

High Tide

Anna Mackenzie

If we'd known how things would turn out, none of us would have signed up in the first place. But then they say it's always easy to see in hindsight what you would have done differently. And I guess none of it would have happened if we hadn't all been hankering for a bit of an adventure.

Synopsis

Samantha Edmonds is a typical teenager. She enjoys hanging out with friends and embarking on new adventures. When Mr Collins, her form teacher, suggests a camping trip Sam decides to go along, despite the fact that none of her close friends are interested. Initially everything goes according to plan. Mr Collins, Sam and seven of her classmates enjoy tramping, camping and getting to know each other better. Then on day four the unimaginable happens. Charlotte and Mr Collins are swept off some rocks by a giant wave. Charlotte is found seriously injured but Mr Collins is lost to the ocean. Now Kahui, Cornelius, Martin, Hannah and Sam have to dig deep to find help before it is too late. They are miles from anywhere and a violent storm means that tramping out is not going to be easy. With Mr Collins gone the teenagers must rely on each other. Will they be able to save their friend's life?

Text Type

This is a fast-paced adventure that would appeal to teenagers. The story is set in New Zealand and most readers would be familiar with the coastal regions and bush described in the story. The narrator, Sam Edmonds, is a credible character who is easy to relate to. She is an ordinary teenager with normal concerns about relationships and fitting in. In the novel she learns a lot about herself, particularly how important it is not to judge people by appearances. Sam and the other characters show courage as they overcome many spiritual and physical obstacles in their quest to save Charlotte. For the eight students who participate in the trip the death of Mr Collins signifies a turning point in their lives. They cease to be naïve children and are forced to become adults.

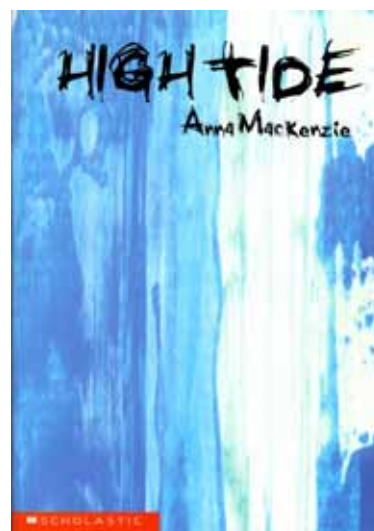
Themes include friendship, relationships, courage and dealing with tragedy.

Resource kit contains:

- *Synopsis*
- *Editorial comment*
- *Study Notes*
- *Activities*

For more information on the author, novel, story behind the story, visit:

annamackenzieauthor.com



SPECIFICATIONS:

Imprint: Scholastic
Classification: NZ Young Adult Fiction
Release NZ: 2003
ISBN: 978-1-86943-571-4
RRP NZ: \$18.00
Format: 132 x 190mm
Extent: 156pp
Binding: Paperback
Readership: 11 years plus

Sharing the Novel

This novel can be shared over 3 independent reading sessions and 4 shared sessions. The book has been broken up into three sections of approximately the same length: Chapters 1-5 (pp. 5-50), Chapters 6-10 (pp. 51-102), Chapters 11-15 and the epilogue (pp. 103-156).

During the shared sessions encourage students to share their thoughts and feelings about the characters and events in the novel. Allow them to clarify words and ideas and make predictions. Encourage them to think critically about the concepts introduced in the novel and the themes covered. The suggested activities allow the students to acquire greater meaning from the story and suit a range of learning styles.

Introducing the Novel

* Examine the cover of the novel and read the blurb. Can you predict what the characters in the story signed up for? Speculate on what might have happened to make the characters regret “hankering for a bit of adventure”. Does the title of the novel give you any additional clues about what is going to happen in the story?

Students read Chapters 1-5 (pp. 5-50) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 1-5 (pp. 5-50)

- * Name all the students who sign up for the trip.
- * Mr Collins has another reason for wanting to take the students on this camping trip. What is it?
- * What do you think Jake’s motivation was for putting Sam’s name on the list?
- * Why did Suze pull out of the trip at the last minute?
- * Describe what happens on the first night that Mr Collins and the teenagers spend together.
- * Describe the old lighthouse keeper’s cottage. What is the surrounding area like?
- * What does Mr Collins learn when he manages to get radio reception?
- * What advice does Mr Collins give to the gang when they go exploring around the lighthouse keeper’s cottage?
- * Where do Sam, Martin and Jake go? What does Sam notice about the beach?
- * Why do Mr Collins and Kahui yell at Hannah, Charlotte and Cornelius?
- * What stops Charlotte from being able to get off the rocks as quickly as the others?
- * What happens to Mr Collins and Charlotte?

Discussion

* In this section of the book the author is initiating the plot and beginning to develop the characters. The narrator Sam does not know any of the other students very well before this trip. What does it suggest about her character that she is willing to go on the trip despite the fact that none of her close friends are going?

* Using evidence from the story explain what preconceptions Sam has about her classmates.

* During the first four days of tramping Sam gets to know each of her classmates and Mr Collins. What does she learn about each of them? What is important to them? What are their families like? How do their backgrounds and home lives contrast with Sam’s? What do they want to do when they are older?

* What do we learn about Sam through her interactions and conversations with the other characters?

* When the group arrive at the lighthouse keeper’s cottage they learn that there is going to be extremely bad weather for the next 2 or 3 days. What problems could this cause for the group?

* Do you think that Charlotte and Mr Collins are going to be all right? What factors are you already aware of that may affect their chances? How do you think the teenagers will cope if there is no longer an adult around to guide them?

* It is unusual for the climax of the novel to occur so early on. How does the author build up excitement and suspense around the event? How has this event been foreshadowed earlier on in the story?

Students read Chapters 6-10 (pp. 51-102) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 6-10 (pp.51-102)

- * Explain how each member of the group deals with the situation that they have just witnessed. Who takes a leadership role and co-ordinates the search? How do you think they were feeling?
- * Where do Sam and Kahui find Charlotte? What injuries has she sustained? How do they get her back to the cottage?
- * What evidence is there in the story to suggest that Sam is suffering from shock?
- * How do the group decide to deal with the situation? Who volunteers to go for help?
- * Why do Jake and Cornelius fight back at the car?
- * What causes the accident? Why does Sam get injured?
- * Where do Sam, Cornelius and Jake find shelter for the night?
- * How far is it from where the car is to Huapai? Why do the boys want to walk to Huapai alone? How does Sam feel about this?
- * Why does Jake return to the bach where Sam is? What did Jake and Sam do in Huapai?
- * Why do Sam and Jake need to return to the others?

Comprehension Chapters 11-15

- * Describe Sam and Jake's journey back to the cottage. What factors make this trip so difficult?
- * Why does Jake feel guilty about putting Sam's name on the list to come on the trip? Does he have any reason to feel guilty?
- * What is Charlotte's condition like when Sam and Jake reach the cottage?
- * What are some of the concerns that Sam has about camping out in the bush?
- * How does Sam feel when the rescue crew arrives? Why do you think she feels this way?
- * How do the rescue crew take Charlotte away? Who goes with her?
- * What happened to Cornelius after Jake left him? How did he manage to get help?
- * Why do you think Sam doesn't want to leave the cottage immediately? What realisation does she come to when she heads towards the rocks after Martin?
- * Describe Sam's meeting with Charlotte in hospital.

Discussion

- * How would you have dealt with a situation like this one? What course of action would you take? Would you stay behind with Charlotte or try and go for help? Give reasons for your answer.
- * Jake is an interesting and multi-faceted character. Describe how he has developed since the start of the story. What qualities does he exhibit? How does he react under pressure? How is his relationship with Sam changing?
- * Explain in your own words how Sam feels when she is left alone by Cornelius and Jake. What sorts of things go through her mind? What does she worry about? Why does she suffer from nightmares?
- * What are some of the problems that Sam, Jake and Cornelius have had to deal with as they search for help? How do they deal with these problems? What do you see as being some of the possible outcomes of this situation?
- * What are some of the main themes of the story?

Students read Chapters 11-15 and the epilogue (pp. 103-156) before the next shared session.

What does she say to Charlotte to reassure her?

- * How did Martin get his black eye?
- * What information is contained in the epilogue?

Discussion

- * All of the teenagers had to band together and show courage to get through this ordeal. Describe the role that each person plays in Charlotte's rescue. What qualities do they exhibit? How do they change or develop throughout the story? What lessons do they learn? What problems does Charlotte herself have to come to terms with?
- * Sam is interested in both Jake and Martin when she comes home from the trip. What is it about each of them that she is attracted to? Who do you think she is better suited to? Explain your reasons.
- * Why do you think it is important for Sam to organise a ceremony and monument for Mr Collins? Do you think that the way the group chose to honour Mr Collins was appropriate? Explain your answer.

Activities

- * **Television Report** – Complete a news report about the tragedy and the teenagers’ heroic response to it. Interview the characters to find out what happened. Interview the rescue workers to learn their reactions. Video your report and show it to the rest of the class.
- * **Diary** – Imagine that Sam took a diary with her on the camping trip. Complete several entries detailing the events that occur and Sam’s reaction to them. Remember to describe in detail Sam’s thoughts and feelings.
- * **Book Review** – Write a book review for “High Tide” for a magazine. Your audience is other teenagers. Remember to talk briefly about character, setting, themes and style but don’t give too much of the story away! Give your opinions of the book and back up your ideas with examples.
- * **Oprah Show** – Organise an Oprah style talk show. Choose a member of the class to be Oprah. Choose other members of the class to play important characters in the story. Students playing characters need to research their character and be able to answer questions in role. The rest of the students make up the studio audience and must prepare at least one question to ask a character.
- * **Writing** – Write at least half a page explaining what problems Jake faces and how he deals with them.
- * **Flow Chart** – Prepare a flow chart to illustrate the sequence of events.
- * **Outdoor Manual** – Using information that you have learned from the story put together a manual for people who want to go camping. Include a list of items that they should take with them and procedures that they should follow to ensure that they complete their trip safely.

Teacher Notes prepared by Vicki Gyde