



Identify

Lesley Choyce

Reading level: 3.8

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Book Summary

Ethan is an anxiety-ridden loner who relies on medication to get through his day. During one of his fairly frequent panic attacks, a girl from school named Gabriella comes to his rescue. Gabe, as she prefers to be known, is facing her own inner turmoil. She has always been a tomboy, but the more pressure she faces to act and dress “like a girl,” the more she wonders just who she really is.

When he learns that Gabe is being constantly harassed at school, Ethan discovers he is able to overcome his own fears in order to stand up for his new friend. Then Gabe finds a disturbing note in her locker, and the threats begin to escalate. Ethan confronts the person responsible, but things take an unexpected turn, and he suddenly finds himself being questioned by police, accused of assault. With a dose of courage and a surprising ally, the two friends come up with a plan to set things right and end up discovering who they really are along the way.

Prereading Idea

Play the song “Bridge over Troubled Water” by Simon and Garfunkel. As a class, discuss what the lyrics mean. Then ask students how they relate to the message in the song. Have students write a paragraph about someone in their life who has served as a bridge to help them through a hard time. Students should include the situation and how the person was able to help them.

Connecting to the World—Writing and Research Ideas

- Ask students to go to www.flickr.com and to select a photo of an older person. Then, using Gabe's example of Harold Hinkley in chapter 2, ask students to create imaginary stories about the person in the photo they have selected. Have students read their fictional accounts to the class or in a small group.
- Gabe tells Ethan, "Someone can say or do anything to you, but it's up to *you* how you react" (ch. 4). After students read the exchange between Skylar and Gabe in chapter 4, ask students to write about a time when they either witnessed or experienced a similar situation. Students should write what occurred, who was involved, and how they responded to the people involved.

Connecting to the Text—Elements of the Novel*Characterization*

Though the characters of Gabe and Ethan are similar in ways that help them connect to each other, they are markedly different in others. Ask students to write an essay analyzing the differences and the similarities between the two characters. As students make their comparisons, ask them to reflect on how the differences and/or similarities strengthen the two characters' friendship and help them individually. Have students include their reflections in their essay and share their essays with a partner or in a small group.

Theme

Ask students to think about the title of the novel—*Identify*. After reading the novel, ask students to write a thematic statement based on the title and then to write a paragraph justifying the theme they have chosen. After students have read their thematic statements and paragraphs to the class, post them in the classroom.

Plot

The plot of this story would be effective as a movie screen play. As a class, determine which famous actor and actress would play the roles of Ethan and Gabe. Then divide the class into seventeen pairs and assign each pair a chapter to rewrite as a movie script. When completed, combine the chapters to make one script, and have the students perform the screen play.

Connecting to the Students—Discussion Questions

1. How does Gabe help Ethan? Where does she take him? Why do both characters decide they like the place?
2. How do Gabe and Ethan deal with the stresses in their lives? Why is Gabe's solution safer and saner than Ethan's?
3. What is Ethan's reaction to his father losing his job and being arrested for drinking and driving? How does Do-Good Dave help Ethan understand what is occurring?
4. Why does Ethan take downers? How do they make him feel?
5. Why is Gabe confused about her gender identity? What does Ethan say about Gabe's gender that hurts her feelings?

6. How does Gabe react to Ethan's parents? Why does Gabe connect with Ethan's dad?
7. Who is Tyler? What role does he play in Gabe changing her looks? Why does Tyler press charges against Ethan?
8. How does the relationship between Gabe and Ethan help them both? What steps do they take together to help strengthen them individually?

Writer's Craft

Vocabulary Enrichment

Challenge students to select one vocabulary word as the title of a poem and to use "found" phrases from the novel and synonyms, antonyms and ideas of their own to create a short word poem. Have students share their poems with the class.

Notorious	ch. 4	Cowering	ch. 10
Vile	ch. 4	Gawking	ch. 10
Reinforces	ch. 6	Countered	ch. 13
Persistent	ch. 8	Taunted	ch. 13

Author Biography

Lesley Choyce teaches at Dalhousie University, hosts a nationally syndicated TV talk show in Halifax, runs Pottersfield Press and has written over eighty adult and young adult books, including science fiction, fantasy, poetry and nonfiction. He is a writer, publisher, educator, musician and television host. He surfs year-round and has worked as a rehab counselor, a freight hauler, a corn farmer, a janitor, a journalist, a lead guitarist, a newspaper boy and a well-digger. He lives in a 200-year-old farm house overlooking the ocean. He says, "I decided to be a writer with high hopes that it would allow me to avoid work. When writing turned out to be work as well as fun, I stuck with it anyway."

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