



## Who Owns Kelly Paddik?

Beth Goobie

YALSA Quick Pick nominee  
Texas Tayshas List

Interest level: grade 7 and up

Reading level: 3.1

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AR Quiz # 67489

### Book Summary

When Kelly begins reacting to a painful childhood in dangerous ways, she lands in an all-female secure facility with wires on the windows and locks on every door. One of the “inmates,” Chris, befriends her, but others, including Pit Bull and her group of girls, do everything they can to make Kelly’s life miserable. She desperately wants to escape, but all of her attempts fail. Eventually Kelly does the only thing she can that will secure her healing and early release. With the help and encouragement from the counselor, Jim, she finally reveals and confronts the painful memory of her past.

### Prereading Idea

Ask students to brainstorm positive and negative associations they have with the word “ownership.” Relate the word to material possessions, abstract terms (such as patents and copyrights), and even “ownership” of human beings through slavery and imprisonment. Discuss who and why someone might “own” Kelly Paddik.

### **Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Activities**

Divide the class into two groups. Ask one group to research secure facilities resembling the one where Kelly was placed. Ask the other group to research group homes similar to those where Kelly lived. How are they similar? Different? Ask students to convey the information they gathered in an informational brochure for parents and counselors.

Ask students to research suicide prevention programs both on the Internet and in their community. Then, ask them to make posters to display in the halls of their school and in various community locations with the pertinent information about the program, including answers to the who, what, when, where and how questions. Have students choose one facility and write to the administrator asking how they might help teens housed there. (i.e. cards of encouragement, small gifts, books, videos, etc.)

The following sites will be helpful in locating information:

[www.yellowribbon.org/](http://www.yellowribbon.org/)

This site offers advice and help to teens and those concerned about them:

[www.yspep.org/](http://www.yspep.org/)

This organization seeks to prevent suicide among adolescents and young adults by providing information and resources to youth, parents and the community.

### **Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel**

#### **Theme**

Ask students to choose one of the following universal themes (overcoming challenges, family problems or abuse) or determine one of their own and relate it to another piece of literature, a movie or a television show. Have students divide a poster into two parts and on each half depict significant scenes from each work relative to the selected theme. Display the posters around the classroom.

#### **Conflict**

Internal and external conflicts are both at play in this novel, affecting Kelly in different ways. Ask students to define both types of conflict, and identify each type using examples from the book. Then have students work with a partner to write a dialogue showing the two sides of one of the major conflicts in the book. Their dialogues should show how Kelly is affected and how she resolves the conflict? Present the dialogues to the class.

#### **Symbolism**

Kelly would pretend that she was a small white bird so she could fly up and away from

her body (pages 9, 52, 58). Based on information in the book and your own ideas, what does this white bird symbolize to Kelly? Ask students to explain their answer in a well-developed paragraph. Then, ask them to draw a symbol they would choose to help define or explain themselves. Post the symbols on a bulletin board with the paragraph explaining why the symbol is relevant to their life.

### Characters

The adult characters in this novel act in ways that both hurt and help Kelly, and for the most part Kelly had no control over her situation. Obviously the abuse by her father and the betrayal of her mother were out of her control, as was her placement in the Marymount School for Girls where adults helped her. Use a line graph with positive and negative axes to chart the influence of the adults in Kelly's life events. Do you think the positive influence of caring adults helped Kelly to overcome the challenge that faced her? Why or why not?

It has been said that "hurting people, hurts people." Choose one of the characters in the novel and show how he or she has been hurt and how he or she has in turn hurt others or themselves. In small groups or partners, draw a web with the character's name in the middle. Surround the web with the names of those who hurt the individual and how the hurt occurred. Add outward arrows and names of individuals who have been hurt by this characters and how he or she hurt them. Share your web with the class.

### Connecting to Students—Discussion Questions

1. What happened to Kelly to make her think "men are stronger and meaner than girls," (page 3)? Based on her experience, was her opinion justified? Why or why not?
2. When Kelly received the poster with the words "LOVE YOURSELF" written on it, her reaction was disbelief and anger. Do you think this came true for Kelly? Why or why not? What was the key that unlocked Kelly's prison?
3. Kelly must overcome the pain of her past to gain control of her future. Why is determining who owns her the beginning of recovery (page 50)? Justify your answer from events in the book. What have been personal aids to you in overcoming obstacles? Include people, philosophies and organizations in your discussion.
4. A supportive and loving family is crucial to an individual's healthy emotional development; Kelly has no such support. She is torn apart from her family for several reasons. What are they and how can Kelly restore the damage that has been done? Why are people so affected by the nurturing (or absence of it) from our parents and family members?
5. Kelly and Chris both suffer from the affects of child sexual abuse. What are some

of the problems they encounter because of their abuse? For example, isolation, fear and anger. What are some ways these problems surface in our society? What steps do Chris and Kelly take to overcome the tragedy of their past? Where do you think they will be in five years?

### **Writer's Craft**

### **Vocabulary Enrichment**

Find synonyms for the following words:

Grubby	page 15	Perched	page 55
Whirling	page 19	Wreck	page 72
Clenching	page 40		

Ask students if they think the synonym they found or the author's word works best in the sentence? Ask students to choose what they think is the best word and justify their choice.

### **Characterization**

Beth Goobie portrays Kelly Paddik as a tormented, desperate, introverted adolescent without employing the use of these or similar adjectives. Often she lets the reader see what Kelly is feeling through Kelly's unique way of expressing her thoughts: "so many people looking right through you with polite nothingness on their faces," (page 1); "I was gasping, trying to catch my breath as I watched the street run away without me," (page 3); "I had to keep looking at what was out there, outside myself, where it was safe..." (page 19). Discuss the meaning of these thoughts and find other examples in the book where the author reveals Kelly's personality through her unique way of viewing the world.

### **Author Biography**

Born in Guelph, Ontario, in 1959, **Beth Goobie** was a piano teacher in high school, a nanny before attending the University of Winnipeg, and for six years after she graduated from the university, she worked with physically and sexually abused children. Then in 1987 she began to write stories, thrilling readers with her thought provoking novels about teens who have been abused and hurt. Her award-winning novels touch the heart of all those who read them.