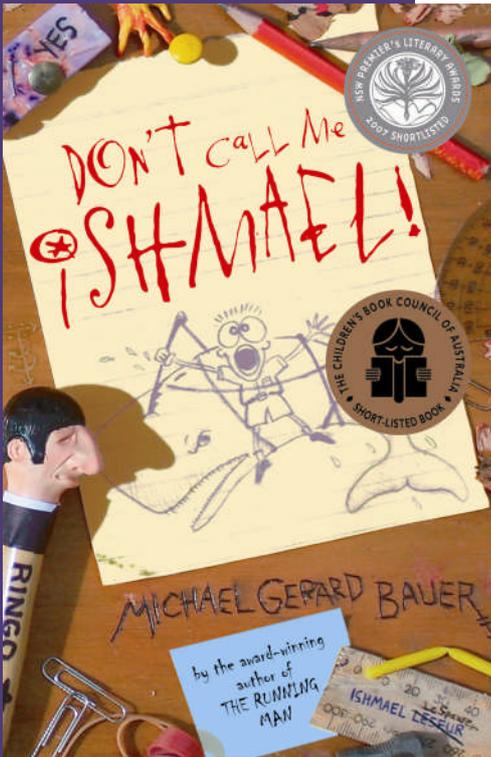


Teachers' Notes DON'T CALL ME ISHMAEL!

MICHAEL GERARD BAUER

Teachers' Notes written by Michael Gerard Bauer



OMNIBUS BOOKS

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INTRODUCTION

Ishmael Leseur is fourteen years old and the world's only sufferer of the self-diagnosed Ishmael Leseur's Syndrome – a chronic ailment capable of turning an otherwise normal person into a 'walking disaster area registering nine point nine on the open-ended imbecile scale'. According to Ishmael, all his problems stem from the bizarre circumstances of his birth, which resulted in his parents calling him Ishmael after the narrator in Herman Melville's classic novel *Moby Dick*.

Ishmael's problems include a school bully called Barry Bagsley who delights in mashing his name and generally making his life hell, an overwhelming fear of public speaking, and a severe case of unrequited love for the beautiful and 'perfect' Kelly Faulkner.

But two new arrivals at St Daniel's Boys College are set to change Ishmael's life forever – a bubbly young English teacher called Miss Tarango and James Scobie, a small boy with an odd facial twitch, a brilliant mind and a heart that knows no fear. With the aid of the irrepressible Miss Tarango, Scobie champions debating at St Daniel's and convinces a reluctant Ishmael to join the Year Nine team – just as a researcher. The rest of the debating team consists of: Bill Kingsley – the daydreaming sci-fi nut; Ignatius Prindabel – a maths and science nerd and repository of irrelevant information, and finally Orazio Zorzotto, a.k.a. Razz, Razza or the Razzman – the class comedian, super confident know-it-all and self-professed guru on the topic of 'hot chicks'.

With this motley group of friends for support, Ishmael takes on debating, Barry Bagsley and the seemingly unattainable Kelly Faulkner as well as his own doubts and fears in what he describes as 'the toughest, the weirdest, the most embarrassingly awful ... and the best year of my life.'

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Gerard Bauer was born in Brisbane and currently lives in the suburb of Ashgrove, the setting for *The Running Man*. Michael taught English and Economics in a number of schools in the Brisbane-Ipswich region for more years than he cares to admit before resigning from full-time teaching in 2000 to pursue his dream of being a published writer. His first novel, *The Running Man*, was published by Omnibus Books in 2004 and subsequently won the 2005 CBCA Book of the Year Award for Older Readers. In 2006 his second book, *Don't Call Me Ishmael!*, was also short-listed for the CBCA awards and its sequel, *Ishmael and the Return of the Dugongs*, was released in 2007. As unbelievable as it seems to him, Michael is now a full-time writer.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

'The story of *Don't Call Me Ishmael!* began when I was writing my first novel *The Running Man*. At the time I had no thoughts at all about writing a comedy set in an all boys school and certainly no idea of any storyline or characters. But one day when I took a break from my writing, I happened to glance over at the big noticeboard beside my desk. It was full of notes and photographs and other bits and pieces I'd pinned there over time.

One of the items on the board caught my eye. It was a page I'd torn from a copy of *Life* magazine showing a still from the old 1956 movie version of *Moby Dick* starring Gregory Peck as Captain Ahab. It was a dramatic scene from the end of the story where Ahab is on the back of the great white whale still trying to harpoon the creature to get his revenge. I'd pinned the picture on the noticeboard because I liked the drama and action of it and because I'd studied *Moby Dick* when I was at uni and, unlike a lot of people, actually liked it!

But what happened was, when I looked at the picture it made me think of the famous first line of the novel – "Call me Ishmael" – which is spoken by the narrator of the story. (Incidentally, the editors of *American Book Review* rated this line number one in their list of the best first lines in novels.) For some reason I then imagined a voice saying the opposite, "Don't call me Ishmael". It was the voice of a boy complaining about his name – and that's where the story started.

Most stories seem to start this way, with tiny things – a picture, a line from a poem, a piece of overheard conversation, a childhood memory, someone you see briefly on the bus – but then they grow into something much larger. These little things grow because they spark your curiosity and make you ask questions about them.

My questions were: Who is this boy called Ishmael? Why doesn't he like his name? I do. How did he come to be called Ishmael? What type of boy is he? The answers that you find when you ask these kinds of questions become part of the story, and usually they throw up even more questions of their own. Before I knew it, those first four words had started to turn into a novel!

That's why I often say if it wasn't for Gregory Peck there wouldn't have been any Ishmael Leseur. Writing is a strange thing.'

COVER

The author's son, Joseph Bauer, designed and created the original book cover – including the Ringo peg and the Ishmael cartoon – when he was in Year Twelve. You can see his initials (JTB) on the desk above Ringo's head. Joseph has also created the original cover for the sequel, *Ishmael and the Return of the Dugongs*, which follows Ishmael's adventures through Year Ten.

STYLE AND STRUCTURE

Don't Call Me Ishmael! is a first-person narrative that takes the form of a journal written by a fourteen-year-old boy about his ninth year of school. The stated purpose of the journal is to explain the nature and symptoms of Ishmael Leseur's Syndrome, and it is described by the narrator as a 'serious document' that will take a 'scientific' approach to the issue.

The novel is divided into five parts, with each part introduced by a quotation from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. Each quotation relates in some way to the themes/action of the following section.

The titles of the individual chapters are taken from words or phrases that appear somewhere in that particular chapter.

BEFORE READING THE TEXT

- Introduce students to the story of *Moby Dick*. Perhaps view one of the three film versions (1956, 1998 and an animated one from 2000) or have them read the story in an abridged, graphic novel or picture book form.
- Have students examine the elements that make up the original book cover. What conclusions could be drawn from these about the possible setting, characters or storyline of the novel? Compare this to the new cover (2008)
- Introduce the topic of debating. Examine the format and structure of a formal debate. Discuss the role of individual speakers. Organise a class debate around the topic 'That Books are better than Computers'.
- Have students read the contents page with the list of chapter titles. What impression do the headings give them about the story? Which ones do they find the most appealing? Have them explain why. What do they predict particular

chapters will be about? Have them choose one of the headings and use it for the title of a short story or poem.

PART 1

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 1: In your own words explain the symptoms of Ishmael Leseur's Syndrome and its causes. What do we learn about Ishmael's sister Prue in this chapter? Who does Ishmael blame for his syndrome?

Chapter 2: What does Ishmael feel about the story of how he got his name? What image does Ishmael use to describe his father and his keenness to tell the story of Ishmael's naming to unsuspecting 'victims'? Why do you think he uses this comparison? Do you think it is effective? Why/why not?

Chapter 3: Who or what does Ishmael's father dress up as in the hospital the day Ishmael is born? Why does he do this?

Chapter 4: Who is Herman Melville and why does Ishmael describe him as the 'real culprit' in the curse of Ishmael Leseur?

Chapter 5: What does Barry Bagsley do that makes Ishmael describe him as a 'mad dog mauling a shoe'?

Chapter 6: What method does Ishmael use to survive going to the same school as Barry Bagsley? How does Ishmael sum up Year Nine at St Daniel's Boys College?

Chapter 7: Write down a list of words Ishmael uses to describe his new teacher Miss Tarango. Why do you think he says she won't survive the term? Do you think he will be right or wrong? Explain your response.

Chapter 8: What conclusions do you think Miss Tarango might draw about Ishmael from his 'Five Amazing Things about Me' list?

Chapter 9: What challenge does Miss Tarango put to the class? Why should Barry Bagsley have 'listened carefully'? What did Ishmael know about Miss Tarango after just one day?

Chapter 10: What effect does his encounter with Miss Tarango have on Barry Bagsley and his treatment of Ishmael?

Chapter 11: Why does Ishmael decide not to turn around and go home another way when he sees Barry and the others bullying the primary school boy? What happens?

FOR DISCUSSION

- Ishmael says his journal is a 'serious document' and that he is going to approach the task of recording his findings about Ishmael Leseur's Syndrome 'scientifically'. In what ways is the style of Ishmael's journal similar to a formal report and how does it differ?
- Ishmael says, 'You probably think I just invented it (Ishmael Leseur's Syndrome) so I can use it as an excuse whenever I make a complete fool of myself.' Do you think this is the case?
- Mr Leseur loves to tell the story of how Ishmael got his name. Is there a story behind your name or that of someone in your family? Does anyone in your family have a favourite story he or she loves to share?
- Why do you think Barry Bagsley makes fun of Ishmael's name? Look at Ishmael's suggestions for what he should do about Barry's bullying (p.43/4). Do you think any of these would work? What would you suggest he do?
- Ishmael is worried that people might elect him the 'Mayor of Loserville'. What do you think of Ishmael so far? What strengths and weaknesses has he shown?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Write your own list of Five Amazing Things About Me. Try to write a list about someone else you know as Ishmael does for Miss Tarango – make sure the list is positive.
- When Ishmael tries to stop Barry and his friends from bullying the primary school boy, he wishes that he has super powers. Rewrite this scene with Ishmael as a secret superhero who uses his unique super powers to deal with the situation.

PART 2

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 12: Describe James Scobie. Why does Ishmael think he would be a 'dangerous person to be around'?

Chapter 13: What two things does Ishmael say that strike you about Bill Kingsley?

Chapter 14: Why does Ishmael describe the Deputy Principal, Mr Barker, as the school's 'go to' guy? How is the way Scobie responds to Barry different from Ishmael's? What reason does Scobie give for not being afraid of Barry?

Chapter 15: What is a phobia? Which phobia does Scobie claim to have had? What does Scobie say caused his lack of fear?

Chapter 16: What do Barry, Danny and Doug do to test Scobie's claim that he has no fear? What happens?

Chapter 17: Why doesn't Scobie accuse Barry of putting the insects and bugs in his desk?

Chapter 18: How are things different for both Barry Bagsley and Scobie after the incident with the insects? What does Scobie speak to the assembly about? How does he win over the audience?

Chapter 19: How does Peter Chung compare to Frankie Crow? How does Scobie help St Daniel's to defeat Churchill in the big Rugby match? What is written on each side of the sign Scobie holds up after the match?

Chapter 20: How does Ishmael feel about Scobie putting his name down for the Year Nine debating team? Why? What role does Scobie suggest for him in the team?

FOR DISCUSSION

- Why do you think Ishmael finally decides to sit next to James Scobie in the first lesson? What do you think he meant when he said, 'Oh well ... if you're stuck on the *Titanic*, you might as well have the seat with the best view of the iceberg.'
- Scobie says his phobia was bugs. Do you think phobias can be overcome? Arachnophobia is the fear of spiders. What are the names of some other phobias?

- Scobie says that more people are afraid of speaking in public than they are of dying. How do you feel when you have to speak in front of people? Can you recall a time when you were very nervous about doing something before an audience? What can you do to help calm your nerves in those situations?
- In the insect episode Ishmael says that Mr Barker 'had a black belt in sarcasm'. How would you define sarcasm? What are some examples of sarcasm used by Mr Barker? Do any of the other characters use sarcasm? There is a saying that 'Sarcasm is the lowest form of wit.' Do you agree?
- Ishmael has a bad feeling about joining the debating team, even as a researcher. What do you predict will happen next?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Use the descriptions given and your imagination to draw a picture of James Scobie or Frankie Crow. Include some lines from the text to support your illustration.
- Write a description of an exciting moment from a sporting event or a character sketch of a particular athlete like a weightlifter or a basketball player.
- Create some additional verses for Scobie's poem or write a poem or a war-cry of your own that might be used to inspire teams from your school.
- Research some famous speeches from history, such as Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech, to show the power of language to move and inspire.
- As James Scobie, write a diary entry describing his first day at St Daniel's and the people he meets.

PART 3

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 21: Ignatius Prindabel, Orazio Zorzotto and Bill Kingsley each have a different reason for joining the debating team. What are they?

Chapter 22: What does Razz accuse Ishmael of at the debating seminar? List the four steps of effective rebuttal.

Chapter 23: What was the first thing that Ishmael noticed about Kelly Faulkner? Ishmael says he is not in love with Kelly, so how does he try to explain why he couldn't stop looking at her?

Chapter 24: How would you describe the boys' first debating meeting?

Chapter 25: What was the main reason for the boys winning their debates? What was Bill Kingsley's main weakness as a debater?

Chapter 26: What peg-person does Ishmael make in Year One? What happens when his teacher shows it to the class? How does Ishmael's experience compare to his sister Prue's?

Chapter 27: Why does Scobie ask Ishmael to debate? What do we learn about Scobie in this chapter? How does Scobie explain his lack of fear for bugs and spiders? What question did Ishmael want to ask Scobie?

Chapter 28: How would you describe Ishmael's state of mind as he gets ready for his first attempt at debating? What discovery does Ishmael make when he sees the opposition team?

Chapter 29: Why does Ishmael miss most of the opposition's arguments? Why aren't Scobie or Razz any help to him?

Chapter 30: What reason does Ishmael give when he rebuts the view that privacy is a basic human right? Do you agree with this sentiment?

Chapter 31: What brings an end to Ishmael's first debate? What does Ishmael compare himself to at the end of the chapter to explain how he feels?

Chapter 32: What is Ishmael told at the debriefing meeting the next day? What does Razz do?

Chapter 33: What does Scobie mean when he says that Ishmael showed the 'true St Daniel's spirit' in the debate?

Chapter 34: What news do the boys hear about Scobie after the holidays? What other news does Ishmael have about their next debate?

Chapter 35: Why does Ishmael think that Bill Kingsley should be third speaker in the Secret Topic Debate? Why is Razz not so sure?

Chapter 36: After a comment from Razz, Ishmael describes the Preston girl as looking 'mortified'. What does this word mean? How does Razz stop Bill from speaking? How does Ishmael feel about his performance on the night and the result of the debate? According to Ishmael, what was the only thing that could have made the night better?

Chapter 37: What does Ishmael find out from Scobie's letter?

FOR DISCUSSION

- A writer can reveal aspects of character both by 'telling' the readers what the character is like and by 'showing' the readers. A writer might 'show' readers what particular characters are like in many different ways – by how they move, by their mannerisms, by what they do, by their interests and attitudes, by how they speak, by their appearance and by their name. Discuss ways in which the characters of Prindabel, Bill and Razza are 'shown' in Chapter 21?
- What do you think of Prue's top ten 'most influential people of the century'? What changes might you make to the list?
- Razza often makes fun of Ishmael and the other characters. Doesn't this make him the same as Barry Bagsley?
- At the end of this section Scobie is undergoing tests. What are your predictions for the future?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Ignatius Prindabel, Orazio Zorzotto and Bill Kingsley are very different characters. For each one, make a list of words and phrases that could be used to describe his appearance, personality and attitudes. Try drawing a portrait of each boy.
- Choose one of Prue's peg-people with whom you are not familiar. Research the person and present a talk to the class to explain how she or he has been 'influential'.
- Create your own peg-person of someone who you feel has contributed in a significant way to Australian society. In a prepared talk explain and justify your choice.

- Write about a time when you were nervous and afraid, like Ishmael is when he is waiting to speak, or a time when something very embarrassing happened to you. Try to describe it so the reader can imagine what it felt like to be you at that time.
- Present a group performance of the first debating meeting using the script provided by Ishmael.
- At the debriefing meeting Razza makes a series of funny puns such as 'keeping abreast of the situation'. A pun is a play on words often where the word used has different meanings that can be applied. Such as *The cross-eyed teacher had trouble controlling his pupils*. Do you know any puns, or can you make up some of your own? Try the internet for websites specialising in puns. Write down your favourites and share them with the class.

PART 4

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 38: What does Miss Tarango announce at homeroom, and what effect does it have on Barry Bagsley? After Barry and the others wreck Bill's certificate, what does Ishmael vow that he's going to do?

Chapter 39: What does Ishmael say it feels like when Barry Bagsley taunts him about bullying Bill and he does nothing? Why isn't Razza bothered by what Barry says about him? Why do you think Ishmael decides to go to the debating final with Razz?

Chapter 40: Why does Kelly want to thank Ishmael? What does Ishmael tell Kelly he will do the next time someone says the line 'Call me Ishmael' to him? What does Ishmael say that he knew when he heard Kelly Faulkner laugh?

Chapter 41: What are the two things Ishmael makes up his mind to do in this chapter?

Chapter 42: Why didn't Ishmael think he was anything like his namesake in *Moby Dick*? Who does Ishmael relate to in the book and why? Why doesn't Bill want Ishmael to tell Mr Barker about Barry's bullying?

Chapter 43: What happens to Bill that fills Ishmael's mind with thoughts of revenge? What does Barry tell Ishmael that he doesn't have?

Chapter 44: At the end of this chapter what does Ishmael say he has finally worked out?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When Barry wrecks Bill's certificate Ishmael wants to tell Mr Barker, but Bill persuades him not to. What would you have done in these circumstances?
- Razza describes Ishmael as 'the boy who takes everything too seriously'. Is this true?
- Is Ishmael right to want to seek revenge against Barry Bagsley for everything he has done?
- How would you interpret the dream Ishmael has involving Bill Kingsley and Barry Bagsley? Do you believe our dreams have hidden meanings?
- Ishmael says at the end of this section that he knows how he is going to make Barry pay for everything he has done. What do you predict he will do?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- Imagine that after Kelly Faulkner's encounter with Ishmael and Razz at the debating final she writes about it in her diary. What will she say?
- In Study of Society the boys have to 'examine the liveability' of their suburb. What aspects could be considered? How liveable would you rate your suburb? Draw up a table listing on one side features that you feel increase liveability and on the other side list the features that decrease liveability.
- Ishmael says that if you want to know anything about whaling you should read *Moby Dick*. Use other sources to research some aspect of whaling, either past or present, and present a three-minute talk to the class.

PART 5

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Chapter 45: What does Ishmael plan to do at the end-of-year assembly to get his revenge? What surprises Ishmael about Mr and Mrs Bagsley? What is familiar about the look Ishmael sees on Barry's face?

Chapter 46: What reasons does Ishmael give for not going through with his threat to expose Barry Bagsley as a bully? What does Razz do to bring the smile back to Bill's face?

Chapter 47: According to Ishmael, how will next year be different?

Chapter 48: What news does Mr Barker give Ishmael about Scobie?

Chapter 49: What is in the letter that Ignatius hands to Ishmael? How does Kelly end the letter and why does she end it this way?

Chapter 50: In what way does Ishmael say he feels different after he reads Kelly's letter? When Ishmael asks, 'Remind you of anyone?' who is he referring to and how is he similar to that person?

FOR DISCUSSION

- When Ishmael decides not to go through with his plan to expose Barry Bagsley as a bully at the big assembly, he says that he knew he had made the right decision. Do you agree with him? Explain your view.
- Ishmael faced and overcame many challenges throughout the year. Looking back, what do you think would be three things that Ishmael might say that he has learnt along the way?

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- As Ishmael, write a letter back to Kelly Faulkner responding to her invitation to Sally Nofke's party.
- What is your overall opinion of the novel? Write a formal review suitable for inclusion in a newspaper, or a write a letter or an email to a friend giving them your views.

AFTER READING

- Design a new cover for the novel that you think would be relevant to the story and attractive to potential readers. Either in a talk or written response, explain and justify the features of your design to the publishers.
- Explain how each of the quotations from *Moby Dick* is relevant to what happens in the sections they introduce.
- The novel begins with Ishmael saying, 'Don't call me Ishmael' and ends with him saying, 'Go on – call me Ishmael if you like. I'm da man!' Create a mind map, flow chart or a storyboard that highlights the important steps and stages that Ishmael goes through in his journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance.
- Ishmael said at the start that Year Nine was 'the toughest, the weirdest, the most embarrassingly awful and the best year of (his) life.' Find incidents in the story that would fit under and illustrate each of these descriptions.
- Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick* plays a big part in this novel. This is called an intertextual link – a connection or a reference to another text such as books, movies, poems, comics and television shows. *Don't Call Me Ishmael!* contains many such intertextual links. For example, Scobie quotes from *Hamlet* and Ishmael refers to *X-men*. See how many of these intertextual links you can find. Why do you think the author has used so many?
- The author often uses exaggerated comparisons in the form of metaphors and similes to make the description more vivid and to add humour. For example, when Ishmael is embarrassed and nervous during the debate he says that his stomach started 'slurping and churning like a dying washing machine' and that he felt 'like someone had shoved (his) head in an oven and turned the dial to roast'. Make a list of 10 of your favourite metaphors or similes and explain why you think they are effective. Try creating some of your own to describe someone who is nervous, afraid or angry etc.
- After Miss Tarango wins her bet with Barry Bagsley she says, 'You see how powerful language can be, boys?'. Find examples throughout the book of the empowering effect of language and how that power can be used in both a positive and negative way. Does language help empower Ishmael to defeat Barry Bagsley in the end?
- Re-read the last two paragraphs of Chapter 28, *Dead Man Walking*. The author has used 'foreshadowing' (hinting at what might happen next) to build suspense and entice the reader to read on. Look at the endings of the other chapters. Can

you find examples of foreshadowing and other techniques used by the author to build interest and suspense into the storyline?

- Use or adapt the following topics for either a formal debate, class discussion, argumentative essay or a piece of personal reflective writing.
 - The pen is mightier than the sword.
 - Revenge is sweet.
 - Winning isn't everything – but losing is nothing.
 - Whaling should be banned forever.
 - All schools should be co-ed.
 - Bullies should be helped, not punished.

- Choose a scene from the novel and write a script to act out as a group or in pairs. The scene might be presented as a live performance in class or as a film.

- Prepare a monologue as one of the characters from the novel. Try to reveal your chosen character's personality and thoughts and feelings about particular events and people in the story.

- Select a scene or section from the novel and present it as a storyboard or as a graphic novel with words and pictures.

- Find pictures from magazines and newspapers to represent the various characters and incidents in the novel. Use them to create a poster. Be prepared to explain and justify your choices.

- Chose an incident or a chapter and rewrite it from the point of view of one of the other characters involved.

- Write an essay on the nature, causes and treatment of brain tumours.

- Research the topic of bullying and the methods used to prevent and deal with it. Prepare a scene to act out which illustrates one or more of these methods.

- In the story we don't know much about what Barry Bagsley is like away from school or what motivates him to behave as he does. Try to fill in this gap by writing a scene set in Barry's home.

- When Ishmael tries to help save the primary school boy from the clutches of Barry and his mates, he wishes he has super powers to help him. Later on Ishmael tells

Kelly that the Razzman is actually a superhero. What characteristics do all superheroes tend to have in common? Design your own superhero. How did he or she come to be 'super'? What are his or her special abilities? Who is his or her arch enemy?

- Design and create an anti-bullying or anti-whaling poster.
- If the novel were made into a movie, what songs would you include on the soundtrack? Explain your choices and what sections of the story they could accompany.
- What do you predict will happen next year with the debating team; with Ishmael and Kelly; and with Ishmael and Barry?
- Try to imagine the boys in the debating team in ten years' time. Write a brief profile on each of them. What did they do after school? What kind of job do they have? Have they married? Are they happy? Do they keep in contact?

THEMES

The Power of Language

- Demonstrated in Miss Tarango's chair challenge.
- Scobie uses language to counteract Barry Bagsley, to inspire the football team and in the debates.
- Barry uses language to humiliate and exert his control.
- Razza uses humour to deal with situations, relieve tension and put things in perspective.
- Consider Ishmael's struggle to express himself in public and his decision not to use words to get revenge against Barry.

Bullying

- Barry's treatment of others, especially of Ishmael and Bill Kingsley.
- The characters' reactions to bullying and the methods they use to deal with it.

Self-esteem and Self-image

- Ishmael and his lack of confidence with public speaking.
- Ishmael and his interactions with Kelly and Barry.
- Ishmael's attitude to his name.
- The effects of bullying on both Ishmael and Bill Kingsley.
- Scobie's and Razza's confidence as compared to Ishmael's.

Acceptance of Individuality

- The unique personalities of the debating team and how they form a friendship and learn to use their individual talents by working together as a team.
- Miss Tarango's interaction with the boys in class.
- Barry's problem with anyone who is different.
- *Moby Dick* quote from Part 5 refers to standing forth your 'own inexorable self.'

The Importance of Friends and Family

- The support Ishmael gets from his family after the debating fiasco.
- The importance of Razza and Scobie in boosting Ishmael's confidence and spirit and helping him deal with the challenges he faces.
- How Ishmael and Razza's friendship counteracts the effects of Barry's bullying on Bill Kingsley.

The Importance of Humour

- Ishmael's self-deprecating humour helps him to put his trials and tribulations into perspective.
- Razza uses humour to deal with Barry, to build Ishmael's confidence and to help him cope with his problems.