

READING GUIDE

RETRIBUTION: BURNED

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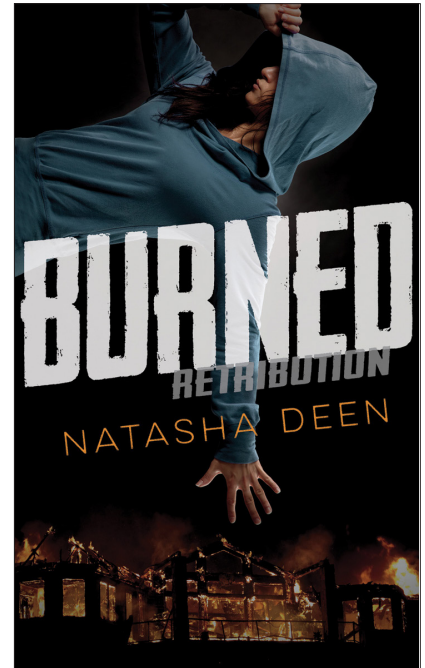
Natasha Deen

Reading Level: 3.9

Fiction Ages 12+

Themes: crime, murder, corruption, police,
homelessness, vengeance, fire

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SUMMARY

Retribution: Burned is one of three books in a trilogy written with two other authors: Judith Graves (*Retribution: Exposed*) and Sigmund Brouwer (*Retribution: Unleashed*).

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Jo has spent the last two years of her life living on the streets after her family was brutally murdered. She is on a mission to bring the culprit to justice. There is only one thing standing in her way. The person responsible for their deaths is a highly decorated police officer. By teaming up with three other teens who have their own crosses to bear, Jo sets out to avenge her family in hopes of finding retribution.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Have a discussion regarding the idea of justice. Ask students to think about the following questions:

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt that you wanted to seek out justice? What did you do? What were the consequences?

Is there ever a time when this can be justified? Explain your reasons.

Can you find examples within history where someone took justice into their own hands? What was the end result?



CONNECTING TO THE WORLD

Each year more and more people throughout North America end up living on the streets. Some people feel that it is the government's job to help these people while others feel that they need to take responsibility for their own life and stop depending on "handouts." Have students choose sides and debate whose responsibility this is.

OR

Have students research statistics in Canada on the homeless. They can do a comparison between provinces, cities, cultures, etc. What are the primary causes?

What can we do as a society to address this problem? What affect does this have on future generations?

CONNECTING TO THE TEXT*Imagery*

Deen uses the symbolism of fire throughout the novel. Find examples and explain how this symbolism inspires feelings, emotions and creates images. How does this provide insight into Jo's character?

Plot

Each event within the text leads to a response causing a ripple effect. Ask students to create a Cause and Effect chart outlining the plot of the story. Students need to explain each event and how it leads up to each effect highlighting the main problem, climax and solution.

Setting

Jo had to learn quickly to survive on the streets. She talks of a code that exists that she must follow to stay alive. Explain the significance of the following quote.

"The homeless had a network, a line of communication, a system of order. Keeping in their good books meant that if I ever needed their help, it would be there. For the homeless, the streets were a concrete jungle, complete with two-legged vipers, golden-toothed lions. Danger didn't lurk at every corner. It stood strong and confident, waiting for someone to do something stupid." (pg 16-17)

CONNECTING TO STUDENTS: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When we first are introduced to Jo she is trying to pass for a boy on the streets. Why is she doing this?
2. In chapter 2 we discover that Jo is hired to steal from a store so the owner can check out the gaps in his security. As Jo reflects on this she says, "A sliver of clean honesty in the waste and mud that was my life." (p12) What does this mean?
3. If Jo had not sought retribution how would her life be different?



4. Jo acts tough but actually has a very vulnerable side to her. What are some examples of this?
5. Meena Sharma was a corrupt police officer. However, she also has a reason for doing the things she does. Can you argue that she was justified in her actions? Why or why not?
6. Jo feels responsible for Emily's death. Is it her fault Emily died? Does she bear some of the responsibility for her death?
7. Jo could have just gone after Meena on the streets and been done with it. But she had several reasons why taking Meena's life would not be enough. Explain.
8. What did Jo mean when she said, "Between him, ATM Guy and Raven I was surrounded by lone wolves who'd rather bay at the moon than hunt together. (pg 106)
9. Why do you think Jo and Raven feel compelled to stick together "living in the shadows, dispensing their own kind of justice"? (pg 159)

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Natasha Deen is an award-winning author from Edmonton, Alberta. She has written a variety of books including creative nonfiction to YA and adult fiction. She was the inaugural Regional Writer in Residence for the Metro Edmonton Library Federation in 2013. When she is not writing she is a presenter and workshop facilitator with schools. For more information, visit www.natashadeen.com.

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