

Lucky For Some

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Synopsis

Lacey Turner's parents are about to drop a bombshell on her. They are shifting away from their nice house in the city and moving into a ramshackle house in the country. For Lacey this is a nightmare. She is a city girl through and through. The thought of leaving her friends and school is too much to bear. Luckily her parents are allowing her to continue with her dance lessons, or her life wouldn't be worth living.

Lacey's parents refuse to listen to her protests. When she begins her new school and finds out that she is the only girl in her year things seem even more hopeless. In a desperate effort to fit in Lacey begins to play rugby with the boys and when it rains and they are unable to play, she convinces them to give dancing a try. When Lacey comes up with the idea of preparing a class dance performance for the school concert she begins to think that maybe things in the country aren't so bad. That is until the boys decide that dancing is for sissy's and refuse to participate. As if this wasn't enough to contend with Lacey also has trouble with her cantankerous old neighbour Mr Fred. Mr Fred believes that Lacey is "soft" and not cut out for life in the country. He takes every opportunity to criticise her in and get her into trouble with her parents when she talks back to him. Somehow Lacey finds herself looking after one of Mr Fred's calves and training her for Agriculture Day. But if Lacey hates Mr Fred so much why does she go to his farm everyday and help him out? Is she just trying to prove him wrong or could she possibly be more of a farm girl than she would like to admit?

Text Type

Lucky For Some is a lively and interesting novel that will appeal particularly to girls. Told in third person point of view the novel tells the story of Lacey Turner and the difficulties that she faces as she tries to adapt to a new life in the country. Lacey is a credible and likeable character who is passionate about dancing. At first she is determined not to like the country but gradually her willingness to give everything a try allows her to make the best of what she sees as a bad situation. The text is highly readable and contains colloquial language that readers will relate to.

Lacey refuses to conform to stereotypes of what girls should do and joins in with the boys playing rugby. She shows perseverance and drive when planning the dance piece for the school concert, despite the lack of co-operation that she receives from the boys. Lacey is a born teacher and manages to pull off the performance successfully. Lacey is stubborn and outspoken. These qualities are never shown more clearly than in her interactions with Mr Fred, her grumpy neighbour. However, despite the

conflict between the pair, Lacey continues to spend time with him. She shows such dedication to caring for the calf that Mr Fred is forced to admit that he may have been wrong about her.

Lacey's character matures as the novel progresses. She learns the valuable lesson that you shouldn't make judgements about people and places before you get to know them. She also learns that you often only get out what you put in, so teaches the reader the importance of making the best of a bad situation.

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 5-18), Chapters 3-15 (pp. 19-129), Chapters 16-21 (pp. 130-203) and Chapters 22-27 (pp. 204-253).

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and ideas presented in the novel. Wherever possible encourage students to relate Lacey's story to their own experiences and broader knowledge. Encourage them to study Lacey's character and track how she changes throughout the novel. Have them make inferences and predict what is going to happen next. Students should be able to identify themes and explain how they are developed in the novel.

Introducing the Novel

Have students study the front cover of the novel and read the blurb.

- Who is the main character in the novel?
- What does she enjoy doing?
- Why does Lacey believe that she will have no life in the country?
- Why do you think the cover illustration is of a rugby boot and a ballet slipper?
- What kind of novel do you think this is going to be? Why do you think the novel is called *Lucky for Some*?

Teacher reads Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 5-18) aloud to the class. Students follow along in their texts.

Comprehension Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 5-18)

- Who does Lacey live with? What do we learn about her family in these chapters?
- Why does Lacey enjoy living in the city so much?
- How does Lacey feel about dancing?
- What does Lacey's mother decide to call the donkey?

- What bombshell does Lacey's mum drop on her? Why isn't Lacey allowed to stay at the same school?
- Who buys Lacey's family home?
- How do Lacey's parents initially react to her concerns? Are they being fair?
- Who are Lacey's friends? How do they react when she tells them the news?
- Describe Lacey's new house. What does she think about it?
- How does Lacey feel when she finds out that she can only go to dancing once a week?
- Why does Lacey get into trouble at school? How do her parents punish her?

Discussion

- Are you a city person or a country person? What is it that you enjoy about living there? How would you feel if your parents told you that you were moving? What would you miss the most and why?
- Should Lacey's parents have discussed moving with Lacey before they made their decision? Why/why not? What factors influenced their decision? Do you believe that their reasons are valid? What alternatives could they have come up with that doesn't involve moving?
- How do you think moving to the country will affect Lacey's life?

Students read Chapters 3-15 (pp. 19-129) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 3-15 (pp. 19-129)

- Why is Lacey's mother so upset with her? What does Lacey tell her parents about how she has been feeling? How do her parents react when they hear her concerns? Why do you think talking about her problems makes Lacey feel so much better?
- What news does Mrs Carmody give Lacey about her dance lesson?
- How long does it take to get to the cottage? Why does Lacey think that it is "worse than she remembered it"?
- Who is Mr Frederickson? How does he treat Lacey? How does Lacey respond to him?
- Why does Lacey's mum surprise her with a new hair style? How does Lacey feel when she gets back into town?
- What is the name of Lacey's new school? How does she get there? Why does Lacey feel immediately uncomfortable when she gets onto the bus? Why is Lacey so surprised when she attends the school assembly?
- Lacey is the only girl in her year at school. How does she feel about this? How do the boys in her year respond to her?
- What do the boys at Lacey's school enjoy doing? Why does Lacey decide to steal the ball? How does Scott react when Lacey kicks him to the ground?

- What does Lacey do during interval and lunchtime at her new school? How does this differ from what she did at her old school?
- Whose rugby team does Lacey play on? What motivates her to join in with the boys' rugby when she doesn't even know how to play?
- Who are the six boys in Lacey's Year?
- Who does Lacey bump into when she runs away from her mother after her first day at school? Why does her mother order her to her room?
- Why does Lacey's dad tell her that he is proud of her? Why does he believe that Mr Fred is "no better" than she is?
- In what ways does Lacey improve at playing rugby? How does playing rugby help her with her dancing?
- Describe the incident with Candyfloss and the school bus. How does Lacey manage to get the donkey back home? What suggestion does Mr Fred come up with to help keep Candyfloss in her paddock?
- Why do you think Belinda feels sorry for Lacey even though she has fun at her house in the weekend? How does Lacey feel when she has to say goodbye to her friends?
- What do the boys usually do when it is raining outside and they can't play rugby? How does Lacey manage to convince the boys to give dancing a try? How do Scott and Miles cope with the dancing? What suggestion does Mrs Halligan make to Lacey after she finishes dancing?
- Why does Lacey feel both sorry for Jonny and angry with him?
- Why does Scott surprise Lacey so much with his dancing?
- How does Mr Fred react when Lacey tells him that the boys are going to dance with her at the Newcomers' concert? Why does Lacey get grounded for a week?
- Describe Lacey's family's first attempt at drenching the stock. How does Lacey finally get the job done?
- Why does Lacey begin to lose hope that the boys will perform at the concert as the term progresses?
- What does Lacey tell Scott's team that her team is going to do before the holidays? Why do you think the rest of the school gets so interested in the bet? What plan does Miles come up with to help them? Why does the plan fail so many times? Who finally scores the try?
- Why does Lacey feel so dejected when she gets back to school after the holidays? Why don't the boys want to participate in the dance? How does Lacey try and sell the idea to them? What does Scott do to try and sabotage Lacey's attempts at putting the dance together? How does Mrs Halligan try and solve the problem? Why does the boys' behaviour hurt Lacey's feelings so much?

Discussion

- Why does Lacey make a big joke out her situation when she talks to Vanessa? Why does she feel like no one really understands how she feels? Do you agree with her father when he says "She'll settle down, she's like you- all she needs is time"?

- Why do so many people believe that Lacey is lucky to live in the country? Compile your own list of the pros and cons of living in the country.
- Describe Mr Frederickson. Do you think his comments to Lacey are fair? Why/why not? In what way do his comments affect Lacey? Why do you think Lacey cares so much about what Mr Frederickson thinks about her? What could Lacey do to avoid getting into conflict with Mr Fred?
- Do you agree with Mr Fred when he says that the boys are “gosh-darned” pansies for dancing, or do you think Lacey is right when she says “I play rugby”. Why shouldn’t they dance”?
- Why do you think the boys react the way they do when Lacey tells them that they are going to dance in the school concert? What alternative approach could she have taken that might have been more successful?
- Describe 5 positive attributes that Lacey possesses.
- Predict what will happen next in the story.

Students read Chapters 16-21 (pp. 130-203) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 16-21 (pp. 130-203)

- Why does Lacey get so upset with Mr Fred when she gets home? Do you think it’s fair that her mother makes her go over to his house to apologise to him? Explain your answer. What argument does Lacey present to Mr Fred that convinces him that he should apologise too?
- What is Agriculture Day?
- Why does Lacey decide to continue playing rugby with the boys? Why are they so surprised?
- How does Lacey react when Mr Fred offers her his calf to look after? What puts her off looking after the calf the most?
- Why is Miles absent from school on Monday?
- What does Scott tell Lacey when Miles tells her to ring him? How does Lacey react to this news? Why does her father suggest that she make some conditions of her own?
- Why did Miles argue with his father? How will participating in the dance help Miles get back at his father?
- What deal does Mr Fred come up with to try and convince Lacey to look after his calf?
- Why does Lacey stop dance practise after five minutes? Why does she believe that the boys have to make a decision?
- Why can’t Mr Fred help Lacey look after the calf? How does Mr Fred feel about the animal?
- Where does Mr Fred’s niece think that he should go and live? How does Mr Fred feel about this idea?
- What does Lacey decide to call the calf?

- Why does Lacey decide to get up early and go and help Mr Fred? What does this suggest about her character? How does Mr Fred react when she shows up?
- Why does Lacey decide to skip practise and let the boys play rugby instead? How do they perform at the official practise? Why does Lacey feel so much pressure?
- Why is Lacey so surprised when she sees Mr Fred teaching the calf to lead? Why does Lacey believe that Dancer is like her owner?
- How does Lacey motivate the boys after the terrible dress rehearsal?
- Why is Lacey so disappointed when Mr Fred doesn't turn up for dinner?
- What plan do Lacey's friends come up with to ensure that the boys don't lose their nerve?
- Describe the dance that Lacey has choreographed. How do the crowd respond to the performance? What does Mrs Carmody tell Lacey after the performance?
- What does Mr Simmons say to Lacey he meets her? Why would it have been hard for him to make this admission?
- Why is Lacey so worried about Mr Fred? What does she discover when she goes to look for him? Why does Scott's dad believe that the accident will be the end of Ian? Why does Lacey believe that she shouldn't have rescued him?

Discussion

- Describe Scott. What evidence is there in the story to suggest that he is the leader of the boys at school? What do you think would happen to Lacey if Scott didn't accept her?
- Why does Miles decide to rebel against his father? Does Miles' father care about his son's needs? Justify your answer. How would you feel if your parents made you go to a certain school and take certain subjects?
- What evidence is there in the story to suggest that Lacey is adapting to life in the country? What aspects of living there does she like? What does she still miss about living in the city?
- The author develops more facets of Mr Fred's character in this section of the novel. What do we learn about him that makes him more likeable and allows us to empathise with him?
- What do you think will happen next in the story?

Students read Chapters 22-27 (pp. 204-253) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 22-27 (pp. 204-253)

- Why is Lacey so upset about Mr Fred? Why does she feel like no one understands?
- What does Lacey overhear Mr Fred's niece talking about with her husband when she is lying in the hay? Who is at the hospital when she

arrives there to tell Mr Fred what she knows? How does Mr Fred react to the news? Who will come and live with him now?

- Why doesn't Lacey want to take Dancer to Ag Day? How does she feel once she gets there? What does Scott tell Lacey about the competition that makes her so angry?
- Who wins the Dairy type competition? Who wins grooming?
- Why do you think Dancer behaves so differently than usual during leading? How does Lacey feel when she is awarded the cup? What will happen to Dancer after Ag Day is over?
- Why does Lacey keep worrying about what will happen next year? Why does she have an argument with her parents? Are her parents being fair to her? Why/why not?
- How does Lacey feel when Miles invites her over to help make the guy? Why does she decide to go to his house instead of Mr Fred's?
- Why do Lacey's parents panic so much when they realise that she is missing? How do they coordinate the search? How does Mr Fred know where to look for Lacey? What kind of state is she in when he finds her?
- Why does Lacey need to stay in hospital for a while?
- What does the fact that Lacey kept riding into the wind suggest about her personality?
- Why does Mr Fred tell Lacey that they are even?
- What suggestion does Mr Fred come up with to solve Lacey's problem? Why does Lacey finally believe that maybe she is lucky after all?

Discussion

- Describe how Lacey's relationship with Mr Fred develops and changes as the story progresses. In what ways are the pair similar?
- Lacey's dad tells her that he and her mother are proud of her. What has Lacey done in the story that is admirable and shows strength of character? Why does Lacey refuse to conform to the traditional role for her sex?
- Identify the climax of the story. How does the author build up tension during this event?
- What do you think the author's message is?

Activities

Static Image – Design a poster advertising the Newcomers' Concert. Use verbal and visual features to convey your ideas.

Diary entry – Imagine that you are Lacey Turner. Write two diary entries for her; one from the start of the story when she has just moved into the country and one for the end of the novel. Remember to include information about things that have are happening and people that you meet. Include your thoughts and feelings.

Newspaper Article – Write a newspaper article about Agriculture Day. Include the names of the winners and quotes from people involved.

Plot – Design a story board that shows 15 important events in the story in the order that they occur. For each event include an illustration and a brief summary about what happens.

Conflict – Lacey is constantly in conflict with Mr Fred during the story. Write a paragraph explaining why this conflict occurs and why it is important to the story.

Character – Draw a picture of Lacey on a large sheet of paper. Divide the picture in half. On one side list all of Lacey's positive characteristics, on the other, all of her negative characteristics. Use examples and quotes from the story to illustrate your ideas.

Book Review – Write a book review for *Lucky for Some*. Include a brief plot summary, describe the setting and explain why it is important. Describe the characters and explain how they develop and change as the story progresses. Identify major themes and ideas in the story. Remember to give your personal opinion about the book.

Character – Imagine that you are Lacey and she is asked to give a speech about herself to her class on the first day of school. Write the speech and present it to the class in role. Include information about her family, where she comes from, things she enjoys doing and what kind of person she considers herself to be.

Character – Devise 5 questions with answers for Scott.

Theme – Identify an important theme in the story and design a static image that depicts it. Include quotes and images from the story to back up your ideas.