

# Little Girl Gone

by Drusilla Campbell



## About the Book

Madora was 17 and headed for a load of trouble when Willis rescued her. Alienated from family and friends, she ran away with him and for five years they have lived alone in near isolation. When he kidnaps a pregnant teenager and imprisons her in a trailer behind the house, Madora is torn between her love for Willis and her sense of right and wrong. Then a pit bull named Foo brings another unexpected person into Madora's life --- Django Jones, a brilliant but troubled 12-year-old orphan. As Django tries to understand his place in the world, Madora is forced to face what her life has become?and fights to transform it into the life she wants.

## Discussion Guide

1. In the opening pages of **Little Girl Gone** we are introduced to Madora and we learn that her father committed suicide when she was a young adolescent. How did this affect Madora's emotional development? No one talked to her about his death; no one helped her to understand what happened. In what ways could she have been helped through the experience?
2. Both Madora and Robin grew up without fathers. Why is a father important in a girl's life?
3. Neither Madora nor Robin fully understood the circumstances of their fatherlessness. How much should children be told about what goes on in their family? Are secrets an unavoidable part of family life? Has there been a time in your life when a secret caused a family crisis?
4. Django is a highly imaginative boy. What were the circumstances of his growing up that led to the development of his creative thinking? Does it empower or Questions for Discussion endanger him? Is there a point where imagination becomes a hindrance more than a help?

5. Why does Madora love Willis? Does he love her? Can you understand her love for him?
6. Why is Linda's baby important in Madora's maturation? What does the reader know about Madora because of her scene with the baby? And later the same day with Linda?
7. At first glance the friendship between Madora and Django seems an unlikely match. What factors contributed to their strong bond? Have you ever had an unusual friend, someone who came to mean a lot to you?
8. The theme of **Little Girl Gone** is captivity and all the different ways people can feel imprisoned. Linda is a literal captive, but what about Robin and her father?
9. For Django, freedom is his half-brother's walled and gated home. Is there somewhere you have visited or lived that seemed to free you to be more completely self-expressed?
10. When we read in headlines about girls held captive, it's natural to wonder about the people who cooperated in the crime. Can you understand why Madora lived as she did, helping Willis to keep Linda locked in the trailer? Was there any excuse for her behavior?
11. Willis didn't physically hurt Linda. She wasn't sexually abused. According to Robin he was well liked by the old people at the retirement home. Was he actually a bad man? It might be an interesting exercise to try arguing both the yes and no position.
12. Why was Foo an important character in the book?
13. How did the setting --- the house at the end of Red Rock Road, arid countryside --- contribute to your experience of the story?
14. How will Robin be changed by what she learned when she visited her father in Temecula?
15. At the end of the book we learn that Madora intends to turn herself in to the San Diego police. Why does she choose to do this? What do you think will happen to her?
16. What is the mood at the end of the book? Did you find it uplifting, confusing, or depressing? Or some other feeling?

## Author Bio

Drusilla Campbell is the author of three critically acclaimed novels: **WILDWOOD**, **THE EDGE OF SKY** and **BLOOD ORANGE**. Before she started school, she had crossed the Pacific Ocean three times. In her 20s she lived in Europe and Central America. Today she's happy to stay at home in San Diego with her husband, the attorney and poet Art Campbell, two rescued dogs and three horses.

## Critical Praise

"[A] story of tension and triumph?. Don?t miss it!"

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