



Caged

Norah McClintock

Reading level: 3.3

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Book Summary

Even if Kenzie's dog had somehow managed to escape from the family's fenced backyard, Kenzie knows the big, lovable chocolate Lab wouldn't have gone far. As they search for Clancy, Kenzie and his dad keep hearing stories about other dogs that have gone missing too. When Kenzie finds Clancy's ID tag and spots a van loaded up with dog food, he knows he has to investigate further. With the help of a schoolmate whose dog has also disappeared, Kenzie uncovers an illegal operation that grabs dogs off the street and turns them into bloodthirsty killers.

Prereading Idea

Ask students to think about the title of the book, *Caged*, and to look at the cover. Then ask them to write a two- to five-sentence prediction about what the book will entail. After they have read the book, ask students to reread their predictions to see how accurate they were and then, as a class, discuss the various predictions in light of the outcome of the book.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- Ask students to write about an experience when they or someone they know shared a special time with a family pet or suffered the loss or death of a pet. Students should write about a specific moment with the pet and include a description of the pet and the pet's personality. Students may write a poem, a narrative or a skit about the incident. Students may attach photos to share with the class.
- Divide students into groups of three and ask them to investigate illegal dogfights: the organizers, the dogs and the spectators. Each student in the group should research one topic. Then, as a group, students should decide on a course of action to present their information to others. Examples: brochures to be posted in the community, letters to legislators regarding penalties, a drive to support an animal-rights group, etc.
- Kenzie and Gayle find themselves in a dangerous situation at the dogfight location. Ask students to write a poem about a time they were afraid or a time they were in danger. Have students illustrate their poems and display them in the classroom.

Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel*Point of view*

As Kenzie tells the story of Clancy's disappearance and the trials that the family and friends go through to find him, the author also allows Clancy to tell what he is experiencing from his point of view. This juxtaposition of the two points of view creates interest for the reader. Ask students to select two characters in the book other than Kenzie and Clancy, such as Kenzie's dad and the dogfight trainer, and then rewrite a portion of the book from the new points of view. Have students practice and present their scripts to the class.

Characterization

Authors use various methods to develop a character: physical description; the character's speech, thoughts, feelings or actions; the speech, thoughts, feelings or actions of other characters; and a narrator's direct comments. Ask students to choose a partner and select one of the characters in the book. Then have them find an example of at least three methods the author uses to develop that character. Have students display on a poster board the name of the character, the three methods, and a quote or situation that represents each method. Display the poster boards in the room.

Conflict

All of the main characters in *Caged* deal with both internal and external conflict. Ask students to select one character and create a chart identifying the conflicts the character faces, the emotional impact of each conflict on the character and the resolutions of each. Then ask students to share, compare and discuss their charts with other students who selected the same character. As a whole class, discuss new insights or understandings based on the sharing activity.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. What attributes make Clancy so special to his family?
2. Why is Clancy's disappearance such a mystery?
3. What steps does the family take to find Clancy?
4. What specifically is Kenzie worried about for Clancy?
5. Who is Gayle, and why do the other students dislike her?
6. What role does Gayle play in helping Kenzie find Clancy?
7. Why doesn't Kenzie want to believe Gayle's theory of dognappers?
8. When Ben finds Clancy's dog tag at the side of the road, how does Kenzie react? What does Kenzie do with his friends?
9. How was Clancy treated by the dognappers?
10. Why do the police refuse to help Kenzie and Gayle?
11. What does Kenzie learn about Gayle that he had misjudged?
12. How is the crime finally resolved? How is the resolution both happy and sad?

Writer's Craft***Powerful verbs***

Powerful verbs help create images in the reader's mind. Ask students to find the verbs listed below and five other examples of powerful verbs in the novel. Then have students find five sentences in their own writing that they can rewrite using powerful verbs. Ask students to select their best revision and share their "before" and "after" sentences with the class.

morphed	ch. 1	cowered	ch. 7
whimpered	ch. 3	yelped	ch. 10
hunkered	ch. 3	dodged	ch. 10
pooled	ch. 5	strode	ch. 12
fluttered	ch. 5	crouched	ch. 13

Author Biography

Nora McClintock won the Crime Writers of Canada's Arthur Ellis Award for crime fiction for young people on five separate occasions. She wrote more than sixty YA novels, including several for Orca Soundings, and contributed to the Seven Prequels, Seven (the series), The Seven Sequels and The Secrets series.