

PATHFINDERS

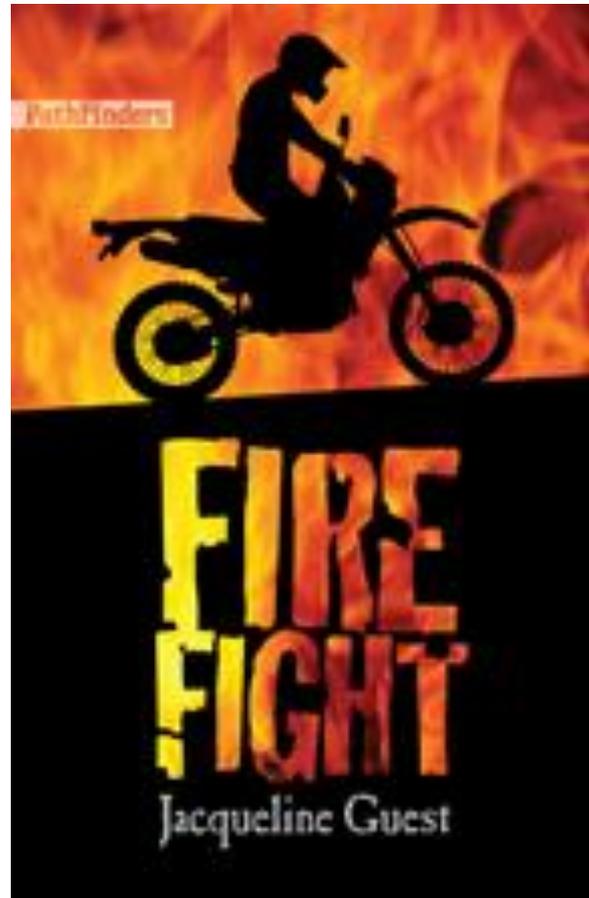
RELUCTANT READERS NOVELS

FIRE FIGHT

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Teacher Summary: *Fire Fight*

Fire Fight is the story of sixteen-year-old Kai Hunter, who is part Navajo and part Stoney Nakoda. The story begins with the passing of Kai's beloved grandmother, her *ikusin*. Kai's *ikusin* was the most important person in her life, and now that she is gone, Kai is all alone. She knows that the authorities from Stoney Nakoda Social Services are on their way to her grandmother's home to pick up Kai and place her in a foster home. Kai makes a decision to avoid the authorities by quickly leaving on her old motorcycle.

Kai is able to escape and she decides to drive to Banff, Alberta. Banff is only 45 minutes west of her home and is a tourist town high in the Rocky Mountains. She believes that no one would expect her to hide so close to home.

The first thing Kai does is to go to a drugstore and buy hair dye. She then uses the bathroom at a gas station to cut and dye her hair. She removes all of her piercings and covers her wrist tattoo with a bandage.

Next, Kai needs a place to stay the night, so she goes to a youth hostel where she meets Anne Collier, its owner. When asked her name, Kai instantly comes up with Robin Pierce, the main character in a book she recently read. Anne can tell that Kai is low on funds and offers her a job at a local restaurant, which she also owns. Kai can't believe her good luck when she ends up with a place to stay and a job.

Before starting her new job the next day, Kai decides to ride around town on her motorcycle. While she is on her way back to the hostel, a green pick-up truck runs a red light and causes Kai to crash her motorcycle. A split second before the crash, Kai is able to leap off the bike and roll across the pavement. She is okay but her motorcycle is damaged. A young man who witnessed the crash comes to help her and she is instantly "captivated by glacier-blue eyes and a grease-smudged face." The young man's name is Rory Caulder.

Rory is a mechanic and offers to fix Kai's motorcycle. Kai accepts his offer and also agrees to a date with Rory. She does not know that the owner of the truck that almost hit her is one of Cory's friends. She will soon realize that Cory is not such a great guy.

Kai enjoys her job, and Anne Collier and her husband become Kai's friends. Anne's husband is a firefighter and introduces Kai to his fire-fighting team.

As the story continues, Kai becomes more involved with Rory Caulder. He is not always nice to her but he always manages to win her over. He even slips her a drug one night to cause her to pass out. He then takes her key to the pub where she works and steals some money. When Kai wakes up, she doesn't realize what has happened.

Kai continues to lie to herself about Rory even though she knows he is not being truthful with her. When they take a motorcycle ride in the mountains, she realizes just how frighteningly dangerous Rory is. He admits to her that he loves fire as he sets the dry mountain brush ablaze. Thanks to her quick thinking, Kai is able to protect herself and Rory as the fire rages over them. Rory is hurt, so Kai goes for help.

Kai is able to notify the authorities and the fire-fighting team arrives. The police also arrive on the scene, and Kai tells them the story of how Rory started the fire. She also must tell the police her true identity.

The story has a happy ending for Kai when Anne and her husband ask Kai to live with them. Kai gladly accepts their offer.

Fire Fight Vocabulary List

The definitions are definitions of the words as they are used in *Fire Fight*.

1. **ordinary** – *adjective* - familiar, everyday, or unexceptional

I wanted to pass as an *ordinary* citizen and not a girl running for her life.

2. **minimum** – *adjective* - a lower limit permitted by law or other authority

Waitress jobs pay *minimum* wage, plus tips.

3. **prospectors** – *plural noun* - people who explore an area for mineral deposits or oil

In 1883 *prospectors* found the original hot springs.

4. **captivate** – *verb* - to attract and hold the interest of

His glacier-blue eyes *captivated* me.

5. **remnant** – *noun* - something left over

He tossed the *remnant* of cloth onto the ground.

6. **certification** – *noun* - official approval to do something at a professional or licensed level

He told me he was working on getting his mechanic's *certification*.

7. **persuade** – *verb* - to cause someone to accept a point of view

"Now that you're here, I could be *persuaded* to stick around," said the boy.

8. **flattered** -- *adjective* – feeling admired, complemented, or honored

He was so friendly towards me that I was really *flattered*.

9. **schlep** – *verb* - to carry clumsily or with difficulty; to lug or drag something (or oneself)

The thought of *schlepping* to the restaurant made me want to groan.

10. **rappel** – *verb* - To descend from a height, such as a cliff or wall, by sliding down an anchored rope

Fire fighters *rappel* down to the forest floor to put out a fire.

11. **mesmerized** – *adjective* - having your attention fixated as though by a spell

I was *mesmerized* as I listened to the music.

12. **adrenalin** – *noun* - a hormone secreted by the adrenal medulla upon stimulation by the central nervous system in response to stress, as brought on by anger or fear

The guy was an *adrenalin* junkie.

13. **acquainted** – *adjective* - known by or familiar with another person

“Why don’t you get *acquainted* with the girls while I talk to Rat.” said Cory.

14. **obligingly** – *adverb* - willingly; in an accommodating manner

Some biker types *obligingly* went to the creek and brought back several buckets of water.

15. **firebreak** – *noun* - a strip of plowed or cleared land made to check the spread of a prairie or forest fire

The fire fighters are going to extend the *firebreak* at the end of the road in case a wildfire comes over that ridge.

16. **annoyance** – *noun* - irritation or vexation; a nuisance

I could hear his *annoyance* with me in the tone of his voice.

17. **devastate** – *verb* – to emotionally shatter, shock, stun, or cause one to be overcome

The miscarriage *devastated* her.

18. **incinerate** – *verb* - to burn completely

Agonizing minutes crawled by as the fire *incinerated* everything around us.

Fire Fight Vocabulary Test

Name _____

Date _____

Directions:

Place the number of the vocabulary word next to the correct definition.

_____ something left over

_____ to carry clumsily or with difficulty; to lug or drag something (or oneself)

_____ a hormone secreted by the adrenal medulla upon stimulation by the central nervous system in response to stress, as brought on by anger or fear

_____ familiar, everyday, or unexceptional

_____ to burn completely

_____ to descend from a height, such as a cliff or wall, by sliding down an anchored rope

_____ willingly; in an accommodating manner

_____ people who explore an area for mineral deposits or oil

_____ having your attention fixated as though by a spell

_____ a lower limit permitted by law or other authority

_____ official approval to do something at a professional or licensed level

_____ to cause (someone) to accept a point of view

_____ feeling admired, complemented, or honored

_____ a strip of plowed or cleared land made to check the spread of a prairie or forest fire

_____ known by or familiar with another person

_____ irritation or vexation; a nuisance

_____ to emotionally shatter, shock, stun, or cause one to be overcome

_____ to attract and hold the interest of

1. ordinary
2. minimum
3. prospectors
4. captivate
5. remnant
6. certification
7. persuade
8. flatter
9. schlep
10. rappel
11. mesmerized
12. adrenalin
13. acquainted
14. obligingly
15. firebreak
16. annoyance
17. devastate
18. incinerate

Connecting to the Text

Plot and Character

Events in sixteen-year-old Kai Hunter's life have led her to make life-changing choices. Gather in groups of four students and brainstorm to list these major events in Kai's life. Place the events in order they happened. Each student should choose four consecutive events and place them on a timeline. The timeline can include drawings that depict the events.

Underline four important, consecutive events on the timeline and write a report answering the following questions:

1. Look at each of the four consecutive events; choose one and explain the impact it had on Kai's life.
2. Look at each of the four events. Which do you think was the hardest for Kai to deal with? Why?
3. Add two positive events to the timeline you created. How could these events have changed Kai's life?

Language Arts:

Creative Writing

Background:

Kai Hunter was able to escape her drastic situation because she had a driver's license and a motorcycle, but her escape was frightening because she was running from authorities. Even in everyday life we sometimes feel the need to escape.

Choose one of the topics below to write about:

1. You had a tough day at school. Maybe you failed a test, or your crush, likes someone else. All you want is a little peace and quiet, but your two brothers won't quit arguing. How or to where do you escape?
2. Your Mom comes home from work one day and tells your family that it is time to escape to the country. She says that life in the city has taken its toll on her and she is taking the family to visit your grandparents, who live in the middle of nowhere.
 - a. Suggestions:
 - You love the country and can't wait to go.
 - You come up with an alternative idea for her to consider.
 - You try to figure out how you can get out of this trip.
3. It has been an extremely hot summer. Your bedroom is on the third floor and is really warm. You escape the heat by sleeping on the back porch.
 - What sounds do you hear?
 - Is it really cooler outside?

Are you afraid?
Do you miss your comfortable bed?

4. Poetry/Rap

Write a poem or rap about Kai Hunter or about running away from a situation. Poems must be a minimum of 4 stanzas with 4 lines in each stanza.

Directed Writing

Opinion Paper

Kai Hunter made two decisions that each had major effects on her life. She took quite a chance when she decided to run away and change her identity. She also took quite a chance when she became involved with Rory Caulder.

In your opinion, did Kai make a **good or bad** choice when she:

1. ran away and changed her identity
2. became involved with Rory Caulder
3. saved Rory before going for help
4. told the authorities her real identity

Writing an Opinion Paper using a Two-Part Thesis

1. What is your opinion? Write a sentence that clearly states your opinion. Your opinion should be supported with two examples that are stated in the last sentence of the first paragraph.

Example: When Kai ran away and changed her identity, I do not think she made the right decision. Kai was not safe traveling alone on an old motorcycle (1), and when she changed her identity it forced her to lie and worry about not getting caught (2).

A two-part thesis has **four** paragraphs.

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Paragraph 1 | Introduction – your opinion |
| Paragraph 2 | Topic #1 – first example that supports your opinion
example: traveling alone on an old motorcycle |
| Paragraph 3 | Topic #2 – second example that supports your opinion
example: forced to lie and change identity |
| Paragraph 4 | Closing – summary
Be careful to NOT include another example that supports your opinion, or unrelated facts. Summarize only your opinion. |

Art

1. Use your own creativity to create a piece of art that reflects one or more of Kai's emotions expressed in the story.

Suggestion: In an oral report, explain to your classmates your inspiration and the meaning of your work of art.

Drama

Use an excerpt from the book to recreate and act out a scene.

Suggestions:

Kai changing her identity in the gas-station restroom

Kai's job interview with Anne Collier

The party Kai attended with Rory Caulder

Research project:

Many children in American run away from home. Using the Internet, gather statistics you can express in a bar graph.

1. Nationwide, how many children were removed from their homes and placed in foster care in 1990, 2000, and 2010?
2. What three states have the highest percentage of runaway teenagers?
3. Nationwide, what is the number of runaway teens by race (white, African-American, Asian, American Indian, Hispanic)?