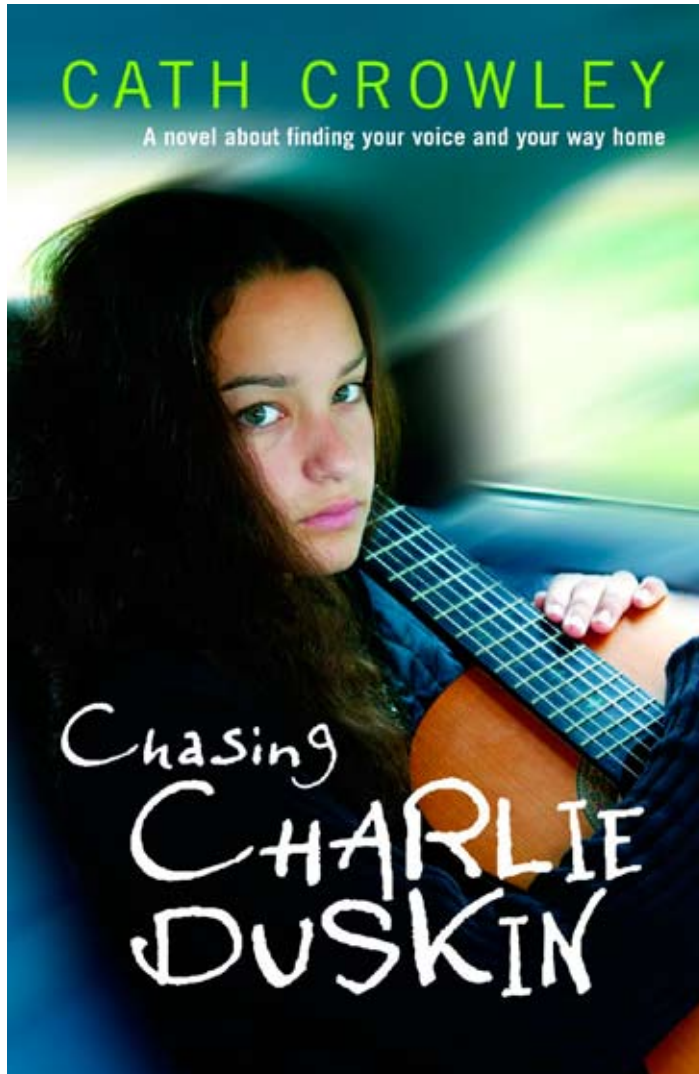


Chasing Charlie Duskin

Cath Crowley

Teachers' Notes



Short listed
for the 2006
Children's
Book Council,
Book of the
Year Award for
Older Readers



1. Group Discussion Points

These questions can be used to commence discussion and encourage students to think further about the themes within the book. Alternatively, you may wish for students to write their own individual responses to these questions.

What happened to Charlie's mum? Why is her family still so upset?

Why does Rose go to the freeway?

Why doesn't Dahlia want to be friends with Charlie any more?

Why does Rose break up with Luke?

Why does Charlie go off with Antony?

Why is it so important to Charlie that she performs in the talent quest?

Where does Charlie's dad keep disappearing to?

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2. Group Exercises

Major Themes

Organise small groups within the class, and allocate each group one of the major themes within the book. As the class reads have them make a list of events, words and concepts that relate to their theme.

Suggested themes include:

- acceptance
- individuality
- violence
- hiding
- tolerance
- death
- fear

Similarities and Differences

At the beginning of the book Rose and Charlie were very different. Yet they grew more similar as they realised they shared similar hopes and fears. Organise a class brainstorming session comparing the differences between the two girls, and then the similarities. Areas to think about may be relationships with family, dreams and hopes for the future, fears, character strengths and what they learn through the course of the novel.

Additional Characters

We are only allowed glimpses of some of the secondary characters. Allocate one of the following characters to each small group and have them list everything they know about the character. Think about behaviour, family, relationships, concerns and the behaviour of other characters towards them.

Characters you may wish to investigate are:

- Mrs Butler
- Mrs Robbie
- Charlie's Grandpa
- Dahlia
- Mr Robbie
- Mr Duskin
- Antony

3. Extended Tasks

This book is written from the perspective of both Charlie and Rose. Consider how some of the events in the book would be seen from another character's viewpoint. Using the character of Dave, rewrite one of the following scenes from the book using Dave as the protagonist.

- camping (pp 116 -27)
- stealing the car and rescuing Charlie (pp 139-49)
- bitten by a snake (pp 175 -81)

Cath Crowley uses metaphors through out the book. There are cooking metaphors, science metaphors, car metaphors and of course music metaphors.

Have each class member investigate:

- What is a metaphor?
- What different types of metaphors can be found within the book?
- Do you think this writing technique has been used effectively throughout the book?

Students could design a CD cover that explores the themes in the book. They could make up new song titles that explore the issues Charlie is dealing with. Perhaps there could be an explanation, written as Charlie, given under each song, explaining why she wrote them.

4. Creative Writing Tasks

You may wish for students to keep their own journal whilst reading the book, giving a personal reflection on the significant issues or themes. Some suggestions of subjects for journal entries are:

Charlie Duskin uses her guitar and music to speak for her. Choose a song that speaks for you and explain why.

Charlie uses the names of songs as a way of describing things that happen in her life. Make a list of song titles that would best describe different aspects of your life.

Charlie talks about the different soundtracks that suit people. Rose is a life thumping with heavy lines of bass. What sort of soundtrack best describes you? Why?

Charlie says that everything in the world has a voice, but most people don't hear hard enough. Close your eyes and listen. List every noise you can hear. Now list sounds that you imagine, but can't hear. See how many you can write.

5. Essay Questions

Charlie hides behind her guitar. What does Rose hide behind?

The tagline on the front cover states '*A novel about finding your voice and your way home*'. Do you think this refers only to Charlie, or is it also relevant to other characters within the book? Discuss.

"People who are good at things do them." (p. 203)

Rose is talking about Charlie's hidden music ability. Do you think this statement is true for other characters? Discuss this statement using 3 characters from *Chasing Charlie Duskin*.



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