

# **Charley Skedaddle Study Guide**

**Charley Skedaddle by Patricia Beatty**

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## Plot Summary

Charley Quinn is twelve years old the summer after his older brother, Johnny, is killed at Gettysburg. Charley can't wait for the opportunity to avenge Johnny's death by killing off some Rebel soldiers. Meanwhile, he works as an errand boy for his older sister, Noreen. He picks up supplies and hats for her sewing business and delivers them when Noreen is finished with them. Charley is a member of the street gang known as the Bowery Boys. Their arch rivals are the Dead Rabbits. As Charley is returning home one day with a hatbox, he encounters a member of the rival gang and gets into a fight. A police officer breaks it up and takes Charley home. Noreen is angry that he has ruined his good clothes and that he had been fighting. While Charley is changing, he hears Noreen talking with her fiancé. At the end of that conversation, Noreen agrees that if Charley can't stay out of trouble she'll send him to a school for incorrigible boys.

Charley is furious and goes out where he encounters a military parade. He recognizes Con Sullivan, a man he believes to have been Johnny's friend. As he pours out his troubles to Con, Charley decides that he wants to run away and join the army. Though he's only twelve, Con encourages the decision and helps him sneak aboard a military transport ship. When they arrive at their destination, Charley is taken on as a drummer boy. He plans to take the first opportunity to avenge Johnny's death. But when the fighting starts, Charley discovers that he's afraid. He sees a man who had befriended him lying dead and picks up the man's weapon, firing on an enemy soldier. The elation he'd expected is replaced by horror that he has taken a man's life and Charley runs away. As he runs, some men call him "Charley Skedaddle." Some try to stop him but he gets away and is taken prisoner by the Confederates. A Confederate officer tells Charley that he doesn't belong in prison and advises that he go west.

Charley escapes to the Blue Ridge Mountains but is hungry. Granny Bent catches him trying to steal eggs from her hen house and takes him in. She's a healer though some think she's a witch. She begins to teach Charley about farming and herbs and he begins to take pride in his abilities. When Granny is called away to assist with a birth, a panther attacks, killing most of the chickens. That night, Charley hears the cat on the roof. The next morning he kills the animal as it springs to attack him. He then has to go find Granny who has fallen and hurt her leg. Charley helps her home and nurses her back to health.

Before it's time for him to leave the mountains in front of the invading Confederate Army, Charley learns that bravery is doing what's necessary even when there's no one around to witness the act. Armed with this new self-confidence, Charley prepares to leave the mountains but vows that he'll someday return.



# Chapters 1 through 4

## Chapters 1 through 4 Summary

Twelve-year-old Charley Quinn is on his way home through the Bowery when he encounters a boy named Tom Bailey. Charley is a member of the street gang known as the Bowery Boys and Tom is a member of a rival gang known as the Dead Rabbits. The two gangs have a history of fighting. Charley's older brother, Johnny, was a member of the Bowery Boys in 185 when the two gangs had clashed violently. But Johnny can't help Charley now because he was killed in the Civil War in the battle at Gettysburg, serving with the 140th New York Veterans Volunteers. Charley knows there will be no help from his fellow gang members who are all busy at a nearby arcade. Charley is dressed in his best clothes because he's been making deliveries for his sister, Noreen. Noreen runs a business sewing trim on hats for ladies and makes a good living. Charley's parents are dead. Charley knows he shouldn't fight but also knows he can't back down from a fight. He's quickly punched in the face and knows it will leave a mark that will alert Noreen to the fact that he'd been in a fight. Soon Charley is atop the other boy even though it means Charley's pants are dirty from the wet pavement. Just then, a police officer arrives to break up the fight.

The officer, known as a Metropolitan, lets Tom go and tells Charley that he's not going to be arrested. Instead, the officer plans to take Charley home to Noreen's apartment on Chrystie Street. The officer virtually drags Charley along and he's relieved that none of his fellow Bowery Boys spots him. The officer knocks at the apartment door and Noreen is first concerned then angry that Charley had been fighting. Noreen's fiancé, Michael Demarest, is there as well. After the officer leaves, Noreen tells Charley that they are all going out for the evening but that Charley will have to stay home. When he's gone to the other room to clean up and change his clothes, he hears Noreen and Michael talking. Michael says that he'll endure Charley's presence once he and Noreen are married, but that he won't put up with Charley's misbehavior. Michael says that he intends to send Charley to a place for "incorrigible boys" if Charley can't behave. Noreen hesitates but Charley hears Mrs. O'Neill, the seamstress who works for Noreen, say that Michael has the right idea. Noreen agrees that Charley has to learn to behave himself.

In Chapter Two, Charley puts on the clothing that all the Bowery Boys wear and leaves the apartment though Noreen had told him to stay home. A short time later, he hears a parade and watches as soldiers march down the street. He hears his name called out and sees Con Sullivan, a man who had been with Johnny at Gettysburg. Con says that he'd been wounded but has rejoined to help the cause. Charley runs to Con and tells him that Noreen plans to put him in an orphanage. He asks Con to take him along and Con helps him sneak onto the boat with all the other soldiers. Con leaves Charley alone soon after arriving on the boat. Con, like most of the soldiers, spends his time drinking and gambling. Charley is befriended by a soldier named Jem Miller. Jem says that Con had been paid to rejoin. When Charley says that Con had lied, Jem doesn't seem surprised. Jem tells Charley that he probably won't be allowed to fight for the Union



Army but that he might be taken on as a servant for an officer. Charley is angry and knows that he can't possibly avenge Johnny's death if he's a servant.

In Chapter Three, Jem tells Con that he's going to have to pay Charley's way home. Con says that he's gambled away all the money he'd been paid to join. He asks to borrow money from Jem but Jem says that he hadn't been paid to join and had left what he had with his wife. Con suggests that Charley join the army and Jem points out that he's only twelve. Con is unconcerned and doesn't care that Charley is in a rough spot. Con says that Charley has at least escaped from the trouble he'd faced in New York. Charley recognizes Con's knife as belonging to Johnny. Con says that he'd won it from Johnny. Con says that he had only returned Johnny's watch to Noreen because he has a watch of his own and that he'd wanted to get a look at Johnny's pretty sister. Jem advises Charley to find an officer. Charley remains behind in the ship when everyone else leaves. When he finds an officer, he tries to lie about his age but is so small that he has to admit that he's not yet sixteen. He's taken to another officer who says that Charley can be the regiment's new drummer boy. He's told to board a train to reach the headquarters where he's to be assigned.

Charley is filled with plans for all he'll do when he's given the chance to be involved in a battle. He has shot guns in an arcade setting in the Bowery and is good at hitting targets there. He believes that he'll be able to do the same on the battlefield if he's only given an opportunity. Charley is to join the 140th, the same regiment Johnny had joined. He wants to prove himself to these men who served with Johnny. Charley believes that they'll be impressed with Johnny's little brother. But on the trip, he's teased unmercifully. One man estimates his age at nine or ten years and says that Charley should be sent home to grow. Charley doesn't handle the teasing well but doesn't pick any real fights with these grown men.

As they travel, Charley listens to the talk of the soldiers around him. He learns that there are rumors that General Grant and General Meade are both at the headquarters at Culpeper where Charley is headed. The soldiers believe that the presence of two such powerful generals means that there's to be a big battle soon. Others point out that spring is near and that means the fighting will resume in earnest.

In Chapter Four, the train arrives at Brandy Station, Virginia. Charley gets off with the others in his boxcar but is told to take the train to the next stop. He finds that Jem is in this boxcar and he feels better after finding this man he now considers his friend. When they arrive at their next destination, Jem tells Charley to "fall in" behind the soldiers. He then has to explain that "fall in" means march along behind them. Charley does as Jem says until he finds a sergeant who says that they are in need of a drummer. The sergeant says he remembers Johnny. He takes Charley along to a building. It's the Virginia Hotel where officers are headquartered. Charley is taken inside by the sergeant and introduced to another officer, this one a captain. The sergeant says that Charley has "special reasons" for wanting to join the 140th. The captain calls for Silas Gorman, the regiment's current drummer. Gorman confirms that he's now sixteen and that he wants to join the regular military rather than continuing as a drummer. The captain tells



Gorman that he'll have to work training Charley each morning and drill with the soldiers in the afternoon.

Gorman takes Charley to the building where they sleep, explaining things to him along the way. Charley gets a look at Meade and Grant as they walk and is surprised at Grant's uniform. Charley confirms that he's hungry and he and Gorman stop off at the kitchen where a black man, a former slave named Marcus, is overseeing preparations for an upcoming meal. Charley asks Gorman if drummers ever join the fight. Gorman says they aren't supposed to but would have the opportunity if they picked up someone else's musket during a battle. Charley promises himself that he'll do that at the first opportunity.

## Chapters 1 through 4 Analysis

Charley doesn't like Michael Demarest and it's probably at least partly because Michael is holding a special place in Noreen's life. Charley can remember the sound of Noreen's sewing machine when he was very little and says that it had been like a song lulling him to sleep at night. He's depended on Noreen for a long time and is bound to be jealous that she has someone else in her life. Charley mentions that Michael is a "pen pusher" who works at a bank. Charley seems to consider this an unacceptable occupation for a man. Later, Charley will be proud of his own skills on a farm and it seems that even while in New York, he's seeking this ability to work with his hands though he can't put a name to it. Finally, Charley believes that Michael is money-hungry and that he knows Noreen makes a good living through her sewing business.

Charley feels betrayed at Noreen's agreeing with Michael. Charley recounts his day to himself. He's dressed in nice clothing though it's not what he would normally wear. He leaves off the traditional uniform worn by all the members of the Bowery Boys in order to impress Noreen's customers. He is polite and professional as he makes deliveries and picks up the items Noreen needs for her business. Charley knows that the money paid to Noreen is for her hard work but also knows that some of the tips are due to his manners and charm. Charley needs to feel needed and appreciated. The fact that Noreen is upset by his fighting overrides any pride she might have felt in his help. Charley can't see anything wrong with the fighting but Noreen can't understand why Charley clings to the lifestyle.

When Charley tells Jem what he'd heard in the other boxcar about the presence of Meade and Grant at Culpepper, Jem says it probably does mean a big battle ahead. Jem then says that he believes Meade could have ended the war at Gettysburg if he'd chased the Confederate Army rather than pulling back. Charley says that perhaps the Union Army can put an end to the war with the upcoming battle but Jem points out the countryside which is rural and familiar to the Confederates. At one point Charley sees an older black man and knows that the man had probably been a slave until Lincoln set slaves free. At the thought of slavery, Charley flashes mad. This is the first time his deep hatred for slavery is seen. While avenging Johnny is Charley's primary mission and becoming a hero is his next, there's little doubt that Charley understands the slavery

issue and wants to help put a stop to it. However, with Charley, this issue is mainly lost behind his need to be a hero and avenge his brother's death.



# Chapters 5 through 8

## Chapters 5 through 8 Summary

In Chapter Five, Gorman begins showing Charley around the camp and telling him about his duties. Gorman tells Charley that he's to be always near the captain while he's on duty. He has to be accessible anytime the officer wants him. He does errands, helps with maps, carries water and anything else that's asked. But as the drummer, he also calls the men to their various duties throughout the day. Gorman says that the drummer must, above all else, learn the codes well. He must also never be late or face a serious punishment. Gorman says he had been switched once for being late. Gorman says that the army, unlike school, doesn't tolerate tardiness. Charley laughs to himself, thinking of the severe punishments handed out by the nuns who teach at the Catholic school he had attended in New York.

Charley finds Jem later that day and reveals that he's being paid thirteen dollars a month to be the drummer. Jem says that's the same as he's making and asks Charley what he plans to do with the money. Charley says he should send some of it to Noreen and Jem suggests that Charley should also send his sister a letter to tell her he's alright. He warns Charley not to reveal anything about the war or their location in keeping with military policy. Charley writes the letter and begins by saying that he's left in order to make it easier for Noreen to marry Michael. He says that he wants to be a hero like Johnny and urges Noreen not to worry. Jem and Charley talk some more and Jem says that the guards who have been watching out for deserters aren't as diligent now that the men are in camp. He says few will run away until there's another battle. Charley says that anyone who runs away is nothing but a coward. Jem agrees.

The following day, Gorman takes Charley in a wagon far from the camp in order to begin the practice on the drums. Gorman shows Charley a rough grave marker made of wood. He says it's the grave of a Confederate soldier and that there are others buried in shallow graves in the area. Gorman says that if they look around, they'll likely find bones. He asks Charley if he'd like to wander around a little but Charley is spooked by the scene and the thought of finding a skull. He says that he wants to get started on the drums right away. Just as Gorman is about to teach Charley the first of the signals he'll have to learn, Charley asks if there's a chance the Confederate troops camped nearby can hear them. Gorman says that the wind is blowing to the north and that if the direction changes so that the wind might carry the sound of their practicing, they'll return to camp. With that assurance, practice begins.

In Chapter Six, almost two months have passed and Charley goes out almost every day to practice. Usually, Gorman is his teacher but he sometimes works with other drummers as his guide. He has an official drummer's uniform, newly sewn, and feels good about it. One day Charley and Gorman see Con Sullivan being punished. His thumbs are tied together and tied to a tree limb so that Con has to stand on his toes to relieve the pressure. Charley doesn't know what Con has done to deserve the





punishment but Con yells angrily when he sees Charley watching. Jem, meanwhile, has been promoted to Corporal and is always happy to see Charley. Gorman says that after only two months, Charley is able to manage all the signals - a feat that Gorman says had taken him six months. Charley is pleased at the compliment.

One evening, Charley is talking to Jem and some other soldiers. The talk turns to an upcoming march that means a battle is likely. Jem says that some soldiers believe they'll die when it's their time, and that their time might very well occur on the battlefield. Others believe that each battle they survive makes it more likely that they'll be killed in the next. Charley asks if drummers get shot and Jem admits that in the heat of battle, a drummer might be shot. As the men prepare to go into battle, Colonel Ayers arrives and gives a speech. He says that desertion will not be tolerated and orders that any man who is running away be shot. Ayers pledges to personally shoot anyone he sees running from the battle. That night, they're ordered to move out. Jem has told Charley that the march will be difficult and Charley assures his friend that he'll be alright. But after hours of walking, Charley can barely keep moving. He's finally picked up by an officer and rides the rest of the night on the back of a horse, dozing against the officer's back. They stop later in the midst of a thick forest called the Wilderness. Charley is uneasy and dreams that night of being involved in a fight with Johnny against the Dead Rabbits. In his dream, he and Johnny are losing the fight.

In Chapter Seven, Charley wakes to hear gunshots and learns that the advance parties of both armies are involved in skirmishes. Following orders, Charley sounds out the order for the men to assemble. The men are soon headed into battle. Charley runs to keep up with his commanding officer to be on hand when there's a need to sound out an order. They come to a clearing known as Sanders Field and it's here that Charley sees the first Confederate soldiers. At first, it seems that the Confederate soldiers have given up and are running away. The Union soldiers run after them, whooping as they go. Charley continues to run with his regiment. Then it's apparent that the Confederates aren't really running away but have merely set a trap, leading the Union soldiers into a corner where they are caught in crossfire.

Charley catches sight of Jem, running and yelling his fellow soldiers on. Then Jem is shot in the forehead and falls to the ground. Charley rushes to his friend, but Jem is already dead. Charley grabs Jem's musket and carefully aims at a Confederate soldier. He pulls the trigger and the man falls. During the fighting, Charley's drum is struck by a bullet and he knows the drum is beyond repair. As he suddenly pays attention to the fighting and realizes that he's shot and killed a man, he is hit with the reality of the situation. He completely forgets his plans for glory and his vow to avenge Johnny. Charley begins to run away from the fighting. Gorman is wounded and calls out to Charley but Charley keeps running. Others yell at him as he races past. One officer tries to hit him but Charley evades the blow. Con calls out that he's "Charley Skedaddle," but even that isn't enough to make Charley stop running. He finds a place to hide and begins to cry.

In Chapter Eight, Charley is chased from his hiding place by fire, the result of the battle. He's quickly captured by a Confederate soldier who forces him to march along. They



walk for an hour before coming to a Confederate encampment. Charley hears someone call out to General Lee and catches a glimpse of the famous Confederate leader. Then Charley is summoned to an officer's tent. As he'd been instructed, he gives only his name and rank - Charles Quinn, drummer. Charley tells the man that he'd run away after he saw Jem killed but doesn't say that he'd shot a Confederate soldier first. He does tell about being called Charley Skedaddle. The officer tells Charley that he should be taken prisoner and if he were, he'd be sent to Andersonville. The officer says the conditions at that prison are horrible and urges Charley to run away. He suggests that Charley go west in an effort to avoid both the Confederate forces who would likely take him prisoner and the Union forces who would punish him as a deserter.

Charley spends the entire day hiding. He thinks about home and wonders what the army will tell Noreen about his disappearance. He picks the stripes off his uniform to make it look less like military issue. Then there's nothing to do but wait for an opportunity to make a run west.

## Chapters 5 through 8 Analysis

While Charley is being shown around the camp for the first time, Gorman points out a soldier who had gotten into a fight with Johnny. Gorman says that Johnny was winning when an officer broke up the fight. Charley has already heard Johnny described as a "hell raiser," and seems proud of that fact. Charley almost brags to Gorman that he's as tough as Johnny and that he is a good shot. But he stops himself, thinking that he'll let it be a surprise when he has the chance to show everyone in the heat of battle. Charley's attitude is that it won't account for anything unless everyone sees it, a misconception that he'll later come to understand. Another interesting fact about Charley's nature at this point is that he continues to focus on the bad aspects of Johnny's character as being those he most admires. The fact that Johnny was fighting with a fellow soldier isn't a positive aspect of Johnny's character, but Charley can't see that.

Charley seems amazed to consider that a drummer is in any real danger during a battle. He believes he is a good shot from his practice at the arcades on the Bowery and believes that being a good shot will mean he's an asset on the battlefield. In Charley's mind, all that's necessary in battle is to take time to aim at a single target and fire. He believes that everyone will be doing that and that means that the drummer, who isn't a direct threat to the enemy, won't ever be the target. Jem explains that in the heat of battle, a person doesn't always take time to aim. Charley will find this out for himself when he's involved in a battle.

As Charley is hiding and waiting for the opportunity to make a run away from the Confederate camp, he thinks about home and Noreen. He is no longer wishing for the opportunity to battle against the Confederates to avenge Johnny and is no longer filled with thoughts of being a hero in battle. He is forced to realize that war is horrible and that he isn't ready to face it. The fact that Charley realizes this is the first step toward an emerging maturity that will become more evident over the coming months. At this moment, Charley only wishes that he could return to what he knows as being safe - his



home with Noreen. Charley has conveniently forgotten his argument with Noreen and vows that if he could only return he'd be willing to accept Michael as Noreen's choice for a husband. He says that he would also give up his membership in the Bowery Boys if it would make Noreen happy. This is a huge concession for Charley because he holds that membership dear. He'd been very sad to take off the Bowery Boy uniform when he'd arrived at the army camp.



# Chapters 9 through 12

## Chapters 9 through 12 Summary

In Chapter Nine, Charley remains in hiding the following morning until flames become very near and he's forced out of the thicket. He finds that the Confederate camp is gone and there are only a few soldiers left behind to bury the dead. Charley knows that he has to head west but can't determine which direction that is. He remembers a lesson from a botany class in school and looks for moss growing on trees. He's certain the moss is growing on the north side of the trees and heads west based on that information. Charley stops and rummages through a dead soldier's pack and findshardtack, which is something like a biscuit. He puts it in his pocket and begins walking. He fills his water canteen from that of another dead soldier. Charley continues walking, running from a soldier who calls out to him. He finally finds the road they'd marched in on and knows that he's finally headed west.

Charley encounters a man on a wagon headed west and asks for a ride. The man looks at Charley in confusion but invites him to climb up. Charley begins to talk and pours out his adventures, his shame at having run away and his fears. The man never interrupts but listens intently, sometimes looking at Charley with confusion on his face. When the man indicates that he's turning off the main road, Charley climbs down, handing the man money to pay for his ride. The man then speaks, saying that he'd "listened hard" to Charley during their ride together and had understood nothing. He asks where Charley is from but doesn't wait for an answer. Charley finds an abandoned house with no furniture. He sleeps near a rear door so that he'll have a chance to get away if he's discovered. He knows that he'll have to travel a great deal farther to the west before he'll feel safe.

In Chapter Ten, Charley believes he'll reach the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains very quickly but soon discovers that the mountains are farther away than he'd thought. At one point he has to hide in the bushes along the road to evade cavalry passing by. Later, a man rushes past Charley slowing down only long enough to yell that the patrols are up ahead, searching for deserters. Charley hides. Charley sees the men coming down the road from his hiding place and watches until they are past.

He discovers a slight trail and follows it, expecting that it will eventually bring him out again to the road some distance away. But it doesn't. Instead, the path twists and Charley arrives at a clearing with four buildings. He recognizes it as a farm only because of other farms he's seen during his time with the army, having never seen anything like it in New York City. He knows that the two larger buildings will be the house and the shed, and that one of the smaller buildings must be a hen house. Charley decides that he'll take some eggs and leave a penny each for them in the nests. He is worried that there might be a dog. He throws a rock against the shed wall and is reassured when there's no barking. Charley sees someone in the house and waits for awhile before making his way to the henhouse. He's inside when there's suddenly a



loud hissing and honking. Before he can identify it, he's confronted by an old woman whom he initially mistakes for a man. He also discovers that the hissing came from a goose.

The old woman asks his name and he tells her it's Charley Skedaddle. She says that her name is Jerusha Bent but that people call her Granny. She is a healer, part Indian, and says that Charley had been trying to steal her eggs. He objects, saying that he'd been planning to pay for them. Granny tells him that she doesn't want his money but says she intends to keep an eye on him. When Charley asks why, she says that she wants Charley to stay with her to do chores. Granny tells him that most of the people who live in the hills would kill him if they knew he was a Yankee soldier. When Charley asks why she doesn't, she says only that she has her reasons.

In Chapter Eleven, Charley washes up using a pitcher of water Granny points out. He checks the door but discovers that it's barred higher than he can reach. He discovers that the window is nailed shut. Charley is very hungry and decides that he'll eat and get some sleep, and will worry the next day about finding a way to leave. Granny brings out a huge plate of eggs, bacon and cornbread. While Charley eats, Granny tells him that she gathers "yarbs" that she uses to heal people. Charley soon figures out that she's talking about herbs. He's heard only of sarsaparilla, but she mentions others, including sassafras. Granny takes his canteen from him because it is engraved with the Union Army insignia. She says she'll bury it to ensure that no one discovers that he's a deserter. They talk some more and Charley learns that Granny has a mule named Canaan. She questions him and he tells her that he knows how to read and that he is Catholic.

Granny sends Charley to the loft to sleep. It's a long time before Charley is able to fall asleep because he's thinking about the bandits and other dangers Granny has mentioned. He wonders if they're true and worries about his ability to survive. The next morning Granny puts Charley to work planting corn. She tells him that getting the seed in the ground is all that's necessary now but that later he'll have to weed the little plants. When Charley points out a flatter spot of ground as a better place for a garden, Granny says that's the graveyard where her five children are buried. She says her husband, Isaac, is buried in Franklin. Charley is curious about Isaac. Granny says that he was a carpenter in Franklin but says only that he had other work to do while they lived in the hills. Charley wonders if he was a moonshiner but Granny, as if sensing his thoughts, says that he didn't make whiskey.

Granny makes it clear that she didn't like Franklin because, with several hundred people, it was overly-populated for her taste. She says that she had only agreed to go there because Isaac had work there and because she had been tired of a long-term feud with the McRae family. She says that the two families have feuded for generations and that Charley, once it's known he's living with Granny, may have to fight Cois McRae as well. Charley says the one thing he does know is fist fighting.

The night after the corn is planted, Granny questions Charley about his life in New York. The idea of the crowded city with its congested streets and people who have no land of



their own is foreign to her. When it's time for bed, she tells him that he needs to get his rest because they're going to go to Hearn Hollow the following morning. Granny tells Charley that he's not to speak for fear that people might figure out that he's from the north and is, therefore, a Yankee deserter. The people of the hills support the Confederates. When they reach Hearn Hollow, Charley sees a church, a store and a few houses. There are several men standing around and one asks about Charley. Granny says that she'd found him wandering in the woods and that he apparently wasn't able to speak. When someone asks his name, Granny says she simply calls him "Boy." Charley doesn't like it but remains quiet. Granny trades the herbs she's gathered for the items she needs from the store, including kerosene. She and Charley are leaving the store when a boy steps up and introduces himself as Cois. Charley looks at Granny and she nods slightly. In Chapter Twelve, Charley prepares to fight but isn't ready for Cois's tactics. He is quickly on the ground and Granny breaks it up.

Cois's abuse turns verbal and he calls Granny "poison" as she and Charley are leaving. After they're away from town, Charley says that the next time he meets Cois, he'll be ready with better tactics for Cois's way of fighting. Granny asks why he'd want to fight again and Charley says because of what Cois called Granny and what he called Charley - a witch boy. Granny says that's reason enough. Summer arrives and Charley is amazed at the beauty he sees in nature all around him. One day, a girl arrives and Charley is taken by her beauty. Her name is Sarie Griffen and she says that her sister is about to give birth. Granny prepares to go help with the delivery but locks Charley in the henhouse first. Sarie asks if it's necessary and Granny says she doesn't want Charley to wander off and get lost. Charley is angry but powerless. The scenario is repeated a short time later but this time Charley spreads some rotten boards and gets out. He plans to run away but soon encounters a man who recognizes Charley from his trip to Hearn Hollow with Granny. The man, thinking Charley is unable to talk and is lost, takes him back to Granny's. Charley gets back in the henhouse.

On a Sunday, Charley and Granny attend church when a visiting preacher is traveling through. Charley is watching when Cois goes over to Sarie and whispers in her ear. Sarie turns red and Charley fights Cois again, this time making Cois's nose bleed before the preacher breaks it up. Charley realizes that the fight is different from those he'd fought in the Bowery because it is for a purpose - he is standing up to Cois and standing up for Sarie.

## Chapters 9 through 12 Analysis

When Charley first meets Jerusha Bent, she tells him that she's part Indian, is a healer, is the one everyone calls for the birth of a child, and that some call her a witch. Charley doesn't know what she means by most of this, but he soon discovers that she can tell what he's thinking even when he gives no outward sign of it. What's interesting is that Granny almost immediately insists that Charley stay with her. She says that she needs him to work for her and that he needs her to keep him safe. Charley doesn't really believe the second part and time passes before he has an opportunity to leave. By then, he no longer wants to go. It seems likely that Granny has seen a need in Charley and



believes she can fill that need. She makes Charley work and though he is not happy at being forced to perform the chores, he soon develops a pride in his ability to accomplish tasks with his hands.

When Granny asks for Charley's name the night she finds him in the hen house, he tells her that his name is Charley Skedaddle. Charley had decided earlier that he is nothing now but a deserter and that he won't be known as Charley Quinn again until he reaches safety in the west. Granny doesn't question the name though she knows skedaddle isn't his last name. Much later, when Charley gains back his self-respect and his self-confidence, he tells her that his name is Charley Quinn.

The story Granny tells about Charley is a series of lies apparently designed to keep Charley safe from those who would harm him just because he's a Union soldier. She says that she found him wandering in the woods, that he seems bright enough but that he can't talk. She will later expand on that story, saying that Charley had been searching for family members who are no longer living in the hills and that her herbal remedies have cleared up his thinking and cured his speech.



# Chapters 13 through 17

## Chapters 13 through 17 Summary

In Chapter Thirteen, fall arrives and Charley has learned the names of trees, herbs and birds. He's also learned the healing properties of some plants and the dangers of others. There's seldom news of the war and though it hurts Charley each time he hears of another battle, he longs for news. Charley hears the call of a bird one night that is unfamiliar and he asks Granny about it. She says that she isn't sure what it's called but says that there might be an owl interested in the chickens. She sends Charley to the henhouse to check on them and once he's inside, she locks him in. Charley is furious and quickly slips out through the rotten boards. He goes to the window of the little cabin and peers inside. He sees Granny is talking to a man - a large black man wearing a Union Army uniform. Charley tries to figure out why Granny wants to keep Charley away from the man, why the man is there and why he and Granny are obviously on such friendly terms, but he can't come up with a reasonable explanation. When the man is gone, Charley goes into the house instead of returning to the henhouse, even though he knows it will mean that Granny knows she can't keep him locked up anymore. Granny isn't really surprised that Charley can get out and says she's glad she doesn't need to lock him in anymore.

Granny says that the man is Thad Porter and that he isn't a deserter. Instead, Thad is a former slave who is camped with the Union Army some distance away. He's been given permission to visit Granny. Granny says she had met Thad and his little sister when the two had been running away from their owners in the South several years before. Granny then says that she and Isaac had helped with the Underground Railroad, a complex system of hideouts aimed at helping slaves escape. For some fifteen years, they'd been a "station" in the system.

In Chapter Fourteen, Charley shows Granny how he'd escaped from the henhouse and she tells him that it's time for him to repair the hole so that some animal can't get into the henhouse. He sets to work on the task and as he's nailing the board on, he realizes that he's pleased with his ability to make the repairs. People drop in on a regular basis in search of Granny's healing. She administers herbal cures and advice and receives meat, vegetables, honey and other commodities in return. On one occasion, Granny and Charley go to Hearn Hollow to have her corn ground and on another they attend church to hear a traveling preacher. Fall arrives in a glory of color followed by snow in December. Charley has seen snow before but it's always turned to dirty slush under the many feet and wagon wheels of New York City. Here, however, the snow is dazzling and Charley is amazed.

Christmas is not celebrated until January sixth, Epiphany. Charley whittles a whistle for Granny and says that she can use it to summon him if he's away from the house when she needs him. She thanks him and says she doesn't have a gift for him, but they eat a wonderful dinner. After the meal, Granny says that it's a holiday tradition to fire off a gun.





She shoots a pistol and has Charley shoot the rifle. The gun is huge and Charley knows it's going to kick. He doesn't want to fire it but faces his fear and does even though it knocks him to the ground. Afterward, Granny shows him how to take care of the weapon and how to reload. Granny tells him one night about a "painter," that Charley eventually figures out is really a "panther." The huge cat has roamed the area for several years and Granny predicts it will return soon. She says that it leaves a distinctive track because one paw is turned in. One night they hear the cry of the big cat and Charley is afraid but Granny says the cat will pass by.

In Chapter Fifteen, the talk returns to the panther and Granny says it's feasible that the cat would attack a human. She says she's never killed the animal because it hasn't harmed her or her livestock. That Friday, Granny and Charley travel to the Hodder farm where a woman is due to have a baby soon. Granny leaves some herbs to help the woman prepare and they return home. They talk on the way and Charley notes the steep drops that occur at several points along the road. A few days later Jacob Hodder calls for Granny and she leaves Charley at home. That night there's a heavy rain and Charley hears the panther on top of the roof. Though the big cat is scratching at the shingles, Charley knows she can't possibly get in. Just the same, he's afraid. The next morning, Charley finds the side of the henhouse caved in and most of the hens dead. That night, Charley is so nervous that he sleeps on Granny's bed. He has Malindy inside as well as the chickens that survived the panther attack. Like the previous night, the panther scratches at the roof and Charley spends a great deal of the night awake, listening to the sounds and knowing that the big cat will likely be gone with the sunrise.

When Charley steps outside that morning, he is cautious and has the rifle with him, just in case he encounters the cat. He has barely gotten off the porch when he hears the cat, still on the roof. Charley barely has time to aim and fire. He falls to the ground from the kick of the gun and the cat hits the ground, dead. Charley then heads to the Hodder farm to check on Granny. Jacob is not at home but an older man says that Granny left two days earlier. Charley heads back to the cabin he shares with Granny, looking for signs of her along the way. He finds where Canaan had slipped off the road. Though the mule and Granny are both alive, Granny is injured and weak from her ordeal. She's also on the opposite side of the river but Canaan doesn't want to cross.

In Chapter Sixteen, Charley pushes Canaan into the river and the mule eventually makes the swim to the other bank, pulling Charley along through the cold water. Charley manages to help Granny onto the mule's back and they make it home. There, Granny sees the dead panther and hears Charley's story of how and why he killed the animal. Charley helps Granny to bed and cooks up the herbs she needs to begin recovering. Jacob Hodder, having heard that she hadn't returned, comes to check on her and is obviously amazed that Charley has killed the panther. He helps Charley skins the animal and stretches the hide on the wall of the shed. One day Charley and Granny are talking and he reveals that he'd shot and killed a Confederate soldier. He describes where he shot the man and Granny reassures him that the man probably didn't die. Charley says that he's come to feel at home with Granny and that he'd like to stay on with her. She says she's pleased to have him.



In Chapter Seventeen, it's early spring and Granny has recovered. One day Cois comes by to pick up some herbs and he and Charley start talking. Cois admits that he would have been afraid to fire the big rifle Charley had used to kill the panther and Charley admits that he doesn't like it either. Charley tells Cois that he shouldn't tease Sarie, even when the purpose is just to make her blush, and Cois agrees that he won't do it anymore. The two part on friendly terms. On another day, Sarie and her family come to visit Granny and Sarie presents Charley with a lock of her hair. News eventually arrives that the war is not going well for the Confederates and that they are likely to move into the mountains where they'll be better able to withstand the Union assault. Granny says that Charley has to leave before the soldiers arrive. Charley reluctantly agrees after learning that Granny will bring Sarie to live with her. Charley says that he expects to return some day because he believes Granny's mountain home is a good place for him to settle down.

## Chapters 13 through 17 Analysis

Granny obviously realizes that firing the huge rifle is scary to Charley but she doesn't mention it. When he first arrives, she reminds him often that he'd run away when faced with the reality of battle. It seems likely that she is trying to ensure that he never forgets the horror so that he won't decide that he should return and fight. Gradually, she lets the subject drop and stops reminding Charley. But on Christmas, she issues a challenge. She gives him the huge gun and tells him to fire it off. She doesn't make a big deal out of it and Charley could have simply refused. But Charley feels the need to redeem himself. It's partly because he wants to redeem himself in Granny's eyes but mostly because he wants to prove to himself that he's not really a coward. Charley has been beating himself up about his inability to face the fight at the Battle of the Wilderness, but the fact remains that he's very young. His determination to conquer his fear of the huge gun means he's learning to face fear.

Granny makes it clear to Charley that the bravery he exhibited in killing the cat is commendable, but she points out again that being brave is being willing to do what needs to be done, even when there's no one to see his actions. She says that he showed that bravery again that day by forcing Canaan across the river to save Granny's life.

Granny and Charley have bonded in a way that Charley never expected. His own grandparents are not in America and Charley doesn't really know what it's like to have a grandmother, but he believes that he has that kind of relationship with Granny. The fact that Charley pledges to return and Sarie has offered a lock of her hair - a sign of affection - leaves the reader with the impression that Charley would have returned and lived among the mountain people once the war came to an end.



# Characters

## Charley Quinn

Charley is twelve the year after his brother, Johnny, is killed in the Battle of Gettysburg. Charley is a member of the Bowery Boys, a street gang in New York City, and believes he is brave and tough. Charley's sister, Noreen, is about to marry a man Charley hates. When he overhears Noreen agree that Charley will be sent to a school for incorrigible boys if he doesn't behave, Charley feels betrayed and runs away with a Yankee military regiment. Because Charley believes he is brave in the street situations where he is most at home, he believes he'll prove himself brave on the battlefield. But when the bullets begin to fly and Charley has an up-close view of battles and death, he is frightened. When a bullet strikes his drum, he breaks and runs away. As he hears the taunts of those who see him running away, he's ashamed but it isn't enough to make him turn around. Charley takes the advice of a Confederate officer and runs west, believing he'll escape over the mountains. Even then, he has hopes of returning some day when he's old enough and brave enough to redeem himself. When Charley meets up with Granny Bent, he learns that the bravery is more complicated than he'd thought. He learns a great deal from Granny Bent about life and about himself. By the time he's leaving, he's come to care about her as he hadn't expected and has won the admiration and respect of the mountain people.

## Jerusha Bent

Known as "Granny Bent," Jerusha is a healer who is known as a witch in the Blue Mountains. She is respected by most and feared by some who believe that she has the ability to cast spells. She is the person called on to serve as midwife. When she first meets Charley, she says that she believes they are meant to be together so that Charley can help with the work and Granny Bent can keep Charley safe from the dangers, including the patrollers looking for deserters. In an apparent effort to keep it secret that he's a deserter, Granny tells everyone that Charley is unable to talk so that no one will hear his accent.

Granny doesn't let Charley forget that he ran from the fighting but she also teaches him that he is to face the wrongs he sees. When Charley fights Cois after church, Granny asks if he has a reason. When Charley says that he does, Granny doesn't chastise him for the fight. Granny teaches Charley a great deal about herbs, which she calls "yarbs." She has always lived in rural areas and thinks a small town of a few hundred people is too crowded. Granny questions Charley about New York City and is amazed by his stories, especially the fact that Charley's sister lives on one floor of a building with a family below her and another family above. Granny is a widow and shows Charley the burial site for her five children.



## **Noreen Quinn**

Charley's older sister, Noreen Quinn is a seamstress who makes her living by adding trimming to ladies' hats. She feels that she can't control Charley and hates it when he's involved with street fighting. Noreen is engaged to be married and agrees with her fiancé that Charley will be sent away if he can't learn to stay out of trouble.

## **Con Sullivan**

A soldier who had been with Johnny at Gettysburg, Con is actually a liar and a thief. Con returns Johnny's watch to Charley and Noreen after Johnny's death. He encourages Charley to run away and Charley eventually discovers that Con had kept Johnny's knife. When Charley confronts Con with the accusation, Con says that he'd won the knife from Johnny. He also says that the only reason he'd returned Johnny's watch is because he has one of his own and he'd wanted to see what Noreen looked like.

## **Jem Miller**

A soldier who befriends Charley during the trip on the ship, Jem is an honorable man and says that he has joined because he feels the need to serve. Unlike many of the other soldiers, he hasn't been paid a bounty. Jem encourages Charley and really tries to be a friend to him. When the company is preparing for a long march, Jem warns Charley that it's going to be difficult.

## **Silas Gorman**

A drummer who has just turned sixteen, Silas Gorman is given the task of teaching Charley to sound out the various calls used to direct the men. Silas has seen battle and is anxious to become a fighter. He's wounded in the battle in the Wilderness and Charley never knows his fate.

## **Cois McRae**

A boy who lives near Granny Bent's house, Cois is something of a bully. Granny warns Charley that Cois will likely want to fight simply because Charley is staying with Granny Bent and the two families have a history of feuding. When the two boys fight the first time, Charley isn't ready for the tricks Cois has, but he redeems himself the second time. Charley and Cois eventually reconcile their differences.



## **Michael Demarest**

Noreen's fiancé, Michael Demarest is a bank teller and has no patience for Charley. Michael tells Noreen that he wants to send Charley away unless he can behave, a plan with which Noreen seems to agree. Michael may be pushy and self-centered but it may also be that Charley sees him in that light because Charley is jealous of the attention Noreen spends on Michael.

## **Sarie Griffen**

A young girl of about Charley's age who lives in the hills near Granny Bent's house, Sarie first meets Charley when she comes to Granny's to alert the healer that Sarie's sister is about to have a baby. Sarie gives Charley a lock of her hair just before he's preparing to head west ahead of the Confederate soldiers.

## **Thad Porter**

A former slave who is serving with the Union Army, Thad Porter gets permission to leave his military unit one night and travels to Granny's house. Thad knows Granny because she'd helped him when he had been trying to escape. It's after Thad shows up that Charley learns Granny had worked with the Underground Railroad. She says that she'd risked going to jail in order to help Thad and his sister and that Thad had risked his life to come thank her.



## **Objects/Places**

### **Bowery Boys**

The gang to which Charley belongs is called the Bowery Boys.

### **The Dead Rabbits**

The gang that is a rival to the Bowery Boys is called The Dead Rabbits.

### **New York City**

Charley and his sister, Noreen, live in New York City.

### **Chrystie Street**

Noreen and Charley live on Chrystie Street.

### **140th New York Veterans Volunteers**

The name of the regiment to which Johnny belonged and that Charley joins is the 140th New York Veterans Volunteers.

### **Gettysburg**

Johnny is killed at Gettysburg.

### **The Wilderness**

The Wilderness is a thickly wooded area where Charley is involved in a battle.

### **Sanders Field**

Charley first sees Confederate soldiers at Sanders Field.

### **Malindy**

Malindy is the name of the goose that serves as a "watchdog" for Granny Bent.



## **Canaan**

Canaan is the mule Granny Bent owns.

## **Hearn Hollow**

Hearn Hollow is the small town near Granny Bent's house.



# Themes

## Coming of Age

The coming of age theme is evident from early in the story. Charley's immature attitude towards his family and friends creates problems for him that would not otherwise exist. One of these is seen in his need for approval. Charley helps Noreen with her business by making deliveries and pickups for her. He says that at least part of the tips he collects is because he is polite and charms the customers. He wants Noreen to thank him for this. Charley doesn't seem to realize that Noreen is young herself and that she might also need some appreciation. When Charley runs away, he expects that he'll find glory on the battlefield and that he'll be applauded as a hero for his bravery there. He needs public notice of his actions. It's not until Charley spends some time with Granny Bent that he comes to realize that he doesn't have to have public acclaim for his actions. This is a sign of maturity. Another aspect of the theme is seen when Charley discovers that he enjoys the sense of accomplishment that comes from working with his hands. When Charley is repairing the henhouse, he suddenly realizes that he's developing skills that he would never have learned in New York, and he's proud of that accomplishment. Charley had fought repeatedly as a Bowery Boy in New York City and feels that winning those fights had been a good thing. But when he fights because someone else has been hurt, Charley realizes that the fights in which he'd been involved before had been pointless.

## Bravery and Fear

Bravery is a recurring theme throughout the book but the definition of bravery is probably just as important. Charley believes that he's brave because he is never afraid of a fight in New York City. Charley has just been involved in a fight with a rival gang member when he encounters Con Sullivan. Charley hadn't been afraid to face down the Dead Rabbit gang member in the alley and expects that fighting the Confederates will take that same kind of bravery. Charley talks to others about battle and listens to what they say, but he doesn't grasp the depth of the fear they describe. When Jem Miller says that some men believe that surviving a battle simply means that they have less chance of surviving the next, Charley listens, but he doesn't understand. He continues to talk to Jem about bravery. Charley goes on to say that anyone who runs away is a coward because he's certain that he knows about bravery. Charley is on the battlefield before he realizes that it takes a different kind of bravery to march into the line of fire. Fear on the battlefield is common and officers who talk to the men prior to the Battle in the Wilderness say that anyone who runs away will be shot. This proves that Charley isn't alone in his fear. Considering that Charley is only twelve, his fear is understandable as is his desire to run away. The problem is that he loses faith in himself at that point and it takes some time for him to recover. It takes some time with Jerusha before Charley begins to regain his self-confidence and to realize that he isn't a coward, but that he has to learn to conquer his fears.





## The Influence of Another Person

The ability to learn from another is an important theme in the book and there are several characters who exemplify this theme. In New York, Charley knows his way around and understands the rules of the street. He is able to get by because of this knowledge but he mistakenly believes that he has little more to learn. When he arrives at the army camp, he's more than willing to learn to play the drum in order to serve as the camp's drummer boy, but he doesn't understand that he has other things to learn from the men around him. Jem Miller becomes Charley's friend and he tries to tell Charley about the fear that is common in battle, but Charley isn't willing to listen. This attitude remains until Charley meets Jerusha Bent. At first, Charley isn't willing to learn from Jerusha either, but she is soon influencing his life in ways he hadn't expected. At one point in the story he says that he's made lye soap, washed quilts in the old washpot over a fire in the yard, learned the various herbs and their properties, and planted corn. Charley learns these things from Jerusha but her influence over him is more than just the things he learns to do. He learns to think for himself and to step out into a dangerous situation, prepared to face that danger. He also comes to realize that fighting for cause makes him feel good, while fighting for the fun of it in New York never had.



# Style

## Point of View

The story is presented in third person from Charley's perspective. The limited point of view is acceptable to the story because the purpose is to take the reader through the events as Charley experiences them. In some stories of such limited perspective, the reader may have to decide whether the main character is slanting details to present himself in the best possible light. That doesn't seem to be the case in this story. Charley's shortcomings are presented with brutal honesty. For example, Charley expects to be incredibly brave when he goes into battle but he runs away and hides. This fear is presented in stark detail. In another part of the story, Charley is beaten in a fight. Those details - including that Charley loses to Cois - are presented clearly. While Charley is not the narrator of the story, the fact that the perspective is limited to his point of view makes it seem as if he is. The story includes a great deal of dialogue. The sections of dialogue are believable and acceptable to the story, the time frame and the characters. The parts of the story that are not dialogue are sometimes focused on Charley's thoughts and emotions. This is an appropriate way of keeping the reader focused on Charley's emerging maturity which is an important theme in the book.

## Setting

The story has several specific settings that are vital to the story. Each is described in adequate detail to provide the reader a picture of that particular setting. The first of these settings is the Bowery of New York City. In that setting, the reader learns about the shops and the people. Charley first passes by groups of his friends at play in the various shops along the streets and later returns to the streets where he encounters a military band. The next important setting is the ship that takes the soldiers to their assigned units. The men spend only a day or so in the ship before being transferred to boxcars on a train. The boxcars are very crowded and Charley is uncomfortable during the ride. The next major setting is the Union military camp and, more specifically, an area known as the Wilderness. Charley is with the Union Army when they clash with the Confederates on this battleground and it's there that he shoots a man. It's also there that he realizes the war is real and that he is too young to face it. He runs away which brings him, after some traveling, to the final setting. The Blue Ridge Mountains are far removed from New York City and the life Charley has left behind. Charley comes to recognize the beauty of the land and its people. It's in this setting that Charley learns to develop skills and becomes proud of himself for the first time. Each of the settings is important to the story in its own way. Each is also real as a basic setting though specific places such as Noreen's apartment and Granny's little cabin probably don't exist.



## Language and Meaning

The story is presented in a straight-forward style that's easy to read and equally easy to understand. There is an acceptable division between dialogue and narrative with both being used to push the action along. The story moves quickly with Charley being introduced in the first chapter and joining the military in the second. The action, however, is easy to follow and the reader should have no trouble keeping track of the characters and their movements. The dialogue is presented in an obvious effort to be true to the people, setting and time. In the case of Jerusha Bent, the dialogue includes many slang words and words that are obviously adapted by the people of the time and place. For example, she says "jest" rather than "just" and typically drops the "g" from the ends of words so that "sitting" becomes "sittin'." Jerusha talks about the danger of a "painter" and some readers may have trouble figuring out that word. Charley thinks about the word until he realizes she means "panther." The reader goes through the thought process with Charley and learns the meaning of the word. As a rule, there are few words that an average reader will not know. The language is suitable and appropriate for the intended target audience.

## Structure

The book is divided into seventeen chapters. The chapters are numbered and titled. Titles give a hint as to the events of that chapter though some titles don't make sense until after the chapter is read. For example, Chapter Ten is titled "Jerusha," but the reader won't know that the title refers to the woman who takes Charley in. By contrast, Chapter Seven is titled "The Battle of the Wilderness" and refers to the battle in a place called Wilderness. Chapters are generally about eleven to thirteen pages in length and vary little from that. Chapter titles are "A Bowery Boy," "The Men in Blue," "The Major at the Wharf," "Culpepper," "Lessons," "Sanders Field," "The Rebs," "Boy Alone," "Witch Boy," "Visitors," "A Special Visitor," "Christmas and the Critter," "The Long Nights," "The Tide and the Reckoning," and "Heading Out Again." At the end of the book is a six-page section of author's notes. In that section, the author describes the information used as historical background for the book and outlines the parts that are based on truth and the parts that are fiction. The book is presented in chronological order. The first chapter provides an introduction of Charley and his family. In Chapters Two through Nine, Charley joins the military and gets his fill of battle. In Chapter Ten, he meets Jerusha, the healer who takes him in. In Chapter Eleven, Charley settles in with Jerusha and remains there through the end of the book.



## Quotes

"Our punishments are not light. We are here to fight the Rebels, not each other."  
Chapter 3, Page 45

"As Charley took the shirt and, with a pang of homesickness, began to put his own Bowery Boy clothing into the open trunk, he made a vow. He would quit drumming and pick up a musket for Johnny's sake as soon as he could." Chapter 4, Page 50

"The army's no place for a deaf man, a lazy one, or a bad drummer." Chapter 5, Page 51

"It's four parts waiting, four parts blundering about, and three parts marching and fighting." Chapter 6, Page 67

"Sprinting beside the color-bearer, his heart beating as fast as his drum, Charley Quinn went forward with his regiment." Chapter 7, Page 77

"Now the truth flooded Charley's consciousness. Gone were thoughts of heroism and revenge," Chapter 7, Page 79

"Then be so good, Charley Skedaddle, as to skedaddle through it right now. As I see it, you are of no use to us." A Confederate officer, Chapter 8, Page 89

"Lord above, I got me a redheaded Cath'lic Yankee deserter boy here. No matter, it's the same God above that we both got, ain't it?" Chapter 11, Page 114

"He'd dug a hole for a new privy for her, planted her cabbage seeds, weeded and watered her fast-growing corn, curried her mule, fed her hens, hunted herbs in the forest with her and then ground them into powder, helped her make lye soap, boiled quilts outside in a big iron pot over a fire, washed yarb bottles - he'd done everything she required of him and never once talked back." Chapter 12, Page 128

"This was a fight he had chosen to fight because somebody else had been hurt. Charley Quinn felt good about himself!" Chapter 12, Page 132

"Isaac and me, we risked goin' to prison by helpin' slaves that had run away, but we don't it all the same. Now Thad's risked his life to ride clear across the state to see me." Chapter 13, Page 140

"All in one day, ya shoot a ornery critter like this one and ya save an old woman's life! Ain'tcha the beatenist, bravest one, Mr. Skedaddle!" Chapter 16, Page 166



## Topics for Discussion

Who is Charley Quinn? Describe his strengths. His weaknesses. What makes this character likeable? What makes him unlikeable? Do you sympathize with Charley's desires? Why or why not?

How does Charley become known as "Charley Skedaddle?" Why do you think he continues to call himself by that name? When does he decide he'll be Charley Quinn again?

What do you believe is the most important theme of this book? Why do you think this theme is important? Give at least two examples of the theme in the story.

Who is Jerusha Bent? How does Charley meet her? What does she say about him staying with her? Why do you believe she makes him stay with her?

What kind of person is Jerusha Bent? What are her strengths? Her weaknesses? Is she a likeable character? Why or why not?

Who is Noreen? Michael Demarest? Silas Gorman? Con Sullivan? Jem Miller? What is the role each plays in the life of Charley?

Describe Charley's life as a Bowery Boy. How does that differ from his life as a drummer? How do each of these differ from his life with Jerusha? Which life is better for Charley?