



## **Manga Touch**

Jacqueline Pearce

Reading level: 4.5

978-1-55143-746-0 PB

978-1-55143-748-4 LIB

AR Quiz # 118644

### **Book Summary**

Dana is excited about her school trip to Japan, despite the fact that she is surrounded by the Melly Mob, “in-crowd” kids who make fun of her. Dana is certain she will be less of an outsider once she’s in Japan, home of manga and anime. But she soon discovers that it’s just as difficult to fit in in a foreign culture as it is to fit in at school. And the only other manga fan she meets refuses to talk to her. As Dana learns to meet people halfway and gains some friends in Japan, Melissa, leader of the Melly Mob, makes every effort to remind her that she’s still an outsider.

### **Author Biography**

**Jacqueline Pearce** grew up on Vancouver Island and currently lives in Burnaby, British Columbia. She has degrees in English Literature and Environmental Studies and has worked at various jobs, including museum accessioner, cartoon researcher and environmental educator. During the writing of *Manga Touch*, Jacqueline Pearce read manga, watched anime and ate Japanese food and candy. Jacqueline is the author of several books for children including *Dog House Blues* and *The Truth About Rats (and Dogs)*. As well as her novels with Orca, she has published a collection of short stories for young adults and poetry for adults. When not writing, Jacqueline enjoys creating art, playing ball hockey, visiting school classes and exploring the city.

## Connecting to the Text

### Language

1. Simile and metaphor connect ideas, giving us images that expand our understanding of situations and characters. There are many examples in *Manga Touch*. Read the following examples aloud to the class, and ask them to identify the connection that is being made. How does the use of simile expand our understanding of the situation or the character?

(ch. 1) *Melissa and her friends flock together like crows.*

(ch. 2) *His thick black hair fits him like a tight hat.*

(ch. 3) *A stab of panic shoots through me.*

(ch. 4) *Words fly around the group.*

2. Invite the students to complete the following sentences using simile (or encourage them to create sentences of their own, using characters and situations from *Manga Touch*).

- ◆ Dana and Melissa used to be best friends. They were like \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ Now Dana and Melissa don't get along. Every time Dana sees Melissa with her big group of popular girls, Dana feels as angry as \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ The crows came down on them in the park like \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ Dana felt panic. Her heart was pounding like \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ Kenji was embarrassed. His face was as red as \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ The plum was as sour as \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ The sky was gray, like \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ The view of the rice paddies from the airplane was really cool. The fields below looked like \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ Zach and Melissa were frightened by the crows. They filled the sky like \_\_\_\_\_.
- ◆ The manga books were heavy, like \_\_\_\_\_.

### Character

1. Dana learns a lot about herself and her schoolmates, and the way each has a manner of "protecting" themselves. Ask students to consider the following passage from *Manga Touch* and complete one of the creative writing exercises below. Encourage them to imagine the answers where there is no direct evidence in the text.

(ch. 13) *In my hotel bed that night, I have a chance to think. Maybe we all have different ways of protecting ourselves. Melissa has her makeup and her attitude. Df has his stupid humor, Fumiko has her cute things. I told myself I didn't care when Melissa and I stopped being friends. Told myself I didn't need anyone. Lying to yourself can be a way of protecting too.*

- ◆ What are Dana, Melissa, DJ, Fumiko or Kenji protecting themselves from?
  - ◆ Choose one of these characters and write a paragraph, answering the following: What are they afraid of? What made them afraid? Do others know they're afraid? Does their "protecting" technique work?
  - ◆ Sometimes the transition from elementary or middle school to high school can be difficult. New friends are made and old friendships can become strained or even lost. What can you do to honor your past friendships while enjoying new friendships as well? Write a song, poem, rap or journal entry that explores this theme.
  - ◆ Compare Dana and Melissa's coping styles. Dana chooses to be alone, and Melissa surrounds herself with "groupies." Dana thinks that Melissa is a phoney, and Melissa doesn't understand why Dana won't try to make new friends. They both see only the negative in the other's style of coping. Write a dialogue between Dana and Melissa in which both see the positive side of the other's style.
2. Dana doesn't have any friends and pushes people away. Write a letter to Dana, giving her advice on how to make new friends and fit in. How can she stay true to herself but still let others in?

### Connecting to the Curriculum

#### *Language Arts*

1. A dominant image in *Manga Touch* is the crow. A group of crows is called a murder. Invite students to match the nouns to their proper collective noun.

crows	school
salmon	murder
cattle	storytelling
owls	pride
parrots	company
ravens	parliament
rattlesnakes	sleuth
lions	rumba
bears	gaggle
geese	drove
beavers	lodge

Answers:

A school of salmon	A murder of crows	A storytelling of ravens
A pride of lions	A company of parrots	A parliament of owls
A sleuth of bears	A rumba of rattlesnakes	A gaggle of geese
A drove of cattle	A lodge of beavers	

2. Invite students to create their own collective noun game, writing them in a scrambled two column list, as above.

**Option:** Encourage students to invent humorous collective nouns to share with the class. For example, a bushel of backpacks; a heap of homework; a chaos of classes.

### *Geography*

1. When Dana leaves for Japan, she anticipates that it will be different from her home. Dana learns that in some ways Japan is similar to her home and in others it is very different from her home. As a group, create a list of examples from the text of ways Japan is similar and ways that it is different. Write the examples on the board or flipcharts.
  - ◆ Ask students to make a brochure for North American students visiting Japan, using examples from *Manga Touch*. Topics could include: how to prepare; what to bring; etiquette in Japan; common foods; school life.
 

**Option:** Ask students to make the same brochure for Japanese students visiting your community. Encourage students to see their school and daily routines through the eyes of someone new to their culture.
  - ◆ Engage students in a postcard or letter writing exchange with a school in Japan. What questions would you like to ask a student in Japan?
2. Using *Manga Touch* as a guide, write a journal or diary entry for an imaginary day in your life if you were a student in a Japanese school. Be sure to describe at least four things that you would experience that would be different from your daily routine now. Prompts could include: school uniforms; boys and girls sitting in separate areas; students staying in one room while teachers change from room to room; and the students clean the school rather than a custodian, etc.
3. Using a world map, chart Dana's travels. She begins in Vancouver, British Columbia, and flies to Nagoya, Japan. Using a map of Japan, chart her local travels. From Nagoya, she takes a ferry to Tsu. She then arrives at Suzuka by train. She also visits Seki-cho and takes the bullet train to Tokyo. Along the way, she sees Mount Fuji.
4. While in Japan, Dana notices differences in the temperature and landscape; for example, it's warmer in Japan than in Vancouver. Japan is more humid and has palm trees and rice paddies. What causes these differences? Thinking about temperature, landscape and flora/fauna, make a list that compares your city to a city in Japan. What would you find in your city that you wouldn't find in Japan? What would be the same?
5. Dana gets to Japan, at about three in the morning Canada-time, and she's been awake for nineteen hours. Invite students to research time zones, standard time and the international date line. What is the history of time zones? What did people do before time zones? Additional topics could include:

- ◆ What is the difference between Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)? Which is more accurate? Why?
- ◆ Which country has the largest number of time zones?
- ◆ Map the time zones closest to where you live. How can one find out what time zone they are in?
- ◆ Where does the International Date Line run? What is its history?

### *Art*

1. Invite students to work in pairs or small groups to “story board” one of Dana’s adventures in *Manga Touch* using the following steps:
  - ◆ Ask students to choose one of Dana’s adventures. For example, when Dana gets lost in the city and must make her way back to Ueno Park, or when she hears screams and finds Zach and Melissa.
  - ◆ Direct students to summarize the adventure into four or six key points or dramatic moments.
  - ◆ Have students sketch images which capture each of the points in a single frame or panel.
  - ◆ Have students present their images in a manga comic book format, with one sheet of paper divided into panels.
  - ◆ In Japan, people read from top to bottom and from right to left. Challenge students to use this model.
  - ◆ Encourage students to use some of the methods of manga drawing style described in *Manga Touch*. See chapter 9 for examples.
2. Invite students to create an art piece which explores the “old” and “new” in Japan. Are they in conflict or in balance? Encourage students to use traditional or organic materials, as well as modern or synthetic ones.
 

**Option:** How do old and new exist in your community? Are they in conflict or in balance?
3. Encourage students to research and try katagami, Japanese stencil art, or origami, Japanese paper folding.
4. Using *Manga Touch* as a guide, draw a picture of one of the rooms in Dana’s host family home. Be sure to include some Japanese elements, such as a Japanese bath, tatami (grass mats), scroll paintings or the tokonoma, the special alcove for the wooden altar.

***Social Studies***

1. Invite students to research traditional Japanese foods. What does a Japanese teenager eat every day?
  - ◆ Have students prepare a daily menu, illustrated with pictures of the day's meals. For example, for breakfast, many Japanese students have miso soup, rice and fish. Have students present their menu to the class.
  - ◆ After all the students have presented their menus, prepare and enjoy some traditional Japanese foods together.
2. Before leaving Japan, Dana's host family takes her to visit the Ise Shrine, which is over a thousand years old. Ask students to conduct research on your community. What is the oldest structure? Write a short report on the structure, answering the following: When was it built and by whom? Why was it built and what materials were used? Does it hold a special place in your community?

**Connecting to the Students—Ideas for Exploration**

1. Dana and her friends learn many Japanese terms while visiting Japan. To build awareness of the Japanese language, invite students to complete one of the following, either working alone or in pairs:
  - ◆ To encourage careful reading of *Manga Touch*, invite students to compile a short Japanese/English dictionary.
  - ◆ Write and perform a short skit in which you use the Japanese words you have learned.
2. Fumiko hopes to become a Japanese/English translator. Ask students to consider the following:
  - ◆ Do you speak two or more languages? Do you speak one language at home, and another at school? Share some new words or expressions with the large group.
  - ◆ Make a list of occupations in which knowing more than one language would be helpful.
  - ◆ If you wanted to become a professional translator, what schooling or training would be required? How could you find out more?
3. In Japan, the students wear school uniforms. As a group, discuss the “pros” and “cons” of wearing uniforms. Brainstorm a list of organizations and professions that require uniforms. For example, the military, football teams, bus drivers, Boy and Girl Scouts, etc.
  - ◆ Make two lists: one titled “pros” and the other “cons.” Then, have students give reasons for and against. For example, “pros” might be that uniforms identify the group to others, are more durable or practical than street clothes; and “cons” might be that uniforms don't allow for individual expression.

- ◆ Discuss school uniforms at your school. Are students “for” or “against”? How does wearing a uniform make student life easier? If students wear uniforms, should teachers wear them too?
  - ◆ To close the discussion, ask students to work in pairs to design the perfect school uniform. Invite students to share their designs with the large group. Prompts for large group discussion could be: What is your rationale for your design? Is it appropriate for all seasons? Would it pass your school’s dress code/guidelines?
4. Dana and her class travel from Suzuka to Tokyo aboard the bullet train (Shinkansen). The bullet train can travel at speeds over 180 miles per hour. Invite students to prepare a short presentation on the Japanese Shinkansen or another high speed transit train, such as the Eurostar (England/France/Belgium) or the Acela Express (United States).
    - ◆ Briefly describe the train’s history. Where was it invented? When was its first trip?
    - ◆ What is unique about its design or its tracks that make it able to go so fast?
    - ◆ Are the high speed transit trains an environmentally good choice for travel? Why, or why not?
  5. Dana’s class engages in a student exchange, where Dana stays in Japan with a host family. Are there opportunities through your school, community, youth group or local government to participate in a student exchange? How can you find out more? What country would you most like to visit? Why?
  6. While exploring Seki-cho, Dana sees a Maneki-neko, a ceramic cat with one paw raised. This is a common item in Japanese shops and is thought to bring good luck. Invite students to research the story of Maneki-neko, or other Japanese folktales. Examples could be Momotaro (the Little Peachboy) or Shita-kiri Suzume (the Tongue-cut Sparrow). Invite students to read the stories aloud or act them out in front of the class.