



## *Driver's Ed* by Caroline Cooney

**Subjects:** Automobile driving—Juvenile fiction; High schools—Juvenile fiction; Schools—Fiction; Death—Juvenile fiction; Vandalism—Juvenile fiction

**Book Lists:** Gifted, Grade 6, Middle School, Reluctant Readers



**Props:** Stop sign, newspaper

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Driver's Ed—a course in safety right? Maybe, maybe not. The teacher and three kids go out driving while the rest of the class stays in a room off the library. The librarian is supposed to watch them, but actually she has many more important things to do than be a babysitter, so she closes the door and the students are on their own. One day the students started talking about signs, road signs, direction signs, street signs—some of the students had signs in their rooms, some of the students wanted signs in their rooms. Pretty soon a sign stealing expedition was organized for that night. Remy, a dark-haired 9<sup>th</sup> grader, decided to go. She had never done anything like stealing signs before, but Lark, the organizer, was her best friend and Remy secretly had a crush on Morgan, one of the boys who had agreed to go. So that night Remy lied to her parents and told them she was going over to Lark's house to watch a movie, when really she was going out to steal signs. It started out to be a great night—fun and exciting. First, they took a “THICKLY SETTLED” sign for Lark. Then Remy had to have the “MORGAN ROAD” sign. It was Nicholas, the driver, who suggested the “STOP” sign. (*Show STOP sign*) He pulled up to it and yelled at Morgan to jump out and use the hacksaw. Morgan jumped out, sawed off the sign and they were gone in a couple of minutes. Morgan could see where others had tried to get the sign and had failed. But they had done it. They were feeling great! (*Put down sign*)

Two hours later Denise Thompson drove down that very same street—not stopping—not even pausing where the “STOP” sign used to be. She went right on out into the intersection where she was crushed by a truck. Denise Thompson died that night. The police began to investigate. They were sure that some kids had taken the “STOP” sign, but they didn't know who, yet. Denise Thompson's husband was consumed with rage. He took out TV and newspaper ads showing pictures of Denise playing with their 2-year-old boy and reading: (*Show newspaper and read*) WHO MURDERED MY WIFE? I DON'T KNOW, BUT I WILL FIND OUT. DON'T SLEEP TONIGHT, LIE THERE. THINK ABOUT MY WIFE. THINK ABOUT MY MOTHERLESS SON. REWARD! TELL ME WHO MURDERED MY WIFE. (*Put newspaper down*) What was going to happen to them? Would someone go for the reward? Should they confess? Should they keep quiet? Could they really be murderers? The answers are here in—(*Hold up book*) *Driver's Ed* by Caroline Cooney.