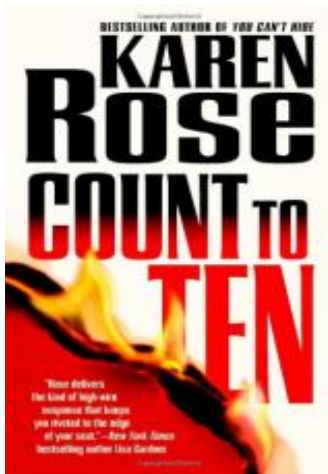


Count to Ten

by Karen Rose



About the Book

1, 2, I'M COMING FOR YOU.

In all his years in the Chicago Fire Department, Lieutenant Reed Solliday has never experienced anything like this recent outbreak of house fires-devastating, vicious, and, in one case, homicidal. He has another problem-his new partner, Detective Mia Mitchell. She's brash, bossy, and taking the case in a direction he never imagined.

9, 10, START RUNNING AGAIN.

Mia's instincts tell her the arsonist is making this personal. And as the infernos become more deadly, one look at the victims' tortured faces convinces her and Reed that they must work closer to catch the killer. With each new blaze, the villain ups the ante, setting firetraps for the people Reed and Mia love. The truth is almost too hot to handle: This monster's desire for death and destruction is unquenchable?and for Mia he's started the countdown to an early grave.

COUNT TO TEN

Discussion Guide

1. On nature vs. nurture:

What is the essence of the ?nature vs. nurture? debate?

In CTT, many of the characters have differing opinions on this question, specifically Mia, Reed, Dr. Westphalen, Olivia Sutherland, and the killer himself.

a. What are their opinions?

b. Are they right or wrong?

c. What do you think?

Do you believe upbringing should be a factor in dealing with offenders ? those who break society's laws? If so, how? If not, why not and what should be the factor(s) in determining punishment?

What are other movies or books that deal with this debate?

2. On surviving abuse: Many of CTT's characters have endured abuse during some period of their lives.

Which characters have lived through abuse, and what was the nature of their experience?

How did they survive?

How were their lives impacted?

- a. Physically
- b. Emotionally

These characters make very different life choices. What are they? Are they realistic?

3. On "good" vs. "bad": Reed and Mia have radically different views of good people vs. bad people.

What are those views?

Who is right?

Can they both be right? Why or why not?

4. On sacrifice: Many of the characters in CTT sacrifice for one another or for society in general, specifically Mia, Kelsey, and Olivia.

What is the nature of their sacrifice?

What was lost or gained by each sacrifice?

What would you have done in a similar situation?

5. On dealing with grief: Many of the characters in CTT are dealing with grief ? Mia, Reed, Beth, Olivia.

In what ways do they deal with their grief?

Are these ways positive?

6. Of living in the shadow of another: Both Mia and Beth are living in the shadow of others.

In whose shadow are they living?

How do they deal with this?

Have you ever felt as if you lived in the shadow of someone else? Why was this? How did you feel? What did you do?

7. On the poem "Casper": The poem is printed in its entirety on page 552.

What did you think of the poem?

Have you ever felt that sometimes you just deserved better?

What did you do?

8. On watching your children grow up: Reed is watching Beth grow up.

How does this make him feel?

How does he handle these feelings?

Does he do the right things?

9. On foster care:

Was the portrayal of foster care balanced?

Do you have any experience with foster care?

What are its benefits and risks?

10. Fun stuff!

If *Count to Ten* were made into a movie, who should play the lead parts of Mia and Reed?

Could it have ended any other way? What might have been an alternate ending?

What should happen to the secondary characters? Who should get his or her own book next?

Author Bio

Karen Rose fell in love with books from the moment she learned to read, with Jo from **Little Women** and Nancy Drew becoming close childhood friends. She started writing stories of her own when the characters started talking in her head and just wouldn't be silenced. When she's not writing stories for readers, Karen writes stories for computers?programming keeps the other side of her brain out of trouble. She lives in sunny Florida with her fantastic husband, an avid fisherman, and two wonderful daughters who also love to read?and write!

Critical Praise

"Kept me up all night with the doors locked?Karen Rose writes hold-your-breath suspense."

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Publication Date: February 1, 2007

Mass Market Paperback: 400 pages

Publisher: Grand Central Publishing

ISBN-10: 0446616907

ISBN-13: 9780446616904