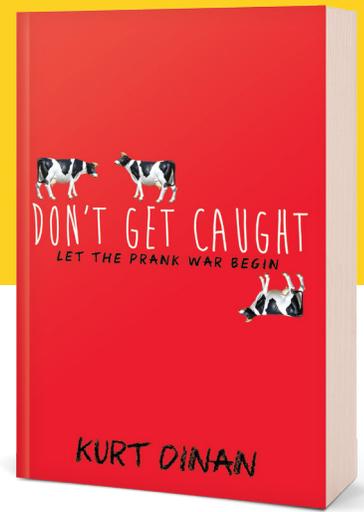


DON'T GET CAUGHT BY KURT DINAN

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



A Common Core State Standards–Aligned Educator's Guide for Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12

About the Book

When Max receives a mysterious invite from the untraceable, epic prank-pulling Chaos Club, he has to ask: Why him? After all, he's Mr. 2.5 GPA, Mr. No Social Life. He's Just Max. And his favorite heist movies have taught him this situation calls for Rule #4: *Be suspicious*. But it's also his one shot to leave Just Max in the dust...

Yeah, not so much. Max and four fellow students—who also received invites—are standing on the newly defaced water tower when campus security “catches” them. Definitely a setup. And this time, Max has had enough. It's time for Rule #7: *Always get payback*.

Let the prank war begin.



About the Author

Kurt Dinan is a high school English teacher. He's had several short stories published, including one in 2010's *The Year's Best Dark Fantasy and Horror*.

He lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, with his wife, three young sons, and baby girl. *Don't Get Caught* is his first novel. Find him at kurtandinan.blogspot.com.

Praise for the Book:

“The best kind of underdog story—heartfelt and hilarious...it's filled with genuine surprises up until the very last page, which features one of my favorite endings in recent memory.”

—Lance Rubin, author of *Denton Little's Deathdate*

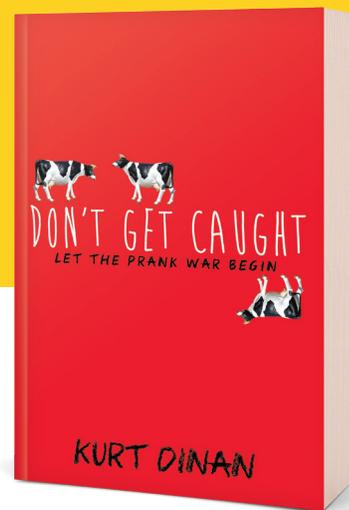
“Witty, charming, and always surprising...Call it *Ocean's 11th Grade* or whatever you like, *Don't Get Caught* snatched my attention and got away clean.”

—Joe Schreiber, author of *Con Academy* and *Au Revoir, Crazy European Chick*



DON'T GET CAUGHT BY KURT DINAN

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



PRE-READING ACTIVITY

History is filled with people playing elaborate pranks and hoaxes simply for the joy of the prank. Lists of these pranks are easily accessible online. Assign students a famous prank played over the course of history, or let them choose their own. Students can share in small groups or in front of the class.

SL 9-10.1, SL 9-10.2, SL 9-10.4; SL 11-12.1, SL 11-12.2, SL 11-12.4

POST-READING ACTIVITY

Assign groups a school-related heist or caper and have them mastermind potential ways to pull off the prank—role players needed, supplies needed, timing, sequence of events, etc. List strengths and weaknesses of the plan. Students can write a research paper on their topic or present their project in front of the class.

W 9-10.7; SL 9-10.4, SL 9-10.5; W 11-12.7; SL 11-12.4, SL 11-12.5

Students should select their favorite character from *Don't Get Caught*. Create a “Fakebook” page to include personal status, friends, and at least two written posts/conversations among their friends about one of the themes in the novel.

W 9-10.3, W 9-10.6; W 11-12.3, W 11-12.6

WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Have student select a theme from the novel and trace its development through the course of the story. Summarize the events that illustrate this theme, being sure to cite specifics from the text. How is it expressed? Do multiple characters express it? What is the significance of the overall theme? How does the student feel this theme applies to his or her own life?

RL 9-10.1, 9-10.2, 9-10.3; 11-12.1, 11-12.2, 11-12.3

W 9-10.1, 9-10.4, 9-10.5, 9-10.10; 11-12.1, 11-12.4, 11-12.5, 11-12.10

SL 9-10.1, 11-12.1

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

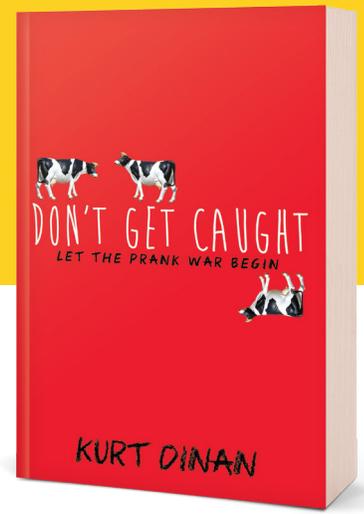
The banner posted in Mr. Watson's classroom challenges the students to “Write your name in the wet cement of the universe.” What does this statement mean to you? Is it important for someone to attempt to make their mark? Why or why not? In what ways, if any, have you tried to make your mark on the universe?

Each character has a different motivation for accepting the Chaos Club's invitation in the beginning of the novel. Who do you think has the best reasoning for attending? Who's motivation do you think is the weakest?



DON'T GET CAUGHT BY KURT DINAN

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



A famous saying is, "Revenge is a dish best served cold." What does this expression mean and how does it relate to the novel?

At one point, Max asks Mr. Watson if revenge is ethical. What is your opinion on this?

Mr. Watson tells Max that revenge and justice are easily confused, but are different. Do you agree with this, or not? Why?

Which character in the novel was your favorite and why? Which character in the novel are you most like/most different than and why?

Do you agree with Max and believe the pranks the group pulls are harmful, or do you side with the rest of the group who believes their pranks are fair revenge for treatment they've received from others? Why?

Over the course of the novel, Max's view of Stranko changes. How does it change, and what do you believe the author's purpose is in having his view change?

If you were Max, would you have accepted the Chaos Club's invitation to join their secret club? Why or why not?

Do you believe Wheeler's final revenge on Stranko is justified or is it too much?

Who do you think should have been the winner of the prank off and why?

What stereotypes are present in the novel? Which of those stereotypes, if any, are questioned over the course of the novel?

Humor plays a big part in character development as well as in keeping the reader interested. What part of the novel did you find the funniest and why?

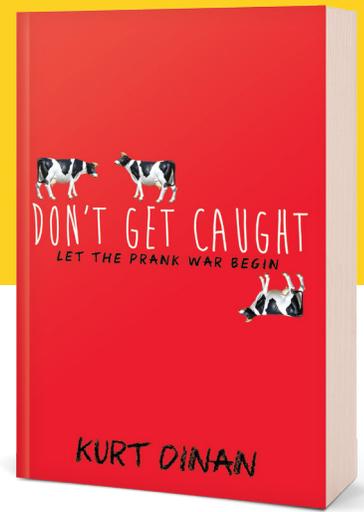
Sometimes a novel's biggest surprises are foreshadowed earlier in the text, but are only clear to the reader on second reading. What examples of foreshadowing did you find in the novel?

At times, the author breaks standard rules of grammar, punctuation, and organization. Why



DON'T GET CAUGHT BY KURT DINAN

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



might an author make such choices, and how do those choices specifically affect this novel?

CCSS-ALLIGNED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Ask students to trace the development of the themes of friendship, community, independence, loyalty, and identity in the novel using specific evidence from the text.

RL 9-10.2; RL 11-12.2

Ask students to use specific examples from the text to trace the character arc for each member of the Water Tower 5 and how the changes the characters go through help advance the plot and/or develop the theme. How does each character change from how he/she is introduced to how he/she is presented at the end of the novel?

RL 9-10.3; RL 11-12.3

An author can use a novel's structure, order of events, or time manipulation to create suspense or surprise. Using the text for support, how are the pranks written in order to keep the reader in suspense or to create surprise?

RL 9-10.5; RL 11-12.5

Max chooses to make decisions based on a series of rules he's absorbed from watching and re-watching heist films. These rules determine his choices and affect his development and growth in the novel. Lead a discussion about guidelines and philosophies students choose to follow in living their lives. How do those guidelines and philosophies come into play in the students' everyday lives?

SL 9-10.1; SL 11-12.1

Show students the video clip of the final scene in *The Breakfast Club* in which the characters write a letter explaining how they don't fall into the stereotypes the principal sees them in. How does this scene's message connect to the characters and events of *Don't Get Caught*? Or students can write a similar letter in the voice of one of the novel's characters.

RL 9-10.9

Have students select a character from the novel, and using narrative techniques such as dialogue, description, voice, etc., write a scene from the character's point of view that is not included in the novel.

W 9-10.3b; W 11-12.3b

