

TAKE

cath crowley

THREE

simmone howell

GIRLS

fiona wood

RUMOUR IS THE NEW TRUTH

What are you going to do about it?

Pan Macmillan Teachers' Notes

TAKE THREE GIRLS

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Notes by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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Introduction

I'm thinking that nothing changes until everything does. (p 11)

He adds that there'll be no judging of anything we share in Wellness class discussions. Ha ha. He doesn't know us very well. (p 35)

Three very different girls in Year 10 at St Hilda's Grammar School discover who they really are in this grippingly honest, wise and often very funny novel. It opens with two contrasting texts – a vicious teenage online exchange on a website, PSST, regarding girls with eating disorders – and a letter from Maura Gaffney, Principal of St Hilda's, announcing to parents that their Year 10 girls are to participate in a co-curricular Wellness Program in Term 3 to be convened by expert Dr Peter Malik, the Year 12 psychology teacher.

One senses that the Wellness Program will not go well. One would be right . . . and one would also be wrong.

The story focuses on three teenage students at St Hilda's:

- Ady – not the confident A-Lister she appears to be.
- Kate – brainy boarder taking risks to pursue the music she loves.
- Clem – disenchanting swim-star losing her heart to the wrong boy.

Each is targeted by PSST, a toxic website that deals in gossip and lies. What will they do? What will their school do? Who's behind PSST?

Three of Australia's most accomplished, insightful, entertaining and thought-provoking novelists for young people have pooled their talents to pen this work which, appropriately, unfolds in multiple voices in a manner characteristic of communication in the digital age.

This novel explores a variety of issues which confront contemporary young women, including cyber-bullying, 'fat shaming', eating disorders, sexual experimentation, sexual abuse (whether physical or verbal), study pressures, obsession, addiction, and finding and following your passion.

It explores a world in which nothing is secret – selfies, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter make any private encounter instantly public. Social media has its benefits in terms of instant publicity, but it also has its grim downside, where young relationships are destroyed with the stroke of a finger or the push of a thumb.

It also traverses universal themes such as friendship, feminism and identity. It is a clarion call to wake up to what is potentially not so much 'big brother' watching you, but many followers invading your privacy and ridiculing you. Ady, Kate and Clem face up to this challenge, though, and realise that they don't need Dr Malik to help them. They can do it all by themselves.

Themes

Rite of Passage into Adulthood, Individuality and Identity

Each of these three girls has secrets which they don't initially reveal to their peers.

Ady's parents are fighting over money, and her dad's cocaine addiction and alcoholism, until he is hauled off to rehab. Rupert, her 'perfect' boyfriend, is better in theory than in practice; fashion and costume design is her major love.

Kate's parents have sacrificed a lot to send her to this school from their country property, in hopes of a scholarship leading to a medical career, but she's obsessed with music and technology.

Clem's parents are overseas and she and her twin, Iris, are bitter rivals. She's starting to question her commitment to her swimming career. That commitment is being tested by lack of focus since her accident, by her weight gain and by her obsession with Stu, who'll send her flirty texts but won't call her his girlfriend.

Each is struggling with who they really are.

The **WELLNESS PROGRAM** has been introduced to help St Hilda's girls deal with their issues. Dr Malik's exercises start with a 'provocation', including literary quotes or song titles, and then dot points and exercises. The girls are sceptical, but the novel evolves as a direct result of the exercises he sets, including asking each student to write in their own private Wellness journal addressing the lessons:

WEEK 1 Identity (pp 6–7)

WEEK 2 Show-and-Tell (pp 82–3)

WEEK 3 Friendship (pp 94–5)

WEEK 4 Self-Esteem (pp 146–7)

WEEK 5 Choices (pp 180–1)

WEEK 6 The Idea of Perfection (pp 218–9)

WEEK 7 Retreat, Reflect (p 306)

WEEK 8 Maps, Taking Stock (pp 362–3)

WEEK 9 Looking Forward (pp 428–9)

Discussion Point/Activity: Discuss each of the topics in Dr Malik's lessons. (Note to teachers: your students may be, as the characters in the novel are, sceptical, and not all exercises may be productive. So be selective with how you choose the exercises you set.)

Discussion Point/Activity:

'You've changed,' she says.

She says this like it's a bad thing, but people need to change. What if I stayed the same person all my life? (p 220)

Discuss Kate's statement in response to Iris's attitude to her.

Choices

Each of these three girls has to make the kinds of choices one makes as one matures, and to decide what in life is worth fighting for.

Discussion Point/Activity:

I want to take the other road.

But I need permission to take it. (p 184)

Kate has made up her mind to swap scholarship studies for music, but when she rings her mother, her resolve is challenged by her mother's tiredness and how much she is counting on Kate winning the scholarship (p 185). Discuss how you would have dealt with this situation.

Discussion Point/Activity: Clem 'isn't that into' competitive swimming anymore and is not sure what she is into, but everyone assumes that because she can do it well, she should. How difficult is it to defy such expectations, especially if you don't know what else you want to do with your life?

Discussion Point/Activity: Ady has a 'perfect' life – she's part of both the 'in-crowd' and of a gorgeous couple – but following her passion makes her appear too 'weird and creative' to her friends. How difficult is it to resist the norms forced on you by peers and to make your own choices instead?

Discussion Point/Activity: Dr Malik asks the students to 'map themselves' by creating their own personal geographies. Create a map of your personal geography, including any significant choices you have made in your life. (Note to teachers: this could also go under 'Broader Activities/Art')

Scholastic life

Discussion Point/Activity: *Things about St Hilda's: it runs on fat cheques and fake smiles . . . I have always gone to public schools. At our last one, if anyone had a problem with you, they'd be up front and pop you at the bus stop. Here, everyone's angst ends up on PSST. (p 43)* On the surface, everyone behaves largely as teachers expect them to. But the PSST website allows students to express their jealousies, worries and insecurities by being mean to other students. Does your school have a secret form of exchange like this? How do problems between students tend to be resolved at your school?

Discussion Point/Activity: Iris, in particular, is driven by a need to succeed scholastically, as is Ady's sister, Clare. Are their attitudes to study healthy and/or sustainable? How does one achieve balance in life when scores are applied to studies and one is often required to drop every other activity or interest in order to pass exams?

Discussion Point/Activity: *The school should look at its own self-esteem, anyway. Private schools never stop their competitive jostling, each one trying to outdo the others. Why do they expect us to find our quiet confidence when they clearly haven't found theirs? (p 160)* Compare the image your school likes to project to the lessons you are taught there about attitudes and behaviour? Are they compatible?

Friendship, Peer Group Pressures and Self-Esteem

How can we monitor our friendships and check that they are healthy? (p 98)

Discussion Point/Activity: *Bestie Tash, sweetie Bec, funny Lola and me. How much do we really have in common these days? (p 99)* Ady has been part of her friendship group for so long that it's hard to escape it. But she begins to realise once Kate and Clem come on the scene that Tash, Bec and Lola aren't all that supportive and don't really understand her. How does one escape a long-term friendship which isn't working anymore?

Discussion Point/Activity: *Oliver has been Oliver so long it's hard to see him as anything else. (p 130)* Kate realises that her first impressions of Oliver were wrong and that she's judged him without knowing him. Examine your feelings about someone in your life you don't know very well, and what they are founded upon.

Discussion Point/Activity: The dialogue on PSST seems extreme but every day in this novel there are examples of girls subjecting others to verbal bullying in an effort to appear cool or to impress others. They even bully their friends, e.g. Tash constantly puts Ady down. Why do you think they behave this way towards each other?

Discussion Point/Activity: Iris's letter to Clem (pp 403–5) explains her part in PSST. Her need to be liked by her peers, and her conviction that she's not, fuels her vindictive feelings towards others. Do you have sympathy for Iris? Why? Why not?

Passion

Discussion Point/Activity: This novel explores the idea that life is driven by passionate interests, not by conforming to what is 'expected' or likely to be safe or secure. Discuss these three quotes:

Kate: *The world becomes more.* (p 215)

Ady: *I'm weak-kneed in love with beauty every single day.* (p 188)

Clem: *But just because you're good at something, does that mean you have to do it?* (p 177)

Discussion Point/Activity:

'You've gone from looking a bit arty, and kind of cool, to looking –'

'Peculiar,' finishes Tash. 'As though we're not even the same species anymore.' (p 300)

Ady will have to contend with this sort of commentary about her taste in art and design for the rest of her life; most people follow very limited codes of dress, and fear individuality. How hard is it to stand out and be different from the mainstream? Would you prefer to stand out or to blend in?

Discussion Point/Activity: Is there any inkling in the novel of what Clem's passion might be?

Discussion Point/Activity: Making a living from art is tenuous. Kate and Oliver know that it will be an uncertain and difficult road but see no other option, like most dedicated musicians. Do you think that, in deciding to follow her passion rather than the more secure path of medicine, Kate is making a sensible choice?

Sibling Rivalry

Discussion Point/Activity: *There is an intimacy between them, I realise, but it's a terrible kind where they know what to say to hurt each other and don't hesitate to say it. You'd never talk that way to a friend.* (p 76) Iris and Clem can't seem to get beyond their rivalry as twins. Is this driven by jealousy?

Discussion Point/Activity: Ady and Clare spar because the latter is so focussed on her work, and because Ady finds it hard to simply ignore her family's problems as Clare seems to do. Discuss the fact that family members are often very different in temperament and how that creates friction.

Discussion Point/Activity: Why do family members so often disagree?

Love, Sexuality and Morality

Discussion Point/Activity: *It's annoying when the perfect boy turns out to be all wrong.* (p 88) Ady's feelings for Rupert are complicated by the sexual things he expects, which leave her cold (p 187). What should a girl or a boy do if they are asked to perform a sexual act that they're not ready for?

Discussion Point/Activity: Ady is furious with Tash for 'hooking up' with Rupert immediately after Ady broke up with him. She outlines the ethics of the situation (pp 303–4). Is she correct, in your opinion?

Discussion Point: *It doesn't feel as though being with a girl should be a cause for announcements. Is that right? I can imagine I might love other boys, and other girls, other times.* (p 348) Ady is matter-of-fact about her sexuality, but PSST calls her a 'dyke', intending it as an insult. Is Ady 'gay', 'lesbian', 'queer', 'bisexual', 'fluid'? Does she need to label what she is or make any decisions about it? Discuss alternative forms of sexuality: do they exist in your home, school or community? What is the response?

Discussion Point/Activity: Clem's acceptance of Stu's offhand behaviour is unfortunately not uncommon. Too many teenage girls put up with offensive, even abusive, behaviour and engage in sex when they're not ready to. (Note to teachers: Stu is nineteen and Clem is sixteen. Although the age of consent in most states is sixteen, Stu is clearly taking advantage of her immaturity. In South Australia and Tasmania the age of consent is actually seventeen, so in those states he'd also be breaking the law.) Discuss Stu's behaviour and other ways Clem could have dealt with it.

Discussion Point/Activity: *God, the tiresome small dealings with random dudes. I couldn't count the number of times I've been a frigid bitch or a stuck-up slut just for not talking to or smiling back at guys who are complete and utter strangers to me – since Year 8, since the first hint of breast.* (p 285) What right have boys and men to speak lewdly or violently or use misogynistic language of any kind to women? How should girls or women respond?

Female Body and Self-Image, Male Dominance of Advertising, Feminism

Discussion Point/Activity: Read the passage which begins *Clare told me about an article that floated the idea of a curfew for guys . . . up to We'd own the streets, own the night.* (p 286). Discuss this idea and how it might affect the way you live and feel.

Discussion Point/Activity: *For us, the message that you fail to attain someone's idea of perfection is a wash that colours EVERYTHING. It is the air we breathe. Sure, we're getting better at calling it, but that doesn't make it go away.* (p 231) Clem's appearance in the team's new swimsuit and subsequent so-called 'walk of shame' is horribly satirised by PSST (p 219). How common is such criticism in your school or on social media? How should one respond?

Discussion Point/Activity:

*'Dr Malik, all our Wellness sheets have quotes from men,' I say.
He looks shocked, even though he must have put them together. 'We'll have to rectify that.'*
(pp 229–30)

How easy is it to fall into perpetuating gender stereotypes without realising it? Consider or survey your school and community environments and assess whether equal representation of women and men is evident.

Discussion Point/Activity: Clem attends a Feminist Collective meeting and ponders the meaning of feminism (p 388). Discuss the meaning of the word feminism. Why are so many young women against the term?

Addictions and Social Pressure

Discussion Point/Activity: *All my parents' friends act like this. It's camouflaged him. My mother says people are 'very silly', or 'very naughty' when they're actually off their fucking faces.* (p 174) Ady's father is presented as a serious addict as well as a drinker. In this quote, social attitudes to drinking are called to account. We hear lots about the dangers of teenage drug use, but the major role that alcohol plays in the social lives of adults is rarely questioned. Discuss how society normalises drinking via, for example, advertising. Discuss the need for adults to set an example in this regard.

Discussion Point/Activity: The house-wrecking party is an example of how smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol can lead to bad and dangerous behaviour in a crowd situation. When does 'fun' in such circumstances tip over into vandalism and abuse?

Discussion Point/Activity: Stu's laid-back attitude may be due to his drug habits as much as to his personality. Discuss how behaviour is often altered by addiction.

Social Media

Discussion Point/Activity: *Not that I want to be on it but at the same time, am I so forgettable?* (p 167) This quote reveals the insidious allure of social media. One might hate the invasion of privacy, but how lonely is it for a teenager not to be part of this world when everyone else is talking about it, taking selfies and comparing their friends' profiles with their own? Is FOMO (fear of missing out) a thing that everyone experiences in the digital age?

Discussion Point/Activity: Clem responds to Stu's sexually suggestive texts with a scantily clad photo of herself (p 253). Is it okay to send images like this? Why? Why not? (Note to teachers: this is a good opportunity to discuss the fact that students might unwittingly yet technically be publishing child pornography by sending such images.)

Discussion Point/Activity: An email or text message can be shared by millions of people and it can be stored for an unlimited period of time. What does this mean about any information that you choose to share online or digitally, be it a text message, an email, a Facebook post, a Snapchat, etc? Have you or anyone you know had any bad experiences?

Discussion Point: Should the girls have told their teachers about PSST? Why didn't they?

Plot and Structure

Structure

Discussion Point/Activity: The novel is structured chronologically, from 11 July to 20 December, but takes alternative paths to show different views of the action. Scenes are described by the three protagonists in their 'now' (i.e. the present tense), so that we gain a trifurcated view of the action. How might the novel have been structured differently?

Plot and story arc

Discussion Point/Activity: The plot of a novel is generally in five parts: Exposition (introduction of the main characters and setting); Rising Action (one or more characters in crisis); Climax (turning point); Falling Action (resolution of characters' crises); Denouement (resolution). This novel works as a series of narrative arcs, with small climaxes and then several major turning points, including Kate's decision to throw the scholarship exam and attend the audition instead; Clem's dumping Stu and accepting that swimming isn't her 'thing' anymore; and Ady moving away from the old 'Brains Trust', accepting her family's financial situation and applying to attend MCA. Draw a narrative map or chart showing the key points at which the narrative rises, falls and then rises again to this turning point.

Discussion Point/Activity: The events which make up the plot of a novel are designed by the writer to flesh out characters and themes. Which were the key events in terms of the theme of testing oneself and making wishes? What were the key events which revealed the nature of each major character?

Ending

'Closure' is spoken about a lot in today's society but very rarely do we find that lives are tied up neatly.

Discussion Point/Activity: The novel deliberately leaves an open ending. The device of each character writing to her future self a) allows the character to face the future with no certainty but with a sense of excitement, and b) also leaves the reader to guess what might happen to Kate, Clem and Ady. Do you like the open-ended conclusion to the book? Is it realistic? Why/why not?

Discussion Point/Activity: Where might Ady, Kate and Clem be in ten years' time from the hints in this novel? Discuss opposing scenarios.

Characters

Action in this novel revolves around three main central characters, a few associated major characters and several minor ones who can be grouped into those associated with the three girls.

Clem Banks

- Iris Banks, Clem's twin sister, Kate's friend, roommate [see Kate below] and fellow orchestra member
- Clem's parents
- Jinx Benedict, Clem's roommate, and fellow member of the swimming relay team ('the Marlins'), and St Hilda's Feminist Collective
- Stuart (Stu) Laird McAlister, Clem's 'boyfriend'
- Theo Ledwidge, Iris's formal date and Basildon student
- Lainie, member of the Marlins
- Roo, member of the Marlins

Kate Turner

- Kate's parents
- Oliver Bennet, fellow Orchestra member and later boyfriend
- Ben Tran, Kate's best friend
- Frances Carter, musician offering scholarship to experimental musician
- Sarah Watford, flautist
- Max, Kate's friend who she met at record shop
- Iris Banks, friend and roommate, Clem's twin sister

Ady (Adelaide) Rosenthal:

- Charlie, her brother
- Clare, her sister
- Ady's parents
- Brains Trust: Tash, Bec Houghton, Lola
- Rupert, Ady's former boyfriend and Basildon student
- Max, Ady's new girlfriend [See above]

Formal Committee: Ady, Bec, Tash, Iris, Theo, Bryce Katz and Jonno Nesbit.

Teachers: Principal Maura Gaffney; Dr Peter Malik, Yr 12 psychology teacher and Yr 10 Wellness Program; Coach Susan Beazley (Beaz) who trains the Marlins; Mrs Davies, Orchestra leader; Old Joy, boarding housemistress; Gregory, a tutor; Ms Heather Yelland, year ten coordinator.

Major Characters

Discussion Point/Activity: Locate a quotation which accurately describes these major characters.

Central Characters	Quotation
Clem	
Kate	
Ady	
Oliver	
Ben	
Iris	
Max	
Dr Peter Malik	

Discussion Point/Activity: Dr Peter Malik is actually central to this work. Teachers in a novel like this are often 'bit' players – either satirised or praised as being inspirational, but rarely given leading role status. He is the leader of the Wellness Program. Imagine how he would describe his days managing the Wellness Program as an extra-curricular activity. Imagine his life. His response to Ady's comment that no female quotes were included in the lessons was to add them in subsequent weeks, which is never commented on.

Discussion Point/Activity: Write Dr Peter Malik's Wellness Journal entry for any of these weeks.

Minor Characters

Discussion Point/Activity: Discuss any of the minor characters and write a short description of them.

Discussion Point/Activity: Were there any minor characters you would like to have seen feature more in the action?

Discussion Point/Activity: Some characters are intended to invoke sympathy in the reader (the three girls of the title), and others are not (Stu). Which characters did you have sympathy for and why? Which were unattractive, annoyed you or were puzzling?

Characterisation

Discussion Point/Activity: Setting can often be used to echo a character's traits. Find an example of this in the novel. (Note to teachers: this could also go under 'Setting' below.)

Discussion Point/Activity:

'The signs all week have been telling me to take a chance.'

'You believe in computer code, not signs.' (p 100)

Dialogue can be used to reveal something about an individual. What does Ben's remark about Kate tell us?

Discussion Point/Activity: Dialogue can also reveal the nature of a relationship. Read some of the conversations between Kate and Oliver; is their mutual attraction obvious?

Style & Use of Language

Voice

Discussion Point/Activity: The narrative voice is first person, present tense, from three points of view. How do these three voices differ? How do their various views of the action make this a richer narrative?

Discussion Point/Activity: Voice is created by a range of devices including syntax, choice of words and literary devices such as metaphor and simile. Choose three of your favourite lines or paragraphs from the book and explain why you are drawn to them.

Discussion Point/Activity: Humour is a device used in each of Cath Crowley's, Simmone Howell's and Fiona Wood's novels. What examples of humour did you notice in this book?

Genre

This novel falls into the genres of: rite of passage novel, issues-based realistic novel, romance, mystery and school story.

Discussion Point: Discuss examples of the tropes of these genres in this novel.

Discussion Point: Read and compare this novel to other examples of the 'rite of passage' novel. [See **Further Reading** below.]

Setting

Discussion Point/Activity: A vivid and convincing setting depends on description which makes it visually come alive for the reader. Choose a passage which makes the place described seem real to you. For example, see the description of St Hilda's starting at *The gravel path crunches underfoot . . .* (p 30)

Discussion Point/Activity: Setting can also be enhanced by contrasting one location to another. This novel is set largely in a school but takes us to other locations such as the girls' homes and Orion. List all of the different locations and discuss how they are depicted differently.

Discussion Point/Activity: Description should also be informed by all the senses – sounds, tastes, smell as well as vision. Is there any passage which employs a range of senses when describing a location?

Discussion Point/Activity: *I've never been anywhere like this – it's like a warren with beer-sopped towels along the bar, photos and curios between the bottles like what you'd find in an op shop, a scrum of old dudes and ladies sitting at formica tables with pots, and a for-real TV in a wood veneer case showing football.* (p 117) Place is evoked by rich description, employing a range of literary devices. What does this description suggest about Clem's feelings for this place?

Broader Activities

Fashion

Ady's clothes are improvised and very creatively imagined and designed. She loves vintage fabrics and texture and putting the incongruous together. Her designs include the 'power pocket dress' (p 386), the 'negative and positive' dresses (p 98), the jumpsuit she wears to the formal (p 410) and Kate's ethereal costume (p 114). Bring an old piece of clothing to school and work in groups to 're-purpose' it into something beautiful to 'wear and share'. (Note to teachers: provide lovely embellishments for students to use in their creations such as buttons, sequins, tulle, pom-poms, felt flowers, zips, studs and also materials which might be woven via crochet, knitting or other weaving techniques.)

Activity: Have a fashion parade of your 'Wearable Art'.

Activity: Visit websites such as:

- World of Wearable Art (WOW) <https://www.worldofwearableart.com/>
- Wearable Art Mandurah <https://wearableartmandurah.com/>
- 'Wearable Art' Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wearable_art

Activity: Discuss costume design as a career and research the topic via sites such as 'Costume Designer', Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costume_design

Music

Activity: Kate's (and Oliver's) music for the Iceland audition is a mixture of her classical training and her knowledge of technology in her looping or sampling of sounds and other music to create an entirely new soundscape. Listen to such music. Try to create a very simple version as a class exercise using the skills of those with musical, technical or other knowledge or skills. (Teacher's note: encourage all to be involved regardless of specific musical skill.)

Activity: Kate creates a playlist to support Clem after the PSST post (p 225). Create a playlist for Kate to help her make the decision between the scholarship and the audition. Explain each of your selections.

Art

Activity: Clem's response to swimming is that although she is talented she isn't enjoying it anymore. Create an artwork which summarises these feelings. Draw on the novel for inspiration.

Activity: Descriptions evoke different images in the mind of the reader. Draw or paint Ady's clothes room, based on how it is described in the novel (p 34). Compare your various images.

Activity: The packaging of a book includes the blurb and cover which must offer the reader an insight into the contents and the emotional impact of a novel without giving the ending away. It must also market the book to its readers. Examine the cover of this book, assessing how the words and images interact and are descriptive of the novel after you've read it. Design your own cover. Read the back cover blurb, and then write your own. What other title might this have had?

Activity: The cover features artwork by Minna Gilligan. Google the artist. How does her style of mixed media and collage art relate to the book? What other image by this artist would you choose to feature on the cover of this book?

Event

Activity: The Formal in this novel is organised by the students. Create a themed party; design a menu, appropriate decorations, costumes and music for your celebration.

Writing Exercises

Exercise: The Wellness Program is well-intentioned, and based on Dr Peter Malik’s knowledge of psychology. You may have encountered a similar program at your school. Draft a *five step program* which simply outlines the points you think would be important to include in such a program.

Exercise: Diary or journal writing can represent a form of therapy. Dr Peter Malik invites those attending his Wellness Program to keep a Wellness journal. Read the three girls’ entries. Then write your own Wellness Journal entry about an issue with relevance in your own life.

Exercise: Write a letter to your future self as Dr Peter Malik suggests the girls should do.

Exercise: Write an argument for the affirmative or negative: ‘Social media is an invasive and corrosive form of communication.’

Exercise: Write the lyrics for a song detailing Kate’s love for the country but also her conflicting and desperate need to be in the city.

Exercise: Three authors have collaborated in writing this novel. Invite students to break into groups of three, and then to draft a synopsis for another novel and to write in three parts the opening three sections of the novel.

Exercise: Iris writes a letter to Clem (pp 403–5) which she never intends her to see but Clem finds it. Write an imagined response by Clem.

Exercise: Clem says she and Ben are having ‘an epistolary romance’ (p 438). Write a letter as if written by Ben to Clem after the formal.

Exercise: How would Rupert or Theo’s profiles be written in the Basildon Yr 10 Yearbook?

Exercise: Write a letter as if written by Oliver to his future self.

(Note to teachers: Literary and musical references are used throughout this novel. Students might be encouraged to choose and discuss any of these references and to engage in related writing tasks.)

Quotes for Discussion after Reading the Novel

- *Am I justified in rebelling? Maybe. And if that's the answer, then probably not.* (p 25)
- *Malik is happily wittering on, Teachers don't get the most basic stuff sometimes.* (p 31)
- *Is it like this for everyone – that school and family are balloons that blow up and shrink?* (pp 32–3)
- *Addiction seems to go away, but it also seems to come back again.* (p 70)
- *Malik tells us that doing something crafty with our hands means our brains will connect to everyone else's brains in a different way because we have a shared goal.* (p 159)
- *I wonder how we get to where we want to go, if where we want to go keeps changing?* (p 184)
- *School's a game, Ady; you've just got to play along.* (p 209)
- *Almost the entire world relies on other people's opinions to tell them what to think.* (p 299)
- *They believe when something's suffered damage and has a history it becomes more beautiful.* (p 327)
- *An anonymous foe is beneath contempt.* (p 375)
- *Choices are all we have. It doesn't matter if things don't work out. It's that we make them for the right reasons – to follow what we think is the best road.* (p 401)
- *We got more out of this year than money or pieces of paper. We got the future. Whatever that is.'* (p 436)

Further Reading Ideas for Class Discussion

Discussion Point/Activity: Read the novel a second time having considered its themes; notice, on this second reading, the hidden references to many of the themes which develop as the novel progresses.

Discussion Point/Activity: Read these three authors' previous novels and trace the links between them.

Discussion Point/Activity: Read a selection of other teenage novels dealing with choices and compare to this one. [See Further Reading below]

Discussion Point/Activity: Read Principal Maura Gaffney's letter to the parents (pp 2–3). What messages does it contain?

Further Ideas Using Technology

Discussion Point/Activity: Research the three authors' backgrounds and read interviews about this and their other works.

Discussion Point/Activity: Several reviewers have written about the novel online. Read some of these reviews, then write your own.

Discussion Point/Activity: Create a Book Trailer for this novel.

Discussion Point/Activity: Design a poster on screen to advertise this book. Use a simple computer drawing program to create your design.

Discussion Point/Activity: Ady loves intricate patterns (e.g. the Florence Broadhurst-esque wallpaper at the wrecking party) (pp 288–289). Find such patterns online. Then design your own.

Conclusion

Take Three Girls is an extremely honest account of the world which contemporary teenagers inhabit. Their problems are the same as those faced by previous generations, but the environment has changed dramatically. Once a personal argument or debate was conducted in the playground or in the classroom. Now it's often on social media provoking other people's comments, which can escalate into full-blown abuse. It's hard to win such an argument, especially if it's conducted with an anonymous combatant. This novel invites teenage girls, in particular, to stand up for what they want and believe in – and to choose their friends wisely.

Authors' Notes

Cath Crowley grew up in rural Victoria. She comes from a family of seven: her parents, three brothers and a dog called Elvis. All of them encouraged her to give up full-time teaching to write. Cath studied professional writing and editing at RMIT and works as both a freelance writer in Melbourne and a part-time teacher. She has lived and taught overseas but now lives in country Victoria. Soccer was the subject of her acclaimed trilogy beginning with her first published work *The Life and Times of Gracie Faltrain*, followed by *Gracie Faltrain Takes Control* and *Gracie Faltrain Gets it Right (finally)*. In between, she wrote her second novel *Chasing Charlie Duskin*. *Graffiti Moon* won the Ethel Turner Literary Prize in the NSW Premier's Awards, and the Young Adult category in the Prime Minister's Literary Award 2011, and was an Honour Book in the CBCA Book of the Year (Older Readers) 2011. *Words in Deep Blue* was Indie Book Awards Young Adult Book of the Year 2017 and an Honour Book in the CBCA Book of the Year (Older Readers) 2017. Visit Cath's website for more information: cathcrowleyauthor.com.au

Simmons Howell is an award-winning author of YA novels. *Girl Defective* was shortlisted in the 2014 Prime Minister's Literary Awards; *Everything Beautiful* was a finalist in the Melbourne Prize for Best Writing, and *Notes from the Teenage Underground* won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for YA and the inaugural Inky Teenage Choice Award. She also writes non-fiction about dream houses, teen movies and ways to map a city. She lives in Melbourne and is currently working on a memoir about her formative female influences. Visit Simmons's website for more information: simmons-howell.com.au

Fiona Wood's novels have twice been awarded the CBCA Book of the Year award for older readers – *Cloudwish* in 2016 and *Wildfire* in 2014 – and her first YA novel, *Six Impossible Things*, was shortlisted for this award in 2011. Her books are published internationally. Before writing YA fiction, Fiona wrote television scripts. She lives in Melbourne with her family. Visit her website for more information: fionawood.com

Further Reading

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