

# Scrap #2: Oh my Dog!

## Author: Vince Ford

---

### Synopsis

Scrap is starting a new chapter in his life. He is leaving his friend Bill and his owner Lionel to go and live with Johnny Mac and a new group of dogs. While Scrap feels nervous about the move, he is also excited. On Johnny's farm he will get the opportunity to muster sheep over huge paddocks. He will also be close to Mount Misery, the farm where his mother Meg lives. The only problem is that Buster, Johnny's lead dog, hates him, and Scrap keeps making mistakes with the sheep. Scrap ends up getting badly cut and needs to go to the vet to be stitched up. While he is waiting outside he meets Sid, a vicious and vindictive dog who lives at Mount Misery with Scrap's mum and Jeremy, the horrible man who tried to drown Scrap when he was born. Sid tells Scrap that ever since Meg found out what Jeremy did to her son she has been behaving badly and is getting into trouble with the boss. Sid is sure that it won't be long before Meg follows Scrap into the river. Distraught about his mother, Scrap decides that he has to see her. This isn't easy considering it is pouring with rain and he has stitches in his side. Not to mention the fact that if Jeremy sees rogue dogs on his property he shoots them ...

### Text Type

*Scrap #2: Oh my Dog!* is the second book in a brand new series written by award-winning New Zealand author Vince Ford. The books tell the story of Scrap, a blond pup whose owner tried to drown him at birth because he was different. Luckily Scrap was rescued and went to live with Lionel, who taught him how to be a sheep dog. Despite being blond, Scrap is a talented sheep musterer who has the Eye. During his time with Lionel Scrap learns everything a young pup needs to know from his mentor Bill. Now he is ready to go off on his own on a new adventure. He is going to live with Johnny Mac and his dogs. During his time at Johnny's, Scrap faces many challenges and has to draw on all his internal strength to survive. Scrap reveals that despite being different, he is a loyal friend and a confident dog that has faith in his own ability. Scrap is also not afraid to stick up for himself and refuses to be bullied by Buster.

The story is extremely fast-paced and written in short, named chapters. The author uses colloquial language and gives us a unique insight into life for a working dog on a farm. The story is best suited to younger readers and contains delightful pencil sketches of Scrap. Themes explored include individuality, bullying, having confidence in your own ability, farm life, family, loyalty and prejudice.

### Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 7–24), Chapters 3–7 (pp. 24–85) and Chapters 8–12 (pp. 86–133). During the shared sessions, encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of the words and ideas presented in the novel. Have them make inferences and predictions. Encourage students to identify the main ideas in the story and explore how Scrap develops and changes as the story progresses.

## Introducing the Novel

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

- Who is Scrap?
- How do we know that Buster doesn't like Scrap?
- Who does Scrap desperately want to see?
- What challenges does he have to face during his journey?

Teacher reads Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 7–24) aloud. Students follow along in their books.

## Comprehension Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 7–24)

- How does Buster react when he first sees Scrap? Why does he react like this?
- Why is Buster so crabby?
- Why are some of the other dogs cynical about Scrap's ability to work sheep?
- What explanation does Sam give Scrap for being a "late starter"?
- What does Jock know about Scrap's mum?
- Why is Buster adamant that no dog should set foot on Mount Misery Station?
- Why does Scrap enjoy playing with Sam so much?
- Why does Scrap feel a bit apprehensive as he surveys the hills and ridges on Johnny's farm?

## Discussion

- What clues are there in the first two chapters that suggest Scrap is confident?
- Why does Buster have some respect for Scrap?
- What do you think is going to happen next in the story?

Students read Chapters 3–7 (pp. 24–85) independently before the next shared session.

## Comprehension Chapters 3–7 (pp. 24–85)

- How do the other dogs react when Scrap introduces himself to the quad bike?
- How do the huntaways muster sheep?
- What does Scrap notice about Pat as he walks up the hill behind her? Why does Scrap find it hard to look at her mustering the sheep?

- How do the sheep get away? How do Sam and Scrap escape from their chains? Why does Scrap decide to round up the sheep without Johnny's permission? Where did Pat go? Why does Scrap agree not to tell Buster what she has done?
- How does Buster react when he catches up with Scrap? How does Scrap know that Johnny is angry with him? How does he punish Sam and Scrap?
- Why do Jock's stories leave Scrap sullen?
- When does Scrap get the opportunity to show Johnny his skills? Why does Jock call these sheep the killers?
- Why is Buster angry at Pat?
- Why is docking the real test of a dog?
- How does Scrap feel when he learns that Buster doesn't want to give him a chance?
- How does Scrap know that he is close to Mount Misery Station?
- Why does Pat warn Scrap not to try and visit Mount Misery?
- What does Pat reveal to Scrap about Buster's brother? Why is there a feud between Johnny and Jeremy Mason? Why was Clay at Mount Misery?
- Why does Scrap clench his teeth when he sees Mason?
- Why does Scrap decide to nip through the fence when he is mustering the hoggets?
- Why doesn't the escaping sheep take any notice of Scrap? What does it do to Scrap? Why is Scrap so determined to catch the sheep? Why is this sheep different to the others? How does Scrap get injured?
- How does Johnny react when he sees Scrap's injury? How did Scrap think he was going to react?
- Why are the other dogs so impressed when Scrap tells them what has happened to him?
- Why is Buster angry with Scrap? Why do you think Pat confesses to him and sticks up for Scrap? What advice does Pat give Buster?
- Which dog speaks to Scrap outside the vet? What does he tell Scrap about his mum? How does Scrap react to this news?

### Discussion

- What qualities do you think make a successful sheep dog?
- What does Scrap's promise to Pat not to tell her secret to Buster reveal about his character?
- How does Scrap feel when he is left in his kennel by Johnny? Why does being caged upset him so much?

- What evidence is there in the story to suggest that Scrap still has a lot to learn?
- Is Buster a good leader? Why/why not? What characteristics and qualities does a good leader possess?
- What do you think is going to happen in the story next?

Students read Chapters 8–12 (pp. 86–133) independently before the next shared session.

### Comprehension Chapters 8–12 (pp. 86–133)

- Why can't Scrap sleep when he gets back home?
- What evidence is there to suggest that Buster's attitude towards Scrap is changing?
- Why does Scrap admire Wodger?
- Why is Scrap so determined to escape and see his mother?
- What does Scrap realise when he smells damp earth through the door of his kennel?
- What does Scrap's gut tell him about trying to escape? Why does he continue despite this?
- What dangers does Scrap face during his journey? How does the weather impede his progress?
- Where is Scrap when he hears the roar of a car engine? How does he know that the driver of the car has seen him? How does he escape?
- How does Scrap know that he has arrived at Jeremy Mason's farm? Which dog does he see? How does he feel when he realises that Meg isn't there?
- How does Scrap know that Meg is near? Why does Meg call Scrap 'Lana'?
- How does Scrap feel when his mother licks his wound?
- What does Scrap suggest to his mother that they do together?
- What does Scrap's mother say to Scrap that nearly makes him cry?
- Why doesn't Meg want Scrap to go bush? What are some of the problems with this lifestyle? What is the only way that Scrap can save himself?
- How does Meg reassure Scrap that she will be okay?
- What does Meg reveal to Scrap about Sid's father? How does this help explain Sid's attitude towards Scrap?
- What does Meg make Scrap promise before he leaves?
- Who is Rex?

- How does Meg help Scrap escape?
- What does the man on the quad bike do when he sees Scrap? Why does Sid climb over the sheep to get to Meg and Scrap? What does Meg say to Scrap that makes the dog change his mind about bringing Scrap down?
- How does Meg stall Jeremy? Who rescues Scrap from Jeremy Mason?
- What does Scrap learn from watching the docking muster?
- How does Pat encourage Johnny to give Scrap a run?
- How does Scrap know that he has earned approval from Buster?
- What message does Pat give Scrap from his mother?

### Discussion

- Why does Scrap want to see Wodger again? Why does he wish the old ram well despite his injury? What does this suggest about character?
- Do you believe in the old saying that blood is thicker than water? Why/why not? How is this idea developed in the story?
- Why do you think Scrap is willing to give up his dream of mustering sheep to save his mother? Why won't Meg let him do this for her?
- What do you think Meg was going to tell Scrap about his father?
- Why is it so important to know who you are and where you come from?

### Activities

**Vocabulary** – Identify 5 new words you learned from *Scrap: Oh my Dog!* Using a dictionary, write a definition for each word and write out the sentences in which you found them.

**Writing** – Write a letter to the author explaining why his book appeals to you.

**Character** – Make up 5 interview questions (with answers) for Scrap.

**Plot** – Create a story board that shows 10 important events in the story in the order that they occur. Under each picture write a brief description about what is happening.

**Static Image** – Design a poster advertising *Scrap: Oh my Dog!* that would be suitable to display in the school library.

**Theme** – Design a collage that depicts the main theme of the novel. Use different words and images from the story to convey your chosen theme.

**Character** – Write a paragraph about Scrap. Describe what he is like at the start of the story and how he develops and changes as the story progresses. Explain the reasons why these changes occur and what lessons you think Scrap has learned by the end of the story.

**Character** – Describe Scrap’s actions and behaviour in a particular situation that occurs in the story. Justify or criticise his motives in this situation.

**Drama** – Choose an exciting event from the story and write a script for it. Include a list of characters and stage directions. Practise your play and present it to your class.

**Oral Book Report** – Write a review of Scrap: *Oh my Dog!* and present it to your class orally. In your review include information such as what type of book it is, a brief story outline, an analysis of the setting and characters and your personal opinion about the book.

**Character** – Compare and contrast Sid and Wodger. What are their character traits? How did their background affect how they behaved?

Notes written by Vicki Ladd