

Discussion Guide

KATHY REICHS



VIRAL SEIZURE



Tory Brennan, niece of acclaimed forensic anthropologist Temperance Brennan (of the Bones novels and hit TV show), is the leader of a ragtag band of teenage “sci-philes.” When the group rescues a dog caged for medical testing, they are exposed to an experimental strain of canine parvovirus that changes their lives forever.



Ever since Tory Brennan and her friends rescued Cooper, a kidnapped wolf pup with a rare strain of canine parvovirus, they've turned from regular kids into a crime-solving pack! But now the very place that brought them together - the Loggerhead Island Research Institute - is out of funding and will have to shut down. That is, unless the Virals can figure out a way to save it. . .

About the Author



Kathy Reichs is the author of the Temperance Brennan novels, an adult fiction series on which the hit Fox TV series, *Bones*, is based. Dr. Reichs is one of only eighty-two forensic anthropologists ever certified by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology. She served on the Board of Directors and as Vice President of both the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and the American Board of Forensic Anthropology, and is currently a member of the National Police Services Advisory Council in Canada. She is a Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

Discussion Questions for *Virals*:

- Using plot lines, characters and setting elements from *Virals* to support your answer, explain the characteristics of an effective mystery story.
- Throughout *Virals*, the author changes the narrative point of view very briefly. How does the inclusion of these points of view (in addition to Tory's) enhance the story?
- Describe a chapter or scene during which the characters use evidence and logic to form a conclusion. What links might you make between this plot device and the scientific themes present throughout the book?
- Early in *Virals* Tory says, "I can't help it. It's in my DNA." (18) referring to her interest in science. How might this quote foreshadow scenes and themes that present themselves throughout the book?
- What role does intimidation play in the novel? Consider the characters of Dr. Karsten, Brian Limestone, Tory's classmates, and even Y-7 while forming your answer.
- In Chapters 23 and 24, Tory and her friends successfully excavate a skeleton. Consider the details of forensic science depicted in these chapters. What do they add to the novel?
- Compare and contrast the settings of Loggerhead Island, Morris Island, and Charleston. How do these settings and their differences affect the novel?
- Would you ever consider a scientific career like the ones depicted in *Virals*? What pros and cons become evident about these careers in the book?
- How does the absence of her mother and the newness of her relationship with her father influence Tory's characterization? Is she a static or a dynamic character? Explain your answer using support from the text.
- What do you think are the primary themes of *Virals*? Why do you think the author chose to include them in the novel?

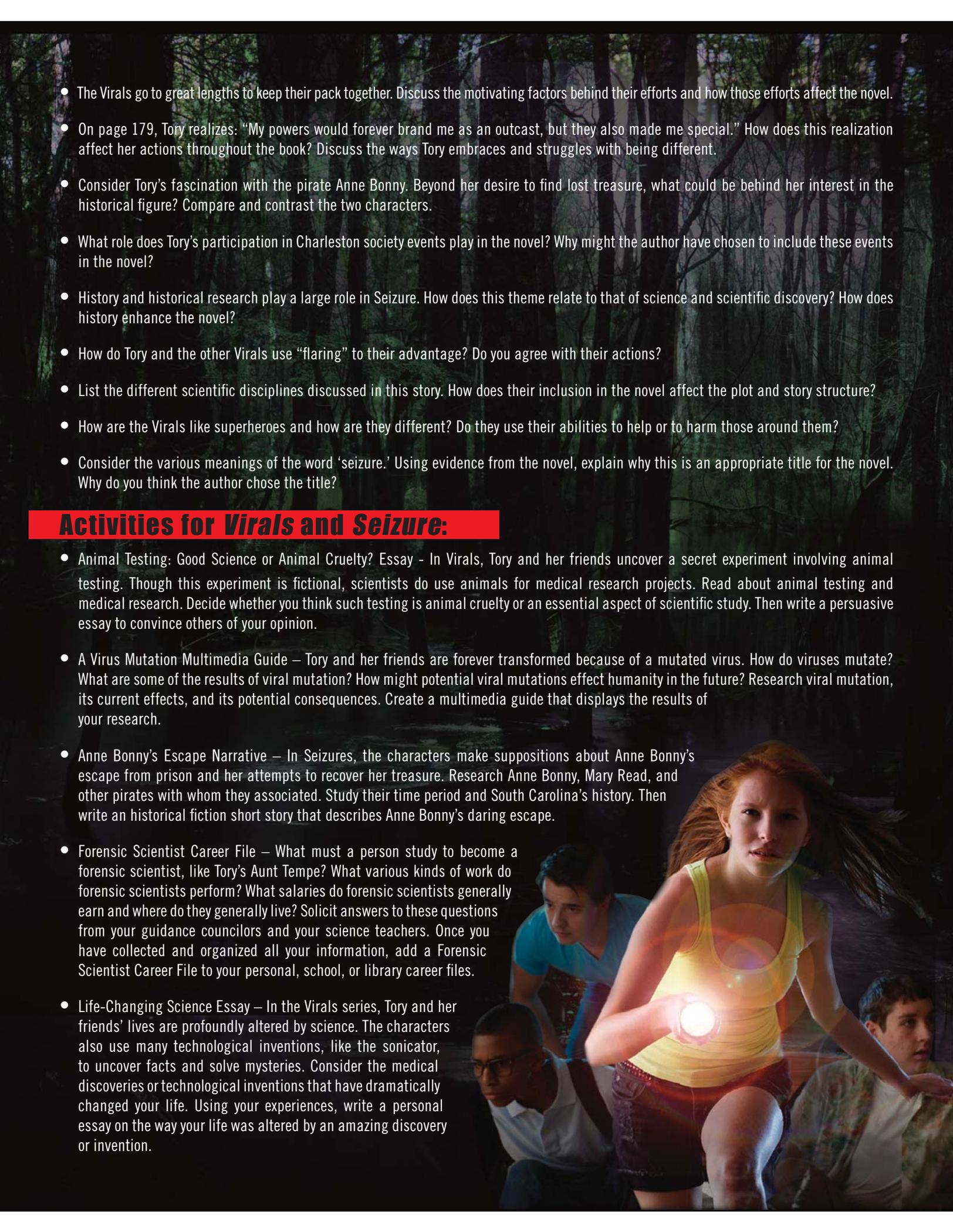
Discussion Questions for *Seizure*:

- Chapter 1 of *Seizure* begins with a vivid description of the Virals "powers." What do these descriptions add to the novel and why do you think the author chose to begin the first chapter with them?

- The Virals go to great lengths to keep their pack together. Discuss the motivating factors behind their efforts and how those efforts affect the novel.
- On page 179, Tory realizes: “My powers would forever brand me as an outcast, but they also made me special.” How does this realization affect her actions throughout the book? Discuss the ways Tory embraces and struggles with being different.
- Consider Tory’s fascination with the pirate Anne Bonny. Beyond her desire to find lost treasure, what could be behind her interest in the historical figure? Compare and contrast the two characters.
- What role does Tory’s participation in Charleston society events play in the novel? Why might the author have chosen to include these events in the novel?
- History and historical research play a large role in *Seizure*. How does this theme relate to that of science and scientific discovery? How does history enhance the novel?
- How do Tory and the other Virals use “flaring” to their advantage? Do you agree with their actions?
- List the different scientific disciplines discussed in this story. How does their inclusion in the novel affect the plot and story structure?
- How are the Virals like superheroes and how are they different? Do they use their abilities to help or to harm those around them?
- Consider the various meanings of the word ‘seizure.’ Using evidence from the novel, explain why this is an appropriate title for the novel. Why do you think the author chose the title?

Activities for *Virals* and *Seizure*:

- **Animal Testing: Good Science or Animal Cruelty? Essay** - In *Virals*, Tory and her friends uncover a secret experiment involving animal testing. Though this experiment is fictional, scientists do use animals for medical research projects. Read about animal testing and medical research. Decide whether you think such testing is animal cruelty or an essential aspect of scientific study. Then write a persuasive essay to convince others of your opinion.
- **A Virus Mutation Multimedia Guide** – Tory and her friends are forever transformed because of a mutated virus. How do viruses mutate? What are some of the results of viral mutation? How might potential viral mutations effect humanity in the future? Research viral mutation, its current effects, and its potential consequences. Create a multimedia guide that displays the results of your research.
- **Anne Bonny’s Escape Narrative** – In *Seizures*, the characters make suppositions about Anne Bonny’s escape from prison and her attempts to recover her treasure. Research Anne Bonny, Mary Read, and other pirates with whom they associated. Study their time period and South Carolina’s history. Then write an historical fiction short story that describes Anne Bonny’s daring escape.
- **Forensic Scientist Career File** – What must a person study to become a forensic scientist, like Tory’s Aunt Tempe? What various kinds of work do forensic scientists perform? What salaries do forensic scientists generally earn and where do they generally live? Solicit answers to these questions from your guidance councilors and your science teachers. Once you have collected and organized all your information, add a Forensic Scientist Career File to your personal, school, or library career files.
- **Life-Changing Science Essay** – In the *Virals* series, Tory and her friends’ lives are profoundly altered by science. The characters also use many technological inventions, like the sonicator, to uncover facts and solve mysteries. Consider the medical discoveries or technological inventions that have dramatically changed your life. Using your experiences, write a personal essay on the way your life was altered by an amazing discovery or invention.



Praise for *Virals*

★ “Reichs has found a pitch-perfect voice for Tory that will ring true with today’s teens.”

—KIRKUS, STARRED REVIEW

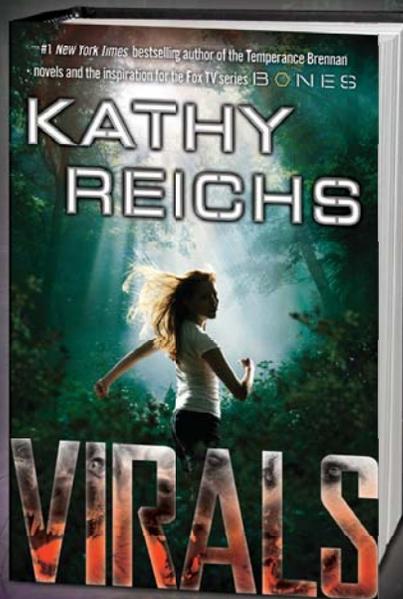
★ “The fast-paced thrills, cool science, and great characters will create a flood of fans waiting for the next installment.”

—SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL, STARRED REVIEW

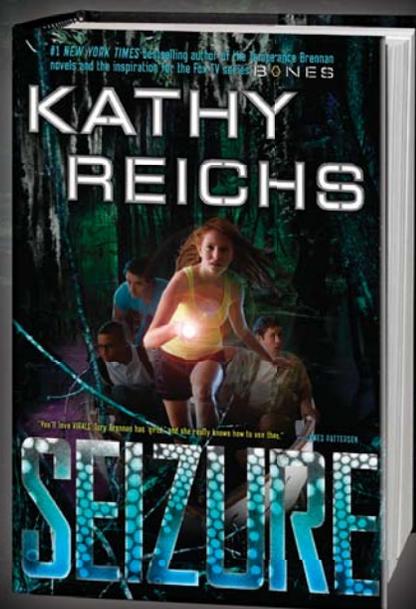
Praise for *Seizure*

★ “Reichs taps into the angst of teens, fear of separation and the uncertainty of today’s economy and wraps it all in an entertaining yarn of history, pirates and modern technology.”

—KIRKUS, STARRED REVIEW



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Ages 9 up - Grades 4 up



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