



Home Invasion

Joy Fielding

Reading Level: 2-3

Interest Level: Adult

Book Summary

Kathy Brown is tired of her marriage; she sees her husband, Jack, as boring. Kathy has gone as far as to have a couple of coffee meetings with an old high school boyfriend, Michael, without Jack's knowing. One night as Kathy lies in bed thinking about Michael, she hears noises in the house. Kathy and her husband face a living nightmare—a home invasion. That night, Kathy also faces her real feelings about Jack and comes to realize that she really does love her husband.

Author Biography

Joy Fielding is an internationally bestselling author. Five of her novels have been made into TV movies. She was named Author of the Year in 2005 by the Canada News Group. Joy is married and has two daughters and one grandson. She divides her time between Toronto and Palm Beach.

Note to the educator: The following activities are suggestions only. Please choose and adjust the projects and questions according to the specific needs and level of your students as well as their experience with doing novel studies. Students can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

THINKING ABOUT THE BOOK**Book Cover and Title**

- (a) Read the title to the students. Ask them to describe what they see on the front cover. Ask them to describe what feelings the picture evokes.
- (b) Ask students to predict what kind of story this will be (adventure, mystery, true crime) and give reasons for their prediction.

WORKING WITH THE BOOK**Characters**

- (a) Ask students to give their opinions on the following statement:
Some people are good and some people are bad, but most people are good and bad.
- (b) As students read the book, have them take note of the details that tell the reader something about Kathy's character. Have them decide where each detail should be placed in the chart—in the Positive or Negative column.

Page	Positive	Negative

- (c) After reading the book, have students share in small groups the details they recorded about Kathy. Have the students make inferences about Kathy’s character based on the details they have recorded.

- (d) Explain to students that Kathy is an interesting character because she is well-rounded, with both positive and negative traits. This makes her seem real to the reader. Have students (i) discuss Jack, Steve, and Bobby in terms of positive and negative traits and (ii) determine how real these characters seem in comparison to Kathy.

How do we make inferences?

Active readers use their experience and knowledge to make educated guesses about characters and their motivations. Readers who make inferences use clues in the text together with their own experiences to help them figure out the author’s meaning.

Plot: Moving Forward

Explain to students that as the plot moves forward, Kathy tries to figure out who the home invaders are. Have students keep track of the clues that lead Kathy to discovering who the home invaders are. After reading the book, have students reread the paragraphs describing Kathy’s dream (Chapter 1, pages 8–9) and discuss which clues relate to the dream, and how.

Page	Clue

Plot: Suspense

- (a) Explain to students that writers often build up suspense to keep the reader interested in the story. Have students read the final paragraphs in Chapters 1 to 5. Have students explain how suspense is created and why they want to keep reading.
- (b) As students read Chapter 6, have them find examples of how the writer creates suspense during Kathy and Jack's escape (e.g., fear of Bobby waking up and Steve returning; taking a long time to cut through the rope; Jack's pain; the 9-1-1 call; baby-stepping down the hall to the front door; speculation on what Bobby might do to them; Bobby's cell phone ringing)
- (c) Put students in small groups. Have each group reread a chapter of the book and note down moments of suspense and how those moments are created. Then have the students share their notes.

Setting

Explain to students that setting is the time and location in which a story takes place, and that writers can create a mood, or feeling in the reader, with the way they describe the setting. Have students take note of the setting details for *Home Invasion* (e.g., middle of the night, family home, a couple's bedroom, quiet neighbourhood, a tiny sliver of a moon). Then have students give reasons as to why the writer chose those details for the setting.

TALKING ABOUT THE BOOK

1. "Kathy felt a sudden pang of guilt." (page 11)
 - (a) Why did Kathy feel guilty?
 - (b) Summarize how Kathy feels about her husband at this point, and why.
 - (c) Summarize how Kathy got involved with her old boyfriend, Michael.
 - (d) At what point do you think Kathy became deceitful? At what point do you think Kathy's deceit became a threat to her relationship with her husband?
 - (e) Why do you think Kathy was willing to deceive her husband?

2. “ ‘Do you want to talk about it?’ Jack asked... ‘Not really,’ Kathy told him.” (page 12)
 - (a) What did Kathy not want to talk about? Why do you think she did not want to talk about it?
 - (b) Kathy does not talk to Jack openly about Lisa. What effect might not talking have on how Kathy feels about Lisa?
 - (c) At what other times do people not voice their thoughts or opinions?
 - (d) What are some effects silence has on people? On relationships?
 - (e) In general, do you voice your opinions or thoughts? Why or why not?

3. “Ruth hated Kathy on sight.” (page 13)
 - (a) Why does Ruth hate Kathy so much?
 - (b) List the ways in which Ruth has shown her hate for Kathy. Give examples.
 - (c) Lisa is sixteen. Do you think she is old enough to understand what is going on between Ruth and Kathy? Why do you think Lisa continues to alienate Kathy?
 - (d) What other factors, besides a jealous or vengeful mom, can make step-parenting difficult?

4. “Her husband’s arms would keep her safe.” (page 19)
 - (a) Compare what Kathy said about her husband’s arms on page 10 with the quote above, in terms of what she said and why she said it.
 - (b) What do you think these comments suggest about Kathy’s feelings for her husband? About Kathy? About their future relationship?

5. “Okay, so maybe I didn’t really lie, she thought. But I didn’t tell the truth, either.” (page 47)
 - (a) What truth is Kathy talking about?
 - (b) Do you think not telling someone all the details about an event is a form of lying? Why or why not?

6. “She’d always been such a good girl.” (page 55)
 - (a) Why did Kathy consider herself “good” when she was younger? Do you think these qualities make a “good” person? What qualities would you add?
 - (b) What made Kathy question her “goodness”? Why, in her opinion, did Kathy stop being good? Do you think Kathy became less “good”? Give a reason for your answer.

(c) Give examples of what you think “being good” means in each of these situations:

- (i) being good at work
- (ii) being good at school or in class
- (iii) being a good citizen

What rewards do people get for being good in each of these situations? What rewards do people get for being risk-takers in each of these situations?

7. “Was she capable of harming another human being?” (page 55)
- (a) Who does Kathy have in mind? What harm is she imagining? Does she end up harming this person?
 - (b) What does the reader learn about Kathy as she answers this question? What does Kathy learn about herself?
 - (c) Does Kathy harm any of the characters? Who? How?
 - (d) Is it possible for a person to never cause harm to others through actions or words?
8. “I’m useless. I can’t do anything.” (page 59)
- (a) What makes Kathy say this about herself? Do you agree with Kathy’s opinion of herself? Why or why not?
 - (b) What thoughts race through Kathy’s mind before she finds the piece of glass to cut through the rope? What does Kathy realize about herself, Lisa, Michael, and Jack? Do you think Kathy would have eventually come to these realizations without the crisis of the home invasion?
 - (c) What other types of events sometimes force people to change or rethink their lives, attitudes, values, and opinions? Why do you think it sometimes takes a major event for people to change?
9. “Finally, tucked between the stiff, clean sheets of her bed, she understood that she and Jack were safe. Only then could she take a long, deep breath.” (page 67)
- In what ways are Jack and Kathy now safe?
10. “Everything is going to be okay.” (page 69)
- (a) What is going to be okay?
 - (b) Summarize how and why the home invasion affected the relationship between Kathy and Lisa. Find evidence of how Kathy and Lisa really feel about each other.
 - (c) Do you believe that good things come out of bad?

WRITING ABOUT THE BOOK

1. Choose a character or event from the novel that you connected with in some way. For example, did the character or event remind you of something in your life? Cause an emotional reaction in you? Teach you something? Describe what, how, and why.
2. Imagine you are Jack. Write a statement for the police describing the events on the night of the home invasion. Include what you saw and heard, what happened to you, and the thoughts that went through your mind.
3. Imagine the conversation Bobby and Steve might have had about breaking into the Browns' home. Some details to include might be Bobby convincing Steve to break in; Bobby telling Steve what he knows about the Browns; planning how and when to break in; and Bobby and Steve's expectations of what they will find. Write the dialogue.
4. Think about the last time you deceived someone. It might be something little, such as telling a white lie, or something more important. Write an imaginary letter to the person describing what you did or said. Talk about why you deceived, or lied to, the person. Describe how you felt. Describe what you learned through the experience.
5. People are not perfect. Write a journal entry that describes your positive and not-so-positive traits. Give examples that illustrate those traits. Note the feelings you have as you write your entry.

PROJECTS and ACTIVITIES

1. Safety Tips: Home Safety

Have students share ideas and create a list of how they keep their homes safe. Then invite a resource person to the class to talk about home safety. The same could be done with a related topic: identity theft.

2. Be a Movie Critic

Have students suggest movies that they have seen and liked because they were suspenseful, or full of suspense. Choose one of the movies mentioned and have students view it. (Many movies can be borrowed from local libraries.) As students watch the movie, have them note how suspense is created in the movie through details of setting, plot, pacing, music, what characters say and do, etc.

3a) Property Crime: Do Some Research

Have students brainstorm ways in which they can find out about property crime in their area (e.g., use the Internet, interview resource people in the community, use resources at the library). In small groups, have the students research the following questions:

Is property crime going up? Down? Staying at the same level? What are the possible causes of property crime in the area?

What is being done by individuals to reduce or prevent property crime in the area? By the community as a group? By people outside the community, such as the police?

Have students present their findings.

3b) Property Crime: Create a Poster

Divide the students into two groups. Have each group design a poster about property crime from the point of view of one of these groups:

- (i) community police officers
- (ii) parents in a neighbourhood crime-watch program

Have the students consider who their audience is and what their main message should be.

FURTHER READING available from Grass Roots Press

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The Perfect Murder, Peter James, Quick Reads

The Grey Man, Andy McNab, Quick Reads

The Scowling Frog, Kate Ferris, Novels for Adult Learners

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