

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-84-832-3495-2 – Bullring Kid and Country Cowboy

Louise Clover

Excerpt

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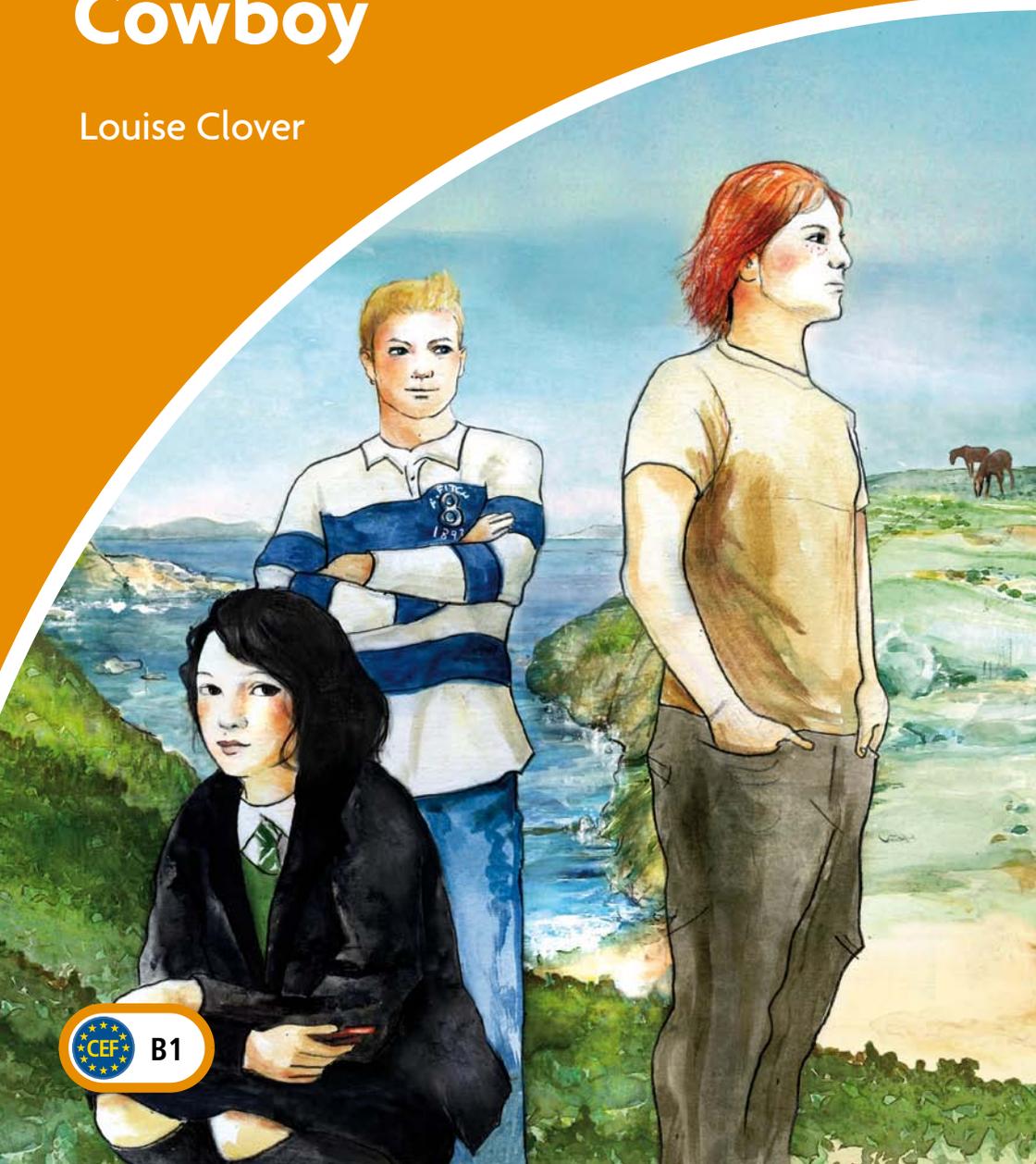
CAMBRIDGE



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People in the story

Fizza McIntyre: a fifteen-year-old girl from Birmingham

Fletcher McIntyre: a fifteen-year-old boy from the small island of Sark

Imran McIntyre: Fizza's dad

Rubel McIntyre: Fizza's mum

Richard McIntyre: Fletcher's dad

Babs: Fizza's best friend

Billy Adams: one of the most popular boys at Fizza's school

Robert Scully: a rich businessman

BEFORE YOU READ



- 1 Look at the cover and the pictures in the first two chapters. Answer the question.
Do you think that Fizza is the Country Cowboy?
-

Chapter 1

The Judo Kid

‘Oof!’

For the fifth time, Fizza’s dad threw her over his back and onto the grass.

‘Ow! I wasn’t ready, Dad!’ she cried.

‘That’s no excuse, Fizza! You must always be ready!’ replied her father. ‘You might be a girl – but it doesn’t stop you from being as brave as a man.’

Fizza picked herself up from the ground and faced her judo teacher. Imran McIntyre was half-Scottish, half-Pakistani and one hundred percent crazy. They had been practising judo for over an hour in the late afternoon sunshine and she was getting really tired now. However, she still managed to take her dad by surprise. Although she was feeling weak, she suddenly ran at him and threw him to the ground.

‘Fizza! Leave your poor father alone!’ called her mother from the house. ‘Anyway, it’s time for tea.’

‘Thanks, Rubel! You saved me from the crazy judo kid!’ said Imran.

He got up and took Fizza’s hand and, laughing together, they went into the house.

It was Thursday, so Fizza knew what her mum had made for tea. Every week it was the same, because it was her dad’s favourite meal.

‘Oh no, I hate fish curry!’ thought Fizza as she sat down at the table.

The fish curry was always so hot it set her mouth on fire – and she *hated* fish. However, to keep her mum and dad happy, she ate her food without complaining.

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‘So are you looking forward to our holiday, Fizza?’ asked her dad.

‘No—,’ thought Fizza.

‘Yes, she is!’ interrupted her mum. ‘Aren’t you, darling?’

Fizza smiled falsely through a horrible mouthful of curry.

‘I can’t wait! I love the Channel Islands, but this will be the first time I’ve been to Sark,’ said Fizza’s dad as he greedily¹ took another big spoonful of food from the bowl. ‘It’s the smallest of the islands, isn’t it?’

‘Yes, and no cars are allowed there, so it’s going to be quiet! Fresh air and no pollution!’² said her mum.

‘How wonderful!’ said Imran.

‘How boring!’ thought Fizza.

Fizza’s mum, Rubel, worked for Birmingham Council³ in the Environmental Office. It was her job to make Birmingham cleaner and ‘greener’, but it was a difficult job with so many cars and factories in the city. There was also too much rubbish. So a holiday on an island with no cars was her idea of a perfect holiday. However, it was not Fizza’s idea of a perfect holiday. She loved the city. She loved Birmingham! It was busy! It was loud! It was home!

‘Right!’ said Imran, as he finished his meal. ‘Come on, Fizza – let’s practise some more judo.’

‘But I wanted to go on the computer,’ said Fizza.

‘Felicity,’ said her mum, ‘you’re always on that computer.’

It was true. Fizza loved her computer. She spent hours working on different programs and she was the best in her class at information technology. It was the one school subject that she knew she was good at.

‘But I want to talk to my friends,’ she replied.

‘Can’t you use the phone?’ said her mum. ‘Or better still, go and visit them – like I did when I was a girl?’

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‘And you won’t get any better at judo unless you practise!’ said her dad.

Fizza sighed⁴ deeply. It was always the same thing. Her mum thought she used her computer too much and her dad thought that she should be an Olympic judo champion.

Fizza’s dad thought that judo was the most important thing in the world. When he wasn’t practising it, he was talking about it. He had taken up judo as a small boy and eventually he had become National Champion of Scotland. However, Fizza did not love it as much as her dad.

‘Actually Fizza, I think you’re really making progress now,’ he said. ‘You’ll be a champion yet! But I’ve told you before, you should join a judo club!’

Once again Fizza sighed. She didn’t mind practising in the garden, but she didn’t want to join a judo club because judo wasn’t ‘cool’. Her best friend Babs didn’t do judo and nor did any of the other ‘cool’ girls.

‘Dad! Are you crazy?’ she said.

‘I’m sorry?’ said her father.

‘You teach me everything. What else can a club teach me?’ said Fizza.

Imran laughed at this sweet talk and Fizza jumped up from the table.

‘Come on, old man. Let’s have a race to the garden – and I promise I’ll be gentle with you!’

* * *

At about six thirty, the doorbell rang.

‘Fizza!’ her mum called up the stairs. ‘Babs is here!’

Fizza ran down the stairs. Her friend was waiting for her in the hall.

‘Hi, Babs!’ she said.

‘Fizza! I had to come and tell you something!’ said Babs, who was clearly very excited.

‘Oh? What is it?’

‘I’ve just been to the shops and guess who was on the bus!’ she said.

‘The Queen?’

‘What? No, don’t be silly. Billy Adams!’

‘Who?’

‘Fizza! You know! He’s that seriously good-looking guy at school!’

Babs wanted to go out with Billy, but so did all the girls in their year. He was very popular with girls.

‘And?’ said Fizza.

‘And what?’ replied Babs.

‘Well, what happened?’

‘Well, he looked at me. Well, I *think* he looked at me – he looked near me because he sat in front of me.’

‘And he had the whole of the bus to choose from?’

‘Yeah!’

Fizza didn’t like to say it was probably just chance that Billy had sat in front of her.

‘Wow!’ she replied.

‘I know!’ said Babs.

Fizza smiled. She had been good friends with Babs since they had joined the school at the age of eleven. For four years they had done everything together: laughed, played silly games, shared secrets and laughed some more. However, recently Fizza felt that something had changed, because something new had arrived in Babs’s life. In fact two things had arrived: boys and fashion. Babs had stopped wearing school uniform and she had started dressing in the same way as the frightening ‘cool’ girls. And although Fizza secretly wanted to be ‘cool’, she *did* still

wear school uniform and outside of school she just wore jeans, T-shirts and trainers. She wasn't really interested in wearing silly clothes or make-up – especially for boys.

Fizza's mum said that she was pretty but then, she thought, her mum would say that, wouldn't she? She had thick black hair which she always wore tied back, brown eyes, a button nose and a mouth which she thought made her look like a frog. It didn't help that she was small and thin for a fifteen-year-old, because it made her look younger than all the other girls.

Fizza knew she and Babs could still be friends and they could still share secrets. But the secrets were different now. They weren't about sweet baby animals or a house with a ghost at the end of the street. They were about boys like Billy.

'Well,' said Fizza. 'He'll be at school tomorrow!'

'Ooh! I know! I know!' said Babs. 'I can't wait! I'm going to make myself talk to him! And Fizza, you're going to help me!'

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Check your answers to *Before you read* on page 4.
- 2 Complete the summary of Chapters 1 and 2 with the words in the box.

Felicity	Greece	Babs (x2)	boys	Billy
Rubel	Imran	judo	Birmingham	

Fizza, whose real name is ¹..... *Felicity*, lives with her parents in a big, busy city in the middle of England called ²..... . Her mum, ³..... , works for the local council. Her dad, ⁴..... , loves two things in life – fish curry, which Fizza hates, and his favourite sport, ⁵..... , which he teaches Fizza in the garden. Fizza, however, prefers spending time working on her computer. It's her best subject at school, but her mum thinks she spends too much time on it. Fizza's best friend, ⁶..... , is very different. She's more interested in fashion and boys, especially ⁷..... Adams, who goes to the same school. On the last day of school, everyone is talking about the exciting places they are going to in the summer. ⁸..... , for example, is going sailing in ⁹..... . Fizza, however, is too embarrassed to tell everyone that she is only going to ¹⁰..... , a quiet island with no cars.

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3 Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Fizza is looking forward to her holiday. F
- 2 Fizza's dad doesn't think she's good at judo.
- 3 Babs and Fizz don't wear the same kind of clothes.
- 4 The other girls at school look older than Fizza.
- 5 Fizza was working when Billy came into the classroom.
- 6 Fizza had her hair cut for Billy.
- 7 Billy was interested in Fizza when he saw her at the shopping centre.

4 Match the two parts of the sentences.

- 1 Fizza doesn't want to join a judo club because d
- 2 Fizza wants to be cool although
- 3 Babs is very embarrassed when
- 4 Fizza is surprised when
 - a she doesn't admit it to anyone.
 - b Billy speaks to her and the other girls.
 - c Billy says she is cool.
 - ~~d~~ it's not cool.

5 Answer the questions.

- 1 Why is Sark a good place for Rubel to go on holiday?

- 2 Why are the other girls surprised that Billy spoke to Fizza?

LOOKING FORWARD

.....

6 Tick (✓) what you think happens in the next four chapters.

- 1 Billy becomes Fizza's boyfriend.
- 2 Billy becomes Babs' boyfriend.
- 3 Fizza has a good time on holiday.