

REAL

Discussion Questions

1. In the beginning of the book, why do people like Elvi and Miss Marcia assume Charity can't learn? What evidence do they have? Can we make assumptions about how a person's mind works based on the way their body moves? Is it okay to think that because someone cannot speak, they cannot understand?
2. Why do you think Charity's dad can teach her to surf and ride a bike, when doctors said she could never do these things? What makes him such a good teacher, according to Charity? Is there something you learned to do (or want to learn) even though someone told you that you can't?
3. How does Charity define pity? Why do you think she feels puny when people pity her? What makes you feel puny? What makes you feel real?
4. Why does Charity feel hopeless at the beginning of the book? What is her life like? What does she want more than anything?
5. When Charity feels overwhelmed by emotions, she often thinks of her animals to help calm her. How do you stay in control when you feel overwhelmed?

6. Describe the changes in Mason from beginning to end. How does he think about Charity in the beginning of the book? Why? What makes him change his opinion? Why does he take a risk and stand up for her at school? Tell us about a time you stood up for a friend even if you felt scared.
7. Charity's first typed sentence was "I am intelligent." Why do you think she typed that first? If you were in Charity's place, what would your first sentence be? Why?
8. Charity says, "Believe that treasures are in all." What treasures might exist in characters like Skyler or Jazmine that can't be measured? What treasures exist in you that can't be measured?
9. Charity also says, "Believe that all kids can learn." How does this attitude—*Every Person Is Capable*—affect the way we treat people like Charity who can't talk or who communicate differently?
10. Once Charity is able to communicate, she discovers her true mission. What is it? Share ideas about your possible mission.
11. Charity tells us that kids like her rarely have friends. Why do you think that is? What are some ways to bring kids together instead of keeping them apart? Can you think of ideas for your school or community?
12. Try not speaking for one day (or half a day) and only communicating by typing on a tablet or writing in a notebook. How did it feel? What did you learn?