There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom

Louis Sachar

NOVEL NOTES
4TH CLASS
Novel Notes

There’s a Boy in the Girls’ Bathroom
Contents

Synopsis .......................... 1
About the Author .................. 2
Objectives ......................... 2
Cross-curricular Links .......... 3
Suggestions for Classroom Work 3
Web Links .......................... 4
Pre-reading Activities .......... 4
Chapter 1 ........................ 6
Chapter 2 ........................ 7
Chapter 3 ........................ 8
Chapter 4 ........................ 9
Chapters 5 & 6 ..................... 10
Chapter 7 ......................... 11
Chapter 8 ......................... 12
Chapter 9 ......................... 13
Chapters 10 & 11 ................. 14
Chapters 12, 13 & 14.......... 15
Chapters 15 & 16 ................. 16
Chapters 17 & 18 ................. 17
Chapters 19, 20 & 21 .......... 18
Chapter 22 ....................... 19
Chapters 23 & 24 ................. 20
Chapters 25, 26 & 27 .......... 21
Chapters 28 & 29 ................. 22
Chapter 30 ....................... 23
Chapters 31 & 32 ................. 24
Chapters 33 & 34 ................. 25
Chapters 35 & 36 ................. 26
Chapter 37 ....................... 27
Chapters 38, 39 & 40 .......... 28
Chapters 41 & 42 ................. 29
Chapters 43 & 44 ................. 30
Chapters 45, 46 & 47 .......... 31
Book Report Sheet .............. 32
Bradley Chalkers is the class bully. Bradley is disliked by everyone in the school, including his own teacher and sits alone at the back of the classroom. He has never done his homework and it is only when a new student, called Jeff, joins his class that he finally finds a friend.

At home, Bradley only has a collection of toy animals to talk to. He has two particularly special friends - Ronnie the Rabbit and Bartholomew the Bear. When his mother mentions an upcoming meeting with his teacher, Bradley becomes defensive and angry. Following the meeting with Mrs Ebbel, Bradley's teacher, Bradley is required to see a school counsellor named Carla to help him with his behavioural problems, schoolwork and relationships.

Like Bradley, Jeff is also obliged to see Carla to help him to settle in. Jeff still does not know his way around the school and on his way to Carla's office, he accidentally walks into the girls' bathroom. Jeff is embarrassed and leaves immediately. It is this incident that introduces Jeff and Bradley to Colleen, Lori and Melinda.

When Jeff eventually reaches Carla's office he is responsive to her suggestions. However, Bradley remains defensive and is aware of her 'tricks'. Bradley and Jeff's friendship continues, although, it is clear that Jeff is not as keen to misbehave as Bradley is. One day, Jeff offers to assist Bradley with his homework, something Bradley has avoided throughout school. Bradley accepts the invitation but wants to fight the girls beforehand. Bradley comes out of the fight embarrassed and with a black eye. This is an important event in the novel as Bradley blames Jeff for his black eye. Jeff begins to gradually socialise more with the other boys in his class.

Bradley becomes isolated again and is badly teased by the other children who call him a monster. This becomes the topic of discussion at his sessions with Carla. She eventually manages to inspire a change in Bradley's behaviour at home and in school.

Meanwhile, Jeff is rude to the girls and gets into a fight with them resulting in a black eye from Melinda. Unfortunately, Bradley gets the blame and the other boys in the school threaten to attack him. To avoid the boys, he runs into Carla's office. The pair eat lunch together and discuss doing homework. Bradley makes an effort to do his homework that night but the next morning he is scared and tears-up his perfectly completed homework. He speaks to Carla who praises his efforts and convinces him to do his book report.

Bradley's changes are noticed by the other children who invite him to play with them. He is even invited to Colleen's birthday party. However, the Concerned Parents Organisation in the school, disagree with Carla's way of working with the children. When Bradley hears that she is to be transferred to a different school he is devastated and returns to his usual self.

However, a letter from Carla and a present of a book helps him, and he goes to the birthday party. He has a great time there, despite some silly and embarrassing incidents. By the end of the novel Bradley is no longer seen by others and himself as a monster; he is now the caring, generous, happy boy that was always there.

Themes and issues addressed in this novel are friendship, relationships, behavioural problems, bullying and feelings.
Louis Sachar is a famous children's writer who has written many well-known books. He was born in New York but moved to California during his childhood. While he was a good student, he did not develop a love for reading until he attended secondary school.

While at University he became a teaching aide. This classroom experience inspired him to write his first and subsequent books. In fact, many of the characters in Sideways Stories From Wayside School were based on the children he met at the school.

Sachar continued writing stories for children while studying and later practicing law. He married his wife, Carla in 1985, an elementary school counsellor. She provided the inspiration for the character Carla in There's a Boy in the Girls Bathroom.

Sachar now lives in Austin, Texas where he continues to write novels. His novel Holes has sold over 8 million copies worldwide and has been made into a major motion picture of the same name by Disney. Sachar has also won many awards for his books including the New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year for Holes.

Curriculum Objectives

The child should be enabled to become an increasingly independent reader; continue to self-correct reading errors, use simple dictionaries effectively, explore new interesting perspectives through reading, keep a record of his/her reading in various forms, read aloud with expression.

Learning Outcomes

- Write a reading log.
- Produce a character profile for Bradley Chalkers.
- Generate a list of adjectives to describe characters from the book.
- Compare Carla to Bradley, discussing similarities and differences.
- Write a letter to the author about the characters in the story.
- Debate the usefulness of counsellors in schools.
- Design an interesting cover for the book.
- Evaluate the ending of the book.
Cross-curricular Links

**Maths**
The children can work on fractions, as Mrs Ebbel’s class were. Furthermore, problem-solving work, such as the peanuts problem mentioned in Carla’s book, *My Parents Didn’t Steal an Elephant*, can be attempted.

**Gaeilge**
The children can learn vocabulary related to parties and write out invitations for a party.

**SPHE**
The children can discuss feelings and friendship during circle time. Follow-up work can be based around scenarios in the book.

**Science**
Bradley has a collection of toy animals. The class can be divided into groups to do science projects on each of the different animals. They can research the animals’ natural habitats and write reports on their findings.

**Geography**
This story is based in America. The class can explore America, or part of America in the context of geography, exploring the location, climates and political geography.

**Physical Education**
Children can engage in athletic activities such as sprinting, relay races and basketball.

Suggestions for Classroom Work

- Keep a reading log for every chapter.
- Create a character profile for Bradley Chalkers. Draw a picture of Bradley and write some points about how he looks, feels, acts and how he is viewed by the other characters.
- Describe the following characters using lists of different adjectives – Carla, Jeff, Mrs Ebbel, Claudia, Bradley’s parents.
- Compare Carla to Bradley, discussing similarities and differences.
- The author based Carla on his wife. Write a letter to the author of a book asking questions about the characters in the book.
- Debate the usefulness of counsellors in schools.
- Look-up the various covers that have been used for the book. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each one and design a new cover.
- Evaluate the ending of the book. Could there have been a better ending? Why? Why not?
Web Links

Anti-bullying website:
http://www.stopbullying.gov/index.html

Customisable word wall for the novel:
http://www.edhelper.com/books/Theres_a_Boy_in_the_Girls_BathroomWordWall.htm

Multiple choice quiz:
http://www4.eboard.com/boards/18/30/71/BoyinBathroom5/att-986701/There%27s_a_Boy_in_the_Girls%27_Bathroom.htm

Pre-reading Activities

Oral Pre-reading Questions

Chapter 1
Look at the front cover of the book. Where do you think this book might be set?

Chapter 2
Do you think Bradley and Jeff will get along? Why?/Why not?

Chapter 3
Do you think Bradley's behaviour will change in this chapter?

Chapter 4
What do you think will happen when Bradley's mother meets Mrs Ebbel?

Chapter 5 and 6
How do you think Bradley will react to the news that he will have to see a counsellor?

Chapter 7
Do you think anything will happen to Jeff as a result of walking into the girls toilets?

Chapter 8
What do you think Jeff will tell Bradley about Carla?

Chapter 9
Do you think Bradley will go to see Carla? Do you think she will be able to help him?

Chapters 10 and 11
Predict what will happen between Bradley and Carla over the course of the novel.

Chapters 12, 13 and 14
Do you think Bradley will persuade Jeff to do things he doesn't want to do?

Chapters 15 and 16
Do you think Bradley will talk to Jeff after the fight?

Chapters 17 and 18
Do you think Bradley will want to get Jeff back for not helping him in the fight?

Chapters 19, 20 and 21
Do you think we will read more about Bradley's toy animals over the coming chapters? Explain your answer.

Chapter 22
What do you think Bradley will want to talk about with Carla?

Chapters 23 and 24
Do you think Bradley will stand-up to the children who are being mean to him?

Chapters 25, 26 and 27
Do you think Bradley can change how other people see him?
Chapters 28 and 29
What do you predict will happen next?

Chapter 30
Do you think Bradley will tell Carla about his homework? Why?/Why not?

Chapter 31 and 32
What do you predict will become important to Bradley in the coming chapters?

Chapters 33 and 34
Do you think the other boys will continue to include Bradley?

Chapters 35 and 36
How do you think Jeff’s friendship with Colleen will affect Bradley?

Chapter 37
Do you think Bradley will enjoy the party?

Chapter 38, 39 and 40
Do you think Carla will keep her job in the school?

Chapter 41 and 42
Do you think Bradley will help Carla on Saturday?

Chapter 43 and 44
Predict what you think will happen next in the story.

Chapter 45, 46 & 47
How do you think the girls will react to Bradley and Jeff?

Vocabulary
Create a dictionary of American words learned from this book, e.g. holler, recess, etc. Pre-teach the relevant new vocabulary in each chapter, add new words to the word wall and ask the children to use the new words in a sentence.

Comprehension Activity Sheets

Presented on the following pages are a selection of both lower and higher order questions for each section of this novel, which the teacher may choose from.
There’s a Boy in the Girls’ Bathroom: Comprehension Activity Sheet 1

Chapter 1

1. Who is Bradley Chalkers’ teacher?

2. In what country is this chapter based?

3. Who is Jeff Fishkin?

4. Mrs Ebbel apologised to Jeff for (a) making him sit next to Bradley, (b) not having an extra desk for him or (c) not having time to introduce him to the class properly

5. Describe Bradley Chalkers.

6. Why do you think nobody wants to sit near Bradley?

7. How do you think it would feel to start in a new school?
Chapter 2

1. What does the word ‘recess’ mean?

2. Who does Mrs Ebbel want Bradley’s mother to meet?

3. How does Bradley react to Mrs Ebbel’s questions?

4. Why is Bradley mean to Jeff?

5. Do you think Bradley enjoys being on his own? Give reasons for your answer.

6. If you were Jeff would you have taken the dollar from Bradley? Explain your answer.
1. Describe Bradley’s parents.

2. What was Bradley’s sister’s name?

3. Who are Ronnie and Bartholomew?

4. What does Bradley usually say when people don’t believe him?

5. Do you think Bradley’s parents understand his behaviour? Explain your answer.

6. Why do you think Bradley talks to his animals?

7. What affect does Bradley have on the other people in his house?
1. What do you think ‘holler’ means? Can you think of another word for it?

2. What does Mrs Ebbel ask Bradley’s mother’s permission for?

3. Who is Carla Davis?

4. What is your first impression of Miss Davis?

5. Do you think Bradley will like seeing Miss Davis? Give a reason for your answer.
1. What does Bradley’s mother say about the meeting during dinner?

2. What is Bradley’s reaction to his mother’s news?

3. Why is Jeff going to see the counsellor?

4. What room does Jeff mistakenly enter when he is looking for Carla’s office?

5. From what you have read, what sort of boy do you think Jeff Fishkin is?
1. What is the name of the school that Jeff and Bradley attend?

2. What name is Jeff often called?

3. What do you think the word friendship means?

4. Do you agree with Carla that the way to be friends is to talk, be honest and share your feelings?

5. In your opinion, what makes a good friend?
Chapter 8

1. Why do the children have to eat in the auditorium?

2. What is the auditorium like?

3. What do Bradley and Jeff eat for lunch?

4. From what you have read so far, what sort of person do you think Bradley is?

5. Do you think Bradley is a loyal friend? Why?/Why not?
1. What surprises Bradley about Carla?

2. What does Bradley draw a picture of?

3. Why, do you think, does Bradley feel tricked by Carla?

4. Carla is different to other teachers. What does Bradley think of her, do you think?

5. Summarise the events of the chapter in a short paragraph.
1. How does Bradley picture the girls' toilets to be?

2. What does the word ‘blushing’ mean?

3. What excuses does Jeff give for not going into the girls' bathroom?

4. How are Jeff and Bradley different?

5. Do you think Jeff is a good friend to Bradley? Explain your answer.
1. What problem does Colleen discuss with Carla?

2. Name the three girls Bradley was waiting for outside Mrs Sharp's classroom.

3. Why did Lori say that Bradley wet his pants?

4. Do you think Bradley is a good friend to Jeff?

5. Do you think Jeff will continue to be Bradley's friend after the fight?

6. Rewrite the fight scene from Jeff’s point of view.
1. How does Bradley’s mother react to the fight?

2. Who does Bradley blame the fight on?

3. Why, do you think, does Bradley not say who else was involved in the fight?

4. How, do you think, does Bradley feel going to school the next morning?

5. Does anything surprise you about Bradley’s behaviour towards Jeff? Explain your answer.
1. Name the boys Jeff meets in the bathroom.

2. Why is Jeff happy after the basketball game?

3. What name does Brian call Bradley?

4. If you were Jeff would you prefer to be friends with Bradley or the other boys? Give reasons for your answer.

5. How, do you think, does Bradley feel when Jeff ignores him?
1. How many new friends has Jeff made?

2. How does Carla always greet Bradley when he visits her office?

3. What excuse does Bradley give for not talking to Carla?

4. What advice does Carla give Bradley to help him do better in school?

5. Carla thinks that Bradley is afraid to try to do well in his tests. Think of a time when you were afraid. Describe the situation and how it made you feel.

6. Bradley is going to make a list of things to talk to Carla about. What might be on his list, do you think?

7. Bradley is different to most other children. Does he remind you of a character from another book? Why is he like that person?
1. What does the word ‘topic’ mean? Can you think of other words for topic?

2. How has the other children’s behaviour changed towards Bradley?

3. Name three topics from Bradley’s list.

4. If you were to group Bradley’s topics into categories what would they be?

5. How would you describe Bradley in this chapter?

6. Do you agree with Claudia that the counsellor will not want to talk about Bradley’s topics? Give a reason for your answer.
1. What do the other children call Bradley?

2. What topic do Carla and Bradley discuss?

3. According to Carla, how does a monster stop being a monster?

4. Why does Bradley want to talk about monsters, do you think?

5. Do you think Carla is good at her job? Explain your answer giving at least two reasons.

6. Why do you think Jeff was mean to the girls?
1. Why is Bradley trying to be so good?

2. Where does Bradley go to hide from the group of boys?

3. What do Bradley and Carla have for lunch?

4. Do you think Bradley is a nice boy or a monster? Give a reason for your answer.

5. Do you think Carla wears clothes that she likes or does she wear clothes that she hopes the children will like? Explain your answer.

6. Imagine you were Carla. What advice would you give Bradley to help him be good in school?
1. What page is Bradley's homework on?

2. Who helps Bradley with his homework?

3. What worries Bradley before class starts?

4. Why, do you think, does Bradley destroy his homework?

5. How do you think Mrs Ebbel would have reacted if Bradley had handed up his homework?
There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom: Comprehension Activity Sheet 18

Chapter 30

1. Why is Carla proud of Bradley?

2. What is the main thing that Bradley learned from doing his homework?

3. Name the book that Carla gave to Bradley.

4. Do you think Bradley will enjoy reading the book? Explain your answer.

5. From what you know of Bradley, do you think he will write and hand in the book report? Explain your answer.
1. What was the letter from the Concerned Parents Association about?

2. How did Claudia describe the Concerned Parents Association?

3. What encouragement did Mrs Wilcott give Bradley?

4. Why, do you think, is Carla called to the Principal's office?

5. How do you think Bradley would change if Carla was not there anymore?

6. Do you think Bradley will remain friends with Jeff and the other boys? Give a reason for your answer.
1. Why was Bradley not a good basketball player at the start?

2. Who walked into the boys’ toilets?

3. What Zen rule did Carla describe?

4. Who else will Colleen invite to the party, do you think? Explain your answer.

5. Do you think schools in Ireland should have counsellors? Give a reason for your answer.
Chapters 35 & 36

1. What are Colleen, Melinda and Lori fighting about at recess?

2. How does Bradley’s father plan to help Bradley with basketball?

3. What news does Bradley have for Carla?

4. Why does Bradley cry in Carla’s office?

5. Why, do you think, is Bradley’s behaviour changed so much?

6. Have you ever been to a birthday party? Describe what types of things happen at birthday parties.

7. What advice would you give Bradley about parties? Write down at least two pieces of advice.
Chapter 37

1. Describe the atmosphere in the Concerned Parents Organisation meeting.

2. What would the parents prefer to have than the counsellor?

3. How do you think Carla feels in the meeting? What thoughts might be going through her head?

4. Do you think Carla could have explained her job better? Explain your answer.

5. Imagine you were Bradley Chalkers’ parents. What would you say to the other parents about Carla’s effect on Bradley?
1. What do you think the phrase ‘captured the essence of the book’ means?

2. What news does Carla have for Bradley?

3. What is Bradley’s reaction to Carla’s news?

4. How did you feel when Bradley was given a gold star?

5. Why does Bradley not say goodbye to Carla, do you think?

6. Do you think Carla will be a good kindergarten teacher? Why?/Why not?
There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom: Comprehension Activity Sheet 24

Chapters 41 & 42

1. Describe what happened at the barber shop.

2. Who does Bradley meet at the school?

3. What does Bradley find in Carla's office?

4. Describe Bradley in this chapter.

5. How, do you think, Carla felt writing the letter to Bradley?

6. What effect do you think Carla's letter will have on Bradley?

7. Imagine you were Bradley and Carla entered the office. What would you say to her?
1. Name the people who were invited to Colleen's party.

2. How do the girls react when Colleen mentioned that boys were coming to the party?

3. Do you think parties with boys and girls would be better than parties with just boys or girls at them? Give a reason for your answer.

4. Describe Bradley's mood when Jeff arrives.

5. Do you think you would be nervous if you were in Bradley's situation?
1. In what different ways does Jeff help Bradley at the party?

2. What games do the children play at the party?

3. What does Bradley receive for earning the most points in the games?

4. What does Bradley get Colleen for her birthday?

5. Why, do you think, does Bradley choose that present for Colleen?

6. How do you think Carla will feel when she reads Bradley’s letter?

7. Why, do you think, does Bradley give Carla his toy animal, Ronnie the Rabbit?

8. If you were the author would you have made the ending different? Explain your answer.
# Book Report Sheet

If you don’t have enough space to write your answers, use the notes section on the following pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil’s name:</th>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of book:</th>
<th>Author:</th>
<th>Illustrator:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting (where the story took place):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List the main characters:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe your favourite character:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe your favourite part of the story:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This book was:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Tick all that apply)

Did you like the book? Why?/Why not?


Grade the book (Tick one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Easy to read</th>
<th>Just right</th>
<th>A little difficult</th>
<th>Difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rate the book out of ten: /10