



Sudden Impact

Lesley Choyce

Reading level: 3.3

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AR Quiz # 102524

Book Summary

When Kurt is injured in a soccer game and ends up in the hospital, Tina tries to help him but nobody will tell her what is wrong, and Kurt's parents don't want her around. Tina learns that Kurt needs a donor with a rare blood type, and she finds a match in Kurt's soccer rival Jason. Jason agrees to donate his blood to Kurt, but when Kurt disappears from the hospital, the situation becomes desperate. Then Kurt's rival is in a tragic accident that may change everything.

Author Biography

Lesley Choyce is the author of more than sixty books for children and young adults. His books include two in the Orca Soundings series, *Refuge Cove* and *Thunderbowl*. Lesley lives, surfs and performs spoken word in Nova Scotia.

Connecting to the Text

Theme

1. Ask students to work in small groups to complete one of the following options. Encourage students to draw from the novel in their presentations.

- ◆ Great teams—what does it take?

(ch. 2) *At school, they were mortal enemies. Even during practice, Jason gave Kurt a hard time. But once they were on the field together, they were like brothers.*

- Kurt and Jason put aside their rivalry when they're playing soccer as part of a team. Brainstorm ideas for what it takes to make a successful team—and what it takes to make a team unsuccessful.
- Decide on three tips that show how to make a team great and three things to avoid. Try to build on examples from the novel. Then create a colorful, eye-catching poster that lists what to do to make a great team and what to avoid.
- Present the poster to the class, describing why you chose the ideas you did. Display the poster in the classroom. Examples could be: having a goal everyone agrees on; everyone giving their best; everyone sticks it out to the end; etc.)

- ◆ Being a better you—what does it take?

(ch. 5) *It seemed like everybody in town knew about the loud screeching battles between my mom and dad. It was hard to live with everyone knowing about it.*

(ch. 10) *[Kurt's mom] didn't want her son spending too much time with a kid from a messed up family.*

- Tina struggles socially because of her parents' reputation (and because she can sometimes be pushy when she wants to get her way). You are a counseling team and you need to give Tina advice on how to better handle her situation and encourage more friendships in her life. Brainstorm ideas of what the best advice for her would be. Make a list of at least four things Tina could do to make her situation better.
- Write and rehearse a small skit in which the 'counselors' give advice to Tina. Present it to the large group. What do they tell her to do? Use examples from the novel such as, "Instead of _____, next time, try _____." How will Tina react to the advice?

- ◆ Being a good friend—what does it take?

(ch. 5) *One day, [Kurt] stayed there with me after Mr. Findlay told us to go to class... Then he walked over to Findlay, said something to him, and Findlay left. Kurt sat back down and stayed with me until I was human again. That's the kind of friend he was.*

- Brainstorm what it takes to be a good friend. Make a list of examples from the novel in which Tina and Kurt demonstrate that they are good friends to each other. Then, using poster board, write a friendship checklist in which you give five tips on how to be a good friend. Beside each item, illustrate scenes or write a short example from the novel. The checklist should look like this:

How to be a Good Friend:

- ♦ *Be there for each other, like when Tina....*
- ♦ *Help each other out, like when Kurt...*

Present your poster to the class, describing your examples and why you chose them.

Plot

1. Ask students to work as a group and brainstorm the succession of events in *Sudden Impact*. How does one event affect what happens next? Ask students to choose three examples from the novel to build on. For example:
 - ♦ Tina is not popular and doesn't have many friends. She's a loner like Kurt. Her parents fight a lot and her neighbors judge her poorly because of this.
Prompt: Kurt sees her upset and they become friends.
2. Ask students to consider the following alternative plot scenarios. How would they have changed the succession of events in the novel?
 - ♦ Tina is popular and has many friends. Her parents get along well and her teachers and neighbors all like and respect her.
Prompt: Would she have become friends with Kurt? Would Kurt's mom have acted differently?
 - ♦ Tina convinces Jason to wear his motorcycle helmet.
Prompt: What would happen to Kurt if Jason had survived?
 - ♦ Kurt doesn't feel he has to prove anything to Jason.
Prompt: Would Kurt have joined soccer?
 - ♦ Tina doesn't find Kurt after he runs away from the hospital.
Prompt: Who would find him? What if it was too late?

Connecting to the Story—Chapter by Chapter

1. Using the following model and working either individually, in pairs, or reading the chapters aloud as a large group, ask students to answer the questions in two stages: first, as they finish reading each chapter (encourage students to guess, based on what they know so far); and, second, after they have finished the book.
2. Hold a group discussion to compare the students' findings. How did their understanding of the story change the farther into the book they got? Did early foreshadowing used in the story help them guess at some of the answers?

Chapter Questions	After reading the chapter, what can you <i>guess</i> is the answer?	After reading the book, what do you now <i>know</i> is the answer?
1. What kind of person is Jason?		
2. Why is Tina “getting worried” about Kurt?		
3. Tina said “Nobody knew what I knew...Call an ambulance.” What does she know that nobody else does?		
4. What’s going to happen to Kurt?		
5. Why does Kurt’s mother dislike Tina?		
6. Tina isn’t convinced she’s getting the whole truth about Kurt’s condition. What will she do to find out more?		
7. Why do Kurt’s parents invite Jason to the hospital—but not Tina?		
8. Tina knows Kurt needs B-negative blood. What will she do to help?		
9. Tina discovers that Jason has B-negative blood. What will she do?		

Chapter Questions	After reading the chapter, what can you <i>guess</i> is the answer?	After reading the book, what do you now <i>know</i> is the answer?
10. Tina's family has "difficulties." Will they be resolved in the story?		
11. Kurt has left the hospital. Where will he go?		
12. Kurt's breathing is "shallow and jerky." What's going to happen to him?		
13. Jason's been badly hurt and is in the same hospital as Kurt. What's going to happen to Jason?		
14. Tina has been warned to stay away from the hospital. Will she?		
15. Jason's parents have decided to "cut life support" but will not allow organ donation. Can Tina help? How?		
16. Jason's father wants to see Dr. Bennington. Why?		
17. The transplant is complete and Kurt is getting better. What do you think Kurt is thinking to himself?		
18. Why did Jason's mom grip Tina's hand and not let go?		

Language

Metaphors and similes connect ideas, giving us mental images that expand our understanding of situations and characters.

- Read the following examples from *Sudden Impact* aloud to the class, or write them on the board. Discuss the connection that is being made and how it lends meaning to the text (for example, lightening + legs = the runner is very fast):
 - (ch. 1) *They could both run five miles without getting winded, and they both had legs like lightening when it came to kicking the ball into the net.*
 - (ch. 1) *But every time Kurt passed the ball, because he had three players all over him, Jason was on him like maggots on dead meat.*
 - (ch. 2) *The game began and players were running back and forth like angry animals.*
 - (ch. 5) *Kurt's mother's face was still burning a hole right through me.*
 - (ch. 7) *Mr. Richards was about to speak, but I fired a look at him that would fry meat.*
 - (ch. 8) *I felt a cold wave of panic come over me.*
 - (ch. 13) *The siren wound down with a mournful howl that faded to nothing.*
- Write the following sentences, which use the novel's context, on the board. Ask students to complete the sentences, either working alone or with a partner.
 - ◆ The ambulance was moving so fast, it was like _____ .
 - ◆ I held Kurt's hand and his skin was as cold as _____ .
 - ◆ I ran a long time. My heart was beating as fast as _____ .
 - ◆ Kurt's skin looked greenish yellow, like a _____ .
 - ◆ Jason was always showing off. It made me angry as a _____ .
 - ◆ Even though they were rivals in school, on the soccer team they were like _____.
 - ◆ Kurt's mother hated me. When she looked at me, it felt like _____ .
 - ◆ Tina's parents were always fighting loudly. They sounded like _____ .

Connecting to the Curriculum**Vocabulary**

The following words were used in *Sudden Impact*. Ask students to write a paragraph, letter or journal entry using six or more of the words or phrases below.

antagonism	defiantly	interjected	recognized
accepting	desperate	internal bleeding	rendezvous
ambulance	determined	intensive care	stretcher
clinical	donor	life support	stubborn
concocted	gurney	monitors	survey
confrontation	harvest	nauseous	suspiciously
collapse	hysterically	obnoxious	transfusions
convince	immediate family	opportunity	transplant
confinement	indefinitely	oxygen mask	unconscious

Drama

Divide the class into small groups and ask students to improvise skits based on key scenes from *Sudden Impact*. Have students create their own scenarios or choose from the examples below:

- Kurt's parents reject Tina as a "bad influence." Tina must convince them she's a good person and worthy of Kurt's friendship. Martha comes along to help.
- Tina talks to her parents about the effect their fighting has on her. How can they sort their problems out without fighting all the time?
- Imagine you are Tina and you must convince Jason to wear his motorcycle helmet.
- Many of the adults in Tina's life seem to assume the worst of her, even when she is trying to help. Choose a key scene where Tina behaves in a pushy or confrontational manner. How could she act differently? Would that change the events that follow?

Science

Tina learns about blood types when her friend Kurt develops a liver disorder and needs blood transfusions. Later, Kurt's condition worsens and he discovers he needs a liver transplant to survive. Invite students to research the following:

- How many blood types are there? Which is the most common, and which is most rare (universally and in your class)? How is blood type determined? How do you get your blood type?
- Research donating blood. Who is eligible? Who is not? If you could donate blood, where would you go? Does it hurt? What is donated blood used for? How quickly does one's body replenish the blood after one donates?
- What are the parts of a blood cell? What does blood do in the body?
- Clara Barton was the founder of the American Red Cross. Find out about her life and legacy.
- What organs and tissues can be donated? Can anyone be an organ donor? How old do they have to be? If someone is waiting for an organ transplant, how long does it take?
- The liver is the largest internal organ in your body. What does the liver do? Why did Kurt's skin turn yellow when he was sick?

Connecting to the Students—Ideas for Exploration

1. In *Sudden Impact*, a number of topics/themes are presented which could be considered controversial, including:

Blood donation / transfusion

(ch. 9) *Maybe I couldn't give Kurt what he needed. But I was determined to make sure he had enough blood until the stupid system could come up with something to really fix him up. At school the following day, I asked everyone I knew what type of blood they had.*

Organ donation / use of transplant technology

(ch. 15) *If Jason is going to die and Kurt has a chance to live, then he deserves that chance.*

Motorcycle helmet laws

(ch. 9) *The law has no right to say what's safe for me. It cuts down my vision. Besides, on a bike, you're supposed to feel free.*

- ♦ As a group, discuss each topic, encouraging students to look at each from different points of view. Why are these topics considered controversial? Although you may feel strongly about each issue, can you see how someone else could feel differently?
 - ♦ Hold debates. Divide the class into small groups, assigning each group a topic (or have each group choose their topic). Each small group will then separate into two "sides," each with an equal number of participants. One side will be "for" and the other side will be "against." Ask students to brainstorm ideas to defend their side's opinion. Using index cards, ask students to list at least three reasons that support their position. Encourage students to draw supporting examples from scenes in *Sudden Impact*. For example: ("for") Jason says it is "his right" to choose not to wear a helmet while riding his motorcycle; ("against") wearing a helmet would have saved his life. With the teacher acting as moderator, ask students to present their debates in front of the large group.
2. Kurt and Kurt's parents find it difficult to face the seriousness of his illness. This is a natural response to this kind of situation. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, a famous psychiatrist, wrote about the "five stages of grieving" in her book *On Death and Dying*. She described the five stages that people go through when they are faced with death: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Hold a general large group discussion on the stages of grieving. What kind of behavior would we expect at each stage? Which stage do you think Kurt's parents were at when they forbade Tina to see him? How do you know?

Web Resources

www.redcross.org

http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/ww/people_barton.html

www.organdonor.gov

www.elisabethkublerross.com