

Jonty and Choc

Author: Vince Ford

Synopsis

Jonty and Choc attend the same primary school and are best friends. They are rarely seen apart and are usually referred to as "Jonty and Choc" or "Choc and Jonty". The friends are so close that they are convinced that when they start Intermediate that they'll stay mates, even if they aren't in the same classes.

But it turns out that staying friends isn't as easy as they originally thought. The two boys have very different interests and talents and become involved in different activities. They meet new people and both make new friends. For the first time a sense of animosity springs up between the boys, as each tries to fit in with their new friends. This animosity is further fuelled by the strange and mystical object that Jonty found on the beach and gave to Choc. Choc is strangely drawn to object and begins to have unusual dreams about it and its origins. Jonty thinks he might know what the strange object is and believes that it could be worth a lot of money. He needs to test it to make sure but since Choc is so attached to the object he refuses to let Jonty near it. Pressured by his new friend Kevin Jonty breaks into Choc's house to test his theory. Will Jonty and Choc's friendship survive this betrayal or will it be destroyed forever?

Text Type

Jonty and Choc is a New Zealand novel written by award-winning author Vince Ford. The story is told in easy to understand colloquial language and readers will relate to the relaxed lingo used by the author. Both main characters are hugely likeable and the problems that they face will be easily understood by readers, as all students face change at some time in their schooling. The boys are excited about starting Intermediate but also a little apprehensive about the unknown. Both boys pursue their own interests and activities at Intermediate and the story shows us that we can be individuals with our own interests and still remain friends. The friendship between the boys also crosses cultural barriers, as Choc is Maori and Jonty is a white South African. The boys have very different home lives and backgrounds and Jonty's mother doesn't approve of the friendship, but despite this, the friendship survives.

The discovery of the strange object at the beach adds an element of mystery and spirituality to the story, as Choc becomes almost obsessed with it and begins

to experience strange dreams. The object becomes a source of dissension between the boys and symbolises the breakdown of their friendship.

Themes in the story include growing up, friendship, experiencing change, betrayal and forgiveness.

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapter 1 (prologue- 21), Chapters 2- 14 (pp. 23- 93) and Chapters 15- 28 (pp. 95- 183).

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of the words and ideas presented in the novel. Have them relate the character's actions to their own experiences and prior knowledge. Encourage them to make inferences and predictions. Identify and discuss the main themes and messages presented in the novel.

Introducing the Novel

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

- Who are the two main characters?
- What changes do the boys face?
- How do you think the whale that is pictured on the front and back cover of the novel is going to be important in the story?
- What do you think is going to come between the friends?
- What are the good things and bad things about starting a new school?

Teacher reads Chapter 1 (prologue- 21) aloud. Students follow along in their books.

Comprehension Chapter 1 (prologue- 21)

- What do you think Jonty finds at the beach? Why do you think Choc wants to keep it?
- What is the last thing that Jonty and Choc are going to do at Ocean Beach School? What do the boys decide to put into the balloons?
- Describe the water fight. How do the boys ensure that they get the balloons that they want? What do they do with the special red balloons? How does Mr Kingi know that it wasn't just water in the balloons?

Discussion

- What does the fact that Mr Kingi is so suspicious of Jonty and Choc while they are filling up the balloons suggest about their past behaviour at school?
- What information do we find out about Jonty and Choc in this chapter?
- Have you ever changed schools? How did you feel about it?
- Make a prediction about what will happen next in the story.

Students read Chapters 2- 14 (pp. 23- 93) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 2- 14 (pp. 23- 93)

- How do Jonty and Choc spend their summer holidays?
- What ceremony do the boys perform to cement their friendship? When does Jonty realise that Choc is making fun of him?
- What do you think the boys found on the beach?
- What does Choc do as soon as he gets home? Why is he so apprehensive about removing the thing from his bag? Why does Choc experience déjà vu when he smells the object? Why doesn't he tell his mother about the object?
- Describe Choc's strange dream. Why do you think Choc dreams about the object?
- How is Intermediate School divided up? Where is Jonty placed? Where is Choc placed?
- What activities do the boys decide to become involved in?
- What game is being advertised at the Activities expo? Why does it appeal to the boys so much?
- What is Choc's real name?
- How does Jonty's mum treat Choc? Why do you think she treats him like this?
- Why doesn't Choc feel comfortable in Jonty's house? Why does he make an excuse to leave early?
- What is the school play called? Who does Jonty recognise at the auditions? How does Jonty know that his audition went well?
- How does Choc feel when he watches the Year 8 hip-hop dancers?
- What does Mr Chase explain to the boys about ki-o-rahi?
- Why doesn't Choc back up Jonty at Ki-o-rahi practice? How does Jonty behave during the game? Why do you think he does this?
- How do the boys make up?

- Why does Choc begin to feel uncomfortable in his room?
- How does Choc feel when Jonty asks him about the object on the beach? Why do you think he feels like this?
- Why isn't Choc interested in finding out what the object is? Why do Jonty and Choc argue about the object?
- Describe what happens when Jonty and Kevin approach Choc and his friends. Why is Choc annoyed and disappointed with his friend?
- What do Chantelle and Choc talk about after the incident?

Discussion

- In what ways are Jonty and Choc similar? How are they different?
- Choc's dreams suggest that the object is spiritually significant. Have you ever had a spiritual experience? If so, what happened?
- How is Intermediate different to Primary School? Why do Jonty and Choc begin to clash after they start there?
- Now that the lump has been explained in more detail do you have any idea what it might be?
- Predict what will happen in the story next.

Students read Chapters 15- 28 (pp. 95- 183) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 15- 28 (pp. 95- 183)

- Why does Jonty feel trapped?
- Why do you think Jonty's mum is impressed with Kevin?
- What explanation does Jonty give for his "gangsta" behaviour? Why is he surprised by Choc's reaction?
- What do Kevin and Jonty find out about the lump when they google it?
- Why is ambergris so valuable?
- Why does Choc feel anxious at hip-hop practice? Who notices that he is not on form?
- How does Chantelle help Choc out when the boys start asking him about the object in his wardrobe?
- How do Jonty and Choc behave towards each other at a ki-o-rahi practice? How does Choc react when Jonty tells him that he knows what the object is? Why do you think he reacts like this? What does Choc do to Jonty? How do we know that he regrets what he has done?
- Why does Choc decide to show Chantelle the lump?

- What do Kevin and Jonty have to do in order to test the lump? Is this action justified? Why/why not?
- Who notices the boys outside Choc's house? How does Kevin convince Jonty to go into the house? How does Jonty feel going through his friend's things?
- How do the boys test the lump?
- Why does Choc get home earlier than expected? Who goes home with him?
- What does Chantelle notice when she enters Choc's house?
- How does Choc know that someone has been in his house?
- How does Chantelle react when she sees the lump? What does Choc notice when he shows it to her? How does he feel when he realises that Jonty broke into his house? Who confirms his suspicions?
- Describe the confrontation between Jonty and Choc at Jonty's house. Why do you think Jonty admits what he has done? Why does Mrs De Villiers throw Kevin out of the house? How do Chantelle and Choc intimidate Kevin when he leaves the house? How is Choc able to control his anger?
- Why does Chantelle believe that the ambergris might have a curse attached to it?
- Why does Choc think that he should split the money from the ambergris with Jonty? How does Chantelle react to this suggestion?
- Why do you think Choc is able to forgive Jonty for what he has done?
- Why is Choc so moved by Jonty's performance in the play?
- How does the old man react when he sees Choc in the street? Why do you think he reacts like this?
- What do Jonty and Choc talk about after the play?
- Why do you think Jonty refuses to take the ambergris or accept any money from Choc?
- Explain Jonty's first conversation with Chantelle. Why is it important that these two get along?
- What did Choc do with the ambergris? How much is it worth? What is Choc going to do with the money?

Discussion

- Describe Choc's relationship with Chantelle. Why do you think they like each other so much? How is this friendship different to his friendship with Jonty?
- Is Kevin a good friend to Jonty? Why/why not?
- Have you ever been pressured into doing something that you didn't want to do by a peer? If so, what happened? How did you feel about it?
- In what ways can playing sports or joining in activities at school improve your life? What skills and values do you learn?

- Have you ever been the victim of prejudice like Choc? If so, what happened? How did this make you feel?
- Do you believe in curses? Why/why not?
- Do you think that Jonty and Choc will remain friends? Explain your answer.

Activities

Plot - Make a timeline of the important events that occur in the novel.

Character - Choose an important character from the novel and describe him. Include information on important actions and behaviour, motivations, thoughts, feelings and quotes that reveal aspects of character.

Plot - Choose an important section of the story and retell it in your own words.

Character - Write a paragraph that explains how Choc and Jonty change throughout the course of the novel and explains why these changes occur.

Static image - Design a static image that reveals a theme from the story. Use any medium you like (collage, paint, computer etc). Include a quote from the story that helps show the theme and remember to combine verbal and visual features to illustrate your idea.

Letter - Write a letter to a friend explaining why this would be a good book for anyone experiencing a change in their life to read.

Review - Write a book review for Jonty and Choc. Include a brief plot summary. Explain the setting and the themes of the story. Include information about the main characters and explain whether you believe the characters are credible. Remember to include your personal opinion about the novel.

Writing - Imagine that you are Jonty and write a diary entry explaining what happened when you broke into Choc's house and your thoughts and feelings about it.

Notes written by Vicki Ladd