

*The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* by Avi

Discussion Questions:

1. One of the reasons I chose this book was to discuss the differences in the way girls were raised in 1832 compared to now. What are some differences?
2. Were there any early hints that all was not well on the Seahawk? If there were, what did you notice?
3. I am interested in the contrast of blind obedience to order and propriety vs. moral reasoning based on considering the facts of a certain situation. How would you say the captain, Charlotte, and her father made decisions?
4. How does Charlotte's self-image as a "lady" affect her thoughts and actions when she first boards the Seahawk? How does she change?
5. Charlotte has to prove herself to the crew by climbing up the rigging. How does that make her feel? Have you ever had to prove yourself in some way?
6. What does justice mean to Charlotte?
7. How does the Captain view justice?
8. What did you think about the ending? If you were the author, how would you have ended the story?
9. On page one Charlotte says that she wanted to be a lady. Were you ever taught or expected to be a lady? What does that mean in our time compared to 1832?
10. This is a question for a Mom. All Charlotte's life she "had been trained to obey, educated to accept." Thinking about the way you, your mother, and your grandmother were raised, could you describe how things have or have not changed regarding obedience and acceptance?
11. At first glance, Charlotte thought that the Captain was a gentleman, a man to be trusted. Have you ever made a first opinion about someone only to discover that you were wrong? Or have you ever given anyone else a wrong impression of you? Would you be willing to tell us about it?
12. On page 60 Charlotte thinks that Captain Jaggery and Mr. Zachariah are such unlike men. In what ways did she think, at that point in the story, that they were unlike? Would you please describe how she thought them unlike after she knew them better?

13. Charlotte spent two hours composing an essay on “proper behavior for young women.” How much time could you spend writing on this topic? On what other topic could you spend two hours writing?
14. Is the author able to keep your interest? If so, how? If you found this book boring, how would you improve it?
15. On page 196, Charlotte writes in the ship’s official log that the Captain died during the hurricane. What did you think about this?
16. On page 198, Zachariah says that “a sailor chooses the wind that takes the ship from a safe port. But once you’re abroad, winds have a mind of their own.” What does this mean to you?
17. When Zechariah offers Charlotte tea and friendship, he says that he and she have much in common. What do you think they have in common? By comparison, what does she have in common with the Captain?
18. When Charlotte tells the captain about the knife, why does she lie and say Grummage gave it to her?
19. Does it seem realistic that a 13-year-old girl could do the physical work of being a sailor? Were you surprised that she could?
20. Zachariah says “To kill a hand during such a storm, when everyone is desperately needed, takes a kind of...madness.” Do you think the captain is insane?
21. Major events in the story depend of Charlotte’s misjudging the people around her: Zachariah, the captain, Keetch, and her father. Does the book show you how a person can make wiser judgments about people?