



## **Chill**

Colin Frizzell

Reading level: 3.5

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AR Quiz # 110008

### **Book Summary**

Although best friends, Chill and Sean disagree about the new English teacher; Sean does his best to justify the new teacher's cruel actions toward other students, and Chill risks expulsion to expose the teacher's cruelty. Their friendship is tested by their actions, but ultimately the bond between them prevails as the true nature of Mr. Sfinkter is revealed.

### **Prereading Idea**

Discuss with students the treatment of children that are physically and mentally disabled, emphasizing respect for all individuals. Ask each student to write a short account of an experience they have had with a disabled student in their school and to share the account with the class.

**Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas**

- Ms. Surette and Mr. Sfinkter both teach Sean and Chill, but the boys hold opposite opinions of the teachers. As a class, brainstorm the positive and negative traits of the two teachers. Add other positive and negative traits that are often displayed by teachers. As a class, sponsor a teacher-recognition celebration and have students write thank-you letters to teachers, past and present, who have displayed positive traits and encouraged the students to achieve their potential. Invite teachers to participate in the celebration.
- The high school that Chill and Sean attend has a “zero-tolerance” bullying policy. In small groups, ask students to investigate anti-bullying policies in high schools in their area and state. Ask each group to define bullying according to the policy of the school they investigate and to make a chart on different aspects of the school’s policy. Use their findings as a springboard for discussion of the school’s policy and its effectiveness. If changes are needed, encourage students to become instruments of change.
- With a partner, ask students to research famous individuals who have contributed much to society in spite of, or in some cases, because of, their physical or mental disability: Helen Keller, Stephen Hawking, Franklin Roosevelt, and others. Create a bulletin board display highlighting their accomplishments.

**Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel*****Characterization***

A character can be classified as static, one who does not change much, or dynamic, one who changes as a result of the story’s events. List the major characters in *Chill*, and ask students to classify them as either static or dynamic. In order to do this, students will need to compare the character in the beginning of the story to the same character at the end of the story and to ask themselves, “Has the character changed, and if so, how did they change?” Divide students into groups and assign each group a character to chart. Have students visually portray this character as dynamic or static on a line graph or flow chart, including events from the story.

***Theme***

Generally speaking, the theme of a book revolves around the main character—what he learns and/or how he changes as a result of his experiences. Based on the brief glimpse the reader has of Sean or Chill’s life, what would you say is the theme of *Chill*? As a class, ask students to brainstorm and write several thematic statements on sentence strips. Then ask each student to write a personal connection to one of the themes on a 4 x 6 index card. Display the sentence strips and the students’ personal connections to them around the room.

**Point of View**

This story is told from Sean's point of view. If Chill had told the story, how might it have been different? Assign students a partner and ask them to rewrite an appropriate section of the story from Chill's point of view. Have one partner assume the voice of Sean as told in the book and the other partner assume the voice of Chill in the rewrites. Have partners prepare an oral reading of their two voices and present their selections to the class.

**Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions**

1. In the first chapter, and again in the last, Sean tells Chill that what he did was cool. Chill's reply is the same both times: *"No," he told me coldly and firmly, looking up at me from his drawings. "It wasn't." And then he lowered his head again, returning to his sketching, and we never spoke of it again.* What does this show the reader about each boy's personality and their relationship?
2. Speaking of Ms. Surette at the end of chapter 1, Chill says, "If she's asking it, it's going to be a challenge or an opportunity." Why does Chill believe this to be true of Ms. Surette? Is it a realistic expectation? Why or why not?
3. Mr. Sfinkter shows one side of his personality to his students and another to his peers. What does this illustrate about his integrity? What negative attributes does he demonstrate toward his students? What positive actions does he take toward his peers?
4. Chill receives respect from his peers partly because he respects others. For what other reasons does he receive respect? Which of his actions demonstrate respect? Which actions of others toward him demonstrate respect? How does Chill's name reflect his personality?
5. Why does Sean verbally attack Chill when Chill warns him to be careful about Mr. Sfinkter's opinion of his writing in chapter 8? Why does Sean protect Mr. Sfinkter? How does he justify Mr. Sfinkter's attacks on the other students?
6. Why is Sean infatuated with Chill's mother? How is she different from Sean's mother? How does Chill's mother help him be an individual? What role does she play in Chill's courage to stand against authority by planting the Crime Stopper story and painting his mural in the school foyer?
7. Who is mainly responsible for the investigation into Mr. Sfinkter's teaching practices? How does the investigation help to eliminate the problem? What long-term effect will Mr. Sfinkter's cruelty have on the students in his English class?

**Writer's Craft***Vocabulary Enrichment*

Have students work with partners to find to find the following words in the context of the story. Have them find synonyms in the thesaurus and substitute the new words into the original sentence.

Subtleties	(ch. 1)	Humbly	(ch. 1)
Obscurity	(ch. 1)	Eccentric	(ch. 3)
Mimic	(ch. 1)	Solace	(ch. 4)
Rendition	(ch. 1)	Prone	(ch. 5)

Have students choose which they think is the best word and justify their choice. As a class, discuss the word choices the various groups would have made and add the vocabulary words and the synonyms to a word wall.

**Author Biography**

Born and raised in Prince Edward County, Ontario, **Colin Frizzell** graduated from Radio Broadcasting at Loyalist College of Applied Arts and Technology. After college, he traveled to Europe and lived in Ireland for almost two years. Upon returning to Canada, Colin moved to Toronto, and met and married his wife. He continued with his writing career while working in the Toronto Film Industry, studying acting and appearing in several short films. He's received a grant from the Toronto Arts Council for a book he's working on and funding from the Self Employment Benefits program to allow him to write full-time.