

Educator Discussion Guide

The Dead Girls of Hysteria Hall

by Katie Alender

Louisiana Teen Readers' Choice Nominee 2018

Grade 9-12

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SUMMARY

When great-great aunt Cordelia dies she leaves her entire estate to her sixteen year old namesake Delia. When Delia and her family arrive to spruce up and sell the property, they are surprised to find Delia has inherited what was once known as “The Piven Institute for the Care and Correction of Troubled Females”, known locally as “Hysteria Hall.” After mysterious happenings occur around the house, Delia comes face to face with an evil presence. When she wakes from the experience, her lifeless body has been thrown from a window and she is a ghost. Delia and the ghosts of other girls who have died at Hysteria Hall are trapped within its walls with no hope of escaping. It is only when Delia’s little sister, Janie, is at risk of being taken by the house that Delia determines to find a way to put an end to the evil of the house once and for all.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Katie Alendar grew up in south Florida where she studied film at the Florida State University Film School. After graduation she moved to Los Angeles to work in television. She insists she does not enjoy scary books or movies although others consider her work to be inherently scary.

Biographical information taken from the author’s website at

<http://www.katiealender.com/about/>

Accessed 3 August 2017.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why doesn’t Delia’s father share all the information he has regarding the Piven Institute with his wife and daughters?
2. What is the significance of the smell of buttercups?
3. Why is Delia so eager to walk through walls and pick up things when she first wakes up?
4. What could Delia and her parents have done differently in Part 1 of the book?
Why does Eliza have bells around her wrists?
5. Why is Eliza so chilly towards Delia at first?

6. Why do the ghosts prefer to stay in their parts of the house? What binds them? Who or what make the rules?
7. Why can't the indoor ghosts go outside and vice versa?
8. If Florence and Eliza are "content" to stay as they are in the house, why isn't Delia?
9. Why is Delia able to go anywhere she pleases on the grounds?
10. Why does time pass the way it does for Delia?
11. Why were Florence, Eliza, Penitence, and the other ghosts sent to the institute? Did they deserve their fate? What might happen to them today?
12. What's the difference between the different floors and area of Hysteria Hall?
13. Why does Delia spend so long turning the music box?
14. What makes Delia different from the other ghosts?
15. Why does Delia feel guilty about what happens to the shadow monster in the basement?
16. Why is Delia able to manipulate salt but the other ghosts cannot? Is this the same as Maria's ability?
17. There is a battle between Fear and Love – which is more powerful? Why does the winner ultimately win?
18. Why do Eliza's bells fall off?
19. There is a change in the ghosts from a blue light to white light. What is the significance of this?

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

English:

Have your students write their own, short, ghost stories. Identify what makes a ghost or horror story different from other works of fiction and discuss how to incorporate these elements into a story. Map out how a work of fiction progresses from introduction, developing action, climax, and eventual resolution. Discuss possible settings where a ghost story would likely take place. For bonus points include 5-10 vocabulary words for students to incorporate into their stories.

Art:

Have your students do character portraits of each of the ghosts presented in *The Dead Girls of Hysteria Hall*. Using information provided in the book, students can create a collage using magazine clippings or pictures from the Internet to achieve a full representation of the ghost's appearance, details of her past life, why she was brought to the Piven Institute, what her current ghost-self is like, etc.

Social Studies:

Have your students research any famous local hauntings or hauntings in your state and present a presentation. What is the history surrounding the tales of these hauntings? What was the time period like? Have your students give oral presentations presenting their findings.

Technology:

Divide students into groups for a group project to create their own book trailer video for *The Dead Girls of Hysteria Hall*. Show examples of book trailers. Share the links below with students to help them get started.

Book Trailer How to's:

- <http://hubpages.com/art/Create-Your-Own-Book-Trailer-Free>
- <http://www.thecreativepenn.com/2011/01/07/how-to-create-a-book-trailer/>
- <http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com/Prezi+On+How+To+Make+A+Book+Trailer>
- <http://thewritelife.com/free-apps-for-book-trailer/>

Creation: *Use free trials if possible

- Windows MovieMaker
- iMovie
- Photo Story
- PhotoShow
- ScreenFlow

Pictures: *Make sure to use free Creative Commons images

- <https://search.creativecommons.org/?q=>
- <http://www.photosforclass.com/>
- <https://pixabay.com/>
- http://www.google.com/advanced_image_search?
- <https://www.befunky.com/>
- <http://www.istockphoto.com/>
- <https://www.flickr.com/>

Vocabulary:

Hysteria	Protrusion	Grotesque
Mystique	Plankton	Sallow
Dementia	Antiquated	Pallid
Decrepit	Sanitarium	Nostalgia
Gilded	Asymmetrical	Maudlin
Clique	Buoyantly	Genteel
Tutelage	Plaintive	Petulance
Modicum	Affectation	Incinerator
Etiquette	Nuances	Surrealist
Decorum	Despondently	Obtuse

RELATED WEB SITES

Katie Alender's Website

<http://www.katiealender.com/>

Author Katie Alender's personal website with information on other titles she's written and published as well as a FAQ's page with more information about her personal life and interests for any inquiring minds.

Hysteria

<http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/techniques/hysteria>

A brief introduction into the history of female hysteria.