

Riding Freedom

Pam Munoz Ryan

Characters:

Charlotte Parkhurst- (Charley) Main character in the story. Orphaned at a very young age. Had a way with horses. Ran away from the orphanage. Moved in with Ebenezer and became his famous stage coach driver. Moved out to California and bought a ranch. She was the first woman to vote. (52 years before women were allowed to vote. She was disguised as a boy.)

Mrs. Boyle- The cook at the orphanage where Charlotte grew up. Put in charge of Charlotte.

Vern- The stable master at the orphanage. The only friend Charlotte had at the orphanage besides Hayward.

Freedom- The horse that Charlotte raced and beat William on. Died of colic the morning after.

William- The first child in many years to be "unadopted". Always bullied the younger boys. Beaten by Charlotte in a horse race.

Mr. Millshark- The overseer at the orphanage. The shortest, fattest, most mean spirited man that Charlotte had ever met.

Hayward- Charlotte's best friend at the orphanage with extremely big ears. Adopted at the beginning of the story. Had dreams with Charlotte to buy a ranch. Picked on by William.

Mrs. Mapes- sat next to Charley on the stage. A plump woman. Traveling companion of Mrs. Earhart.

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Ebenezer Balch- Employer of Charley. Often got compliments on Charley's stagecoach driving.

James Birch- One of Ebenezer's stable boys. Helped convince Charley to go to California.

Frank Stevens- One of Ebenezer's stable boys. Helped convince Charley to go to California.

Margaret- Owned the land next to the land that Charley bought. The bank was going to foreclose on her but Charley paid the mortgage on the condition that she help care for the chickens and cook a few meals.

Questions:

1. How did Charlotte's mother and father die? An accident with a runaway wagon.
2. What caused the horses to run out of control and kill Charlotte's parents? They were frightened by a bolt of lightning
3. Who stayed with Charlotte until somebody found her? The horses
4. What did Mrs. Boyle resemble? A very large toad
5. Where did Vern live when he was young? He was a slave on a plantation in Virginia.
6. What was Charlotte holding onto when her neighbors found her? A piece of reign from her father's horses
7. Who did Charlotte beat at her race? William
8. Who was Charlotte riding when she beat William? Freedom
9. Why did Freedom die? Colic
10. What were Charlotte and Hayward going to put on the sign in front of their ranch? Private property
11. Could Charlotte remember her parents? No
12. How old was Hayward when his parents died? Seven
13. Who was adopted near the beginning of the story? Hayward
14. Where did Mrs. Boyle used to hide Charlotte when people came to look at the children? The potato bin
15. Why did Mr. Millshark tell Charlotte she couldn't work with the horses anymore? The orphanage had a reputation for raising strapping young men, and if Charlotte kept beating them at racing, they would

look like mollicoddles.

16. What did Charlotte give Hayward when he left? Half of the bracelet that she had worn as a baby.
17. What did Hayward give Charlotte to help her escape? Clothes
18. What did Vern give Charlotte to help her escape? Scissors, money, a sandwich and large handkerchief
19. Why did Charlotte leave her apron strings wrapped around tree brambles as she escaped? To make it look like she had drowned.
20. Why did Charlotte have to disguise herself as a boy when she escaped? Girls couldn't travel without a chaperone.
21. How did Charlotte signal to Vern that she had made it to Concord? She piled up some rocks around the wooden Concord sign
22. Where did Charlotte spend the night after she got off the stagecoach? The livery stable
23. What did Ebenezer think Charley could do that made him reluctant to turn her in to Millshark? Drive a six-in-hand
24. After she moved to Rhode Island, how did Charley get word to Vern how she was doing? She often wrote to Hayward, and when he went near Concord he stopped to see Vern
25. Why did Charlotte let Mr. Millshark ride up on top of the stage with her? He offered her a handful of cigars, and no reputable driver would turn down an offer of cigars.
26. How did Charlotte take revenge on Mr. Millshark during the stagecoach ride? She drove the coach through a bog and made Millshark help her get it out.
27. What did Charley steal from Millshark and give to Ebenezer? Millshark's boots
28. Why did Charley want to go to California? Land was cheap
29. Why was Northern California "booming" at the time Charlotte moved there? Gold
30. What did Charley think of the woman in California who was passing out handbills about women's right to vote? She thought she was brave.
31. How was Charley's eye injured? A mustang kicked her in the eye while she was shoeing it.
32. How was Charley able to drive with just one eye? She could hear the way the horses' hooves were hitting the road, and she claimed to be able to smell the road.
33. Why did James finally agree to let Charley be a driver? She got all the passengers and the coach safely over a bridge just before it collapsed in a storm
34. What did it mean if a one-eyed driver ran over your coin? You'd have good luck.
35. How much did Charley pay for the property she bought? \$600 in gold coin
36. How did Margaret pay rent to Charley after Charley bought her land? She tended the chickens and eggs and did some cooking.
37. How did Charley find out Hayward had gotten her letters about the ranch. She came home one night and there was a sign that said "Private Property" posted out front.
38. What job did Ebenezer do when he got to California? Managed a stage coach way station
39. What did William do that caused him to be returned to the orphanage? He beat a prize mare
40. Why didn't Charley want to go back to Missouri with Hayward to bring back his parents? She wanted to stay and vote in the election.
41. What did Charley name the two foals born at the end of the story? Vern's Thunder and Freedom
42. When did everyone find out that Charley was a woman? After she died.

43. Who did Charley remind Ebenezer of? His daughter
In what book . . .

1. Does a man make a handkerchief out of a shirt?
2. Does a girl need 6 ribbons to do her job?
3. Does a woman get to California by going through Panama?
4. Does a woman wear an eye patch?
5. Do we learn that Wyoming was the first territory to give women the right to vote?