

The Boy Who Met a Whale

Discussion Notes

- What language is used in the first chapter to show the chaos taking place on board the ship? Pick out a few examples and discuss how they set the scene.
- Read through the scene when Razi discovers the boat (p. 7-14). What different emotions do you think he feels during this time – from when he finds the boat to when he talks to the men?
- Do you believe Zheng when he talks about all the adventures he has had at sea? Why/why not?
- Zheng had to leave behind his whole life when he escaped the ship. How do you think he felt?
- Razi and Shifa blame themselves when Zheng is kidnapped by Marco and Cook. Do you think it was their fault?
- Why do you think Razi decides to go out in the boat now, even though he hasn't been to sea since his father died?
- Razi and Shifa have only just met Zheng, but they decide to help him anyway. Why do you think they decide to do this?
- Have you ever seen a whale? Can you imagine how big they are?
- Why do you think the whales cause Razi to cry? What do you think he is thinking about?
- Make a list of the things that go wrong on the mission to find the dagger and discuss how each obstacle is overcome. Which challenge do you find the most exciting and why?
- If you were stranded on an island, what things do you think you would need to survive?
- Think about a scary/worrying situation you've been in. How did you get through it?
- At the end of the book, Zheng says he feels like he's found a new family. What does family mean to you? Why is family important?
- The three friends come up with a plan to capture Marco and Cook. Read through the chase scene (p. 179-189) and discuss how the author maintains tension throughout. What did you think was going to happen?
- How does the adventure change each of the characters? What have they learnt from going through this adventure together?
- Think of three words to describe Shifa, Razi and Zheng at the beginning of the book, and three different words to describe them at the end of the book.



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Activity Ideas

TREASURE MAP

The treasure map that Zheng has is very important to the story. Draw your own treasure map, either based on a place you know such as school or a fictional location. Include an X to mark the spot and landmarks such as the playground or a river so people know how to find the treasure.

CHASE SCENE

There are a few tense chase scenes throughout the book. Write your own, making it exciting and building tension throughout! Think about where the chase is taking place – is it at sea, through a busy marketplace or in an old castle? How many people are involved in the chase? Read your chase scene to a teacher or family member and see if they find it exciting! Could they guess what was going to happen at the end?

MAALU'S STORY

Maalu, the whale, features throughout the story and even helps the three friends when they're in trouble! Write a short piece from Maalu's point of view. How does she feel about Razi, Shifa and Zheng? What does she see beneath the water? How does she rescue each of the three friends?

MY FAMILY

Family is very important to each of the characters in the book. Write a letter to someone in your family, or a friend, and tell them how much they mean to you. What do you love about them and what are your favourite memories of times you've spent together?

