

The Gypsy Crown

The Chain of Charms Book 1

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Teachers' Notes

Once there was a gypsy queen who wore on her wrist a chain of six lucky charms – a golden crown, a silver horse, a butterfly caught in amber, a cat's eye shell, a bolt of lightning forged from the heart of a falling star, and the flower of the rue plant, herb of grace. The queen gave each of her six children one of the charms as their lucky talisman, but ever since the chain of charms was broken, the gypsies had been dogged with misfortune.

It is even worse for the Finch tribe – they have been thrown into gaol with only three weeks to live. The only members of the family to escape are thirteen-year-old Emilia and her cousin Luka, who have been entrusted to find the six charms and bring them together again. What Emilia and Luka do not realise is that there is a price to be paid for each lucky charm, and that the cost may prove too high...

Book 1: The Gypsy Crown:


11th August – 13th August 1658

Maggie has given them the first charm – an old gold coin – but Luka and Emilia must escape the brutal thief-taker, Coldham. With a horse, a monkey, a dog, and a huge brown bear in their train, it is hard to travel secretly as they flee across the Surrey countryside. With a little bit of luck – or, as Emilia believes, magic – they manage to escape, but Coldham will not give up so easily.

ORIENTATING ACTIVITIES

1. Look at the front cover. As a class, or individually, brainstorm predictions of what you think the book will be about. (*Rules for brainstorming: write for two minutes exactly and there are no right or wrong answers!*)

2. After reading the blurb for the book, fill in a prediction card for each of the characters mentioned. Draw a picture and make a prediction as to what might happen to them.

Character	Prediction
	

3. Using a computer or library lesson, research the following:

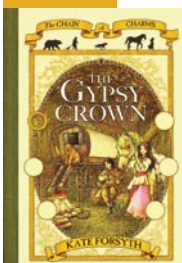
- Oliver Cromwell
- Puritans and gypsies
- 1642–1653 in English history

You might like to consider why gypsies have been persecuted throughout history. Have you heard any stories about real-life gypsies? If so, how were the gypsies portrayed?

4. This story is about a journey – what great journeys can you think of in history or in movies?

- Make a list of as many movies you can think of that revolved around the main character (protagonist) undertaking a journey or a quest?
- Formulate your information under the following three columns: character name/obstacles/character's qualities.

5. 10 minute journal writing on the title, 'The day I discovered the (insert surname) family jewels'. (*Rules for journal writing: spelling and grammar isn't checked and try not to lift your pen off the paper!*)



ENHANCING ACTIVITIES

Will be suggested chapter by chapter

PROLOGUE

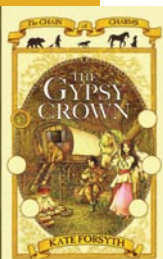
Perform the prologue information as a 30 second theatre.

- Don't know what 30 second theatre is? It's pretty easy really: it's a piece of theatre which tells a story in 30 seconds. (For example, imagine telling the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' in 30 seconds. What are the most important pieces of information you would need to include?)
- In groups of 4–5 you have 5–10 minutes to rehearse and should NOT use a script. You may make very simple props (for example name cards) if you need to (but remember this will cut into your rehearsal time).
- Everyone in the group MUST have a role in your play. You may play more than one character. Your aim is to be the group who tells the story clearly and in an entertaining fashion, and in a time closest to 30 seconds.

A DEVIL OF A MAN

1. In the first chapter we are introduced to the Finch tribe. In your own words, where were the family travelling to and why?
2. Throughout the novel, keep a table which lists all the information we find out about the family. Add to this throughout the novel.

Character	Relationship to Luka/Emilia	Appearance	Other Information
Luka Finch			
Emilia Finch			
Maggie Finch			
Jacob			
Silvia			
Lena			
Mimi			
Beatrice			
Noah			
Ruben			
Sabina			
Alida			
Zizi			
Rollo			
Sweetheart			



THE SHADOW

1. From the text, can you explain in one sentence why Emilia and Noah's father isn't with them.
2. Page 26–29 the Finch family performs at the party. Each family member seems to have a talent. Imagine you are a talent scout for the fair and you are witness to the party.
 - Make a list of each of the family members and their talent. Make some notes on their performances (keep a track of the page number you find the information on) and rank the performance from 1–5. Use the template below to set your work out:

TALENT SCOUT FORM

Name:

Talent:

Description:

Grade:

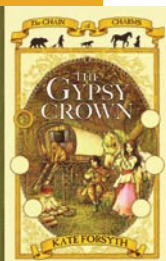
THE OWL CRIED

1. This chapter begins with Maggie making some predictions. Make a list of what they are?
2. Have you ever had a 'feeling' something bad was going to happen? Did it come true?
 - Spend 10 minutes writing in your journal on the topic 'My bad feeling'. If you can't think of something that is true, try to remember a story you have been told by someone else or make one up.
3. On page 34, we are given information (or rules) on Cromwell's England.
 - Design a pamphlet which you would give to visitors to England which inform them of these rules.
4. What does 'Upon-Thames' mean? Research what the 'Thames' is and write about it (in your own words) in your books. See how many other places you can find that are called '..... -Upon-Thames' in England.
5. Create a poster which advertises the fair at Kingston-Upon-Thames.
6. Complete a W chart imagining you are at the fair.

W CHART (Ralph Pirozzo, 2003)

Looks like	Feels like	Sounds like	Tastes like	Thinks like

7. Imagine you are responsible for designing a map that you would hand out to visitors to the fair in Kingston-Upon-Thames. Draw the map labeling the different market stalls/ places described in this chapter.



CROW FAIR

1. Create a storyboard or comic strip re-telling the events of the chapter in only 15 frames.
2. The constables try hard but Emilia evades them.
 - How would the constables re-tell the incident to the Pastor so that they do not appear to be 'guilty' of letting Emilia escape. Try to use language effectively so that we feel sorry for the constables.
3. Write a news report for the *Kingston-Upon-Thames Gazette* detailing the events of the crime and the escape.
4. On page 71 Luka calls Coldham a 'lickspittle'.
 - Make a list of 10 'made up' words which you could use as an insult. Have fun creating some crazy insults.
 - Perhaps your class could have a 'crazy insult war'!

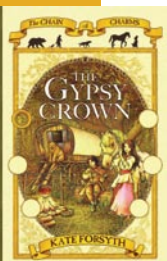
A ROM CAN NEVER REST

1. On page 75, Emilia thinks about her family and uses adjectives to give them all descriptions. For example: 'gentle Beatrice' and 'funny Uncle Ruben'.
 - Make a list of your family and using only one or two adjectives, describe them the same way Emilia does.
2. In your own words, detail the story of the 'Chain of Charms' that Maggie tells Emilia.
3. In a group act out this story. You could even try presenting it as 30 second theatre.
4. Imagine you are Emilia who, after talking to her grandmother, makes the following notes detailing the charms:

Charm	Power	Appearance	Location

ON THE RUN

1. Maggie packs Emilia a bag. Imagine you were able to spend time packing but were only able to carry five things. What five things would you pack in your bag for this quest?
2. Create a map which tracks the ground Emilia and Luka cover in this chapter.



SUMMER STORM

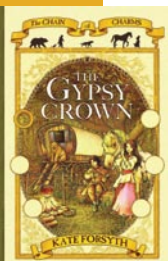
1. On page 109 the weather changes. Imagine you are the weather man. Write your weather report for this evening's news reports. You may like to act it out for your classmates.
2. Symbols are often used by authors in novels as a way of representing something. Use a dictionary to define the word 'symbol'. Write the definition in your book.
3. The chapter ends with Emilia sitting alone thinking.
 - Write her diary entry reflecting on the events passed and how she feels about them. Write it in first person.
4. Emilia and Luka are now wanted by Coldham and the pastor.
 - Design their 'WANTED' posters which could be posted around the local towns. Include a picture and some details of their clothing and belongings.

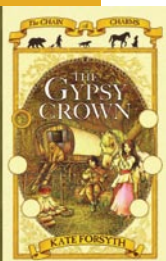
BOLTS, BARS AND DOORS

1. When criminals are put into jail, they're fingerprinted and photos are taken. These are called 'mugshots'.
 - Draw the mugshots for each of the Finch family in jail. Annotate your drawings describing the appearance of each Finch family member. You may need to use the table you completed earlier for help.
2. The family meets a man in jail called Winstanley who gives quite an inspirational speech. Write a letter as Winstanley to the editor of the *Kingston-Upon-Thames Gazette*.
3. Winstanley is not fictional. Use the internet to research Gerard Winstanley. In your own words, summarise your research.
4. Filling the gap: on page 136 Luka says, 'We'd have been in trouble if someone still lived here'.
 - Who did live there? Why did they leave it empty? Write your predictions down in your book.

THE ROYAL FOREST

1. Continue to track the journey of Luka and Emilia on your map. Include: the abandoned house; Sutton; The Cock Inn; Nonsuch Park; the road; Nonsuch Palace; Sutton Manor.
2. In 5–9 frames, draw the storyboard titled 'The Chase' (pg 147–152).





NONSUCH

1. Write Luka's diary on his way back to Nonsuch Palace. Your diary entry should reflect how he feels about being re-captured and his plans to escape again.
2. Throughout the meal, Colonel, Coldham and the pastor list a number of crimes that the 'gypsy brats' have committed.
 - Write this list of offences. Imagine they are taken to Court. Convert this list to a speech you could make as the prosecutor to the jury.
3. Explain why 'Luka had to bite his tongue to stop himself from grinning' (pg 169).

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

1. Why do you think Colonel Pride offered the children food?
2. What did Emilia see in the crystal ball? Write this as the Colonel's horoscope for the daily newspaper.
3. Imagine you are Emilia or Luka. Write a 'How to' guide entitled: 'How to escape Nonsuch Palace'.
4. Imagine you are a journalist reporting 'on assignment' at Nonsuch Palace after the children had escaped.
 - Write your report which would be pre-recorded for the evening news.

LUCK OR MAGIC?

1. Who is Felipe Hearne?
2. Why does Felipe Hearne decide to help the children?
3. How does Felipe trick Coldham?
4. Make a list of all the 'lucky' things that happen to Luka and Emilia.

THE FACT BEHIND THE FICTION

1. This chapter shows us that the story is based on fact.
 - As a class, choose a factual story, perhaps one from the news, one you have studied in class or one your teacher or classmate has told you. Write the synopsis for your own fictional story based on these facts.

SYNTHESISING ACTIVITIES

1. On a large piece of paper, draw a graph which represents the tension of this story. Number 1–10 'tension' the vertical axis and the chapters in order along the horizontal axis. Try to track the 'tension' throughout the story.
2. In any quest, the main characters experience obstacles. Make a list of the obstacles the two protagonists have to overcome and detail how they do it.
3. Using the information you researched about Oliver Cromwell, write a biography for the life of this man.
4. Based on your reading, design a new book cover for this story.
5. There are six books in the Chain of Charms series. In table form, predict what the next five books are going to be about.
 - Write the blurb for the next book.
5. Imagine you are the casting director of *The Gypsy Crown - The Movie*. Using famous actors, or members of your family, decide who is to play each character and in one sentence say why.
6. Luck vs Magic. Discuss this theme as a class.
 - Do you believe in magic? Do you believe in fate? Do you believe in luck or do you think people create their own luck?
 - Having discussed the issue, write a persuasive speech to your classmates convincing them of your beliefs on this topic.

