

Reader's Guide

Girl, Stolen

by April Henry

A YALSA Quick Pick

A YALSA Best Book for Young Adults

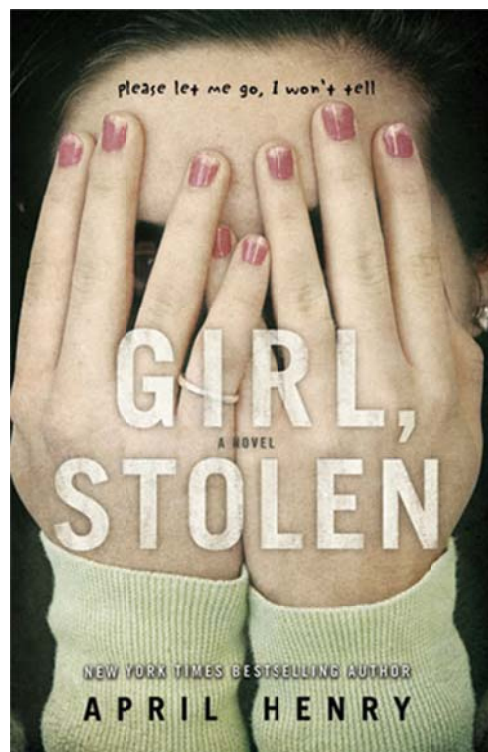
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Ages 12 and up



About the book:

Sick with pneumonia, sixteen-year-old Cheyenne Wilder is in the back of a car while her stepmom fills her prescription at the pharmacy. She leaves the keys in the ignition in case Cheyenne gets cold. But before Cheyenne realizes what's happening, their car is being stolen—with her inside!

Griffin hadn't meant to kidnap Cheyenne. All he wanted to do was steal a car his dad could take apart and sell. Cheyenne begs him to let her go. Not only is she sick with pneumonia, she's blind. Not knowing what to do, Griffin takes her back to the chop shop his dad runs out in the country.

But once Griffin's dad finds out that Cheyenne's father is the president of a powerful corporation, everything changes. How much will her father pay to get her back? And even if he gets the money, will Griffin's dad just let Cheyenne go?

Griffin doesn't trust his dad, and Cheyenne is desperate to escape. Together they form an uneasy

bond. But can each trust the other—or even themselves?

Prereading activities:

Girl, Stolen is a thriller. What do you think is the difference between a mystery and a thriller?

If you had to lose a sense—taste, touch, smell, hearing, or sight—which would you choose? What would be the hardest sense to lose?

Close your eyes and try to get around a room in your home. Is it difficult? What senses did you rely on since you couldn't see? Did this experiment make you understand Cheyenne's experience in a different way?

Discussion questions:

- Describe at least one thing you liked and one thing you disliked about the book.
- Discuss some of Cheyenne’s strengths. She is a survivor. What does this mean on a deeper level?
- Griffin struggles with doing the right thing. Since he doesn’t have any positive role models, this becomes challenging for him. Discuss this point.
- Cheyenne is physically blind. Are there ways that Griffin is also blind?
- Do you think Cheyenne trusts Griffin? Does she use him in some ways? How so?
- Is there something else that you would have done to help yourself escape besides attack Griffin?
- Would you have left the house in the middle of the night, blind, in the snow, with no coat, and tried to escape?
- Why do you think Griffin cares about helping Cheyenne, especially after she harms him?
- In many ways, Griffin and Cheyenne are both alone and need each other. Please discuss how this is so.
- Would you consider Griffin a hero given his circumstances and how he tried to help Cheyenne? Explain.
- What do you think Cheyenne said to Griffin at the end of the story? And why did she say yes—or no? If yes, could Cheyenne and Griffin realistically have a healthy relationship?
- What would you have said if you were Cheyenne?
- Why did the author leave the ending somewhat ambiguous?

Activities:

- Rewrite a section of the book in the voice of another character, or with Cheyenne having a different physical disability.
- Write a six-word summary of the novel. See examples on the following websites: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18768430> and <http://somuchtoread.com/sixwords.html>
- Create a graphic novel version of the story.
- Write a book report/book review, Twitter style, in 140 characters or less.



About the author:

April Henry is the *New York Times*–bestselling author of many acclaimed mysteries for adults and young adults, including the young adult novels *Girl, Stolen* and *The Night She Disappeared*, and the thriller *Face of Betrayal*, co-authored with Lis Wiehl. She lives in Oregon with her family. Visit April on the web at aprilhenrymysteries.com.

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April says:

"*Girl, Stolen* was inspired by the 2005 kidnapping of a blind teenager named Heather. Heather had been waiting in the back seat of her mother's car when a man spotted the keys in the ignition and stole it. That night, I watched Heather and her mom being interviewed, and I asked myself a series of what-if questions. What if the guy hadn't forced her out of the car and instead kept her? What if the car thief had been another teenager? What if it turned out that Heather's father was wealthy? Those questions became the basis for *Girl, Stolen*.

"To research the book, I interviewed blind people to better understand what their lives are like. I decided to give my character a guide dog because the people I spoke with said it changed their lives. The dog makes them more approachable and lets them walk a lot faster. I even visited a Guide Dogs for the Blind school. I was blindfolded and then got to harness and walk a dog.

"While Heather has been blind since birth, I decided to make Cheyenne blind from an accident. I think you probably perceive the world differently if you were born without a sense, and I wasn't sure I could do justice to that.

"After the book was published, I managed to track down Heather. It turns out she loves to read and wants to be a writer."

Also available:



THE NIGHT SHE DISAPPEARED

"A riveting story that many readers will finish in one sitting." —*Publishers Weekly*

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Praise for *Girl, Stolen*:

"Be ready to be startled and inspired as the story reaches its climax. Readers will race to the end." —*The Strand Magazine*

"The pace is impeccable, becoming rapidly more frantic as Cheyenne realizes her chances for success are dwindling. In addition, the premise itself is powerfully realistic and compelling, with one small incident (Griffin's jumping into a car that had the keys in the ignition) snowballing into a nightmare series of events that will change everyone." —*BCCB*

"[A] captivating tale that shifts between Cheyenne's and Griffin's thoughts. Both are well-built, complex characters, trapped in their own ways by life's circumstances, which —paired with a relentlessly fast pace — ensures a tense read." —*Publishers Weekly*

"Readers will be hard-pressed to put this one down before its heart-pounding conclusion." —*School Library Journal*

"Spine-tingling. . . . Reminiscent of Gail Giles' thrillers and tension-filled to the last sentence, *Girl, Stolen* will resonate with readers long after the cover is closed. With a thoughtful and eye-opening look at disabilities, it highlights Cheyenne and Griffin's resourcefulness and resiliency as they save themselves—and possibly each other." —*BookPage*

"Thoroughly exciting." —*Booklist*

"Grabs your attention with the first page you read. . . . Each page holds new questions that are answered in the most unexpected ways." —*VOYA*, 5Q review

"Constantly interesting and suspenseful." —*Kirkus Reviews*

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