Chapter 1 Richmond, Melbourne 1919
1. What type of a suburb was Richmond?
2. Why did Charlie Feehan enjoy running?
3. What legacy did Charlie’s father leave him?

Chapter 2
1. Instead of going to school, where did Charlie go?
2. Describe Squizzy Taylor as Charlie first met him.
3. Why was Charlie there?
4. Discuss Charlie’s comment ‘Still I felt no shame in being the underdog. After all, it was what I knew best.’
5. Why did Charlie win the race? Who had backed him and what was his reward?
6. Who was Nostrils?

Chapter 3
1. How do the neighbours look out for each other?
2. Why was Charlie’s ma offended by Gracie’s family’s food?
3. Describe Ma’s reaction to Squizzy Taylor’s letter.
4. In what ways had the death of Charlie’s father affected the family?
5. How did Charlie spend Saturday mornings?

Chapter 4
1. What had Charlie learned about surviving in the slums?
2. Harriet the duck was unusual as far as Charlie was concerned. How?
3. Describe the Saturday night bath ritual.

Chapter 5
1. Describe Mr. Peacock. How did Charlie feel about his visit?
2. Where did Nostril and Charley go and how did they spend their time?

Chapter 6
1. What secret was Charlie withholding from his ma that Monday morning?
2. Which two surprises did Charlie receive from Squizzy Taylor that morning?

Chapter 7
1. Describe Charlie’s first week of work.
2. What had upset Ma to the point of tears?
Chapter 8
1. Why were Nostril's family enjoying sponge cake?

Chapter 9
1. How did Charlie celebrate his sixteenth birthday?
2. In what way were ‘the streets of Richmond like the pages in a book’? What story did they tell?
3. Why was Charlie in such deep trouble?
4. How did Squizzy and Dolly help Charlie out of his dilemma with Mr. Peacock?

Chapter 10
1. Discuss the impact of the abuse on Ma. What do you think she was suffering from?
2. What other talent does Charlie decide to develop at Mr. Redmond’s request?
3. What did Mrs. Redmond contribute to the training?

Chapter 11
1. How did Nostril’s first match with Richmond Hill go?

Chapter 12
1. Why was Squizzy in a rage?
2. What reputation did Fitzroy have?
3. How did Charlie cope with being a debt collector?

Chapter 13
1. What problems did Charlie run into at the Fitzroy cake shop and how did he solve his problem?

Chapter 14
1. Why did Charlie quit his boxing training?
2. In what way were things at Charlie’s home better for the family?

Chapter 15
1. What was Charlie’s new training goal?

Chapter 16
1. What happened when Charlie and Nostril met Barlow?

Chapter 17
1. How had Ma turned a new corner?

Chapter 18
1. Why was it hard for Charlie to face Nostrils in the hospital?
2. How did Squizzy react when Charlie gave him back the new boots?

Chapter 19
1. In what ways was Charlie’s life looking up now that he had left Squizzy?

Chapter 20
1. Describe the relationship Charlie seemed to have had with his father.

Chapter 21
1. Why was Charlie eager to bet so much of his money on the Ballarat Mile?

Chapter 22
1. How will Charlie spend his prize money?

Chapter 23
1. Did you enjoy the ending?

Extended Questions

1. Contrast the Squizzy Taylor Charlie first meets at the start of the novel, with the one at the end of the novel. Are there any differences? Speculate what may be responsible for Squizzy’s changes.

2. To what extent do you think that Charlie identifies with Squizzy as a substitute father figure? Who else plays a fatherly role in Charlie's life? Which one is better for Charlie?

3. Charlie goes against his mother’s wishes and decides to apply for a job with Squizzy Taylor without telling her. What motivated Charlie to do this? How did he feel about going against his mother’s back and keeping a secret?

4. Even though Charlie is just aged sixteen, he seems to be very mature in many ways. Find evidence of Charlie’s maturity compared with the typical year 10/ year 11 boy of today.

5. In what ways was life harder and /or easier in 1919, compared with today?

6. What did Charlie and his mother value and believe in? How have you arrived at this conclusion?