



Sea Change

Diane Tullson

Reading level: 3.1

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AR Quiz # 140886

Book Summary

Lucas is headed for Sandspit, site of the fishing lodge where his father has worked as a fishing guide for all of Lucas's life. Yet Lucas has never once gone fishing with his dad, even before the divorce that moved his mother and him to Los Angeles three years ago. In spite of their extremely strained relationship, Lucas is hoping this fishing trip will be his opportunity to prove himself once and for all to his dad. But when Lucas's dad abandons him within minutes of their arrival at the fishing lodge, Lucas assumes his dad is simply up to his unreliable distant self. Left alone with Sumi, the almost non-conversational, deer-shooting, young caretaker of the lodge, Lucas attempts to make the most of a difficult and awkward situation. In spite of the fact that Lucas has been dumped upon her, Sumi agrees to take Lucas out for the fishing endeavor that he was promised by his dad. Back at the camp, they narrowly escape an encounter with a bear, only to find themselves in an even more dangerous situation. With a shotgun wound to her foot, only Lucas can take Sumi to the logging camp where they can find a medic and a helicopter to transport her for medical attention. With Sumi's boating skills and knowledge of the area and Lucas's "strong heart" and a sprinkling of first-aid skills, the two are able to get Sumi safely to the logging camp for the help she needs. Along the way, Lucas finds out more than a little about himself and the dad that he has already written off.

Prereading Ideas

Most students have had the opportunity to go fishing or hunting with a friend or relative. Ask students to do a seven-minute quick-write about a special memory of a hunting or fishing trip. Have students share their stories in small groups. Ask students if any of their stories involved a medical emergency. Ask these students to share their stories with the whole group. As students read the novel, ask them to note skills and personal attributes the two main characters used to survive the crisis.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- Lucas's father works at a fishing lodge at Sandspit, British Columbia. Have students locate Sandspit, British Columbia, on a map of Canada. Have students work with a partner to create a brochure advertising the fishing opportunities at Sandspit. Have students include information such as average climate and temperature, types of fish, and other scenic attractions. Students should also incorporate information from the novel in the brochures.
- Shock and hypothermia are two medical conditions mentioned in the novel *Sea Change*. Have students work in small groups to research one of these two medical conditions. Then have students write, practice and present a short skit about one or more individuals who are experiencing the condition. Have students include the factors that could lead to the condition, symptoms of the condition and appropriate first aid necessary to prevent death or loss of body functioning.

Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel

Characterization

Authors utilize a variety of techniques to reveal the personality of individual characters, including descriptions of their physical appearance, dialogue, actions, thoughts and motivations, other people's reactions to them, and even what other people say about them. In the case of Lucas's dad, based only on his actions in the story, especially just after Lucas has arrived, the reader might conclude that Lucas's father has no intention of trying to have a relationship with him. Throughout the book, however, the author allows other characters to speak on his behalf, allowing the reader to see glimpses of his humanity and his character. Have students locate clues to the character of Lucas's father from what other characters say about him. Have students create a poster depicting what they say and including quotations from the book.

Point of View

The story of *Sea Change* is told from Lucas's point of view. To understand Lucas's father, the reader is privy only to brief glimpses of insight to be gleaned from his actions and sparse conversations. In the novel Lucas speaks of their strained relationship from his point of view. Though at the end of the story, there are hints that Lucas is finally coming to terms with who his father is and forgiving him for his absence in his life. Write several short journal entries or one lengthy journal entry written by Lucas's father discussing his thoughts and motivations from the moment of the helicopter landing to the final parting of Lucas and his father as Lucas heads to the Vancouver hospital.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. Lucas's dad was in LA on business, and he called Lucas to invite him to come to the fishing lodge to fish for coho. Yet, from the minute Lucas and his dad land, their relationship seems strained, Lucas's dad remote. What was his intent when he asked Lucas to come fishing for coho?
2. In chapter 1, Lucas reflects: "I want a big fish, a monster. I want a fish so big the old man pays to get it stuffed and hangs it in the lodge with a brass plate with my name on it." Why would Lucas want this so badly? What is it that Lucas truly seeks?
3. In many ways, Sumi seems indifferent to Lucas, as if she is merely tolerating him. However, Sumi is willing to take Lucas out fishing when he has never been fishing before, requiring her to show him even the simplest of tasks such as baiting his hook. Why is Sumi willing to teach Lucas to fish?
4. Several places throughout the story, noticeably in chapter 1 and chapter 5, Lucas talks about wanting to catch a monster of a fish. Yet, when he does catch the one-hundred-pound "hali," he chooses to let her go. Why does Lucas let her go? How does this decision reflect a change in his thinking?
5. In chapter 7, Lucas remembers, "I've stopped sending him a school photo. I've stopped going up to Vancouver at Christmas. I've stopped answering his emails..." How does this bit of information show that the strain on the relationship between Lucas and his dad is not simply one-sided? Though it is not stated, it is pretty clear why Lucas broke off these communications. What was Lucas's motivation?
6. The author uses heavy doses of irony in the encounter with the bear and the subsequent gunshot wound to Sumi's foot. What is ironic about her statement to Lucas, "Like I'd let you run around the forest with a loaded gun"?
7. Though neither Sumi nor Lucas wants to leave the fishing lodge to seek medical treatment, it soon becomes apparent that they must. Only through the efforts of both characters are they able to get Sumi the medical treatment she needs. What skills and abilities do each of the characters have that enables them to successfully arrive at the logging camp?

8. The characters of Sumi and Lucas seem to be totally different: Sumi, a very able outdoors person; Lucas, an aspiring chef with relatively little experience in the great outdoors. Yet Sumi and Lucas have much in common as well. What do the two characters have in common?
9. By chapter 14, Lucas is able to navigate the shoreline back to the fishing lodge all on his own. How does this reflect a change in Lucas from the beginning of the story? In his last conversation with his dad in chapter 15, Lucas shows that he has changed in other ways as well. What are the indicators that he has changed?

Writer's Craft

Metaphors

The author uses metaphors effectively throughout the novel, often to describe the landscape and often to convey the depth of the characters' feelings. Have students refer to the following examples from chapter 1: "...the helicopter is a drum and I'm inside it"; "...sometimes a stream ropes through the trees." Have students work in small groups to locate these and other examples of metaphors throughout the novel. Then have students make a mural incorporating the descriptions—revealing both the landscape and characters. Have students illustrate the metaphors and include the wording of the metaphors on the mural. Display the murals in the classroom.

Sarcasm

The author uses sarcasm (remarks that mean the opposite of what they seem to say and intended to mock or deride) several places throughout the novel. For example, in chapter 2, Lucas reflects, "Nice, having this time together, me and Dad—except that he's two hours away with his girlfriend." Have students find an example of sarcasm in the novel. Students should create a cartoon strip to depict the situation leading up to the sarcasm and incorporating the sarcasm as the final block in the cartoon strip. Have students share and post cartoon strips in the classroom.

Author Biography

Born in Calgary, Diane Tullson received her BA in English literature and her MFA in creative writing. She has used her writing skills extensively, both in journalism and editing and as an author of young adult fiction. Her books include *Red Sea* and *The Darwin Expedition*. She has also written for magazines such as *Canadian Living* and *Westworld*. Diane is also the proud member of various writers' organizations including: the Children's Writers and Illustrators of BC, Vancouver Children's Literature Roundtable, The Writer's Union of Canada and the Canadian Children's Book Centre. She speaks to school children across Canada encouraging and nurturing young authors. Diane lives with her family near Vancouver, British Columbia.