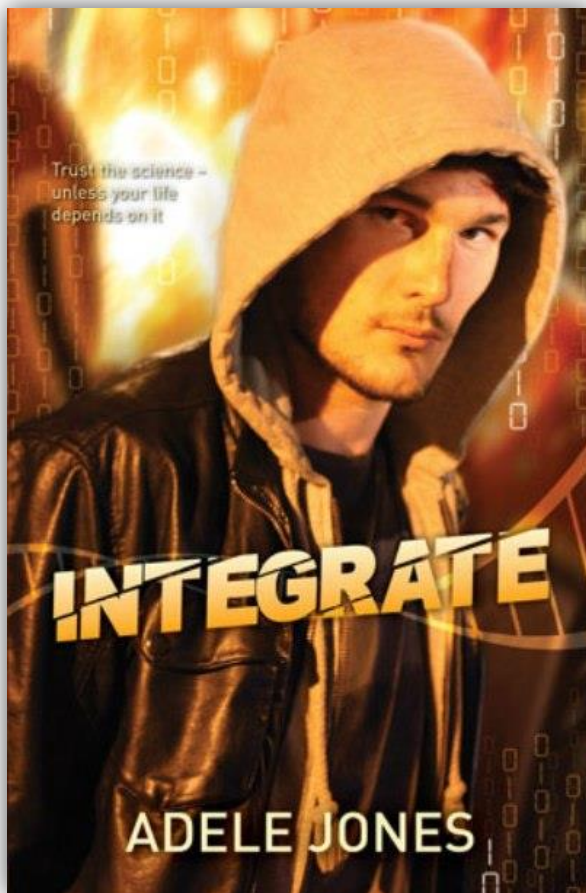




BOOK CLUB NOTES



INTEGRATE

By Adele Jones

ISBN: 9781925139099

RRP: \$17.99

Reading Level: ages 14+

PO Box 1519, CAPALABA BC QLD 4157

rhizapress.com.au

(07) 3245 1938

info@rhizapress.com.au

Light the Dark Pty Ltd, Trading as Rhiza Press

ABN: 30 137 345 941

These notes may be reproduced free of charge for book club use but not offered for commercial sale.

INTRODUCTION

Trust the science – unless your life depends on it.

Just weeks before his eighteenth birthday, Blaine Colton seems to have the world at his feet. Nearly three years earlier science rewrote his genetic death sentence, allowing him to leave behind constant health crises, disability and to finally do things everyday teens often take for granted – including hanging out with his best friend and the girl of his dreams.

But Blaine’s new life comes crashing down when he’s told the treatment was never approved. Thrown into conflict over the claimed illegitimacy of his gene therapy, along with conflicting revelations regarding his adoptive parents’ motives in enlisting him in the programme, he finds himself questioning everything that matters in his world.

When life sustaining treatment is withheld and contact with his parents refused, the gravity of Blaine’s situation increases, along with his determination to find answers. This sees him escaping the Institute and running from over-ambitious Chief Scientist, Melissa Hartfield. Through this he embarks on a journey of discovery broaching issues of identity, faith, love and self-worth.

Awarded the 2013 Caleb Prize in the unpublished manuscript category, *Integrate* takes the reader on a fast paced search for truth as Blaine grapples with his unexpected circumstances and his personal value in a world that idolises perfection and achievement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In her first Young Adult novel, Australian author Adele Jones melds her love of writing with her professional background in science. Her passion for building positive connections with others is evident throughout her written works, which explore issues of social justice, humanity, faith, natural beauty and meaning in life’s journey.

Through her broad personal and career-based interests, she has welcomed diverse engagement opportunities, including science-based student experience and outreach events, conference presentations, literary readings and musical performances. A strong believer in embracing life’s journey, she delights in sharing that adventure with others, be that through the pages of a story or engaging in a social or professional context.

With a long standing interest in historical fiction, Adele based her Master’s dissertation on this topic and is soon to release of her first novel in this genre. She has also had a variety of poems, short stories, inspirational meditations and magazine articles published. To find out more visit www.adelejonesauthor.com. For availability for book clubs and other related engagements, contact Rhiza Press at info@rhizapress.com.au.

Discussion Questions

1. Throughout the story Blaine wrestles with who he is and where he fits in life. Discuss key factors you believe may have influenced his sense of identity and self-worth.
2. Blaine uses 'ticks for hope' to keep his spirits up. How significant did you feel this habit of focusing on the positives was in gaining his freedom from ARI (Advance Research Institute)? Why do you think he held on to this philosophy in spite of doubting his parents' value of him?
3. Which character did you identify with most? Why?
4. Is Dr Hartfield right in justifying her actions by claiming nature has determined Blaine should die? What do you believe determines the value of a human life?
5. Find examples of dialogue from a scene (any scene you wish) that includes Dr Hartfield. What does the dialogue tell you about Dr Hartfield's opinion of a) herself and b) the person she is speaking to? (Consider who she is communicating with, her actions, word selection and tone.)
6. What do you believe Blaine learns most about himself through the experiences depicted in the novel? Explain.
7. Throughout the story Dr Hartfield gives Blaine (and other characters) information about his treatment, health, value and life options that conflicts with what's been previously conveyed. Think of a time when you, like Blaine, received conflicting information about a situation or person from different sources.
 - a. What process or criteria did you use to determine what was true?
 - b. How did you know what information was reliable?
8. In chapter three Blaine feels like he's being treated like a lab rat and talked about instead of to. Can you recount a situation where others have been making decisions about you, even in front of you, but not enabled you to have input into that decision making process? Describe how this felt.
9. Dr Jonick appears to have both brains and brawn, yet seemingly by his own choosing, finds himself entangled in Melissa Hartfield's ploy.
 - a. Discuss the possible motivating factors (intrinsic and extrinsic) and decisions that led to his ongoing involvement.
 - b. Do you think he is acting with integrity?
 - c. What was your first impression of Dr Jonick? Did your opinion of him change as you discovered more of his history?
10. If the type of gene therapy described in the novel was ever developed for treating complex genetic disorders, do you believe it should be made available as a routine treatment? Discuss the possible implications of gene modification of that scale in a living subject.