

Study Guide for 9th grade Summer Reading:

***Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher**

Chapter 1 pp. 1-18

1. Explain why T.J. Jones had to be adopted?
2. What is T.J. Jones racial background?
3. Why doesn't T.J. want to play on the high school football or basketball teams?
4. Who is Chris Coughlin and what caused his brain damage? Why does Mike Barber say that Chris can't wear the school jacket?

Chapter 2 pp. 19-32

1. Give three facts about Dan Hole.
2. Give three facts about Taiyo-Ray Quibble.
3. Give three facts about coach Benson.

Chapter 3. pp. 33-45

1. To what does "Wolverines Too" refer ?
2. Who is Rich Marshall? Why is he still in school?
3. Explain the incident that made T.J. dislike Rich Marshall so much?
4. Give three facts about Oliver Van Zandt.

Chapter 4 pp. 46-56

1. In chapter 4, three more students join the swim team: Simon De Long, Jackie Craig and Andy Mott. Find one or two details that make them appear to be misfits.
2. When T.J. was two years old, his parents sent him to see Georgia Brown. Who is she? Why was T.J. sent to her?
3. What kind of relationship do Georgia and T.J. have now?
4. Carly Hudson's father physically abuses her. What happens in this chapter that shows this to be true?

Chapter 5 pp. 57-74

1. When T.J.'s father was in his early twenties, he was unknowingly involved in a very tragic incident that has troubled him ever since. What was the incident? How has T.J.'s father managed to cope with his pain?
2. What plan does T.J. come up with that allows all guys on the swim team to practice even though the pool is too small for all of them?
3. Which member of the swim team has not shown up for practice yet?
4. In chapter 5, the reader learns first hand the scars that racism can create. Who is Alicia Marshall? What has happened in her life that has caused this emotional scarring?
5. What is a "Guardian ad Litem"?

Chapter 6 pp. 75- 83

1. Explain the origin of Icko? What did I.C.O. originally represent?
2. What does Icko do when he catches Mike Barbour bullying Chris Coughlin?

Chapter 7 pp. 84-95

1. How does Andy Mott shock the swim team?
2. What is a prosthesis?
3. How does Mr. Simet react to Icko? What offer does he make to Icko?
4. Explain the circumstances behind Andy Mott getting "a couple of days of I.S.S." at the sport assembly.
5. T.J. realizes a car is following him as he drives home. Who does it turn out to be? What is so important that this person has to follow T.J. to his house?

Chapter 8 pp. 96-109

1. What plan do T.J. and Mr. Simet agree on for letter requirements? Why is this plan clever?
2. What suggestion does Andy Mott make on the way to the swim meet that makes T.J. realize "he's got some class"?

3. What happens on the return trip? What causes it? What happens during? How does it end?
4. Explain Andy Mott's personality disorder. What does he suggest caused it?

Chapter 9 pp. 110-127

1. How do Rich Marshall and Mike Barbour react to the article about the swim team in the paper?
2. Why is T.J.'s dad crying?
3. Explain what Coach Simet does to keep all of his swimmers academically eligible? Why is this a good thing?
4. Who is T.J.'s houseguest? Why and how does this complicate T.J.'s life?
5. How does T.J.'s father react when Heide spills the french fries?
6. Who does T.J.'s father threaten with a baseball bat? Why does he do this?

Chapter 10 pp. 128-137

1. T.J. and his dad are talking about what happened to his father when he realized he had accidentally killed a child. Because of that death, he is now very protective of his children. Eventually, the two discuss whales which leads to the title of this book. As best you can, explain how whale talk relates to this book.
2. How did Andy Mott lose his leg? Why does he want to buy a photo of Tay-Roy?

Chapter 11 pp. 138-150

1. What is Coach Benson's reaction to all the swimmers making their best times?
2. Explain what happens between Kristen Sweetwater and Mike Barbour.
3. What advice does T.J. give him about Mike and Kristen?
4. What advice does his father give him about the same issue?

Chapter 12 pp. 151-167

1. What do Mr. Morgan and Coach Benson talk to T.J. about? Why?
2. What similarities can you see between Kristen Sweetwater and Alicia Marshall?

3. Explain the connection between the All-Sport Championship and the swim team. In other words, why is the swim team's win important to the whole school?
4. What happened to Andy Mott that caused gangrene in his leg?

Chapter 13 pp. 168-185

1. What decision does the Athletic Council make about the letter criteria? Why?
2. How does T.J.'s mother solve the problem of the telephone hang-ups? Where are most of the calls coming from?
3. How does T.J.'s dad trap the caller? Who was it?
4. How many events does T.J. have to win for Cutter to get an All Sport title?
5. What deal does T.J. attempt to make with Coach Benson?

Chapter 14 pp. 186-197

1. Why did T.J. throw the 200 meter free-style?
2. What bet does T.J. make with Mike Barbour? Why?
3. Explain how T.J.'s Dad is planning to trap Rich Marshall using his video camera, cell phone, and computer?
4. How does this chapter end?

Chapter 15 pp. 198-213

1. What is the outcome of the race between Mike Barbour and Chris Coughlin?
2. Who is the only swimmer who won't qualify for a letter jacket? How does he feel about this? Why?
3. Who wins the Hoopfest for the Mermen?
4. Who does Rich Marshall attempt to shoot with the deer rifle? Is he successful?
5. Who are Tyler and Stacey Couples?
6. What does T.J. promise his father?
7. How does this chapter end?

Whale Talk: pp. 214 - 220

1. Who is Kyle Couples? What is the significance of this meeting?
2. Where is Richard Marshall?