless" for putting everyone through so much worry. How would Abby react to this assessment? (*synthesis*)
6. Faith wonders if she could have said or done something to save Abby. What do you think? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

If Abby returns, can she and Faith ever repair their friendship? If so, what would be different? Would their friendship be stronger or weaker?

## Chapter 15

### Lily ~ December 7, 12:30 a.m.

#### Word Study

lobs	promiscuous	heave	suppressed
murmurs	pry	exploited	generate
expedite	backlog	priority	minors

#### Discussion Starters

1. Lily's dad tells the detective that he hadn't noticed Abby's withdrawal from family events. How does Lily react? (*knowledge*)
2. Why is Lily annoyed by the detectives' questions? (*comprehension*)
3. Detective Larson asks for a photo of Abby so that he can generate a flyer to distribute to other police departments. Make your own flyer for Abby that describes her personality, habits, and gives a physical description. (*application*)
4. Which question makes Abby's dad furious? How would Abby react to this question? How would she answer? (*analysis*)
5. Compare the guilt that Abby's mom, dad and sister seem to feel over her disappearance. Who would Abby blame? (*synthesis*)
6. Do you think Abby's family contributed to her decision to run away with Luke? Are they to blame? Explain your thinking. (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

How will Abby's disappearance affect Lily's relationship with her parents?

## Chapter 16

### Faith ~ December 7, 5:45 a.m.

#### Word Study

habitual

#### Discussion Starters

1. Why did Faith feel sorry for Billy? (*knowledge*)
2. Why do the officers come to Faith's house so early in the morning?  
(*comprehension*)
3. Why does Faith's dad say that ChezTeen is not a safe site? In your opinion, what are the characteristics of a "safe" site? Make a list of sites that meet your criteria.  
(*application*)
4. Faith says that it's hard to admit in front of her parents that her friendship with Abby had changed. Why? (*analysis*)
5. Faith feels both anger and sadness about Abby's disappearance. What are some conflicting emotions that Abby had expressed about Luke? (*synthesis*)
6. When Faith wonders if Abby really did meet Luke at the church retreat, she thinks, "What happened to my friend?" How would you answer that question for Faith? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will any of Faith's information help the police? Which piece of information will be most helpful? Why?

## Chapter 17

### Billy ~ December 7, 6:30 a.m.

#### Word Study

sucker punched	blew a gasket	smithereens
intently	motive	blot out

#### Discussion Starters

1. How does Billy react when his mom tells him that Abby's mom called looking for Abby? (*knowledge*)
2. What is Billy afraid of when the police come to question him? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a time when you felt guilty about something even when you were innocent. How does your experience compare to the way Billy feels as he answers the officers' questions? (*application*)
4. What is Billy's relationship like with his father? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion. (*analysis*)
5. As Billy talks, the officers write down his answers. Write what you think the officers may have written. (*synthesis*)
6. How would you evaluate Billy's character? Would he make a good romantic match for Abby? Explain your reasoning. (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

If Billy ever sees Abby again, how will he feel about her? Explain your reasoning.

## Chapter 18

### Huntington Police Department

#### Word Study

incident report	supplemental	narrative	pertinent
willingly	liaisons	platonic	criminal history

#### Discussion Starters

1. Whom did the police interview for this report? (*knowledge*)
2. Why did the police interview this person? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a time when you were dishonest and someone found out. How did you feel? What did you say? Compare your feelings with the way Abby might feel if she discovered that her family and friends knew about her lies. (*application*)
4. How does this report refute what Abby told Faith about Luke? (*analysis*)
5. Write the report narrative as Abby may have written it when talking to Faith about Luke. (*synthesis*)
6. Why did the officer put the word “boyfriend” in quotations? Should it be? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Who will the police interview next? Based on this report, who would you interview next?

## Chapter 19

### Lily ~ December 7, 12:30 p.m.

#### Word Study

circumstances	disruption	facial	wail
academic	inconsiderate	traumatic	pained

#### Discussion Starters

1. Who does Lily confide in about Abby? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Lily think Abby's disappearance is her fault? (*comprehension*)
3. Lily is convinced that her dad thinks Abby is "the smart one in the family." Make a list of adjectives you think your parents would use to describe you. Ask your parents to do the same. How do your lists compare? (*application*)
4. Why does Lily say she wants to stay home from school? What do you think the real reason is? Explain your answer using evidence from the text. (*analysis*)
5. Lily chooses not to tell her friend Dawn about Abby. Why not? How might Dawn have reacted if Lily had told her? Tell or write the scene as you think it would have turned out. (*synthesis*)
6. List the emotions that Lily feels in this chapter. Is she justified in feeling this range of emotions? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will Lily's friends find out that Abby has disappeared? How will they react?

## Chapter 20

### Town of Lenox Police Department

#### Word Study

affiliate	premises
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#### Discussion Starters

1. Whom did the police interview for this report? (*knowledge*)
2. Why did the police interview this person? (*comprehension*)
3. Detective Winters, who filled out this report, is the ICAC affiliate for Lenox. One of the resources you can access through the Internet Crimes Against Children organization is here: <http://www.netismartz.org/Presentations>. Click on the “Email, IM and Chat Rooms” link from the menu on the left. What information from this site would have been helpful for Abby? (*application*)
4. How would the retreat organizer react to the news about Abby? (*analysis*)
5. Change the tone of this narrative to Abby’s voice. How does the retreat organizer describe Abby? How would she describe herself and her interactions with others at the retreat? (*synthesis*)
6. During the church retreat, the kids did not have access to computers or cell phones. Is this a good rule for a retreat? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

The Lenox police department ran “an MA criminal history check” on Luke Redmond. Will they move beyond Massachusetts and do a nation-wide check? If so, what will they find?

## Chapter 21

### Faith ~ December 7, 1:00 p.m.

#### Word Study

accosts	voluntarily
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#### Discussion Starters

1. Who asks about Abby? (*knowledge*)
2. When Faith bursts into tears, how does the crowd around her react? (*comprehension*)
3. Faith says that real-life stories don't always have happy endings like afternoon specials do. Write a plausible happy ending for Abby. (*application*)
4. Faith is surprised that Grace gets teary over the news about Abby. Why? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (*analysis*)
5. Compare Faith's and Grace's reactions to the idea that Luke might be doing something awful to Abby. How do their reactions reflect how they feel about Abby? (*synthesis*)
6. Is Grace a good friend to Faith? Explain your thinking. (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Now that the word is out, how will the rest of the student body react about Abby's disappearance?

## Chapter 22

### Lily ~ December 7, 1:30 p.m.

#### Word Study

generate	leads	pang	interacting	footage
subpoenaed	grooming	barriers	isolation	imminent

#### Discussion Starters

1. Who came forward as a witness? (*knowledge*)
2. Why has the F.B.I. been called in on the case? (*comprehension*)
3. Detective Heller tells Abby's dad, "...unfortunately, you have to do the hardest thing of all, which is wait." Tell or write about a time when you had to wait for something you really wanted. How did you pass the time? (*application*)
4. Analyze Lily's conflicting emotions about Abby. How can she be feeling opposite emotions? (*analysis*)
5. What does Officer Ball say about grooming? How did Luke accomplish this with Abby? (*synthesis*)
6. How does Lily react when her mom tells her about the news bulletin? What does Lily say her mom thinks of her now? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

How will Abby's family cope with the wait for news about her?

## Chapter 23

### Faith ~ December 7, 3:45 p.m.

#### Word Study

reciting	shrouded	retreating
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#### Discussion Starters

1. Why does Faith get angry at Ted on the set? (*knowledge*)
2. What did Faith not want to admit about her friendship with Abby?  
(*comprehension*)
3. Faith remembers the day she and Abby became best friends. Write or tell about how you met one of your closest friends. (*application*)
4. Why is Faith angry at Ted for judging Abby? How might Abby judge her actions now? (*analysis*)
5. Faith says, "...it feels so wrong to be going on with life as normal while Abby is missing." Should Faith be going on with life as normal? How would Abby react to this statement? (*synthesis*)
6. Do you agree with the advice that Faith's mom gives about friendship? Why or why not? What are the pros and cons of this way of thinking? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Faith wonders how Abby will be judged by others when (and if) she returns. What do you think?

## Chapter 24

### Lily December 8, 9:30 a.m.

#### Word Study

emerges	blunders	acronyms	jurisdiction
diplomatic channels	consults	detection	underage

#### Discussion Starters

1. Who comes to Lily's house? (*knowledge*)
2. Why can't the FBI get access to Abby's account on ChezTeen? (*comprehension*)
3. Lily's parents react in ways that scare her. What would be unusual behavior for your parents that would signal to you that something is truly wrong? (*application*)
4. Lily says her dad is crazy, like Abby. Analyze his character using examples from the text that support your opinion. How do you think he'll react to Abby when and if she comes home? (*analysis*)
5. The password hint for Abby's account is "Abby loves..." What do you think the answer could be? Jot down your best guess, then compare your answer with those of your classmates. (*synthesis*)
6. Agent Saunders says that predators are "practiced at avoiding detection." Does this describe Luke? What has he done to cover his tracks? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will the FBI be able to access Abby's ChezTeen account? If not, how else could they track down Luke?

## Chapter 25

### Billy ~ December 8, 1:30 p.m.

#### Word Study

remote	certifiable	reeling	contagious	stalks
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#### Discussion Starters

1. What are some of the opinions that others have of Abby? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Billy claim no one understands? (*comprehension*)
3. When Billy imagines things that could have happened to Abby, what does he feel like doing? What do you feel like doing when you're this angry? (*application*)
4. Knowing Abby's character, how do you think she'd react to the rumors about her? (*analysis*)
5. Billy and Faith ask how Abby could run off with Luke. How would Abby answer this question? How would the FBI agents answer? How would Luke answer? (*synthesis*)
6. Was Ted's reaction to seeing Faith and Billy fair? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will Ted apologize to Faith? If so, how will she react?

## Chapter 26

### Faith ~ December 8, 3:45 p.m.

#### Discussion Starters

1. What is Abby's password? (*knowledge*)
2. What changes in Abby's family does Faith notice right away? (*comprehension*)
3. In order to brainstorm what Abby's password might be, Faith went to Abby's room for inspiration. Where do you go for inspiration? Try writing about a topic in a place related to that topic. How did the location affect your brainstorming abilities? (*application*)
4. Compare and contrast Faith's and her mother's thoughts on helping with the investigation. (*analysis*)
5. Read the description of the photos and mementos on Abby's bulletin board. Draw or sketch a bulletin board that would reflect Abby's and Faith's friendship from the start of this school year. (*synthesis*)
6. Can Faith's and Abby's friendship ever return to the way it used to be? Can they still be best friends? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Now that Faith has provided Abby's password, how long will it take to get more information on what happened to Abby?

## Chapter 27

### Lily ~ December 9, 8:30 a.m.

#### Word Study

ulcer	APB (All Points Bulletin)	probable cause	search warrant
preliminary scan	pornography	preyed	pedophile
traumatic	craggy	apprehend	entwined
stat	police custody	assault	decrees
to identify with	sputters	insidious seduction	denial

#### Discussion Starters

1. What have the FBI learned about Luke? (*knowledge*)
2. Abby's father's can't believe she'd run off with someone she met online. How do the FBI agents explain this? (*comprehension*)
3. Lily's comfort food is French toast. What is yours? Compare your choice with those of your classmates. (*application*)
4. Even after the FBI agents explain the grooming process, Abby's family can't believe she fell for Luke/Edmund. What made Abby vulnerable? (*analysis*)
5. How does Abby's dad react to the information about Luke/Edmund's childhood? How do you think Abby would react? (*synthesis*)
6. Although Lily is relieved and happy about Abby's rescue, she still feels that her parents prefer Abby over her. Do you think she's right? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

How will Abby and her parents react when they're reunited?

## Chapter 28

### Abby ~ December 9

#### Word Study

grungy	polyester	shag carpet	punctuated
barren	mistaken identity	frisks	anchoring
envelop	schooled	colliding	undertone
reluctantly	harvest	gingerly	fluorescent light
stirrups	contraption	sexually transmitted diseases	HIV
foundations	wreckage	vodka	

#### Discussion Starters

1. Who is Luke Redmond? (*knowledge*)
2. How is Luke different this morning compared with the way he's acted on other mornings? (*comprehension*)
3. Keeping her experience with Luke in a separate "box" from her family and friends seems to help Abby cope. Write or tell about a situation in which you had to block out one thing in order to do another. (*application*)
4. As Abby gets dressed, she thinks, "Don't think about Billy. Don't think about home. Keep this in a box totally separate from everything else." Why does she do this? Does it help? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. How will Abby and her parents begin to repair their lives? What challenges will they face? Use evidence from their reunion in this chapter to support your answer. (*synthesis*)
6. What happened to Abby when she was with Luke? What is her assessment of the way he treated her? When he was arrested, why did she shout, "DON'T HURT HIM!"? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will Abby see Luke again? What will happen to him? How will Lily and Abby react when they're reunited?

## Chapter 29

### Abby ~ December 10, 10:30 a.m.

#### Word Study

hovering	gist	inquisition	obtained
warrant	migrate	timely access	gullible
pedophile	betrayal	jurisdiction	gawked

#### Discussion Starters

1. What does Abby learn about Luke from the FBI agents? (*knowledge*)
2. Why do the agents want Abby to tell everything that happened with Luke? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a time when you had to explain something unpleasant or scary that happened to you. Did you tell all the details? Why or why not? Did you feel better after talking about it, or worse? (*application*)
4. How has Abby's tone changed since the beginning of the book? What does she say in this chapter that she never would have said before running away with Luke? (*analysis*)
5. Compare how Abby's mother and father are dealing with the situation. What does Abby say they think of her now? How will they move past these emotions? (*synthesis*)
6. When the FBI agents' questions make Abby uncomfortable, she thinks, "I reach down inside for the ice-cold numbness that I feel whenever I think of Luke and pull it over me like a security blanket." Does this "cloak of numbness" help? When does it stop working? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

What defense might Luke's lawyers give in court? How might they depict Abby?

## Chapter 30

### Faith ~ December 12

#### Word Study

traumatic experiences	peppering
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#### Discussion Starters

1. What does everyone at school think happened to Abby? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Faith answer everyone's questions? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a time when you defended a friend to others. What was difficult about it? What was rewarding? Would you do it again? Why or why not? (*application*)
4. Why does Faith "blow" when Nick and Amanda ask about Abby? (*analysis*)
5. How would Abby react if Nick asked what happened to her? (*synthesis*)
6. When Grace blames Abby for the rumors going around school, Faith grudgingly agrees. Is this assessment of Abby fair? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

How will Faith support Abby when she returns to school? How will Grace act around Abby?

## Chapter 31

### Abby ~ December 13

#### Word Study

gory	contaminate	destiny	proceeded
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#### Discussion Starters

1. How does Abby feel when Faith first comes over? (*knowledge*)
2. What questions does Faith have for Abby? (*comprehension*)
3. As Abby and Faith start to talk, Abby feels closer to Faith than ever. Tell or write about a time when hardship brought you closer to someone. (*application*)
4. Why doesn't Abby tell Faith what she's been through? What does this say about Abby's character? (*analysis*)
5. Abby is afraid to tell Faith the full story. If she were to tell everything, how would Faith react? What would she say? Would her reaction be different from what she'd be thinking? (*synthesis*)
6. Abby calls herself "a dirty, brainless idiot, who's screwed up everyone's lives." Is this a fair assessment? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will Faith and Abby remain close once Abby goes back to school? Faith tells Abby, "I'll always be there for you. And this time, don't forget it." Will Faith be there for Abby? Will Abby trust herself to rely on Faith?

## Chapter 32

### Abby ~ December 15

#### Word Study

chauffer	undertone	revealing	gauntlet
indifference	remand	social leper	underestimated
intently	judgments	scorn	sneering
tentative	slacker	putrid	intently

#### Discussion Starters

1. Who is Abby most nervous about seeing again? (*knowledge*)
2. What finally gives Abby the courage to get out of the car and go into school? (*comprehension*)
3. Abby says, "...the worst part is seeing the reflection of myself in my father's eyes. That's worse than any mirror." Tell or write about a time when you disappointed someone. Did you ever resolve the problem? If so, how? If not, why not? (*application*)
4. Do you think Grace is sincere? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion. (*analysis*)
5. What does Billy do that makes Abby feel "normal" again? When she remembers all the times she rushed out of class so she wouldn't have to talk to Billy, she thinks, "Now I wonder what would have happened if I'd stayed still long enough to listen to what he had to say." What do you think might have happened? Could dating Billy have prevented her from running away with Luke? (*synthesis*)
6. Abby is convinced that Billy won't be as accepting of her if he finds out everything about Luke. Do you agree? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

What will happen with Nick? Will Faith, Grace and Billy find out what Nick knows? If so, how might they react?

## Chapter 33

### Lily ~ December 16

#### Word Study

obsessed	posttraumatic stress	social cred	ebola virus
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#### Discussion Starters

1. Why does Lily decide to go to Abby in her room? (*knowledge*)
2. How have Abby's choices affected Lily's life? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a time when you felt both pity and anger towards someone. How did you react? How does it compare with the way Lily reacts in this scene with Abby? (*application*)
4. What reason does Lily give for her father's behavior towards Abby? Do you agree? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. If the family goes to therapy, what issues will they need to work out? Make a list for each member of the family. Place a check next to the issues that were present even before Abby disappeared. (*synthesis*)
6. Lily describes herself as the "Worst. Sister. Ever." Do you agree? Why or why not? Do you think Abby agrees? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

At the end of the chapter, Lily says, "I don't know if there's a way to ever make things right again." Do you agree? Explain your thinking.

## Chapter 34

### Abby ~ December 17

#### Word Study

Zen	shrink couch	grim	fraying	manipulating
sole purpose	exploitation	felony	absorb	violated

#### Discussion Starters

1. Who does Abby go and see? (*knowledge*)
2. How does Abby feel at first about talking to this woman? How does she feel by the end of the chapter? (*comprehension*)
3. Abby says she can't blame people for hating her and treating her badly. How would you react to Abby if she went to your school? How would your reactions differ if she had been a good friend? (*application*)
4. How does Abby respond when the therapist asks, "Do you think you deserve everyone at school being a jerk to you?" What is your response to the question? (*analysis*)
5. What does Abby say her dad and Lily think of her? Pretend to be the therapist and "interview" Abby's dad and Lily. Do their views of Abby match her perception of how they feel about her? What other emotions or statements might emerge that Abby might not have guessed? (*synthesis*)
6. What is your assessment of Abby's therapist? Give examples from the text to support your opinion. (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Abby says she wants "...to believe that maybe I'm not this total piece-of-crap person and that maybe life will be okay again someday." Will Abby learn to forgive herself? How?

## Chapter 35

### Faith ~ December 18

#### Word Study

persuasion	blackmailing	guilt-tripping
houselights	the scarlet letter	dialogue

#### Discussion Starters

1. How does Faith get Abby to come to the play? (*knowledge*)
2. What happened when someone scratched *Slut* on Abby's locker? (*comprehension*)
3. Ted knows the exact spot on Faith's shoulder where she tends to get tense. What physical reactions do you experience when you're stressed? What helps you work through your stress? (*application*)
4. In Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a love potion makes people think they're in love. Elaborate on a possible analogy between the love potion and Abby's experience with Luke. Would Abby think of this analogy during the play? Why or why not? (*analysis*)
5. What does Faith observe about Abby before the opening of the play? Write or narrate what Abby might be thinking as she waits for the play to begin. (*synthesis*)
6. Do you think Faith should forgive Ted? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

What do you think Ted will say to explain his behavior to Faith? What will he need to say in order for Faith to forgive him completely?

## Chapter 36

### Lily ~ January 3

#### Word Study

zones out	social reject	devious	manipulator	moral support
flack	averted	pleading	downcast	mingles
dense	manipulate	contaminated	status	remote

#### Discussion Starters

1. Why is Lily angry with Abby? (*knowledge*)
2. At the start of the chapter, how does Lily feel about being at the therapy session? How does she feel at the end of the chapter? (*comprehension*)
3. Lily asks her parents, “Would *you* have told *your* parents that you felt like a total loser with no friends?” How would you tell your parents if you were having problems? List at least three different ways you might communicate how you feel with your parents. (*application*)
4. Although this chapter is told from Lily’s point of view, what clues do you see about how Abby is feeling? (*analysis*)
5. Who do you think is having the hardest time dealing with this whole situation? Why? (*synthesis*)
6. What happened with Abby’s father? Has this changed your opinion of him? Explain your answer. (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

How will Abby’s relationship with her father be from now on?

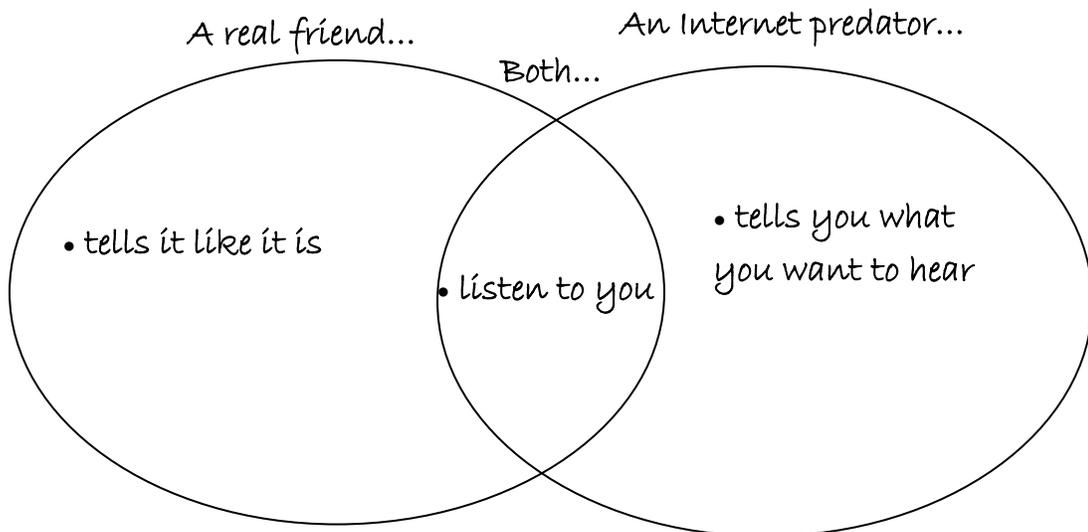
## Chapter 37 Abby February

### Word Study

pathetic	coy	glisten	compressed	periodically
fictional	empathy	statistic	exploiting	testify
likelihood	drawbacks	fidget	decimated	productive

### Discussion Starters

1. What is the one question that has been on Abby’s mind? (*knowledge*)
2. According to Dr. Binnie, why are adolescents at such a high risk for being targeted by predators? (*comprehension*)
3. Tell or write about a time when you realized that friend wasn’t really a friend. How did you know? What did you do about it? (*application*)
4. How has Abby’s experience with Luke affected her relationship with Lily? (*analysis*)
5. Using a Venn diagram like the one below, compare behaviors of real friends and an Internet predator like Luke. Use the examples that Abby gives in the chapter, and add more of your own. (*synthesis*)



6. Abby isn’t sure if she wants to be notified when the FBI arrests someone who has downloaded the “Abby Series.” What would you advise her to do? (*evaluation*)

### Predict

What are some “baby” steps that Abby will take on the road to recovery?

## Chapter 38

### Faith ~ April

#### Word Study

suckered	disputing	concept
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#### Discussion Starters

1. What is Abby excited about when she calls Faith? (*knowledge*)
2. What are Faith and Ted worried about? (*comprehension*)
3. How do you feel about speaking in public? What tips would you give Abby? Make a class list of public speaking tips. Try them out and vote for the most helpful one. (*application*)
4. What name does Abby use for Luke in this chapter? Why do you think she does this? (*analysis*)
5. Draft a speech that Abby might give to help other kids. (*synthesis*)
6. Do you think Abby's idea is a good one? Can she go through with it? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Will Abby go through with her plan? If so, how will it turn out?

## Chapter 39

### Lily ~ May

#### Word Study

funk	nuclear	track record	cackling
hyenas	wails	podium	forfeited

#### Discussion Starters

1. How do Abby's friends help her to prep for her presentation? (*knowledge*)
2. How did Abby's dad react when she announced that she wanted to speak in public about her experience? (*comprehension*)
3. Lily and Abby can't go online without their parents knowing exactly what they're doing. Jot down some Internet rules at your house. How do they compare to the Johnstons' Internet rules? (*application*)
4. Why do you think Lily changed her mind about having Abby come to speak at her school? (*analysis*)
5. If Abby's dad were to hear her speak at a school presentation on Internet safety, what would he think? Write or narrate a possible response from his point of view. (*synthesis*)
6. Abby's and Lily's parents tell them, "The Internet isn't a right, it's a privilege." Do you agree or disagree? Explain your reasoning. (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

Lily knows that Abby has a crush on Billy, but Abby tells Lily she's not "ready for any of that stuff." What will happen with Abby's relationship with Billy? Will they remain friends, or will they become more than friends?

## Chapter 40

### Billy ~ May

#### Word Study

masochist	postal	circulating	sniggering
retorts	intervening	full-fledged	aced
fratricide	sidles	animated	resilient

#### Discussion Starters

1. How have other people reacted to Billy hanging out with Abby? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Abby ask Billy to do when she makes her speech at school? (*comprehension*)
3. What advice do Abby's friends offer to help her get over her stage fright? Which would be the most helpful for you? Why? (*application*)
4. Analyze how Billy is managing the range of emotions he's been experiencing. Which one do you think would be the most difficult to deal with? Why? (*analysis*)
5. Billy wonders if Abby will hug him, too, after hugging Lily, Faith and Grace. Write or talk about what might have been going through Abby's mind before and after she gave Billy a hug. (*synthesis*)
6. Billy says Abby is "incredibly, freaking brave." Do you agree? Why or why not? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

How will Abby do speaking in front of her schoolmates? How will the other kids react to her presentation?

## Chapter 41

### Abby ~ June

#### Word Study

fatal	confront	oblivious	ravine	anvil
gory details	seduced	flattered	seductive	rely
ovation	humiliating	convict	statutory rape	defective

#### Discussion Starters

1. What surprises Abby about Agent Saunders? (*knowledge*)
2. What does Abby think as the students are filing into the auditorium? (*comprehension*)
3. Abby turned down her parents' offer to wait with her backstage. Instead, Faith and Grace help calm her nerves before her speech. Who would you invite backstage with you before a big performance? Who is the last person you'd want with you? Explain why. (*application*)
4. Agent Saunders feels that Abby's speech is important. Do you agree? How does her story make the presentation more effective? (*analysis*)
5. What do you think Nick and Amanda thought of Abby's speech? Will they treat her any differently now? Why or why not? (*synthesis*)
6. What do you think of Abby's speech? How did you react as you read it? Did anything surprise you? (*evaluation*)

#### Predict

What will Abby's parents say to her after her speech? How do you think her mother and father were each affected by Abby's words?

## Culminating Activities

The following projects incorporate Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Consider having students choose culminating projects that best match their learning styles.

### Self-Defense Moves

*(Bodily-Kinesthetic, Mathematical)*

While Abby never considered Edmund Schmidt to be dangerous, he could have beaten or killed her. Many victims of Internet predators do not survive.

Invite an instructor from a local self-defense or martial arts studio to demonstrate some self-defense moves with your class. Before announcing the demonstration, create a survey that measures how confident your classmates feel about self-defense. The surveys can be anonymous, but have students mark if they are male and female. Give the same survey after the self-defense demonstration and analyze the results. Did the self-defense class affect the survey results? Is there a difference between the data for males and females?

### Giving Back

*(Interpersonal)*

Abby decides to share what she has learned with other students at her school and Lily's school. Take a look at this F.B.I. webpage on Internet Safety for younger kids: <http://www.fbi.gov/fun-games/kids/kids-safety>. How does it differ from the presentation Abby gave?

Using Power Point or a similar program, create and present an Internet Safety talk that would be appropriate for a class of younger children at a neighboring school.

### Your Space

*(Intrapersonal, Naturalistic, Visual-Spatial)*

Abby has a bulletin board in her room with photos and mementos of fun times with Faith. Using Glogster (<http://edu.glogster.com>), design two bulletin boards—the one described on page 7 that Abby has had for years, and a new one that Abby might create now. Compare and contrast the two. In what ways does the new bulletin board reflect how Abby has changed?

Create your own virtual bulletin board. Include things such as photos of important people in your life, a photo of your favorite place or natural setting, mementos of special events, symbols of goals that you have for the future, etc.

## Voki Voices

*(Linguistic)*

*Want To Go Private?* is told from different points of view. Go to [www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com) to create talking avatars for each of the main characters in the story. How would each character reflect on what happened to Abby?

## Playlist

*(Musical)*

In the story, Luke makes Abby a playlist with songs that he wants her to listen to. Make a playlist of songs that Abby might choose for herself both before and after she runs off with Luke. List each song title and artist, along with a brief explanation of why Abby would choose each song.

## Internet Safety Presentation

*(Visual-Spatial, Mathematical)*

Abby makes an Internet Safety speech at school in order to save others from a similar fate. Create your own presentation on <http://animoto.com>. Include facts you learned from the book about Internet predators and how to stay safe while online, as well as tips from the author's ChezTeen site: <http://chezteen.com/staying-safe-online.html>. Incorporate stats from the ChezTeen statistics page: <http://chezteen.com/statistics-about-teens-and-.html>.

(Note to teachers: Students can use Animoto for free (with the Lite Plan) to create presentations that are 30 seconds long. For \$30 per year (the Plus Plan), students can make unlimited full-length presentations for a year.

**For more information about Internet safety, teens can visit the author-created site <http://www.chezteen.com>. Parents and teachers can visit: <http://wanttogoprivate.com>.**



## An Interview with Author Sarah Darer Littman

### **How did you get the idea for *Want To Go Private?***

I was writing a different book when I heard Supervisory Special Agent Tom Lawler of the FBI's New Haven Office speak about Internet Safety at my son's school two years ago. But I was already extremely aware how many parents are flying blind when it comes to their kids' online activities, and how easy it is for young people to make mistakes that have lasting and far-reaching consequences.

After his presentation, SSA Lawler told me about a case in CT where a girl had left with a predator. Fortunately, her mom was a reasonably clued up parent and had the passwords to the girl's accounts, so they were able to figure out what had happened pretty quickly, but even so, by the time the police rescued her, the predator had almost taken her to the Canadian border. What struck me most – and what inspired me to write *WANT TO GO PRIVATE?* – was her reaction when the police apprehended the predator. It wasn't "Thank heavens you've rescued me", but rather "Don't hurt him!"

As soon as I heard that, I turned to SSA Lawler and said, "That is the book." Kids today have been getting Internet Safety training since elementary school, and this girl's mother was obviously clued up enough to have the passwords to her account, so I imagine there had been discussions in the home. How then, did she travel to the point of "Don't hurt him!"?

### **Once the idea came to you, what happened next? Did you jot it down right away? Let it simmer?**

I kept trying to work on the book I was *supposed* to be writing, but that question ("How did she get to 'Don't hurt him?") wouldn't leave me alone. It nagged me while I was trying write the other book, when I was out grocery shopping, when I was driving the carpool. It just kept nagging me and nagging me until I knew I had to write a book to answer it. I called my agent and asked her if it was okay to abandon the book I was working on and write this one instead. Fortunately, Jen Rees, my wonderful editor at Scholastic, was very supportive of this book right from the start.

### **What was the most challenging part of writing this book? The most**

**rewarding?**

Without a doubt the hardest part of WTGP was writing a scene of which only fragments appear in the book. One of the comments from Jen, my editor, about the initial draft was that I'd left it too ambiguous - "It's like Abby and Luke just went for a car ride together." I realized that there was a reason for that - I really didn't want to know what had happened to Abby when she was away with Luke.

There are two reasons for this. My daughter was about the same age as Abby when I was writing the book, which made it incredibly difficult to contemplate. But also, as a victim of childhood sexual abuse myself, to face what happened to Abby risked revisiting to some extremely painful places.

**How did your own life experiences influence the characters and plot in your novel?**

I knew that to write a realistic portrayal of Abby's experience, to be able to write the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder flashbacks that as a sexual abuse victim myself I knew full well she would be experiencing, I had to turn the handle on the motel room door and see what happened to her.

When I first tried writing the scene, I started having terrible nightmares, and had to stop. I kept revising the rest of the book, but then it got to the point where I needed to write it in order to finish my revisions. So one day, while my kids were at school, I told myself, "Okay, this is it. Open that door and face what you see there."

I was shaking when I finished writing the scene. I think part of the reason the book hits people so viscerally is that I was able to draw on my own experiences with abuse to write about Abby's trauma.

**Why did you choose to tell the story from different points of view?**

Originally, I thought I was going to have to write WTGP in 3rd person, because Abby was going to be missing for part of the book. I wrote 11,000 words and it just wasn't working. It felt flat. Then I had this brainwave about how I could tell the story using a three-part structure in first person with different points of view. I talked to my editor, Jen Rees, about it, and she pointed out that would actually have an added advantage of increasing the tension and suspense, because the reader would only know what the characters know in real time. Once I started rewriting in first person the story came alive, and readers have told me that the switch in point of view at the beginning of Part II is incredibly effective and adds to the shock and anxiety about Abby's safety.

**Describe the research you did for this novel.**

I wrote to the FBI headquarters in Washington to get permission to work with SSA Lawler at my local FBI office for my research. I had to provide a list of the questions I would be asking him (which required quite a lot of research in advance, because I had to figure out what questions to ask) and a synopsis of the novel. Once I had that permission, SSA Lawler and MaryBeth Miklos at the New Haven Office were incredibly helpful. I honestly couldn't have written this novel without their assistance. I also was aided by my local police department in Greenwich.

In addition to that, my reading list was long and heavy. My daughter said, "You used to have really interesting books on your bedside table but now they're all about pedophiles and creepers."

It was very important to me to try and make the novel as accurate as possible, both in terms of the procedures, but even more importantly, in terms of the emotional truth that all the characters would be experiencing. It was not an easy book to write!

***Want To Go Private?* is your fourth novel. How did your process differ this time around?**

It was definitely the fastest first draft I've ever written – even with the complete rewrite to first person POV after 11,000 words, I completed the first draft in four months. I think this is because my research had given me a very clear idea of where the story needed to go, but also because after having had this story nagging at me for so many months while I was trying to work on another book, I was relieved to be able to get it out.

After I'd written the first draft, I created a very detailed timeline of all the plot points and met with the FBI again. They were amazing – advising me on where my fictional FBI agents wouldn't have had sufficient evidence for a search warrant so that I was able to modify the story to include small points that would lead to Abby's eventual rescue.

One of the other points that came up in my research with the FBI was that for the story to work as I'd envisaged, the servers for my fictional teen site had to be located out of the United States. Very early on, I knew that I had to ensure that I controlled that domain name, so I registered ChezTeen.com as soon as I picked it. I knew that in all likelihood, teens would go check it out (I know I would!) and I wanted to create a site that would help kids think about Internet Safety in

conjunction with reading the book.

**What's the best piece of writing advice you've ever received?**

It was from the incredibly talented and prolific author Jane Yolen – “Get your butt in the chair and write the book.”

Ultimately, that's the difference between someone who says they want to be a writer and someone who *is* a writer. The writer actually has the passion, the motivation and the discipline to glue their butt to the chair and write, even when they aren't “inspired” and the words aren't flowing easily.

**What advice do you have for young writers?**

Read, read, read. Then read some more. It doesn't matter what genre – I recommend reading widely, in many different genres, including non-fiction.

Keep up to date with the news. I'm also a political columnist, and I think that feeds and informs my work as a novelist.

And then get your butt in the chair and write. The more you write, the better you will get.

Above all, be open to the world around you. Ideas can come from anywhere – but you have to be open to receiving them.

**When you aren't writing, what are some of your favorite things to do?**

I love reading, of course. So many books, so little time! I'm also a big fan of live music. You know that aging rock chick you see at concerts? That's me. I also love to cook – not the everyday “what's for dinner, Mom?” cooking but entertaining for big crowds of friends and family cooking, especially in the summer when I can go snip fresh herbs from my garden.