

Addie Accident

Author: Shirley Corlett

Synopsis

Eleven-year-old Addie Harris was born under an ill wind. At least, that's what her father always tells her when something goes wrong in her life. Unfortunately, this happens to Addie all the time. She is constantly getting into trouble at school and having accidents. Her bad luck has earned her the name "Addie Accident" at her school. Addie is overweight and unhappy. She is bullied at school and often escapes into an imaginary world where she doesn't have to take responsibility for her actions.

It is through her imagination that Addie conjures up Hubert the Hapless, a strange boy who is living next door in an empty house. Hubert announces that he is Addie's soul mate and he used to live in Imaginary Land. Addie is confused. Isn't Imaginary Land in her head? If Hubert is from her imagination, why is he so annoying? Hubert is in fact incredibly like Addie herself; accident-prone and always trying to blame others for his misfortunes. But he has a solution to both their problems. The two of them must work on a spell that will put an end to the curses that plague them. In order to gather all of the ingredients that are needed for the spell, Addie must complete a series of tasks that require daring. Addie has her doubts about the tasks but feels she has to complete them, or she will live under an ill wind forever.

Text Type

Addie Accident is a fast-paced, humorous novel full of mishaps and adventure. Written by New Zealand novelist Shirley Corlett, the story is written in easy-to-understand colloquial language and will appeal particularly to girls. The main character in the novel, Addie, is a likeable girl, despite her myriad of faults. Addie has trouble controlling herself and makes many bad choices about everything - from what she eats to how she behaves. Her father has always told her that she was born under an ill wind and this is to blame for her constant bad luck. Addie believes this and never takes responsibility for her own actions. To help her deal with her life, Addie escapes into an imaginary world where she meets Hubert the Hapless, a strange, red-haired boy who is just like her, only a boy. Together the pair embark on a hilarious adventure that helps Addie to mature and develop as a person. By the end of the story she displays a courage and maturity that she never would have believed possible of herself previously.

She learns that she is in control of her own destiny and that what makes the difference between good luck and bad luck is her own choices.

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapters 1- 3 (pp. 9- 24), Chapters 4- 16 (pp. 25- 121) and Chapters 18- Epilogue (pp. 122- 213).

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and ideas in the novel. Have them make inferences and predictions about what will happen next in the story. Wherever possible have students relate Addie's experiences to their own lives and broader understanding. Encourage students to identify key themes raised in the text, such as taking responsibility for your own actions, and explain how these are developed by the author. Student should also study the character of Addie and be able to explain how she changes and grows throughout the story.

Introducing the Novel

Have students study the front cover of the novel and read the blurb.

- What kind of story do you think this will be? How do you know?
- Who is the main character in the story?
- How did the main character get her name?
- Have you ever had an imaginary friend? If so, who? Why do you think young children often have imaginary friends?
- Make a prediction about what will happen in the story.

Teacher reads Chapters 1- 3 (pp. 9- 24) aloud to the class. Students follow along in their books.

Comprehension Chapters 1- 3 (pp. 9- 24)

- What do the kids at school call Addie? How does this make her feel?
- How does Addie respond to the taunts?
- Why does Miss Forrest believe that "common sense flies out the window when one is dealing with Addie Harris"? Why does the fire brigade need to be called?

- What does Addie's dad mean when he says that she was born under an "ill wind"?
- How did Addie's mum get a black eye? What happened to her father's leg?
- Who is Candice? Why is she so embarrassed by Addie?
- Why does Addie feel so sorry for herself? What happened to her friend Becky?
- Who are Addie's special friends? What does she consider to be her secret place?
- What is Imagination Land? Who is its sovereign? Why does Addie like Imagination Land so much?
- Why do you think Addie lies about eating the chocolate biscuits?

Discussion

- Have you ever been the victim of a bully? How did this make you feel? What is the best way to deal with a bully?
- What effect do you think Addie's father's comments about her being jinxed have on her?
- How does Addie's mother treat her, and how is this different from how her father treats her?
- Make a prediction about what will happen next in the story.

Students read Chapters 4- 16 (pp. 25- 121) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 4- 16 (pp. 25- 121)

- How did Addie end up in hospital?
- What does Addie hate more than being called names?
- What does Addie hold the record for?
- Who are Georgina and Leah? Why doesn't Addie tell anyone about them?
- Is Addie right when she tells her mother that the accident "wasn't her fault"? Why/ why not?
- What advice does Addie's mother give her about dealing with the kids at school? Is this good advice? Why/why not?
- What does Addie see that convinces her she has to go next door? How does she feel when she thinks that she has lost the ability to use her imagination? Why does she decide that she needs a friend who is just like her?
- What does Addie discover when she enters the house?

- Describe Hubert the Hapless. Where has he come from? What do Addie and Hubert have in common? Why is Addie so suspicious of Hubert?
- Why is Hubert the biggest challenge that Enchantress Chu has ever had?
- What do Hubert and Addie have to work together on? Why does Addie agree to help?
- What does Addie need to get before they can begin making the spell?
- Why does Addie get into trouble when her father gets home?
- Why does Addie feel she is no good at anything?
- Why does Addie's mother ground her?
- What startling discovery does Addie make when she visits Hubert in the morning? Why is she so surprised when Hubert lies?
- What is the first thing that Addie has to collect for the spell? What potential problems does this create?
- Why is Addie so intrigued by the old water tower?
- Why is it unusual for Addie to be telling herself to think and not rush?
- What happens when Addie is accosted by Leah and Georgina?
- How does Addie disguise herself before she goes over to Miss Minify's pond?
- Why is Addie pleased with herself when she decides not to leap over the creek?
- What is Addie thinking about when she realises that the frogs are jumping into the box? What happens to the box when the frogs are inside?
- How does Addie get into trouble on the way home? What is her mother's initial reaction when she sees her? Then what does she do?
- What does Addie's conscience tell her when she complains that "it wasn't fair"?
- What does Hubert do with the frogs?
- Why does Addie start wondering if she really needs Hubert?
- What do Addie and Hubert have to wait for before they can add the next ingredient to the spell?
- What is the next ingredient that Addie has to find for the spell? Why is Addie so reluctant to complete the task?
- Why do you think Addie decides to smoke Candice's cigarette? Why does she think it was a silly idea?
- Describe Addie's feelings as she climbs the tree. What happens to her after she grabs the feathers?
- What happens when Miss Minify finds Addie in her compost heap? Why does she think that Addie's mother is just as mad as she is?
- How did Addie's dad's shed catch fire? What happens when Addie picks up the hose? How does Addie's dad know that she is responsible for the fire? Why doesn't Addie tell her father where the cigarette really came from?

- Why is Addie so confused when she lies in bed that night?

Discussion

- Describe Addie's relationship with her mother. What do they have in common? What is Addie's relationship with her father like? What does Addie's mum mean when she says that her husband will give Addie an "inferiority complex"? Do you agree with her? Why/ why not?
- What is Hubert like? In what ways are he and Addie similar? What attitudes and beliefs do they share? If Hubert is conjured from Addie's imagination and is supposed to be like her, why does she find him so annoying?
- What other lessons do you think Enchantress Chu wants Addie and Hubert to learn?
- What is significant about all of the tasks that Addie is required to complete?
- Why is it so important to have confidence in yourself?
- Does Addie change at all during this section of the book? If so, in what ways?

Students read Chapter 17- Epilogue (pp. 122- 213) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 122- Epilogue (pp. 122- 213)

- What happens when Hubert adds the feathers to the pot?
- Why does Addie think that she should give more thought to her own decisions?
- What does Addie bring Hubert for breakfast? How does he react when he sees her offerings? Why is Addie so disgusted watching Hubert eat? What does this reveal to her about herself?
- Where does Hubert suggest that Addie might find a clutch of fog whatchamacallits?
- How does Hubert react when Addie threatens not to help him anymore?
- Why does Addie's dad ask her if she has been hanging around next door? What does Addie learn when she confronts Hubert about wandering around outside?
- Describe how Addie catches the whatchamacallits. Why does she think she has to outsmart them? How does she do this?
- Who is waiting for Addie when she climbs over the gate? How do they react when they see her?

- What does Addie tell Leah and Georgina she has in the bag? Why do they believe her? What happens to the bag when Mr Akura arrives?
- Why does Addie have such a bad day?
- What realisation does Addie come to about why Enchantress Chu gave her Hubert? Why does she decide to stop using her imagination?
- Why does Hubert seem different when Addie finds him in the morning?
- Why is Addie confused when Hubert spots the bag of whatchmacallits? What explanation does Hubert give her for why it keeps disappearing?
- Why does an elephant appear in the kitchen? What does Addie have to collect from it? How does the elephant react at suddenly being in a strange kitchen?
- Who does Addie see peering through the kitchen window? How do they react to the elephant?
- How does Addie get the elephant to do a poo? What happens after this?
- Why is Addie so concerned about Leah and Georgina? Why isn't Hubert worried that he will be discovered?
- Why does a policeman turn up at Addie's house? How does Addie's father convince him that there is nothing going on next door?
- Why isn't Addie disappointed that she didn't get rid of Hubert? What does she learn about her own behaviour from being around him?
- How does Addie feel when she wakes up the morning after she decides to stand up to Leah and Georgina? What happens when she gets to school? How do Addie's parents react when she gets home?
- What happens to Georgina and Leah after she confronts them? How does Addie's life at school change?
- What is the last ingredient Addie needs to get for the spell?
- Where does the rainbow that Addie spies from her bedroom window end?
- What does Addie see when she goes over to retrieve the pot of gold? How does Candice react when Addie tells her what's wrong? How does Addie react to the situation? How does she get into the house? What does she tell Candice to do? Why does Addie decide to break the rules and enter the house?
- How long did Addie have to stay in hospital for? What about Miss Minify?
- Why does the Fire Awareness Intervention Officer come to Addie's house? What does he say about Addie's actions? How does Candice feel about what her sister has done?
- What does Addie's dad say to her about ill winds and fate? Why does he apologise to her?
- How does Addie's life change after the fire?

- How is Hubert different when Addie visits him after the fire? How does he react when she tells him she hasn't got the gold coin? Why does Addie believe this doesn't matter?
- What has Addie learned about herself from her adventures? Why does she conjure up the gold coin for Hubert? What is the last thing she agrees to do for Hubert?
- What happens after Addie drinks the potion?
- How does Addie's relationship with Miss Minify change after the fire? What does she tell her about Imagination Land?
- What does Hubert become after he returns to Imagination Land? Why does he thank Addie?

Discussion

- Is Addie her own worst enemy? Why/why not?
- What important lessons does Addie's imaginary friend teach her?
- Identify an important theme or idea presented in the novel.
- Describe the qualities and attributes that Addie develops as the story progresses?
- Why is it important to stand up to bullies?
- Is there such a thing as bad luck or do you "make your own luck in life"?

Activities

Monologue - Create a monologue for Addie in an important part of the novel. What is she thinking and feeling in that moment? Why?

Movie Pitch - Write a one page "pitch" to a producer, explaining why the story would make a great movie.

Static Image - Design a static image that illustrates a theme from the novel. Remember to combine verbal and visual features to convey your idea.

Book Review - Write a book review for Addie Accident. Include a brief plot summary, describe the setting and explain why it is important. Describe the characters and explain how they develop and change as the story progresses. Identify major themes and ideas in the story. Remember to give your personal opinion about the book.

Character - Imagine that you are Addie and have been asked to give a speech about your experiences when you return to school. Write the speech and present it to the class in role.

Writing - Write a letter to Shirley Corlett explaining what you liked about the novel.

Drama - Choose an important event from the story. Write a script that depicts the event. Remember to include a cast of characters and stage directions in your script. Practise your play and present it to the class.

Plot - Design a storyboard that illustrates ten important events from the novel in the order that they occur. Under each picture write a brief summary of what is happening.

Plot - Choose an important event from the story and explain how this event affected the outcome of the story. If this event hadn't happened, how would things have turned out differently?

Poem - Write a poem about Addie in the style of the riddles featured in the story.

Notes written by Vicki Williams