



Bad Business

Diane Dakers

Reading level: 3.1
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Book Summary

Lindy has been working hard cleaning and doing odd jobs around the neighborhood to earn money for a trip to the Arctic. When Mrs. Naulty, an elderly client, mistakenly pays her a huge amount of money, Lindy keeps it to pay the early-bird rate for her trip. It's only when a schoolmate learns what she did and starts blackmailing her that Lindy starts to suffer for her actions.

Author Biography

Diane Dakers is a freelance writer and journalist. She lives in Victoria, British Columbia.

Connecting to the Text***Theme and Plot Study***

Powerful themes in the novel are honesty and doing the right thing. Use the following as large group discussion topics, individual novel study or paragraph writing exercises.

1. In chapter 4, Lindy found \$200 in Mrs. Naulty's weekly envelope instead of her usual \$10. Lindy took the money and considered the situation. She could keep it and prevent Mrs. Naulty from going to a nursing home. And she *had* worked extra hours without pay. But she also said to herself, *Don't even think about it...I cannot keep this money.*
 - ◆ Do you think Lindy did the right thing by keeping the \$200? Why, or why not?
 - ◆ If you were in her situation, what would you have done?
 - ◆ How would the story have changed if Lindy had given the money back right away? Do you think Lindy would still have troubles with Shanna?
2. Lindy really wanted to go to the Arctic with Students Up North. She had to save \$5,500 herself, write an essay, get references and be a "total do-gooder" at her school and in her community (ch. 2). Consider Lindy's behaviors in the novel, both positive and negative. Do you think she should have been allowed to go on the trip after all that happened?
 - ◆ Lindy worked hard and demonstrated responsibility by saving money for the trip, but she did take \$200 she believed wasn't meant for her (ch. 4).
 - ◆ Lindy didn't shoplift, but she bragged to Shanna that she stole because she wanted to look cool (ch. 7).
 - ◆ Lindy came clean. She decided that she had to tell Ms. Komiuk. She said, "I have to do this...I have to be the one to tell her what I did" (ch. 13).

The Writer's Craft

Writers use descriptive language to give readers particular impressions of characters and situations. Invite students to complete the following.

1. List the descriptive words used in chapter 1, when Lindy discovers the fire in Mrs. Naulty's kitchen, right before Lindy said she felt sad for her. How do these words help readers understand the scene and how Lindy is feeling? To illustrate, read the paragraphs again without powerful words like:
 - ◆ *Choked, blaring, billowing, stench, burning, toxic, smoldering, charred, burning, screaming, mistake*
2. In chapter 8, Shanna shows her true colors and tells Lindy, "I only hang out with you so you'll do my assignments." She also blackmails Lindy for a cut of Lindy's earnings. Afterwards, Shanna refers to Lindy by names like *Artic Annie, Snowflake, Miss Brain Freeze* and *Penguin*. Why does the author write this into the character of Shanna? As readers, what does this tell us about Shanna?

3. Compare and contrast the words used in chapters 8 and 9 to describe Lindy's two friends, Shanna and Claire. As a reader, what impression do you make of each?
- ◆ Shanna: *scary serious, creepy, ugly grin, nasty confidence, sneers*
 - ◆ Claire: *always laughing, chirps, friendliest person I've ever known, we giggle*

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is a literary device where the writer hints to readers things that might happen later in the novel. Ask students to consider that Shanna turned out to be a bully who blackmailed Lindy, much to Lindy's surprise. Ask students to find two behaviors Shanna demonstrated in chapters 3 and 7. Were there hints then about Shanna's true nature? As a reader, did you see what Lindy didn't, and did this make you want to find out more?

Prompt: Shanna didn't text Lindy back; was late; ate in the library which was against the rules; looked for an easy way to complete the charity assignment; shoplifted Twizzlers; and high-fived Lindy for keeping Mrs. Naulty's \$200.

Vocabulary Building

The following words were used in the novel in the context of Lindy's experiences, including finding the \$200, being bullied and blackmailed by Shanna, confessing to Ms. Komiuk, and learning her punishment.

afraid	consequence	embarrassed	nervous	punishment
anxiety	curious	learn/ed	opportunity	respectful
ashamed	decision	mistake	panic	scared

Ask students to use four or more of the words above to describe Lindy's feelings or inner dialogue. For example,

- *Lindy felt afraid and nervous after Shanna blackmailed her. She was in a panic.*
- *Lindy felt ashamed that she took the money. She knew she'd made a mistake and there would be a consequence to her actions.*
- *Lindy was curious to learn what her punishment was. She learned from her mistake but that might not be enough. She might not get the opportunity to go to the Arctic.*

Connecting to the Curriculum

Creative Writing, Reading Comprehension

In chapter 14, Lindy tells her parents what happened. She said, "We talk about things like temptation and trust. And choosing our friends wisely. And respecting our elders. And fixing our mistakes." Ask students to choose one of things they talked about and write a descriptive diary entry in the voice of Lindy reflecting on what she learned. For example,

- *I was really tempted by the \$200 in the flowery pink envelope. I couldn't resist that temptation and it changed my life...*

- *I realized I was becoming a liar and a thief. Actually, I started getting really good at lying, and it was killing me inside...*
- *I could have done a better job of choosing friends. I started hanging out with Shanna but I just didn't see the warning signs. Like when...*
- *I was respectful to Mrs. Naulty when I visited, helped out, and told Mom about the fire. It wasn't very respectful when...*
- *Shanna was disrespectful to Ms. Komiuk, my favorite teacher. I can't believe she called Ms. Komiuk "Ms. Eskimo Pie" and "Miss Igloo." That's racist. Come to think of it, Shanna was disrespectful to me too...*

Art

Ask students to choose from the list of scenes below, or find their own. Invite students to illustrate the scene using a medium that represents the metaphor or tone of the scene. If students can't do an actual art project, ask them to imagine and describe one instead.

- "The kitchen is choked with smoke...billowing smoke...stench of burning plastic... screaming fire alarm." (ch. 1)
What colors and textures would illustrate the scene in the kitchen as Lindy walks in?
- Lindy knows the Arctic can be rough, even in summer. "When we're out on the water, it will be freezing cold. And crazy windy...At least the wind will keep the swarms of mosquitos away." (ch. 7)
How would you visually capture the cold, windy Arctic and the swarms of mosquitos?
- Lindy knows she has to fix the mess she's made. She says, "I'm crying because I'm ashamed of myself...because I feel like a jerk for lying to my parents, my friends and my favorite teacher...because I'm afraid of what's going to happen next." (ch. 13)
What media could illustrate the strong feelings Lindy has in this scene?
- "Hey, Snow Queen," she says icily. (ch. 17)
What media could represent Shanna's feelings toward Lindy in this scene?

Research Topics

1. **Elder Abuse:** In chapter 2, Lindy feels "totally creeped out" when she sees a man in Mrs. Naulty's kitchen selling a water filter because Roger just installed one. Lindy's mother said Mrs. Naulty could be at risk of elder abuse. Ask students to find out more about this.

- ◆ What is elder abuse? What forms does it take? Who is at risk?
- ◆ How would you know if an elderly person is experiencing abuse? What signs could you look for?
- ◆ If you suspected an elderly neighbor, friend or family member was being abused, what could you do to help them?
- ◆ Did Lindy commit elder abuse, as Shanna said she did in chapter 8?

2. **Youth Suicide:** In chapter 6, during Ms. Komiuk's Northern Discovery Club, Austin gives a presentation on suicide in remote Arctic villages, noting that the suicide rate for youth is significantly higher there than in other areas of Canada. Ask students to find out about suicide rates in their community, city, state, region or province, and compare them to others.

- ♦ What factors can influence low or high rates of youth suicide?
- ♦ What resources are available in your school and community for youth at risk? Where could a student in your school go if they were suicidal?

3. **Alzheimer's:** Lindy's mom suspects that Mrs. Naulty may "be in the early stages of Alzheimer's or some other form of dementia" (ch. 2). Invite students to find out more about this disease.

- ♦ What are the warning signs of Alzheimer's?
- ♦ Are there ways to prevent this disease if someone is at risk?
- ♦ Can children and young people get Alzheimer's?
- ♦ If someone in your family showed signs of Alzheimer's, what could you do?

Web Resources

Lindy visited Artic Canada with other kids from all over the world. She had the opportunity to volunteer and learn about Arctic culture.

Students interested in youth volunteer programs can find more information from school counselors or by completing an online search using the words "youth volunteer program."

USA

www.yvc.org

<http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/american-youth-leadership-program>

Canada

www.katimavik.org/other-youth-programs

Elder Abuse

USA

www.ncea.aoa.gov/index.aspx

Canada

www.seniors.gc.ca/eng/pie/eaa/elderabuse.shtml

Alzheimer's

www.alz.org