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Preliminary remarks

- The following assignments offer tasks and activities, which the teacher or students can choose from.
- Many tasks are suitable for talks or presentations to the class.
- Some tasks overlap with others.
- Since the material can be edited, the teacher may enlarge the tables, diagrams, and charts, or the students may copy them into their exercise books.

Pre-reading activities

1. Look at the picture on the cover and use your imagination. Who are the two boys? What are they doing?
2. Two brothers meet again after a long time. Twenty-one years ago, an argument drove them apart. Try to imagine what this argument was about and tell the story.

While-reading activities

1. Constellation of figures
   This is a story about two brothers. Fill in the chart below to show how the minor characters are connected to Jimmy and Danny.

2. Titles
   Create titles for each chapter.

3. Summaries
   Write a very short summary of each chapter (2 or 3 sentences each.)
4 Narration

As you read each chapter, fill in the following columns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Flashbacks</th>
<th>Chronological narration of the meeting in the pub after 21 years</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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5 Tension

From the beginning of the story, we know that Jimmy and Danny haven’t met for more than 20 years. At the end of each chapter, think of a possible reason for the brothers’ long separation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Possible reasons</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[r1]</td>
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6 Characterization of Jim (Jimmy) and Daniel (Danny)

Throughout the story, Jimmy seems to be the dominant brother. Find examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Examples of Jimmy’s dominance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

Also find examples of Danny’s (little) triumphs over his dominant brother, Jimmy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Examples of Danny’s triumphs</th>
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</table>
7 Setting
Find the settings of the story. Use a map for illustration.

8 Themes
While reading the book, make notes about the following themes:
1 What typical behavior and rites of little boys and teenagers do Jimmy and Danny show?
2 What rivalries between the brothers play a role?
3 What changes in their home town do Danny and Jimmy notice when they meet again after 21 years?
4 In what way is the behavior of the barman typical?

9 Narrator, point of view, and change of perspective
1 How is the story told (narrator and point of view)?
   (You can find a definition of narrator and point of view in a library or on the Internet, or your teacher may have one ready for you.)
2 Imagine you are Jimmy’s and Danny’s mother. What would you tell someone who asks you about their childhood?

10 Interpretation by acting
1 Chapter 1, pages 2 and 3: Act the scene.
2 Chapter 4, p. 13 through p. 17, line 2: Act the scene.
   (These are just two examples. There are more opportunities for acting in other passages.)

11 Freeze frame
Make a freeze frame of Danny, Kay and Billy Dunne (Chapter 6, p. 22, lines 4–9). A freeze frame is like a snapshot of a situation.

1st step: Imagine your character’s body position in this situation and decide what your character’s face looks like. Then find and freeze your pose. Don’t talk.
2nd step: Hold your pose while the rest of the class interprets the freeze frame.
3rd step: Rejoin the class and participate as students discuss this interpretation.
   (This is just one example. More freeze frames are possible in other passages.)

12 Style
Have a close look at page 42, lines 2–9 and page 54, line 14 through page 55, line 12. What do you notice about the structure of the sentences? Try to imagine why the author writes in this style.
**Post-reading activities**

1. **Book review**
   Write a critical book review and state your personal opinion.
   (If you liked the book, you may encourage other students to read it.)

2. **Letter writing**
   In the story Jimmy phones Danny to arrange the meeting. Imagine instead that he writes a letter. Write this letter from Jimmy to Danny.

3. **Ending**
   Imagine that Jimmy actually has cancer, with only a short time to live. Write a different ending to the story.

4. **Gossip**
   Imagine you are the pub’s barman. After the brothers’ reunion, tell your next customer what you just saw and heard. Try to make the story interesting. You may exaggerate and change or add a few things.

5. **Comment**
   1. Write a short comment on the following topic: “Brothers and sisters can never be real friends.”
   2. Explain the phrase *Dogs are for life, not just for Christmas* (Chapter 18, p. 92).

6. **Summary**
   Write a summary of the story in 90–100 words or 180–200 words or 270–300 words.
   *(It is more difficult to summarize a story like this in 100 words than in 300 words.)*

7. **Book cover**
   Design your own book cover.
   *(Your teacher may hold a contest for the best entry.)*

8. **Title**
   Think of other titles for the story.
   *(Your teacher may hold a contest for the best suggestion.)*