



**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 9-12**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Summer of Fear

Lois Duncan



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

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Lois Duncan

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Brainstorming,  
visualization

### Literary Elements

Characterization, story  
elements, foreshadowing,  
dialogue, suspense, plot,  
colloquial speech

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, drama

### Vocabulary

Synonyms, sorting, word  
mapping, etymology

### Comprehension

Predicting,  
cause and effect,  
comparison/contrast

### Writing

Description, letter,  
summarizing

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## Summary

Rachel tells of the summer after her mother's sister and husband were killed in Missouri in a fiery automobile accident. Rachel's cousin Julia came to live with Rachel and her family. Everyone was enchanted by Julia except Rachel who grew to believe Julia was a witch. It turns out that the girl who shared Rachel's room was not Julia but Sarah Blane, who had worked for Aunt Marge and Uncle Ryan. Sarah's disastrous plan to kill Rachel's mother and marry her father is thwarted, but Sarah escapes. The story is a spell-binding mystery thriller with interesting foreshadowing and clues for the reader to enjoy.

## About the Author

Lois Duncan Steinmetz (her original name) was born in 1934 to two magazine photographers. She attended Duke University and was graduated (*cum laude*) from the University of New Mexico in 1977. She is the mother of five grown children. She states that she's always thought of herself as a writer, even as a child of three dictating poems and stories to her parents. She grew up with her younger brother Bobby in Sarasota, Florida. She submitted her first typed manuscript to the *Ladies Home Journal* when she was ten. She collected many rejection notices until a family friend, MacKinlay Kantor, counseled her to write about what she knew. Her first published work was in *Calling All Girls*; she was paid \$25.

*Don't Look Behind You* was published in June, 1989, a young adult suspense story of a girl in a witness relocation program. The heroine April is chased by a hit man in a Camaro. In a strange coincidence, Kate, Duncan's daughter who served as a basis for the April character, was chased by a hit man in a Camaro and shot to death. The author's quest for truth in the matter is detailed in *Who Killed My Daughter: The True Story of a Mother's Search for her Daughter's Murderer*.

Duncan's writings include:

*Debutante Hill*, Dodd, 1958

(Under pseudonym Lois Kerry) *Love Song for Joyce*, Funk, 1958

(Under pseudonym Lois Kerry) *A Promise for Joyce*, Funk, 1959

*The Middle Sister*, Dodd, 1961

*Game of Danger*, Dodd, 1962

*Season of the Two-Heart*, Dodd, 1964

*Ransom*, Doubleday, 1966, published as *Five Were Missing*, New American Library, 1969

*I Know What You Did Last Summer*, Little, Brown, 1973 (Novel Units Teacher Guide Available)

*Down a Dark Hall*, Little, Brown, 1974

*Summer of Fear*, Little, Brown, 1976

*Killing Mr. Griffin*, Little, Brown, 1978 (Novel Units Teacher Guide and Student Packet Available)

*Daughters of Eve*, Little, Brown, 197

*Stranger with My Face*, Little, Brown, 1981

*The Third Eye*, Little, Brown, 1984 (published in England as *The Eyes of Karen Connors*, Hamish Hamilton, 1985)

*Locked in Time*, Little, Brown, 1985

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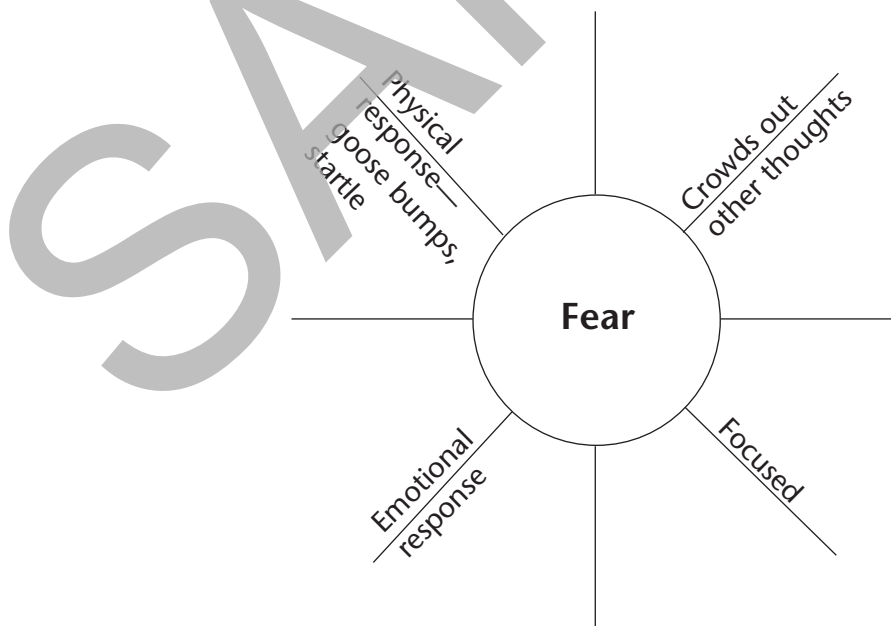
*The Twisted Window*, Delacorte, 1987  
*Don't Look Behind You*, Delacorte, 1989

Juvenile:

*The Littlest One in the Family*, illustrated by Suzanne K. Larsen, Dodd, 1960  
*Silly Mother*, illustrated by Larsen, Dial, 1962  
*Giving Away Suzanne*, illustrated by Leonard Weisgard, Dodd, 1963  
*Hotel for Dogs*, illustrated by Leonard Shortall, Houghton, 1971  
*A Gift of Magic*, illustrated by Arvis Stewart, Little, Brown, 1971  
*From Spring to Spring: Poems and Photographs*, photographs by the author, Westminster, 1982  
*The Terrible Tales of Happy Days School* (poetry), illustrated by Friso Henstra, Little, Brown, 1983  
*Horses of Dreamland*, illustrated by Donna Diamond, Little, Brown, 1985  
*Wonder Kid Meets the Evil Lunch Snatcher*, illustrated by Margaret Sanfilippo, Little, Brown, 1988  
*The Birthday Moon* (poetry), illustrated by Susan Davis, Viking, 1989  
*Songs from Dreamland* (poetry), illustrated by Kay Choro, Knopf, 1989  
*The Circus Comes Home*, photographs by father, Joseph Janney Steinmetz, Delacorte, 1992

### Initiating Activities

1. Previewing the Book: Read aloud the first two pages of Chapter One. What ideas do you have about this book? Answer the question "who is this person"?
2. Research: What do you know of Lois Duncan's writing? What are your feelings after reading a Duncan book?
3. Attribute Web: Explore the title, *Summer of Fear*. What is fear? What makes you fearful?



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## Chapter Ten, pp. 114–126

### Vocabulary

conjure (115)	rescinded (115)	incantations (115)	animosity (116)
malicious (120)	antagonistic (120)	vulgarity (121)	incongruous (122)
maim (124)	naive (125)		

### Discussion Questions

1. What evidence does Rachel find in her library research on witches? (*Dogs have a natural animosity toward witches. Witches use hair balls to dispose of enemies.*)
2. How is an evening at home in the Bryant house different when Julia isn't there? (*It feels easy and comfortable; relaxed and happy; like they're a real family again*)
3. What happens when Rachel confronts Julia about witchcraft? (*Julia, at first, tries to put off Rachel and then states that the Bryants will never believe Rachel's assertions.*)
4. Why do you think Julia is suddenly not worried at the end of Chapter Ten? What do you think will happen in the rest of the book? (*Answers will vary.*)

### Supplementary Activities

1. Art of the Novel: How is the author building the suspense? Look for specific examples from the book.
2. If you could choose background music for a reader of *Summer of Fear*, what would you choose and why?
3. Compare life for Rachel before Julia and after Julia.

Before Julia	After Julia
Own room	Mike no longer boyfriend
Boyfriend Mike	Trickle dead
Good friend Carolyn	Unrest
Calm, pleasant existence	Worries
Pet Trickle	Suspicious

## Chapter Eleven, pp. 127–136

### Vocabulary

spiteful (128)	sarcasm (129)	smugly (130)	implication (130)
tedious (130)	meticulously (130)	acrid (132)	

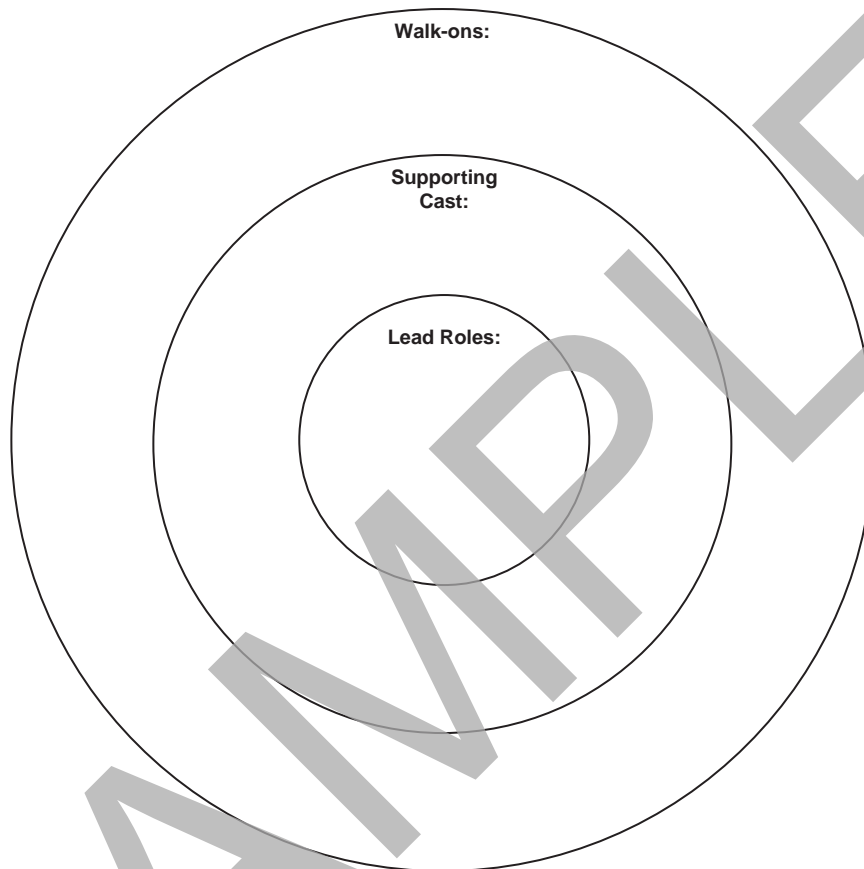
### Discussion Questions

1. What is her dad's initial reaction to Rachel accusing Julia of being a witch? (*disbelief, anger towards Rachel*) Is his reaction reasonable? Why or why not? (*Answers will vary.*)

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## Your Book Has Been Optioned for the Movies

1. You are the casting director. Who are the lead roles, supporting cast, and walk-ons? What kind of characters are they? What actors will fill the roles? How should they look? What acting abilities will they need?



2. Design costumes for the cast. Explain your choices.
3. Pick the music. Will you need background music only or will you have musical "numbers"?
4. Design the set.
5. Identify and describe the props.
6. What will you title your movie? Why?