The Full Monty

by Wendy Holden
Based on the screenplay by Simon Beaufoy

SUMMARY

The Full Monty is the novelization of a very popular film which was released in 1997. The story takes place in Sheffield, an industrial town in the north of England, in the early 1980s. As in many towns in Britain at that time, the town has far fewer jobs available in heavy industry than it did in the past. Factories making steel used to employ the men of the town. Now the factories employ fewer men and many men stay at home. There is work for the women in the new companies which have started up, but less work for the men.

The story opens with Gaz and Dave, two friends, stealing a piece of iron from their old factory. Gaz thinks they can sell it for a few pounds. His son, Nathan, is there too. He wishes his dad would take him to a football match like other dads. The idea of selling the iron ends in disaster like most of Gaz's money-making ideas.

Nathan is the reason that Gaz needs money. Gaz is separated from Nathan's mother, Mandy. He is supposed to pay Mandy some money every month to help buy clothes and food for Nathan. But without a job, he can't pay. And now the courts have told him that if he does not pay ... he cannot see Nathan.

The American male strippers, the Chippendales, come to town. When Gaz discovers how much the women in the audience have paid to see the show, an idea begins to form in his mind. Over the next few weeks an unlikely group of six ordinary men of different shapes and sizes form themselves into a group of male strippers....

BACKGROUND AND THEMES

'The Full Monty' is set in the early 1980s. Gaz, the central character of the film, has been unemployed for three years. He gets some money to live on from the state. This used to be called 'unemployment benefit' and is now called the 'job-seekers allowance'. Most people call it 'the dole' - Gaz is on the dole. Gaz is also separated from his wife - she left him two years ago - and they have one son. By law he has to pay money every week to Nathan's mother to help support him - to pay for Nathan's food and clothes. Because Gaz is on the dole, the amount he has to pay every week is small - it's related to what someone earns. But Gaz hasn't even been paying that. It adds up and he now owes Mandy, his wife, £700 - about 14 weeks' dole money. Unless he finds the £700, he won't be allowed to see his son.

The film is set in Sheffield, an important steel manufacturing centre. People around the world eat with knives and forks made in Sheffield in the north of England. Today, Sheffield's factories still make steel, but over the past twenty years sophisticated machines have replaced human labour and the factories now have competition from the Far East. In the 1980s, jobs in heavy industries like steel disappeared across Britain. New jobs were created in the service industries, such as finance and tourism, but men who could make steel couldn't get jobs in those industries.

Although 'The Full Monty' represents the situation of many unemployed men in the north of England in the 1980s, in fact Sheffield is not now the grey and depressing place we see in the film. The producers had to work hard to find suitable locations to shoot the outdoor scenes in the film. There is now plenty of work for men like Gaz and Dave in the food industry and engineering, as well as steel-making. Now the fifth largest city in England, Sheffield is a thriving multi-cultural community. The city was very pleased to host 'The Full Monty', which has given it new status as a tourist attraction.

ABOUT THE FILM

Filmed in 1997 on location in Sheffield in the north of England, 'The Full Monty' made audiences laugh around the world. The producers didn't have much money and the actors didn't earn very much, but its mix of comedy, human tragedy and great music warmed people's hearts.

It was nominated for four Oscars, but unfortunately it had to compete against the film 'Titanic', which took a record 13 Oscars at the Academy Awards in Hollywood that year. It won only one Oscar - for Best Original Music. As well as original music, the soundtrack includes some well-known pop songs - Hot Stuff by Donna Summer, You Sexy Thing by Hot Chocolate and others by M People, Gary Glitter and Tom Jones.
the effect of unemployment on relationships between friends and between men and women. Although Gaz and Mandy love each other, their marriage cannot stand the strain of Gaz without work. Dave and J can love each other but have stopped sharing their problems and worries, leading to a tense atmosphere. Gerald lives a lie with his wife, Linda, because he is too ashamed to tell her that he has lost his job.

The Chippendales, the world-famous male strippers, appear in this story in a working men's club. These clubs have a long history, particularly in the industrial north. They were the working class version of the gentlemen's club, a private club open only to members and members' guests. Women were not allowed either in working men's clubs or in gentlemen's clubs. Many still exist, but these days women are allowed in too. As well as entertainment, working men's clubs often provide adult learning and re-training programmes.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Divide the class into two groups. Students imagine this situation: One group comes from a town with good employment for men and women. The other group comes from a town with no employment for men and some work for women. Divide each group into three groups: men, women and children. Each group discusses what their daily lives are like. Ask them to think about good things and bad things. They can think about: what they do all day, family life, food, free time, holidays, etc. Then each group describes their life. Make notes on the blackboard. Compare the ideas.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

Chapters 1-4

Before the class, write about ten sentences to summarize the story so far. Write each sentence on a separate card. Photocopy them as many times as necessary. In class, put students into small groups, and give each group a set of sentences. Ask students to put the events on the cards into the right order. Note down the order on the board.

Each group then prepares a short dialogue around one part of the story. Groups read or act their dialogues in turn.

Chapters 5-8

Students work in small groups. Ask each group to think of three different ways that Gaz and his friends could make some money, apart from doing the show. Compare ideas across the class. How many different ideas are there?

Chapters 9-11

Put students into small groups. Tell them to imagine that they are in the audience for the show. The men come on stage. They think of things to say about each of the men (BEFORE they take their clothes off!). Ask the groups to read out their answers to the class.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

Put students into small groups. Ask them to discuss the following. The Full Monty is about ordinary people from an ordinary city in the north of England. What did you learn from it about people and their lives and relationships? Write students’ suggestions on the board.

Glossary

It will be useful for your students to know the following new words. They are practised in the Before You Read sections of exercises at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on those in the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)

Chapters 1-2

application (n) an official, usually written, request for a job, place at college etc.
astonish (v) to surprise someone very much
band (n) a group of musicians who play together
canal (n) a long narrow area of water made for boats to travel along
cornet (n) a musical instrument that you blow into
depressed (adj) very sad
glider (n) a long thick piece of iron, used in building large buildings and bridges
naked (adj) not wearing any clothes
queue (n) a line of people or vehicles that are waiting for something
security guard (n) somebody who protects a building or object to keep it safe
steel (n) a strong hard metal used for making knives, cars, etc
strip (v) to take off all your clothes

Chapters 3-4

cart (n) a vehicle with two or four wheels that is pulled
credit card (n) a small plastic card which you use to buy things and pay for them later
gnome (n) a little person made of stone, which people put in their gardens
horror (n) a strong feeling of shock and fear
kid (n) a child
plaster (v) to spread a thick white liquid over the walls of a room to make the walls smooth

Chapters 5-6

alarm (n) a loud bell that warns people of danger
g-thing (n) a very small piece of material to cover the ‘private parts’ of the lower part of somebody’s body
hire purchase (n) this is when you buy something and pay for it in small parts over a long time
underpant (n) a short piece of underwear worn on the lower part of the body
worth (adj) to have a value of

Chapters 7-8

account (n) an arrangement that allows you to keep your money at a bank and take it out when you want to
benefit (n) money that you get from the government when you do not have a job
poster (n) a large notice or picture used to advertise something
shed (n) a small wooden building used for storing things

Chapters 9-11

arrest (v) if a police officer arrests someone, they take them away because they believe them to be guilty of a crime
cheer (v) to shout loudly when you like someone or something
funeral (n) a religious event for somebody when they have just died
MATCH THE NAMES WITH THE DESCRIPTIONS.

(a) Gaz (i) a man with no friends
(b) Nathan (ii) an unemployed steel worker
(c) the Chippendales (iii) a man who can't tell his wife that he has lost his job
(d) Dave (iv) Gaz's son
(e) Lomper (v) a group of male strippers from the USA
(f) Gerald (vi) a man who thinks he is too fat

CHAPTERS 1-2

Chapter 1

Fill the gaps below, using the following words.
band, security guard, girder, steel factory, inside, locks, stealing, as usual

Gaz, Dave and Nathan are walking through an empty
(a) ......................... It was Gaz's idea to steal the
(b) ......................... , but Gaz isn't carrying
anything. (c) ......................... Dave is doing all the
work. Nathan doesn't like his father
(d) ......................... Suddenly they hear the sound
of a (e) ......................... coming closer. One of the
band members, Lomper, is the factory
(f) ......................... When he sees the factory door
is open, he runs over and (g) ......................... It.

Gaz, Dave and Nathan are locked
(h) .........................

Nathan spends one day a week with his father. What
doyou think they do on a day out together? Write
about Nathan's day. How does he feel about it? Use
your own ideas.

Chapter 2

What do Jean and her friends talk about in the men's
toilet? What is Jean's problem with Dave? Does she
still love him?

Complete this Job Club application form for Gaz. You
may have to look back to Chapter 1 for some of the
details.
Surname: .............................................. Age: ............
No. of children: .................. Age of children: ..........

CHAPTERS 3-4

Chapter 3

Who ...
(a) doesn't like running?
(b) has a modern, warm and comfortable house?
(c) has a cold and untidy flat?
(d) is going to take Nathan to EuroDisney?
(e) says he will never strip in public?
(f) has been in prison?
(g) saves Lomper's life?

Gaz and Dave suggest four ways for Lomper to kill
himself. What are they?

Each idea in exercise 2 is no good for a different
reason. Match the reasons below to the ideas you
wrote down.
(i) he hasn't got any friends
(ii) he can't swim
(iii) they don't know anyone with a gun
(iv) he doesn't like heights

Chapter 4

Where is Gerald when these things happen?
(a) Gaz and Dave find out that he likes gnomes.
(b) Gerald shouts at Gaz, shaking with anger.
(c) He looks up and sees four faces watching him.
(d) He agrees to teach the men to dance.
(e) Gerald sees three gnomes fighting at the
window.

Work with a partner. One of you is the interviewer. The
other is Gerald. Interview Gerald for a job in your
company. Use this information.

Interviewer: Your company makes steel knives and
forks; you want a manager; the manager will be in
charge of the men who make the steel. You are
looking for someone who has experience of the steel
industry, is good with people, works hard, and
understands financial matters.
CHAPTERS 5-6

Chapter 5

1. Draw lines to match the descriptions and the names.

- looks like a bus driver
  - enthusiastic
- an excellent dancer
  - Gaz, good-looking
- very good-looking
  - Lomper, thin and pale
- a good dancer
  - Dave, not very active
- doesn't dance
  - Gerald, very good-looking
- old
  - Horse, middle-aged
- fat
  - Guy, not a bad dancer
- unable to keep in time
  - very attractive

2. Dave is having a bad time. What two things upset him in this part of the story?

Chapter 6

Answer these questions.

(a) In what way does Gaz feel differently about Gerald?
(b) Where does Lomper practise his dancing?
(c) How does Gerald's life change?
(d) As well as dancing, what do the men do together?
(e) Gaz says they need a meeting at Gerald's house to discuss their plans in private. What is his real reason?
(f) Who frightens the men from the hire purchase company away?
(g) What are they going to wear to do their show?

CHAPTERS 7-8

Chapter 7

Answer these questions.

1. Where does Gaz get his £100 from?
2. What does Gaz say to Sheryl and Louise to persuade them to come to the show?
3. What happens in the queue at the unemployment office?
4. Why is Gaz happier at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 8

Dave changes his mind about doing the show for lots of reasons.

1. he wants a real job, earning money
2. he thinks everyone at Asda will laugh at him
3. he thinks Jean will laugh at him
4. he's ashamed of his body

Which do you think is the most important reason for Dave? Put the reasons in order of importance, starting with the most important.

CHAPTERS 9-11

Chapter 9

Who ...

(a) is watching the final practice?
(b) turns up the music very loud?
(c) hears the music outside the factory?
(d) escape through a back door?
(e) is called Barrington Mitchell?
(f) watches the security video at the police station?
(g) is always 'ahead of the others'?
(h) tells Gaz to look at himself?
(i) never liked gnomes?

Chapter 10

In this chapter ...

(a) Gaz has an unexpected visitor. Who is it?
(b) Gerald has some good news and some bad news. What is the good news? What is the bad news?
(c) Gaz gets a letter from the court. What does it say?
(d) Dave and Gaz need black jackets. What for?
(e) Everyone in Sheffield recognizes the group? Why?

Chapter 11

1. Match the sentence halves.

(a) Alan tells Gaz that
(b) Gerald is a big success story
(c) Gerald wants to have some fun for one night
(d) Jean thinks Dave
(e) Dave is very happy
(f) the crowd loves
(g) the men throw their hats in the air
(i) and stand in front of the crowd, naked and proud.
(ii) is seeing another woman when she finds his G-string.
(iii) for the Job Club.
(iv) every minute of the performance.
(v) they've got to do the show.
(vi) because he can wear a suit for the rest of his life.
(vii) because Jean still loves him.

2. The story ends happily for Gaz, Lomper, Gerald and Dave. Describe the ways in which it ends happily for each of them.

3. Did you think the men would really go for the full monty? Why/Why not?

Activities after reading the book

1. The music for the film 'The Full Monty' included Hot Stuff by Donna Summer and You Sexy Thing by Hot Chocolate. What music would you choose for the story? Think of a song for each chapter. Show your ideas to a partner. Are they similar?

2. Write a quiz! Look at your book and write 15 questions. Then give your quiz to a partner. Answer the questions on your partner's quiz. Who got the most questions right?