

BOOK CLUB GUIDE

Guide created by Amy Christine Parker for library, classroom, and reading group use.



Random House Children's
A Division of Penguin Random House

GATED

By Amy Christine Parker

SYNOPSIS

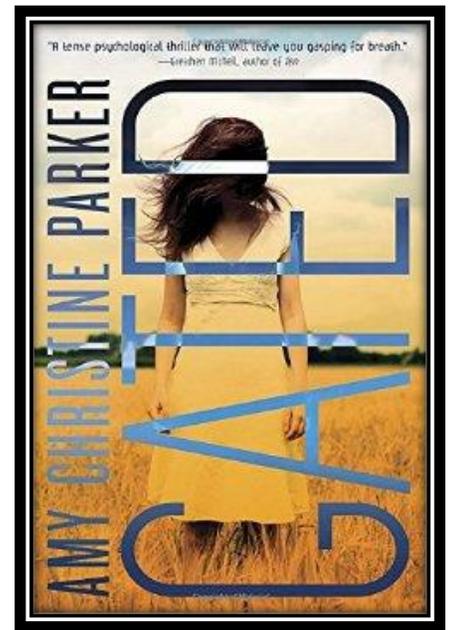
A fast-paced, nerve-fraying contemporary thriller that questions loyalties and twists truths.

Appearances can be deceiving.

Lyla Hamilton is a loyal member of the Community. Her family was happy to be chosen by Pioneer to join such an lovely gated neighborhood. Here, life seems perfect.

But after meeting Cody, an outsider boy, Lyla starts questioning Pioneer, her friends, her family--everything. And if there's one thing not allowed in the Community, it's doubt. As Pioneer cleverly manipulates his flock toward disaster, the real question is: Will Lyla follow her heart or follow Pioneer over the edge?

From the outside looking in, it's hard to understand why anyone would join a cult. But *Gated* tells the story from the inside looking out, and from behind the gates things are not quite so simple. Amy Christine Parker's beautiful writing creates a chilling, utterly unique YA story. Perfect for fans of creepy thrillers and contemporary fiction alike.



PRAISE FOR GATED

"A tense psychological thriller that will leave you gasping for breath as you race to the very last page."

—Gretchen McNeil, author of *Ten*

"Parker doesn't pull punches, indicating a level of brutality that will appropriately disturb even as it successfully conveys Lyla's complete entrapment in the Community. Compelling and not that far distant from real world cults that have ended in tragedy."

—Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review, June 15, 2013

"This well-plotted tale will allow readers a glimpse into the possible world of a doomsday cult. The language is accessible, making it a good choice for reluctant readers. After the last page is turned the question will linger 'Could I ever be deceived like this?'"

—School Library Journal

"Parker skillfully explores the mindset and inner workings of an apocalyptic cult, steadily building toward the inevitable moment of truth. As for the apocalypse, itself, Parker keeps things suitably ambiguous resulting in a complex, intriguing tale rooted in real-world events."

—Publishers Weekly

WELCOME ACTIVITY

In *GATED* the end of the world is supposedly near. Surviving it is a big part of the book. As book club members arrive, hand them paper and a pen. Have each person make their own list of what they think they would need to survive the end of the world. The goal is to make as comprehensive and unique a list as possible. Once everyone has arrived, go around the group and have each person share the items on their list. If others have common items on their own lists, have everyone cross that item off. The person with the most items on their list that are not crossed off, wins a prize.

Prize suggestion: box of “emergency rations” (candy or chocolate).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The book begins with Lyla out on the gun range where she has difficulty making herself shoot the targets in lethal spots until she's forced by Pioneer. What does this say about her as a character? Why do you think the author chose to begin the story with this scene?
2. Lyla's parents joined the Community shortly after their daughter goes missing and 9/11 occurs. Lyla feels that they were convinced that isolating themselves in the Midwest with other like-minded individuals would be the best way to keep her and themselves safe. Is it ever a good idea to isolate your family in this way? Why or why not?
3. What do you think happened to Lyla's sister Karen? Why do you think the author chose not to reveal what happened to her in the book?
4. The Community lives under a very strict set of rules. How do you think someone like Pioneer can get the other adults to agree to these rules, especially the ones involving punishing the kids?
5. When the sheriff comes to visit the Community, why do you think Lyla has such a strong reaction to Cody? Is it love at first sight? Why do you think an outsider boy is the catalyst Lyla needs to question her world?
6. Marie believes her brother has run to LA to become an actor or something equally glamorous. What do you think really happened to him?
7. Why does Pioneer guard what the Community members read, see, and hear from the outside world? Do you think he could still get them to believe his prophecies if he didn't?
8. Do you think Pioneer believes his own prophecies? Why or why not?
9. The author puts quotes at the beginning of each chapter. In the beginning, they are from Pioneer and later they switch to quotes from various cult leaders. Why do you think the author chose to format the book in this way? Do you think there is any significance to when the quotes switch from Pioneer to the other cult leaders? Why or why not?
10. Did you ever find yourself unsettled by things Pioneer did or said because they sounded almost plausible? When and why?

MAKE IT A PARTY

GATED is the perfect book for an Apocalypse Party. Here's how to pull it off:

Invitations: Use an image of the book's cover to design your own invite. [Canva](#) is a terrific site to use for this.

Encourage Themed Attire: Ask your book clubbers to come dressed in survival gear.

Venue: Make your meeting truly unique and thick with "end of the world atmosphere" by gathering at a campsite or picnic area at a camp grounds or state park.

Decorations: Think red emergency lights, camping gear, oxygen masks, lots of candles. Raid your local Army Navy for some interesting props. Serve food on camping dishware.

Music: Create an End of the World Playlist with theme appropriate favorites from REM, Linkin' Park, Britney Spears, etc.

Activities

1. In Lyla's Community movie night is a big deal. After the meeting hold an outdoor (or indoor) movie marathon of one or more Apocalypse themed movies such as:

Armageddon

The Day After Tomorrow

Deep Impact

The Road

2012

2. Hold a Survival Scavenger Hunt. Hide end of the world themed items in your neighborhood or around the area where you are meeting and have guests race to see who can find the most items first.

CLUB MEETING MENU

Create a decadent Last Meal Before the World Ends Potluck.

Have everyone bring their favorite indulgence food and eat as if this is your last meal!

Supply an epic dessert bar and stock it with your choice of the following:

Doughnuts

Assorted Candy

Cupcakes/cookies

Pies

Mini chocolate mousse, key lime pie, tiramisu cups

Brownies

S'more fixings (graham crackers, marshmallows, peanut butter, chocolate bars, toasted pecans, flaked coconut, etc.)



CONSIDER AN AUTHOR APPEARANCE

Having the author discuss her book with your group will allow you a unique glimpse into her inspirations and can make discussions on the themes and character motivations even deeper and more meaningful. Amy is available to do virtual appearances via Skype or Google Hangouts and some in person appearances. She does charge for her time, but depending on the group and their needs, she can sometimes be flexible on her fee, but this will be on a case by case basis.

Skype/Google Hangout Visits

Skype visits are completely free for the first 30 minutes.

31-60 minute visits cost \$50.

Amy will send personalized, signed book plates to each member of your book club as well as some special swag.

Book Club Appearances

\$100 for 60-90 minutes.

Travel expenses required for all appearances beyond Pasco and Hillsborough Counties unless Amy is already in the area for a book festival or school visits.

Amy will be happy to sign/personalize books for each member of your book club who would like their copy signed and will provide special swag during the appearance.

Find out more about Amy Christine Parker and her books, appearance schedule, and more at www.amychristineparker.com