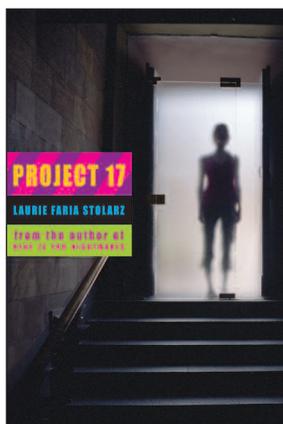


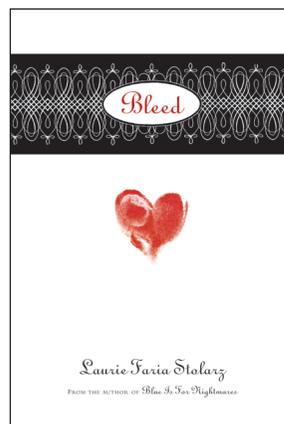
This guide was created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a reading specialist and children's author. Visit her Web site at www.tracievaughnzimmer.com to find hundreds of other guides to children's and young adult literature.



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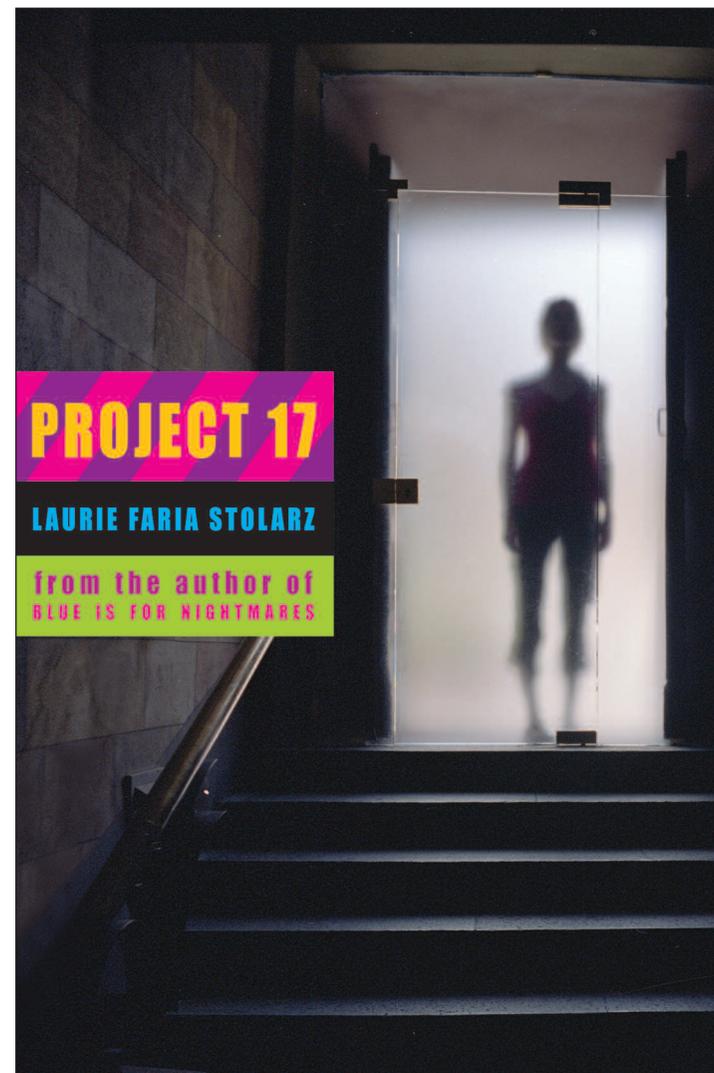


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HYPERION

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

HYPERION

ABOUT THE BOOK

High atop Hathorne Hill, just outside of Boston, sits Danvers State Hospital. Built in 1878 and closed in 1992, this abandoned mental institution is rumored to be the birthplace of the lobotomy. Locals have long believed the place to be haunted. They tell stories about the unmarked graves in the back, and of cold winds felt through its underground tunnels. And then there are the treasures found inside, eerie remnants of its former tenants: journals, hair combs, bars of soap, even old medical records, all left behind for trespassers to view.

On the eve of the hospital's demolition, six teens break in to spend the night and film a movie about their adventures. For Derik, it's an opportunity to win a filmmaking contest and save himself from a future of flipping burgers at his parents' diner. For the others, it's a chance to be in a film, or for a night with no parents. But what starts as a playful dare quickly escalates into a frenzy of nightmarish action. Behind the crumbling walls and down every dark passage-way, these high schoolers will unravel the mysteries of those who once lived there and of the spirits who still might.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What is Derik interested in doing at the old mental institution, Danvers State Hospital? What do you know about the historical treatment of people with mental illnesses? Would you want to visit such a place? Why or why not?
- 2 Who was Liza named after? What has she been raised to believe is her destiny? Is it fair for parents to push their kids into a particular academic field or sport? Where is the line between support and encouragement, and pressure and demands? Have you ever been pressured into anything by your parents?
- 3 Derik, too, has a future planned out by his parents. What do they want him to do? Do you know anyone in a family business? What does Derik believe is his only way out? Which family member supports his filmmaking efforts? Have you ever had an extended family member or other adult become a mentor like this?
- 4 What personal interest does Mimi have in the Danvers Hospital? What does she hope to discover there? Is it a realistic goal?
- 5 Who are Greta and Tony? Why do they agree to go along with the project? How would you describe their personalities? What does Chet add to the ensemble? What are his reasons for going? Who would you most likely become friends with in this motley group? Why?
- 6 Have you ever thought about creating a film? What topic would most inspire you? Have you ever watched any documentaries or independent films? How do they differ from industry films?
- 7 Everyone seems to have a moment of terror in the novel. Which is the freakiest moment to you? Do you think the characters are creating the terror, or is the terror real? What can fear do to your reason and senses? Do you believe in ghosts or spirits? Can they make connections with humans?

- 8 Who is Christine? How does she almost become another member of the project? What do the others learn about her history? What do they discover about her story?
- 9 How do the characters make unlikely connections because of the project? Have you ever been involved in something that created improbable friendships like these? What kinds of experiences make the characters closer? Will the closeness last past this one night? Why?
- 10 How do each of the teens change over the course of this one night? Are they all positive changes, or are there some negative repercussions to this night as well? Who do you think changed the most? Why?



PROJECTS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Write your own scene through the eyes of your favorite character in the novel. Try to capture the character's voice and make the action feel authentic in terms of the story, the characters, and their relationships. The scene can be set before the novel opens, during its action, or after it closes.

CHARACTER CHART

Fill out the following chart as you read the novel

Character	Description	Why involved in Project 17	In the end...
DERIK			
LIZA			
TONY			
GRETA			
CHET			
CHRISTINE			

HISTORY

Research the treatment of the mentally ill and mentally disabled. Create a PowerPoint presentation or a Web site about what you learned. Discuss how you think treatment options might change in the next one hundred years for the mentally ill.

MUSIC

Choose your favorite scene in the novel. Find or create a piece of music which would serve as a sound track for the scene. Explain your choice in a brief essay.

ART

Experiment with the art of filmmaking. Take at least twenty minutes of footage at a location and event of your choice. If possible, experiment with editing to create a five-minute presentation to share with the class.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LAURIE FARIA STOLARZ is the author of *Bleed*, as well as the highly popular young adult novels *Blue Is for Nightmares*, *White Is for Magic*, *Silver Is for Secrets*, and *Red Is for Remembrance*. Born and raised in Salem, Massachusetts, Stolarz attended Merrimack College and received an MFA in Creative Writing from Emerson College in Boston.

For more information, please visit her Web site at www.lauriestolarz.com.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW

1 Did you scare yourself writing this novel?

Yes, very much so. I decided to write this novel at a time when all the local and Boston papers were discussing the controversy surrounding the hospital's teardown. Once the story idea and sample pages were accepted by the publisher, I started to delve into the research—visiting the hospital, talking to former patients and staff, and reading and viewing everything I could get my hands on concerning the hospital. I got completely haunted by the research, so much so that I started keeping myself up at night. After a while, though, for better or for worse, I started to numb up a bit to everything I was researching, including hours of audio and visual footage. That numbness enabled me to take a step back and write the book.

2 What's your writing process? Do you outline the plot or just dive right into the story?

I do quite a bit of plotting before I actually begin. Plotting helps me think things through to the end—planning out my story, its subplots, and the character arcs. Plotting also helps me keep focused on the finish line. I don't always stick to my plot, but I like having it there as a guide.

3 What books have influenced you most as a writer?

There are really too many to list, but some of my favorite writers include Robert Cormier, Stephen King, Andre Dubus, Donna Tartt, Kate Chopin, Francesca Lia Block, Aimee Bloom, Anne Lamott, Wally Lamb, and Raymond Carver.

4 What can your fans look forward to next?

I'm currently working on a new series. It's about a mysterious boy who has a very dark past and a very special power. Ben Carter, seventeen, has the ability to touch a person or object and sense something from him/it. Sometimes this touch power is a blessing; most of the time it's a curse, especially when he's unable to control it. The main character, Camelia Hammond, sixteen, falls for Ben—hard—despite his dangerous past and despite how much she also fears him. The first book in the series is loaded with suspense, drama, romance, and mystery. It's slated for a Fall 2008 release.