Novel Study:

*Touching Spirit Bear*

by Ben Mikaelson

Student Workbook
GETTING FAMILIAR WITH THE NOVEL

Directions: Prepare to start reading *Touching Spirit Bear* by answering the following questions and making some predictions about what the book will be about.

1. Who is the author?

   __________________________________________________________

2. Based on the title, what do you think the book might be about?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. Looking at the cover, what do you think the book might be about?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. Read the description of the story on the back of the book. Do you think you will like this book? Why or why not?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

5. The following words are all connected to what is going to happen in the novel:
   bully  abused child  Spirit Bear
   justice  totem pole  forgiveness

   Based on these words, what can you predict about what might happen in the story?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
THE SETTING

Setting: The time and place where the story is taking place.

In the novel, *Touching Spirit Bear*, the main character, Cole Matthews is sent to live on a remote island off the coast of Ketchikan, which is a small town near the southern border of Alaska. Ketchikan is well-known for its salmon and was originally a fishing village. It is built along a steep hillside and has a population of 14,500 people. In some places, the town is built right over the water on pilings.

It has a coastal climate, which means winters are warmer, summers are cooler and precipitation is heavier than places further inland. That being said, it is still Alaska, so things are pretty cold year round. Summer temperatures range from 10 °C to 16 °C and winter temperatures range from -1 °C to 4 °C. Ketchikan receives 411 cm of precipitation each year, including 81 cm of snowfall. In comparison, Vancouver’s annual temperatures range from 1 °C to 23 °C and we get a total of 112 cm of precipitation per year, which mainly falls as rain.

Ketchikan is a popular place for tourists who enjoy the outdoors. From May to September, many tourists will arrive in Ketchikan on cruise ships. Sport fishing is a popular pastime. Tourists also enjoy the Native art, particularly the many totem poles on display throughout the village. But the main attraction is the beautiful scenery and wildlife, especially its many bald eagles.

Now that you have learned a little more about the setting discuss these questions:
1. What type of challenges do you think Cole will face on the island given the climate around Ketchikan?
2. Why do you think Cole would be sent to a place with such a harsh environment?
PRE-READING VOCABULARY FOR
CHAPTERS 1-6

Directions: Use the context clues in the following sentences to determine the meaning of the underlined words.

The probation officer was concerned that Billy would steal a skiff from the harbour.

1. probation officer
   a) person monitoring convicted criminals who are out of custody
   b) security guard
   c) undercover police officer

2. skiff
   a) a lamp
   b) a flat-bottomed boat
   c) a small car

The terrorists’ detainees were cowering in the corner of a locked room, afraid of being tortured.

3. detainees
   a) accomplices
   b) guests
   c) prisoners

4. cowering
   a) crouching from something frightening
   b) humming
   c) following along

The prosecutor for the court case believed that there should be immediate sentencing for the crime.

5. prosecutor
   a) the representative of the government who pursues formal charges against the accused
   b) the lawyer who defends an accused criminal in court
   c) the judge who presides over a trial

6. sentencing
   a) a hearing to determine if an individual is innocent or guilty
   b) a hearing to determine the consequences for a crime
   c) a hearing to determine if an individual should be released from prison
The tight handcuffs *chaffed* against the wrists of the criminal when he was brought into court to *plead* to the charges against him.

7. chaffed
   a) to cut
   b) to tickle
   c) to rub and irritate

8. plead
   a) to deny any wrongdoing
   b) to claim guilt or innocence in court
   c) to hire a lawyer

The **juvenile delinquent** had trouble breathing in the **stifling** heat of his prison cell.

9. juvenile delinquent
   a) a young person in trouble with the law
   b) a young person who is frequently late
   c) a young person who is short for his/her age

10. stifling
    a) smoky
    b) suffocating
    c) dry

Time was so tired he was not *conscious* of the **deadfall** as he walked through the forest.

11. conscious
    a) careful of
    b) having an interest in
    c) aware of

12. deadfall
    a) cool weather
    b) tangled, fallen trees and branches
    c) pine-scented air

The **billowy** clouds of smoke from the campfire *shrouded* the view of the mountains.

13. billowy
    a) rolling waves or a surging mass
    b) light-coloured or clear
    c) slow

14. shrouded
    a) brightly lit
    b) revealed
    c) concealed

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1 In Canada, the term “juvenile delinquent” is not used in the legal system. Instead, we use the term “youth offender.”
The over-confident teen stood unflinching when the charges against him were read during his arraignment hearing.

15. unflinching
   a) confused and afraid
   b) smiling
   c) steady and unafraid

16. arraignment hearing²
   a) final stage of a trial where a punishment is issued
   b) first stage of a trial where the accused makes a plea
   c) hearing where the Crown (government) decides if they will charge a person with a crime

Because it was a sunny afternoon, the lawyer moseyed to the courthouse to bring the depositions from his client.

17. moseyed
   a) moving in a slow and leisurely way
   b) moving in a hurried way
   c) moving in an excited and happy way

18. depositions³
   a) testimony taken down in writing
   b) handcuffs
   c) DNA samples

Concerned about his friends’ fleeting loyalties, the gang member brandished his gun in front of them to gain their respect.

19. fleeting
   a) firm or secure
   b) drifting or fading away
   c) quick-running

20. brandished
   a) waved around or showed something in an intimidating manner
   b) polished
   c) hid away

² The Canadian legal system uses the term “first appearance” rather than “arraignment hearing”.
³ In Canada, we use the term “affidavit” instead of “deposition.”
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
Chapters 1-2

Chapter 1
1. Where is Cole being sent, and why is he being sent there?
2. How does Cole feel about banishment as a punishment?
4. Garvey, the youth probation officer, says, “Something terrible has happened to you to make you want to kill a poor small animal.” Why do you think he says this? Do you agree or disagree with him? Why or why not?

Chapter 2
1. Garvey tells Cole that “You figure if I’m scared of you, you can trust me.” What does he mean by this? Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
2. List some of the advice and warnings that Edwin gives to Cole about living on the island.
3. Is there any significance in the fact that the Spirit Bear is a pure white black bear?
4. What does Cole say he would do to the Spirit Bear? What does Edwin tell him?
5. What does Garvey leave with Cole? What must he do with it?
6. Do you think Garvey agreed to be Cole’s sponsor for the Circle because he genuinely believed Cole had changed? Why or why not?
7. What does Cole do to his shelter at the end of the chapter? Why do you think he did this?
FACING OUR FEARS

1. In Chapter 1, when Cole was on his journey to the island, he stated, “Everyone in the world is afraid of something.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

2. Cole is the sort of person who acts like he isn’t afraid of anything, but what do you think Cole is really afraid of?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

3. List 5 things you are afraid of:

1. __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________

3. __________________________________________

4. __________________________________________

5. __________________________________________

4. What do you think the most common fear in the class would be? Why?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

5. Compare your answers with your classmates. Was your prediction correct? If not, what was the most commonly shared fear?

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Chapters 3-6

Chapter 3
1. How does Garvey convince Cole to eat the groceries?
2. Think back to Chapter 1 when Garvey said, “Something terrible has happened to you to make you want to kill a poor, small animal.” Then consider Garvey’s lesson for Cole with the ingredients and the cake. Then look at the list of “ingredients” in Cole’s life on p. 31. How do these connect? What lesson is Garvey trying to teach Cole?
3. Describe Cole’s plan to escape the island. Do you think he will be successful?
4. Who is allowed to be at Cole’s Circle?
5. Why is it important for Peter to forgive Cole? Do you think it will be easy for Peter to forgive him? Could you forgive Cole if you were Peter?

Chapter 4
1. Why is it significant that Cole gives Peter a threatening look at the beginning of the Circle?
2. According to the Keeper, what is the point of the Circle, and why does regular justice often fail?
3. Do you think that everybody who is present at the Circle has a sincere reason for being there? Do you think there are people who don’t want to be there?

Chapter 5
1. For the first time, Cole admits that he made a mistake. What was the mistake?
2. Describe Cole’s first encounter with the Spirit Bear. Why do you think this is a significant moment?
3. Review the four comments made about Cole at the Circle on page 46. Which comments do you agree with? Which ones do you disagree with? Justify your answer.
Chapter 6
1. What does Cole accuse his father of in the Circle? How does his father respond?
2. Why do you think Cole’s mother refused to confirm Cole’s story in front of the Circle?
3. When the Keeper asks Peter what needs to be done to make things better, he responds by saying, “I think someone should smash Cole’s head against a sidewalk so he knows how it feels.” Do you think Cole already knows how this might feel? Why or why not?
4. When leaving the Circle, in reference to his father, Cole asks Garvey, “Did you hear him lie tonight?” Garvey responds, “He wasn’t the only one.” To whom do you think Garvey is referring?
5. Cole reformulates his plans for leaving the island. How will he try to make his next escape?
6. Garvey discusses some of the reasons that isolation works to help heal a criminal. What are these reasons?
7. Outline what will happen to Cole after the banishment is over.
PRE-READING VOCABULARY FOR CHAPTERS 7-13

Directions: Use the context clues each sentence in the left-hand column to help you match it to the proper definition in the right-hand column.

1. ____ The gluttonous kitten ate all the food in its bowl.
2. ____ Tyler’s binder was in such a haphazard state, his Teacher demanded he reorganize it.
3. ____ As the steam-powered locomotive pulled away, chuffs of smoke came from the engine.
4. ____ After seeing what he thought was a ghost, James went into a state of delirium.
5. ____ After the fire, the charred remains of the house were all that remained.
6. ____ Torrents of lava came from the volcano when it erupted.
7. ____ The sand on the bottom of the aquarium roiled when the fish dove into it.
8. ____ The butterfly was flitting around the picnic table because of the gusting wind.
9. ____ Absolutely exhausted after the ball game, Joey stumbled home in a stuporous daze.
10. ____ While at home sick with the flu, a bitter bile taste came into Veronica’s mouth.
11. ____ Rivulets ran down the window during the rainstorm.
12. ____ We were going hunting, and ducks were our quarry.

a. puffing
b. stirred up or disturbed
c. burned or scorched
d. small streams
e. excessive greed
f. body fluid that helps absorb fats
g. seemingly without any order
h. dulled sensibility
i. rushing flow of liquid
j. moving quickly and unevenly
k. an animal taken in hunting
l. very confused thinking
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
Chapter 7

Chapter 7
1. As chapter seven begins, Cole finds himself needing to “clear the anger and pressure from his mind.” Does this bode well for Cole’s healing process? Why or why not?
2. What weapon does Cole create? How does he plan to use it?
3. Cole plans to escape the island, but still attempts to kill the Spirit Bear. What does this say about Cole and his respect for life?
4. As Cole inches towards the Spirit Bear, he stops, looks around, and becomes aware that nobody is watching, and he could easily back away. What compels him to keep approaching the Spirit Bear?
5. Describe the Spirit Bear and its characteristics.
6. What do you think will happen when Cole gets close enough to kill the Spirit Bear?
SPIRIT BEAR FACTS

- The Kermode, or Spirit Bear, is a black bear that has white fur due to a rare genetic trait. The bear is not albino because it usually has brown eyes and a brown nose.
- The greatest concentration of Spirit Bears in the world is found on the Central and North Coast of British Columbia.
- In BC, the greatest number of Spirit Bears can be found on Princess Royal Island where as many as 1 in 10 black bears are born white.
- It is illegal to hunt the Spirit Bear in BC.
- Like other black bears, Spirit Bears weigh about 1 pound at birth and quickly grow to 150-300 pounds.
- They are omnivores that eat berries, nuts, fruit, roots, grasses and other plants, insects, deer and moose fawns, carrion and salmon.
- They usually live on their own, except females with offspring.
- Cubs are usually born in their mother’s winter den and will live with their mother until they are one-and-a-half.
- Like most bears, they can live without food for up to seven months during hibernation.
- Spirit Bears can live for more than 25 years in the wild.

SYMBOLISM

*symbol*: an object, action, word, etc. with a meaning that is deeper and more significant than just its surface-level meaning

The Spirit Bear that Cole encounters on the island appears again and again in the story, and Cole seems to have a powerful connection to it. That is an important clue telling us that the bear is a symbol in the novel.

- What do you think the Spirit Bear might symbolize?
- When Cole faced the Spirit Bear, it didn’t run away or attack him. Cole concluded that the bear must be scared. Do you think the bear was scared? Could there be another reason it stood still and faced Cole?
- Before attacking the bear, Cole felt it was challenging him with his stare. Do you think the bear meant any harm by looking at Cole? Why else might the bear have been watching Cole?
- Does this difference in Cole’s nature and the nature of the Spirit Bear help you to see what the bear may symbolize?
CONFRONTING “BEARS”

Directions: Read the following questions and thoughtfully respond to them all in at least 3-4 sentences.

Have you ever faced a “bear” (a circumstance or person far more powerful than yourself)? Describe the experience.

Have you ever chosen to fight instead of respecting a greater power? What happened?

What forces in life are more powerful than you are? What do you need to do to live with these forces in a way that doesn’t have negative consequences for you?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
Chapters 8-11

Chapter 8
1. As Cole lies bleeding, he thinks to himself, "What luck...to end up on an island with a stupid bear that didn't have brains enough to run away." Has Cole realized his responsibility for what has happened?
2. Cole states that he would rather be in a prison cell than on the island. What are his reasons?
3. What does Cole's crushing of the caterpillar indicate about his personality, even in his beaten state?
4. Look back to Peter’s comments at the Circle on page 50. What parallels are there between what Peter wanted for Cole and what has happened to him?
5. Do you feel bad about what has happened to Cole? Why or why not?

Chapter 9
1. Cole comments that "Nobody else cared about him, so why should he care about himself?" Is it true that nobody cares about him? Even if no one else cares, what should Cole care about himself?
2. What happens to the tree with the sparrow’s nest during the electrical storm?
3. Why do you think Cole calls out to see if the baby sparrows are okay?

Chapter 10
1. Cole notices that the baby sparrows tried to do something before their death. What was it? How does Cole relate this to his experience growing up?
2. Cole begins to think about the circle of life. What is this circle, according to Cole? How does he feel about his role in it?
3. Cole thinks, "The power to choose was the real power, not the fake power of making others afraid." Explain this statement.

Chapter 11
1. In this chapter, what are the things Cole does to survive?
2. The Spirit Bear appears near the end of the chapter. What do you think will happen to Cole?
TYPES OF CONFLICT

**Conflict:** In a story, it is the struggle between two people or two forces. Usually it is the main character who struggles with one or more of the four types of conflict: person vs. person, person vs. self, person vs. nature and/or person vs. society.

**Directions:** List four conflicts that Cole has experienced so far in the novel, coming up with an example for each type of conflict. Then explain how each conflict is resolved (if it has been resolved already).

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ANGER MANAGEMENT

Directions: Think of TWO situations in the story so far where Cole allowed his anger to control him. Identify what he did as a result of losing control of his anger and the consequences of that action.

Scenario 1:

1. How could you tell that Cole was angry? What was he thinking or saying? How did he act or feel?

2. Were the consequences of acting out of uncontrolled anger positive or negative for Cole?

3. What are some things that Cole could do to help him reduce his anger and gain control over it?

Scenario 2:
Revisit the two scenarios you identified and try to imagine how they might have been different if Cole had managed to control his anger.

Scenario 1:

Now use the paragraph outline below to help you reflect on a time when you were extremely angry.

When *(describe an event that made you angry)* ____________________________

________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________, I was so angry that I couldn’t think clearly. I let my anger control me. I knew I was extremely angry because *(describe how you felt, what you were thinking, etc.)* ____________________________

________________________________________________________________________. I made the choice to *(describe your actions)* ______

________________________________________________________________________.

The consequences of my choice were *(describe the outcome)* ____________________________

________________________________________________________________________.

Scenario 2:
Now pretend that you can go back in time and manage your anger in a positive way. The initial event and your initial feelings won’t change, but think of an anger reducer that you could have used to help you calm down and get control of your anger before acting. Write about how you would handle the same situation in a calmer way and how the outcome may have been different.

When______________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________,
I was so angry that I couldn’t think clearly. I was extremely angry because ________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________.
I did not want my anger to control me, so I tried to reduce my anger by (describe a method you could use to calm yourself down in a tense situation) ________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________.
Once I was calm enough to think clearly, I decided the best way to handle the situation was to ______________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________.
The result was ____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________.

- 

![Angry Bird and Cool Down Strategies](Image)
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
Chapters 12-13

Chapter 12
1. When the Spirit Bear comes back, why do you think Cole chooses not to spit on him, but to touch him?
2. How does Cole feel about death?
3. What was the buzzing sound that Cole heard?
4. Was it really seagulls grabbing at Cole and trying to lift him up?
5. What do Edwin and Garvey do with Cole?
6. When Cole says that he’s okay, what does he mean by this?

Chapter 13
1. When Rosey asks for a blanket, Garvey wants to hand him the at.oow. Why is it significant that Cole reaches out and grabs it?
2. Why is it significant that Cole whispers “My fault!” when Garvey apologizes for getting Cole into this situation?
3. Garvey tells Cole that he will still be facing jail time when he recovers. Considering what he went through, do you think this is fair?
4. Why does Cole throw out the hair he pulled from the Spirit Bear? Would you have done the same?
5. Edwin says that Cole will be okay if he ever finds a reason to live. Do you think Cole found his reason to live? Explain.
REFLECTION QUESTIONS:
Part 1

1. Do you think the bear attacked Cole or did Cole attack the bear?
2. Did Cole have a right to attack the bear? If the bear had hurt him first, would that have given him the right to hurt or kill the bear?
3. Why did Cole decide to attack the bear long before it ever hurt him or even threatened him? (Hint: What does the bear represent to Cole?)

A character foil is a character in a story whose qualities contrast those of another character (usually the main character). Comparing the two characters helps us to understand the main character better.

4. In what ways is the Spirit Bear a foil for Cole?
5. What do you think Cole hoped to gain by attacking the bear?

Re-read this passage from Chapter 10:
In death, there was no control, no anger, no one to blame, no choices, no nothing. To be alive was to have choice. The power to choose was real power, not the fake power of making others afraid. Cole knew he had used that fake power many times. All of his life he had squandered his choices, wallowing in revenge and self-pity, keeping himself down. Now, as he lay near death, those he had hated were safe and warm. Those he had blamed were still alive and well. He had hurt himself most. Life was empty and meaningless unless he found some meaning.

6. Where did Cole’s choices take him? What choices had he made?
7. Where did Cole’s choices place him in comparison to those he had tried to hurt with his choices?

REFLECTION PARAGRAPH (choose ONE topic)
1. Write about a time when your choices hurt you more than the people around you or the people you intended to hurt.
2. Write about what gives your life meaning.
3. Would you rather have the power to make choices or the power to make people afraid? Explain.
PRE-READING VOCABULARY FOR
CHAPTERS 14-24

Directions: Complete the sentences below using the best words from the given list. You may have to look up a few of the words in the dictionary if you don’t know their meanings. No word will be used more than once.

relinquish  composure  irked  conjuring
ingenuity  grimacing  gingerly  persistence
vaulted  reverently  writhed  redemption
chop  sullen  resignation  breaching

1. Afraid of causing even more pain, the doctor _______________ touched the sore arm on his patient.
2. Martin tried to regain his _______________ after bursting into tears at the news of his grandfather’s death.
3. Realizing that nothing could be done about the incoming storm, Shelly just shook her head with _______________.
4. The defeated army had no choice, but to _______________ the captured territory to its enemy.
5. The elder’s stories were _______________ up images in the minds of her audience.
6. Welina _______________ with disgust after finding a hair in her food.
7. Amin’s cat _______________ across the kitchen to try and eat the spilled tuna.
8. Hoping for _______________, Ryan asked Jen to forgive him for breaking her MP3 player.
9. The rain on the day of the picnic only added to Jocelyn’s _______________ mood.
10. The fish were _______________, likely in an attempt to catch the flies buzzing just above the water.
11. Paige was _______________ that her parents wouldn’t buy her a new laptop.
12. The young boy _______________ approached his grandfather in search of advice.
13. Because of Olivia’s _______________, the teacher caved and allowed her to re-do her project in the hopes of a better mark.
14. Betty was _______________ at the thought of having to clean the dirty toilet.
15. The boat bounced along over the heavy _______________.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
Chapters 14-17

Chapter 14
1. What happened to Cole’s father?
2. Cole’s mother appears to have a change of heart regarding her lifestyle and relationship with Cole. How has she changed? Why do you think she decided to make those changes?
3. Cole’s mother discusses how his father was beaten as a child, and she says this was a reason for him abusing Cole. How is this also a circle?
4. When Cole returns to the Circle, there are two people missing. Who are they? Why do you think they are not there?

Chapter 15
1. How is Peter recovering from the injuries caused by Cole?
2. How does Edwin demonstrate the change in Cole’s path in life?
3. What did Edwin’s friend Bernie see on an island near the one on which Cole had been placed? What does this prove?
4. Peter’s lawyer is very blunt and not kind to Cole. Why do you think the lawyer acts in this manner?
5. The Keeper says that they have no way of knowing if Cole is over his anger. What is his response?
6. What news does Cole receive from Edwin and Garvey at the chapter’s end? Would you have made the same decision? Why or why not?

Chapter 16
1. How is Cole’s second trip to the island being funded?
2. When Cole asks what to do first, Garvey responds, “Everything is up to you now.” Why would he say this?
3. What are some of the first tasks Cole has to complete?
4. What could Garvey’s observation that “all the world is a hot dog” mean?
5. Cole briefly considers the possibility of taking the skiff and returning to the mainland. However, even if he had tried, Edwin had removed the spark plugs from the engine, so it would not have worked. What does this incident tell us about Cole, Garvey and Edwin?
Chapter 17

1. Cole thinks about Peter when he cannot sleep. What are his thoughts? How are these thoughts different from his earlier feelings about Peter?

2. Edwin uses a stick to demonstrate a point to Cole. What is his point?

THE STICK

After re-reading the section of Chapter 17 where Edwin explains how happiness and anger are two ends of the same stick, draw a picture of a stick on your paper. The left side represents anger; the right side represents happiness. Draw or write about the things that make you angry on or near the left side of the stick. Draw or write about what makes you happy on the left side.

Choosing to focus on something that makes you happy can be a good way to calm down and regain some self-control in a moment of anger.

How does Cole use this technique in the novel? What happy thing does he choose to focus on?

Of the things that make you happy, which one do you think would be most helpful to focus on in a tense situation if you wanted to regain your composure? Circle it.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
Chapters 18-21

Chapter 18
1. What does Cole begin building in this chapter? Why must it be of such high quality, and why don’t Edwin and Garvey help him build it?
2. Edwin states, “Pride has no place on this island.” Describe two instances in this chapter where Cole puts pride ahead of practicality.
3. Cole is upset that Edwin and Garvey are not helping with anything. By doing nothing, are they helping Cole?
4. What does Cole take away from the whale dance?
5. What activities do Cole and Edwin do to help him release his anger?

Chapter 19
1. What does Cole do after working on his shelter that upsets Garvey and Edwin?
2. What is Garvey’s response to Cole’s actions? Do you think he is being fair?
3. What lesson does Cole learn from the wolf dance?
4. When pushing the rock down the hill, Cole comes to a realization. What is it?
5. What does Cole see as he begins to return to camp?

Chapter 20
1. What realization does Cole have regarding his father?
2. Why do you think that Edwin and Garvey don’t heap a lot of praise on Cole for building his cabin?
3. Edwin put the spark plugs back in the boat two days before he and Garvey left. What does this indicate?
4. Edwin states that “you can never heal completely until you discover one thing” but he does not tell Cole what that thing is. What do you think Edwin is referring to?

Chapter 21
1. Cole discovers a large piece of driftwood on the beach and realizes there are two possible uses for it. What are they?
2. What does Cole decide to do with the log?
3. Do you think Cole is sincere when he asks Edwin how Peter is doing? Why or why not?
4. How does Edwin explain totem poles to Cole?
LETTER TO PETER

Pretend you are Cole Matthews. You are on the island for the second time, reflecting on how your actions led to the serious injuries of Peter Driscoll. Write a letter to Peter expressing your true thoughts and feelings based on what you have experienced and come to understand as part of your banishment.

Remember, your letter must have a greeting. It must be at least 7-10 sentences long. It must finish with a closing and your signature.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
Chapters 22-24

Chapter 22
1. How does Cole make himself invisible, and why is he doing this?
2. Cole appears to have discovered why the Spirit Bear came to visit him, and why the fish and beaver came so close to him. What do you think the reason is?

Chapter 23
1. What does Cole believe to be the secret to being invisible? Why does he come to this conclusion?
2. What does Cole see after allowing his mind to clear and letting himself become one with nature?
3. Cole decides that he can now do the anger dance. When he is doing it, he screams, “Please forgive me! I didn’t mean to hurt Peter!” Think back to his motivations at the time of the assault, Cole’s family history, and Cole’s reaction to Peter when he hears him speak for the first time since the assault at the Circle on p. 40. Is this statement true?
4. Cole also states, “I forgive you” during his anger dance. Who do you think Cole has forgiven?

Chapter 24
1. What does Cole note about being angry at the beginning of the chapter?
2. Cole learns that if he cannot help the person he wrong, he should help somebody else. How does this idea connect to Edwin and Garvey?
3. Cole spots the Spirit Bear every few days now. What does this indicate about the change in Cole?
4. When Cole starts thinking about his return to Minneapolis, what is he concerned about? Why is this unusual?
5. Peter twice attempts to commit suicide, and Cole believes the answer to Peter’s problems is to have him spend time on the island. Why does Cole think this is a good idea, and do you think it will work?
6. Cole attempts to carve the bottom of the totem pole several times in this chapter, but cannot find an appropriate symbol for him getting over his anger. What do you think Cole should carve?
ANGER MANAGEMENT, PART 2

Throughout the novel, Cole chooses to manage his anger in both healthy and unhealthy ways. In the word search below, find the words that describe these different ways of managing anger.

WORDS TO FIND:
- yelling
- dance
- climb
- talk about it
- work
- steal
- fighting
- ignore
- walk
- blame others
- soak in pond
- hike
- exercise
- isolate
- build
- roll the rock
- run away
- carve totem
- help someone
- burn shelter

Once you have found all the words, create a list of the healthy ways that Cole managed his anger:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Make a list of the unhealthy and healthy ways you express anger. Then make your own word search in the grid below using these words and give it to a classmate to solve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unhealthy ways that you express anger</th>
<th>Healthy ways that you manage anger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>4.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>10.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Chapters 25-28

Chapter 25
1. What is Cole’s idea to cure Peter’s depression? How does Edwin react to this suggestion?
2. Do you think it is a good idea for Peter to visit the island? Why or why not?
3. About two weeks after Cole’s suggestion, who arrives on the island?
4. Peter blurts, “Leave me alone! I don’t want your help!” to Cole. How is this situation similar to Cole’s initial feelings about Garvey and Edwin? How is it different?

Chapter 26
1. Peter does not want to sleep in the cabin with Cole. What arrangements are made for Cole while Peter is on the island?
2. Do you think that Edwin purposely brought a leaky tent? Why or why not?
3. Peter shows some signs of embracing Cole’s island practices. What are these?
4. Why do you think Peter threw the rock at Cole and later tossed him into the water?

Chapter 27
1. What does Peter tell Cole when he lets him into the cabin? What does Peter do in the following days that show he dislikes Cole?
2. What does Cole convince Peter to do after destroying the bear on his totem pole?
3. What does Cole say about the quality of the carvings on the two boys’ totem poles?
4. What does Peter do to Cole’s totem pole at the end of the chapter? What does this say about the change in Peter’s attitude towards Cole?

Chapter 28
1. Peter asks Garvey to not accompany Cole to the pond. Why does he do this?
2. Why does Cole refuse to fight back when Peter attacks him?
3. Do you think Cole deserved the beating he received from Peter? Why or why not?
4. Cole states, “I don’t think I’ll ever heal from what I did to you, but I’m sorry, Peter. I really am sorry.” Then what happens?
5. As the book closes, Peter states, “What makes you think I forgave you?” Do you think Peter has forgiven Cole? Why or why not?
REFLECTION QUESTIONS:
Part 2

1. Do you think Cole truly changed over the course of the story? How can you tell?
2. What do you think changed him the most?
3. What did Cole learn from the Spirit Bear’s attack?
4. Do you think the attack was worth the pain and suffering for the changes it brought to Cole’s life?
5. Did Cole deserve the pain and permanent damage to his body after causing pain and permanent damage to Peter?
6. How do you think his own suffering changed his attitude about what he had done to Peter?
7. Do you think there would have been any other way for Cole to truly change? If yes, how?
8. Did Cole deserve a second chance on the island?
9. How would the ending have been different if Cole had not been given the second chance on the island? (Hint: think about both Cole and Peter’s lives)
10. Were Cole’s problems his fault? His parents’ fault? The justice system’s fault? Society’s fault? His friends’ fault?
CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Over the course of a story, characters may or may not undergo important internal changes. Characters who do not change are called **static characters** because they are pretty much the same person at the end of the story as they were at the beginning of the story. Characters who undergo one or more significant changes as a result of the events in a story are called **dynamic characters**. Minor characters are typically **static**. The main character in a story is usually **dynamic**, but other major characters can be **static** or **dynamic** depending on the story.

For each person on the following list of characters, identify whether they are a static or dynamic character by circling the correct option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Static</th>
<th>Dynamic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garvey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edwin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cole’s dad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cole’s mom</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To show how Cole changed, identify **four** new traits that Cole developed while on the island. List those traits in the boxes below. Underneath the traits write a short description of **how** Cole showed that he had developed this new trait.
Think about the dances that Cole danced. What did he learn about himself from each one?

wolf dance: _________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

beaver dance: _________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

anger dance: _________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

mouse dance: _________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Which dance do you identify with the most? Why? _________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________