

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

Grades 4-6

## chasing the white witch

A NOVEL

marina cohen



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# I OVERVIEW

## A Note to Teachers

*Chasing the White Witch* by Marina Cohen offers students and teachers an opportunity to work with curriculum while engaging in Claire's story. A story about a self-conscious and somewhat impulsive twelve year old, this novel shows what can happen when we delve into unknown territory without adequate forethought. In this case, Claire finds a book at the grocery store. She believes the book's promises to solve problems by using magic charms and the reader learns what results from this. Claire also deals with uncertainties in her relationships with her brother Jordan and her friends, including Paula-Jean and later Hollis, and this will ring true with many students in this age group. This novel contains many possibilities to enhance reading, writing and discussion in the middle grade years.

Because one of the major themes of the novel involves Claire's experimentation with magic charms, questions and concerns may be raised by students and their parents. Awareness of the potential sensitivity of this topic, the nature of student comprehension at this developmental level, and of your school district's guidelines with regard to working with students on issues of this nature will help teachers to proceed in the best possible way. It is a story that teaches students about the dangers of acting in impulsive ways in unknown territory and it does so in a fairly lighthearted fashion.

The ideas presented in this Teacher Resource Guide are intended for the consideration of teachers who may use this novel in their practice with students. It is not intended that this guide be used in a step-by-step fashion, but rather, that teachers choose the assignments that best support their particular approach and the learning needs of their students. Included are a variety of ideas that are appropriate for students with diverse learning abilities and that can be used as presented or modified by the teacher to span the different levels of learning as documented in Bloom's Taxonomy.

## Book Summary

Teased by her older brother, bullied by the popular girls at school, and plagued by a blistering pimple that has surfaced on the tip of her nose, twelve-year-old Claire Murphy wishes she could shrivel up and die or spontaneously combust. But when a mysterious book appears at her feet in the checkout aisle of a grocery store, Claire is confident that her troubles are over.

Following the instructions carefully, Claire dives nose-first into reeking remedies, rollicking rituals, and silly spells. It's only when she recklessly disregards the Law of Three that the line between good and evil blurs and Claire must race against time to try and undo all the trouble she's caused.

## About the Author

Marina Cohen is an elementary school teacher in the York Region District School Board. Her previous novels include *Ghost Ride*, a finalist for the 2011 Red Maple Award, and *Mind Gap*. She lives in Markham, Ontario.

## II SETTING THE PURPOSE: PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Prior to reading, it is of benefit to predict what might be found in the story. The process of prediction can engage the reader throughout the reading of the text, but especially at the beginning it can help to capture the interest of the reader in proceeding with the story. In the case of *Chasing the White Witch*, the following are some possibilities for prediction and helping the reader to set a purpose for reading. The questions may be addressed as whole class discussions, small group or individual work.

1. Consider the title. What do you think the book will be about based on the title *Chasing the White Witch*?
2. Look at the front cover. What do you see there? What does the illustration tell you that would help you to know what the book might be about? How old do you think the girl is? What might her expression be saying?
3. Read the back cover. Based on this, what ideas or themes do you think will be explored in this novel?
4. Read Chapter One. Based on what you have learned from the front and back covers of the book, and from reading Chapter One, complete a KWL Chart to discuss your expectations, questions and predictions about the book.

K What I Know	W What I Would Like To Know	L What I Learned

At this time, students complete only the first two columns of the chart. Let students know they will be returning to the chart at the end of the study to see if their questions were answered, their expectations were met or their predictions were correct. Students should have an opportunity to share their information orally once it is collected. This particular activity can be worked on by the class as a whole, by small groups, or by individuals. If worked on individually or in small groups, there should be plans for sharing in some way with the larger group. Students might want to learn, for example, why the book is titled *Chasing the White Witch*. They might wonder about the different themes suggested on the back cover and how they will play into the story. They might wonder how Claire will end her troubles by using the book she has found in the grocery store. They might want to learn more about how remedies, rituals and spells will play into the story. They might want to know what troubles Claire causes and whether or not she can undo the troubles.

# III EXPLORING THE TEXT

## 1. Chapter Summaries

### Chapter One

We meet Jordan and Claire. Claire has just discovered her first-ever zit about which she is extremely self-conscious, and Jordan, her older brother, teases her relentlessly about this. We also meet Hollis, Claire's sworn enemy. Hollis is beautiful and popular and appears to enjoy tormenting Claire. While in the grocery store trying to avoid being seen by Hollis, Claire finds and buys a magazine.

### Chapter Two

We meet Cyrus, Claire's loyal and long-suffering beagle. Claire peruses the magazine and finds a remedy for acne. When everyone in the family is asleep she makes up the recipe but substitutes some ingredients. Just as she is about to put the mixture on her face, the lights come on and Jordan enters the kitchen.

### Chapter Three

In her haste to keep Jordan from discovering her plans, Claire claims to be having a midnight snack and eats some of the concoction. When Jordan leaves, she places the mixture on her face, reads the incantation aloud three times, and goes to sleep, believing this solution will work.

### Chapter Four

We are introduced to Paula-Jean, Claire's best friend, who is coming for a sleepover. The potion has flopped and Claire realizes she should have "cleansed her character" first. She begins to try to understand how to do this by asking her dad for help, but he assures her that she is smart and can figure it out.

### Chapter Five

Paula-Jean arrives for the sleepover. As they visit Claire realizes her zit is gone. Claire concludes that this has to be magic and explains the book to Paula-Jean. When Claire suggests they use the ideas in the book to cast another spell, Paula-Jean argues against this and expresses her concern that something might go wrong.

### Chapter Six

Paula-Jean tries to talk Claire out of placing an avenging curse on Jordan, but she is unsuccessful and ultimately agrees to accompany Claire on a journey to Mrs. Walker's garden, where they cut off and steal a branch from a yearling tree so that the curse against Jordan can be completed. Mrs. Walker discovers intruders in her garden and chases them unsuccessfully. They return to Claire's house with the branch.

### Chapter Seven

Claire performs the steps of the curse while Paula-Jean watches. PJ sleeps but Claire cannot. In the morning Jordan appears to be in pain and says he feels horrible.

### Chapter Eight

PJ and Claire have a disagreement in which PJ states her concerns around Claire's impulsive nature and Claire feels PJ is not being a supportive friend. PJ leaves Claire's house. Thanksgiving dinner proceeds and Claire discovers four new pimples. She treats them with the remedy.

## Chapter Nine

After handing in her own assignment, Claire interferes with Hollis's excuse for not completing hers by reminding the teacher about the consequences for not handing the assignment in on time. Thus Hollis is banned from the Fall Fun Day. Instead of Claire, Paula-Jean chooses Hollis for her partner in a class project. Claire is devastated.

## Chapter Ten

Out of hurt and anger toward Hollis for "stealing" Paula-Jean, Claire decides to put a curse ("binding hex") on Hollis. The morning after placing the curse, Claire cannot locate the shoelace she used to tie the seven knots called for in the curse. Claire looks for but cannot locate PJ until she gets to school, and then she discovers that Hollis is absent. Claire is delighted by Hollis's absence. At Fall Fun Day, Claire trips in several races and does not win her usual firsts. Claire begins to feel she cannot control her own body.

## Chapter Eleven

Hollis continues to be absent from school. Claire is unable to speak clearly in the class presentation and becomes convinced that the spell she placed on Hollis has bounced back to her. Claire decides to undo the curse; however, she is unable to locate the missing knotted shoelace or the directions.

## Chapter Twelve

Claire phones PJ who initially expresses concern that Claire will place a hex on her. Claire tells PJ about the hex on Hollis and indicates to PJ that she, Claire, is an evil person. During the phone call, Claire thinks of a solution to the problem. She gets PJ to promise to say she is ill if she misses school the next day. Claire gets the green book and finds the publishing information.

## Chapter Thirteen

Claire enlists Jordan's help to call in sick for her at school. Jordan loans Claire his cell phone.

## Chapter Fourteen

Riddled with guilt at deceiving her parents, Claire first stops at Hollis's house. When Hollis finally answers the door, Claire realizes that Hollis is very ill. Claire explains her plan. Hollis tries to convince Claire that she is legitimately ill, but Claire convinces her to come along to find the White Witch so they can find out how to reverse the curse.

## Chapter Fifteen

Claire and Hollis take the bus to the publishing company. En route, Claire chases away a street kid who was harassing Hollis and then gives him five dollars when she realizes he is very needy.

## Chapter Sixteen

Claire and Hollis locate Mixed Pickle Press. As they walk in they see a coffee table with many mini books similar to Claire's Remedies, Rituals and Incantations, and they see a clown sitting at the desk.

## Chapter Seventeen

Claire decides to leave the publishing office before being seen, but Jordan's cell phone rings and the clown looks up. When the clown explains that he dresses in the costume on Mondays to volunteer at the Hospital for Sick Kids, Claire and Hollis relax somewhat. Unfortunately the clown does not have contact information for the White Witch. As Claire and Hollis leave the office, Claire grabs and hides the clown's coffee cup.

## **Chapter Eighteen**

While they eat lunch at a nearby pizzeria, Claire tells Hollis she is going to perform a “charm spell” to get the clown to give them the post office box number of the White Witch. She obtains flour and water from the pizzeria owner, uses the table salt and water and mixes a concoction in order to form a talisman of a clown. She uses the stolen coffee mug as a personal belonging, and they have everything they need for the charm spell. Then they chant the spell.

## **Chapter Nineteen**

They leave the pizzeria and return to the publishing office to return the stolen mug. On the way, they run into the clown, and Hollis, who does not see him in time to stop, is slightly injured. Claire returns the mug and is looking for band aids for Hollis when she inadvertently discovers a file with author information in it. She memorizes the post office box number for the White Witch and the girls quickly leave.

## **Chapter Twenty**

Claire and Hollis go to a drugstore to mail a parcel addressed to the White Witch and discover that the post office box is in the drugstore.

## **Chapter Twenty One**

Robin and Griff discuss Robin’s dilemma about whether or not to tell Dad about Ari’s plans to sneak out to the bush party. Griff tells Robin that Brodie is a special boy. Robin also worries about what is happening to Relentless and what she should do about whether or not to confront the sheriff with her friends. Supported by Griff’s care and love, Robin finally lets her emotions go and cries for the loss of her mother and her other worries.

## **Chapter Twenty Two**

They chase the person and catch him. Claire grabs the package and the man introduces himself as Wayne White, author. Wayne immediately lets them know he has no magic powers. Dejected and now sure she cannot help Hollis, Claire puts Hollis on a bus home and calls Jordan.

## **Chapter Twenty Three**

Jordan and dad rescue Claire from the donut shop. Dad tells Claire that Mom is with Cyrus and the vet’s. Cyrus is having emergency surgery for a knotted piece of string stuck in his intestines.

## **Chapter Twenty Four**

Claire, sobbing, holds the recovering Cyrus and tells him she is sorry. Claire tells her parents the whole story. She keeps calling Hollis to see how she is doing but initially gets no answer. When she finally gets in touch with Hollis’s dad, she learns the devastating news that Hollis has had emergency surgery for a lump on the lining of her brain. Claire takes the string and uses it to complete the unbinding hex in hopes of helping Hollis, because she believes this will work.

## **Chapter Twenty Five**

In the morning, Claire feels better and Hollis’s dad calls to say Hollis is doing well. Claire goes to the hospital and Hollis apologizes for being mean to her in the past.



## Chapter Twenty Six

Claire apologizes to Mrs. Walker for ruining her bush and gives Mrs. Walker a new bush. A package waits for Claire on her return home, and it contains her little green book and the socks she had mailed to the White Witch. When Claire reads the foreword of the book for the first time, she finds that it means a great deal to her.

## 2. Chapter Questions

Many incidents occur throughout the story *Chasing the White Witch*. These chapter questions have been developed to assist the reader in situating and organizing these happenings. The questions are intended for this purpose only and not to elicit higher order thinking or responses. Other activities in this guide focus on the possibilities of higher order thinking and responses..

### Chapters One to Five

1. Why is Claire self-conscious?
2. What does Claire buy in the grocery store?
3. Who are Jordan, Paula-Jean, Hollis, and Cyrus?
4. What does Claire do with the solution?
5. What conclusion does Claire reach when she realizes her zit is gone? What suggestion does she then make to Paula-Jean?

### Chapters Six to Ten

1. What does Claire steal to assist in making her avenging curse on Jordan?
2. How does Jordan feel the morning after the avenging curse has been completed?
3. When PJ and Claire discuss Claire's impulsive nature, what happens?
4. What happens to ban Hollis from Fall Fun Day?
5. When Claire is hurt and angry about Hollis "stealing" PJ, what does she decide to do?
6. What happens to Claire at Fall Fun Day?

### Chapters Eleven to Fifteen

1. What makes Claire decide to undo the hex on Hollis? Why can she not undo the hex?
2. Why does Claire ask PJ to cover for her absence from school?
3. How does Jordan help Claire with her plan?
4. What does Claire discover when she stops at Hollis's home?
5. While they are on the bus to the publishing company, what does Claire do that makes us think she has a soft heart?

### Chapters Sixteen to Twenty

1. What two things do Claire and Hollis see as they enter the offices of Mixed Pickle Press?
2. What important information will the clown not share with the girls?
3. What does Claire do at the pizzeria to help with the charm spell?
4. What does Claire find at the publishing company when she is returning the borrowed coffee mug?
5. Where do Claire and Hollis go to try to find the White Witch? What do they find there?

### Chapters Twenty One to Twenty Six

1. What do Claire and Hollis discuss while they are waiting at the donut shop?
2. What does Claire see just as she gives Hollis a hug?
3. When Claire grabs the package, who does she meet and what does she find out?

4. Who rescues Claire from the donut shop?
5. What has happened to Cyrus? How is Cyrus doing by the time Claire gets home?
6. What does Claire learn has happened to Hollis?
7. What does Claire do when she finds the missing knotted string?
8. Where does Claire go to see Hollis and what happens there?
9. What does Claire discover when she finds the green book and reads the foreword?

### 3. Vocabulary

#### Crossword Puzzle

This crossword puzzle highlights a number of words used in the novel. The puzzle provides an opportunity to study the context and the meaning of these words. Each clue is followed by a number in parentheses. This is the page where the word is found in the novel. Students should be instructed to find the word in its context and then to add it to the puzzle.

#### CLUES

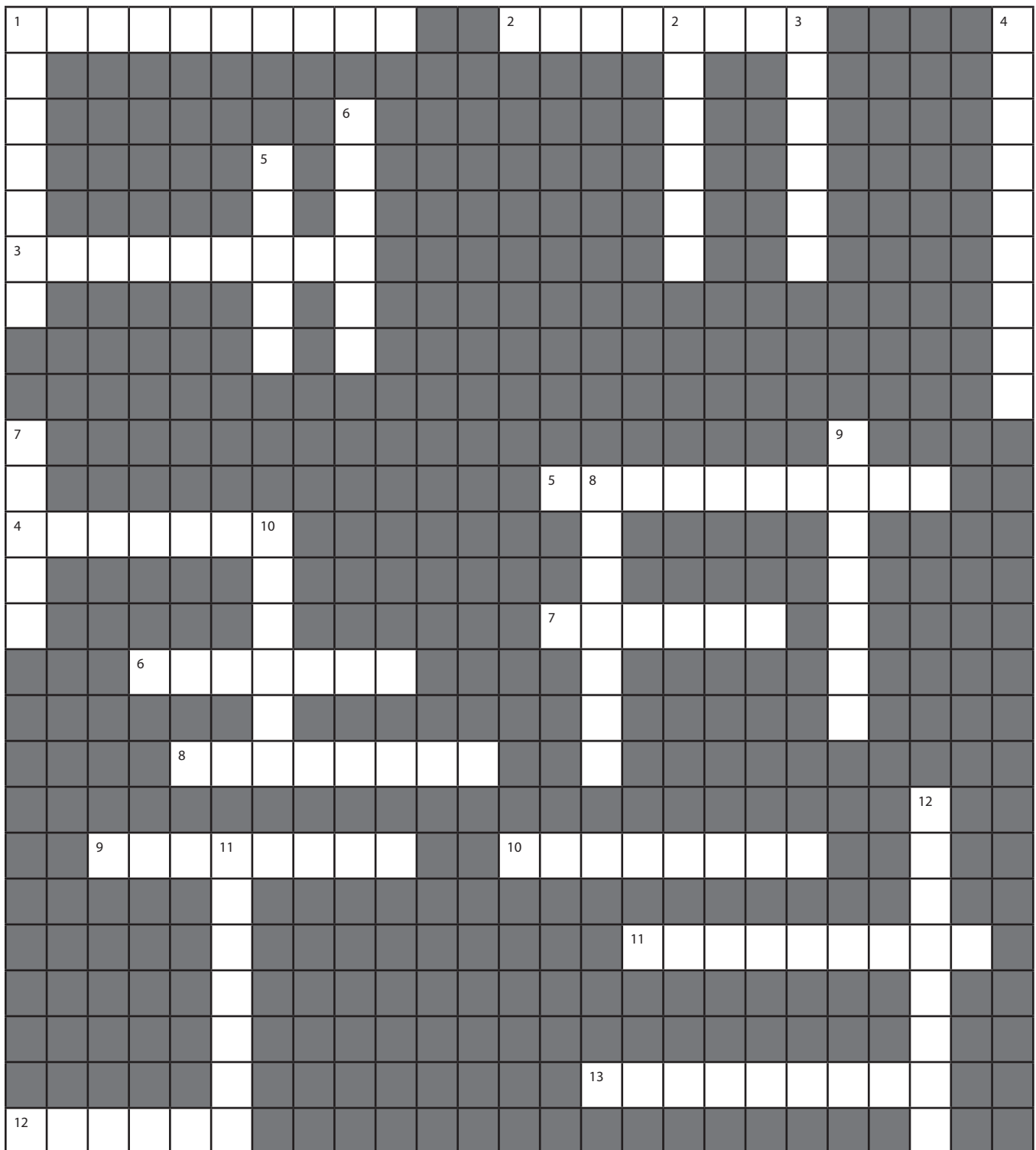
##### Across

1. a firmly held belief or opinion (p.16)
2. scowled (p.10)
3. acting without careful thought (p.51)
4. physical attack (p.53)
5. in low spirits (p.70)
6. the impression that something bad is going to happen (p.40)
7. a strong and unpleasant smell (p.24)
8. fast and energetic in an uncontrolled way (p.57)
9. an excess of (p.63)
10. rebound one or more times off a surface (p.44)
11. nearness (p.54)
12. harmful or destructive (p.59)
13. having doubts or reservations (p.90)

##### Down

1. mysterious or obscure (p.50)
2. obtain by force, threats or other unfair means (p.83)
3. the action or practice of concealing or misrepresenting the truth (p.84)
4. so foolish or out of place as to be amusing (p.81)
5. derogatory or mocking in an indirect way (p.65)
6. scattered or spread untidily (p.87)
7. feeling great anger (p.28)
8. a person who believes that certain persons deserve favored treatment (p.93)
9. the complete loss or absence of hope (p.26)
10. hypnotic state (p.45)
11. of little value or importance (p.70)
12. a thing that blocks one's way or hinders progress (p.18)

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## Make Your Own Crossword Puzzle

In her writing, Marina Cohen uses a number of challenging words that offer readers an opportunity to learn. In the following exercise, words that were not used in the previous crossword puzzle can be used to make one's own crossword puzzle. In this way, students can be exposed to the meanings of as many words as possible. It is suggested that the class do one together first, and then students go on to make their own. (See BLM 3 for crossword puzzle blank).

### Steps for Making a Crossword Puzzle:

1. Choose words.
2. Make a 25 X 25 grid in Word (or use the blank crossword puzzle in the blackline masters section at the end of this guide.)
3. Print three copies of the grid.
4. On one copy, print each word, putting one letter in each square.
5. Cut out these words.
6. Using the cut out words and the second grid copy, place the words on the grid, such that crosswords are used; in other words, that letters overlap appropriately. This may take some juggling.
7. Glue the words onto the blank grid.
8. Add numbers. From the top across and down, number "across" numbers and "down" numbers.
9. On the third copy of the grid, shade all the squares that will not be used. Number the blank spaces as you have in the draft you have already made.
10. Arrange the words as to "Across" and "Down" and in number order to form a "clues" section below the final grid.
11. Look up a definition for each word and include it in the "clues" section that you have added following the puzzle grid.
12. Remove the words and leave the definitions.
13. Now you are ready to share your puzzle with a classmate!

Here are some suggested words for the class puzzle and the individual puzzle:

#### Class Puzzle

blemish (p.11)  
solitude (p.23)  
squelch (p.23)  
plummeting (p.64)  
pedestrian (p.93)  
unscathed (p.99)  
cowering (p.101)  
spewed (p.24)  
eternity (p.26)  
clenching (p.29)  
resignation (p.39)  
petrified (p.95)  
reclusive (p.103)  
chaos (p.56)

#### Individual Puzzle

vested (p.108)  
exorbitantly (p.67)  
pathological (p.107)  
kleptomaniac (p.107)  
commentary (p.118)  
vultures (p.132)  
lurched (p.57)  
interrogate (p.71)  
pseudonyms (p.98)  
aversion (p.99)  
defiantly (p.49)  
maniacal (p.50)  
ceremonial (p.53)  
vile (p.132)

psychic (p.106)  
gangly (p.54)

contours (p.24)  
wry (p.131)

### Context Clues

Being able to decide on the definition of a word from its context (the examination of the parts of the sentence or sentences surrounding the word) is one way to find meaning. Below are ten sentences from *Chasing the White Witch*. The page number on which each appears is in parentheses following the sentence. Read each sentence and then, using the context of the underlined word, make an educated guess about the meaning of the word. Following completion of the exercise, discuss as a class, using a dictionary as required.

1. "Hey," I said, trying to sound as casual as possible just to gauge whether or not Paula-Jean would even talk to me. (p.73)  
gauge means \_\_\_\_\_
2. The digital alarm read 5:22 a.m. when I skulked into Jordan's room. (p.79)  
skulked means \_\_\_\_\_
3. With what light there was from the nearly full moon creeping into the room from between the slats in the blinds, I could make out his dark silhouette. (p.80)  
silhouette means \_\_\_\_\_
4. Her expression remained skeptical, but there was something in her eyes that said she hoped I was right. (p.90)  
skeptical means \_\_\_\_\_
5. I had my own concerns about ascending those stairs, but I wasn't about to let Hollis know that. (p.97)  
ascending means \_\_\_\_\_
6. (The giant clown was waiting patiently-perhaps to welcome me, or perhaps to bludgeon me-at this point, his motives were unclear.) (p.100)  
bludgeon means \_\_\_\_\_
7. Luckily, the clown was too engrossed in cyberspace to notice the two of us peeping round the corner at him. (p.99)  
engrossed means \_\_\_\_\_
8. The ensuing episode wasn't pleasant to say the least. (p.110)  
ensuing means \_\_\_\_\_
9. I was too far gone now to respond in any sort of coherent manner. (p.140)  
coherent means \_\_\_\_\_
10. Her face contorted. (p.138)  
contorted means \_\_\_\_\_

## **“Magic” Terms**

Choose several words from the novel that have associations with the “magic” theme and ask students to create their own small dictionary. They may use a dictionary or the internet to help find definitions. Remind them that dictionaries are in alphabetical order. Giving them a small booklet to help capture these definitions can be motivating, and they may also enjoy creating an illustrated cover page for their dictionary. Some words from *Chasing the White Witch* that could be used in this activity are:

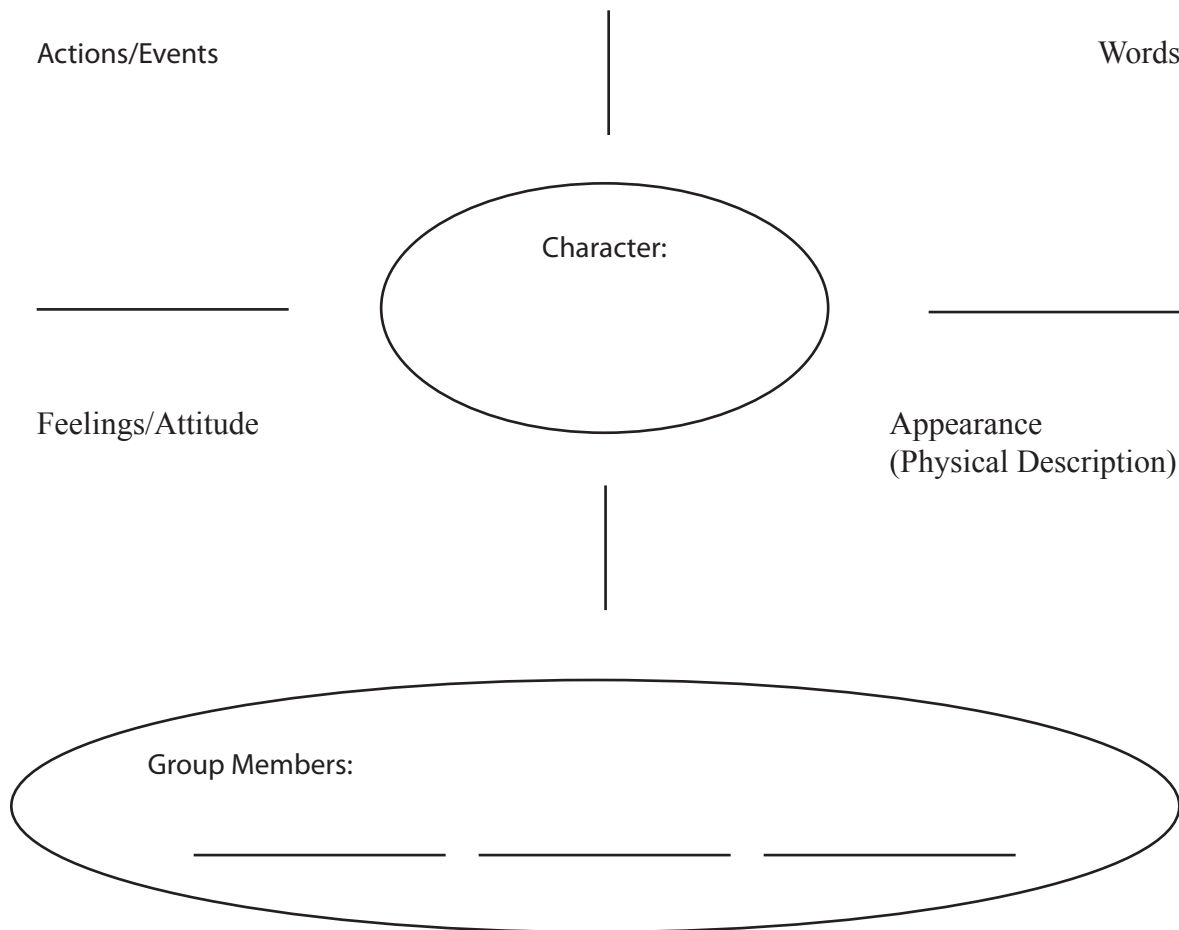
mystic, talisman, charm, hex, gargoyle, witch, spell, potion, voodoo, demon, diabolical, remedy, ritual, incantation, magic.

## 4. Character Study

### Character Web

In this assignment, students are divided into groups of three. For each group, a facilitator, a recorder and a reporter are assigned. The facilitator's job is to make sure the group stays on topic and to keep the discussion going; the recorder's job is to document the discussion as it is occurring; the reporter's job is to report back orally to the large group when requested. All members are responsible for the research and participation in the discussions in addition to their specific role.

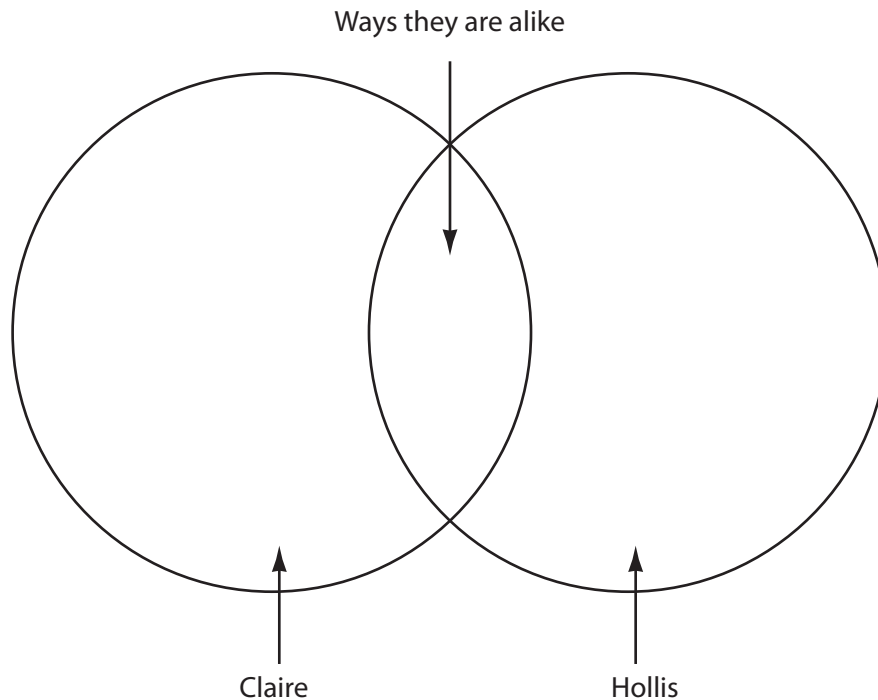
Each group is assigned a character from the story: Robin, Griff, Brodie, or Ari. There will be more than one group studying a particular character. The assignment is to discuss their character, record information on the following template, including page numbers to support documentation, and then to present the information to the large group.





## Character Comparison

Compare and contrast the characters of Claire and Hollis. Initially, students collect information by using a Venn diagram (as below). The Venn diagram allows students to organize the information in point form as to unique characteristics of each character, and ways they are alike. Then, using the information from the Venn diagram, they write a paragraph that explores the ways Claire and Hollis are similar to and different from each other.



## Character Interview

In groups of two, each group chooses one of the following characters: Claire, Hollis or Paula-Jean. The group works together to develop and write ten questions they would like to ask this character. The group also writes the answers they think this character would give. All of this is to be based upon what they know of the character and the way the character acts on the story.

When the questions and answers have been developed, the group turns them into an interview. One group member is the interviewer and the other group member is the character. The completed interview is presented to the class and the written portion is submitted to the teacher. Teachers may choose to assess students on the process of working in a group, the authenticity of the questions and answers, and the oral presentation.

## Character Poetry

Following instruction, students use different forms of poetry to demonstrate their understanding of the characters, and they choose good descriptive words and phrases to aid in this demonstration. Students can

be asked to present this poetry in an artistically pleasing fashion, and may illustrate by drawing, shading, bordering, or computer enhancing.

Some possible types of poetry include:

#### Cinquain

This is a five line poem that does not rhyme. The first line contains a subject, the second line contains two descriptive words (adjectives), the third line contains three action words (verbs), the fourth line contains a phrase or sentence describing the subject, and the fifth line contains a word that means something similar to the subject. Here is an example:

e.g.                   Cyrus  
                  loyal, opinionated  
          scarfing, snorfling, stashing,  
          he is Claire's conscience.  
                  beagle

#### Limerick

Limericks are humorous, light, five line verses that use the AABBA form of rhyming. Following instruction on the limerick form, students could choose a character from the story and write their own limerick. Here is an example:

e.g.    There once was a girl named Claire,  
          She tried to make spells with great flair;  
                  She made a mistake,  
                  And that took the cake,  
          In future she'll take better care.

## 5. Descriptions

Marina Cohen describes a number of locations in the novel. She uses strong descriptive terms and phrases to paint a picture in the reader's mind. In this activity, students are asked to choose one of the following descriptions from the story and complete a pencil sketch of their vision for this scene. Under the sketch students copy a few sentences from the book to match the description with their vision.

This assignment offers the opportunity of integrating art with literature. Teachers might provide suggestions and instructions on pencil sketching.

- "I scrambled to my feet, and, holding the branch like the Olympic torch, I flew across the lawn toward Paula-Jean, who was already tearing up the lawn making a beeline for my house. I could hear Mrs. Walker hollering behind me, but from her mad ravings I could tell she hadn't recognized me. As I ran, the leaves and fruit of the dwarf winterberry euonymus blew off the branch one by one, scattering evidence of my tree massacre to the wind." (p.42)

- “This clearly startled him. He sat bolt upright, limbs flying in all directions. Our heads whacked. I heard him swear and Cyrus yelp as I fell backward, tripping over the poor beagle and breaking my fall in Jordan’s pile of dirty laundry.” (p.79)
- “Hollis’s house was as perfect as she was. Polished marble and hardwood floors, huge baseboards and crown mouldings, heavy brocade drapes, and nothing-not one thing-looked out of place. Even the books that were strewn across the coffee table looked like they’d actually been arranged to look strewn.” (p.87)
- “Mixed Pickle Press was written in chipped gold paint on the window of a small, dingy door wedged between a Persian rug store and a pizzeria. Half of the buildings in the area consisted of modern chichi type cafes, furniture stores, and clothing boutiques, while the other half were remnants of darker days. I pressed my face up to the glass. A narrow staircase was visible through the greasy film.” (p.97)
- “An old floral sofa, complete with doilies on the headrests, was off to one side. There was a rickety coffee table with piles of mini books similar to my Remedies, Rituals and Incantations scattered across the top. A few old picture frames adorned the walls-some that looked like they housed certificates or awards. In the opposite corner there were several filing cabinets and a huge old wooden desk with a computer that could be politely described as an antique. And sitting at the desk that was covered in piles of manila envelopes of various sizes and shapes, was a rather large, rather menacing-looking clown.” (p.98)

# IV RESPONDING TO AND REFLECTING ON THE TEXT

## 1. Response Journaling/Dialogue Journaling

Students respond to different parts of the book, either on their own or as a dialogue journal with a classmate. The ideas for these responses are posed as questions for the students to consider. The questions encourage students to go beyond recalling events in the story and to demonstrate higher levels of thinking about what they have read. Some of these responses could take place during the reading of the book, and some might best take place following the reading. For each, the teacher might consider a class discussion prior to the writing activity so that students would have some ideas as to where to begin their responses. Students should be asked to write about their answers to the questions. In the case of dialogue journaling, they would write back and forth to a partner as in a conversation and base their writing on the particular question assigned by the teacher, commenting on the other student's ideas and posing further questions and offering possible answers.

- Compare yourself to Claire. How do you see yourself as similar and how do you see yourself as different? Use a Venn diagram to begin your response.
- Cyrus the beagle appears at every key point of the story. What role do you think Cyrus plays in Claire's life in addition to that of loyal companion?
- Claire thinks that Hollis is a bully. Do you agree? Why or why not? What is a bully? Does your perception of Hollis as a bully change over the course of the story? Does Claire's perception of Hollis change over the course of the story? If so, how does it change and why do you think it changes?
- When Claire re-reads the "remedies" on page 27, she notes something she missed on first reading: the expression "cleanse thy character." What does this expression mean to Claire as the story evolves?
- When Claire is trying to place a hex on her brother, she thinks of some of the times he has done bad things to her. What does Jordan do near the end of the story to vindicate himself? Are there people in your life for whom you have mixed feelings or for whom your feelings have changed over time? If so, give an example and explain.
- At Fall Fun Day, Claire, usually a winner at all races is unable to move her feet properly, and she falls, not just once, but several times. Why do you think this happened to her? Have you ever failed at something you thought you were really good at? If so, what was it and how did things turn out? Why do you think this happened to you and could you have done anything to prevent it from happening?
- When Claire gave money to the street kid, did this change your feelings about her? If so, in what way? Why do you think Claire gave him money? What other things does Claire do in the story that show she can be a thoughtful and caring person?
- Claire decides to try one last thing to help Hollis, because "Sometimes, believing goes a long way..." What did Claire try? Why did she try this? Do you think this was what helped Hollis to get better? Why or why not?
- At the end of the novel, Claire reads the foreword of the green book for the first time:  
" There is a great power that dwells in each of us- a power to alter oneself, others, and the world around. Seek to control the energy deep within your spirit, live wisely, and, above all, do no harm- then, and

only then will peace and harmony be yours”.

Comment on what you think these words mean to Claire and how you think she will act in the future after having read it and experienced what she experienced. What does this quotation mean to you in your own life as you move forward?

## 2. Partner Discussion and Individual Written Response

Another possibility for eliciting responses to this novel is included next. A number of quotes from the story are documented below. The process would have the teacher read the quote aloud and ask students to find the quote in the book and to read the quote in context. Then, with a partner, students should discuss what they think this quote meant in the story and what it might mean to them in their own lives. Following this discussion with a partner, each student would write his/her own six to eight sentence response to the quote. After completion, these responses could be read aloud to the class. It is intended that this assignment would take place during the reading of the novel, and that the work would be done on an ongoing basis.

In *Chasing the White Witch* Claire often mentions her dad’s sayings. Below are five of these sayings and three quotes from others in the story. Students should be invited to consider these sayings in the following ways:

- √ what they think the saying means
  - √ what has happened in the story to draw their attention to the saying
  - √ what may have happened in their own life to make the saying true
- “There’s a pearl in many an oyster, if you’re willing to dig through gelatinous gunk to find ‘em –”(p.11)
  - “If you kick a stone, you’ll hurt your foot.” (p.29)
  - “Where you are going is more important than how fast you get there.” (p.69)
  - “Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive...” (p.84)
  - “You have to believe it. Sometimes believing goes a long way.” (p.146)
  - “Look Claire,” said Hollis, “sometimes you’ve just got to make peace with reality.” (p.132)
  - “Not everything in life is what it appears to be,” he said, taking his hand from my shoulder. “Nothing is simple, either. Life isn’t ever black or white. Mostly it’s just shades of grey.” (p.138)
  - “You can always find a way to help out in your community if you really want to.” (p.155)

### 3. Completion of KWL Chart

Return to the KWL Chart that was partially completed at the beginning of reading the book. Ask students to complete the “What I Learned” or “L” part of the chart. This can be done individually, in small groups, or by the class as a whole. Regardless, the information should be shared by the larger group and can form an effective conclusion to the study. Completing this chart helps students articulate their new learning and what they have gained from reading the book. The “L” part of the chart may contain new learning not previously wondered about in addition to questions answered.

K What I Know	W What I Would Like To Know	L What I Learned

# V EXTENDING THE TEXT

The following ideas or literary devices are used or mentioned in *Chasing the White Witch*. Teachers might use these as connections or starting points for further exploration.

## 1. Mnemonic Devices

Claire makes use of a mnemonic device to help her memorize information from the file on the White Witch (p.115). A mnemonic device is a learning technique to aid memory or a memory device. An interesting pursuit would be to explore mnemonic devices and perhaps create a class list or poster of those considered helpful. Here is one example of a mnemonic device:

“ROY G. BIV”- used to help students remember the order of colors in the rainbow: **R**ed, **O**range, **Y**ellow, **G**reen, **B**lue, **I**ndigo, **V**iolet

Students could also be invited to create their own mnemonic devices to help them remember information of importance to them.

## 2. Cliffhanger

Every chapter in *Chasing the White Witch* ends in a cliffhanger. A cliffhanger is a dilemma, revelation or twist in the turn of events that keeps the reader eager to find out what happens next. Using the cliffhangers in this novel as models, teachers could discuss this method with students and devise writing projects and practices to include the notion of cliffhangers.

## 3. Figurative Language

Marina Cohen uses figurative language to enhance descriptions in *Chasing the White Witch*. There are a number of examples of alliteration (the repetition of initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables). Some examples are found as follows:

- “meticulously manicured” (p. 41)
- “whipped and whomped and whacked” (p.45)
- “olfactorily offensive” (p.54)
- “gangly gargoyles” (p.54)
- “mystic message” (p.59)

She also uses a number of similes (comparisons using the words like, as or than), such as:

- “The rest of the day oozed along like a lousy slug.” (p.37)
- “But instead, Paula Jean let the silence dangle between us like the blade of a guillotine.” (p.73)

Another type of figurative language employed by Cohen is the metaphor (a comparison without the words like, as or than):

- “The sky was a woolly grey mantle leaking cold drizzle into the morning air.” (p.53)

The attention of students could be drawn to these examples and used as a stepping stone to further exploration of figurative language in literature.



## **VI BLACKLINE MASTERS**

**BLM 1: First KWL Chart**

K What I Know	W What I Would Like To Know	L What I Learned							

## BLM 2: Crossword Puzzle

### CLUES

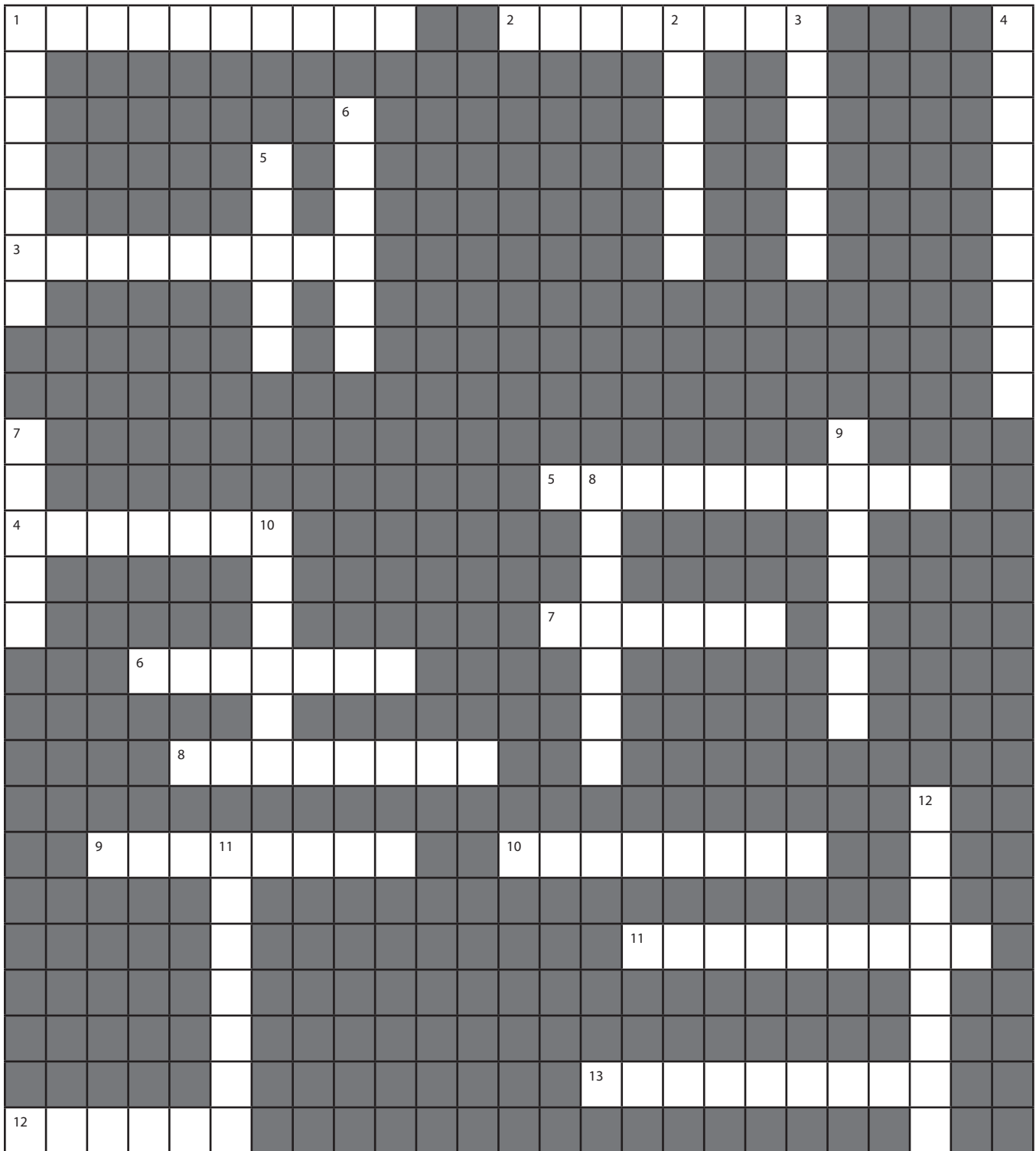
#### Across

1. a firmly held belief or opinion (p.16)
2. scowled (p.10)
3. acting without careful thought (p.51)
4. physical attack (p.53)
5. in low spirits (p.70)
6. the impression that something bad is going to happen (p.40)
7. a strong and unpleasant smell (p.24)
8. fast and energetic in an uncontrolled way (p.57)
9. an excess of (p.63)
10. rebound one or more times off a surface (p.44)
11. nearness (p.54)
12. harmful or destructive (p.59)
13. having doubts or reservations (p.90)

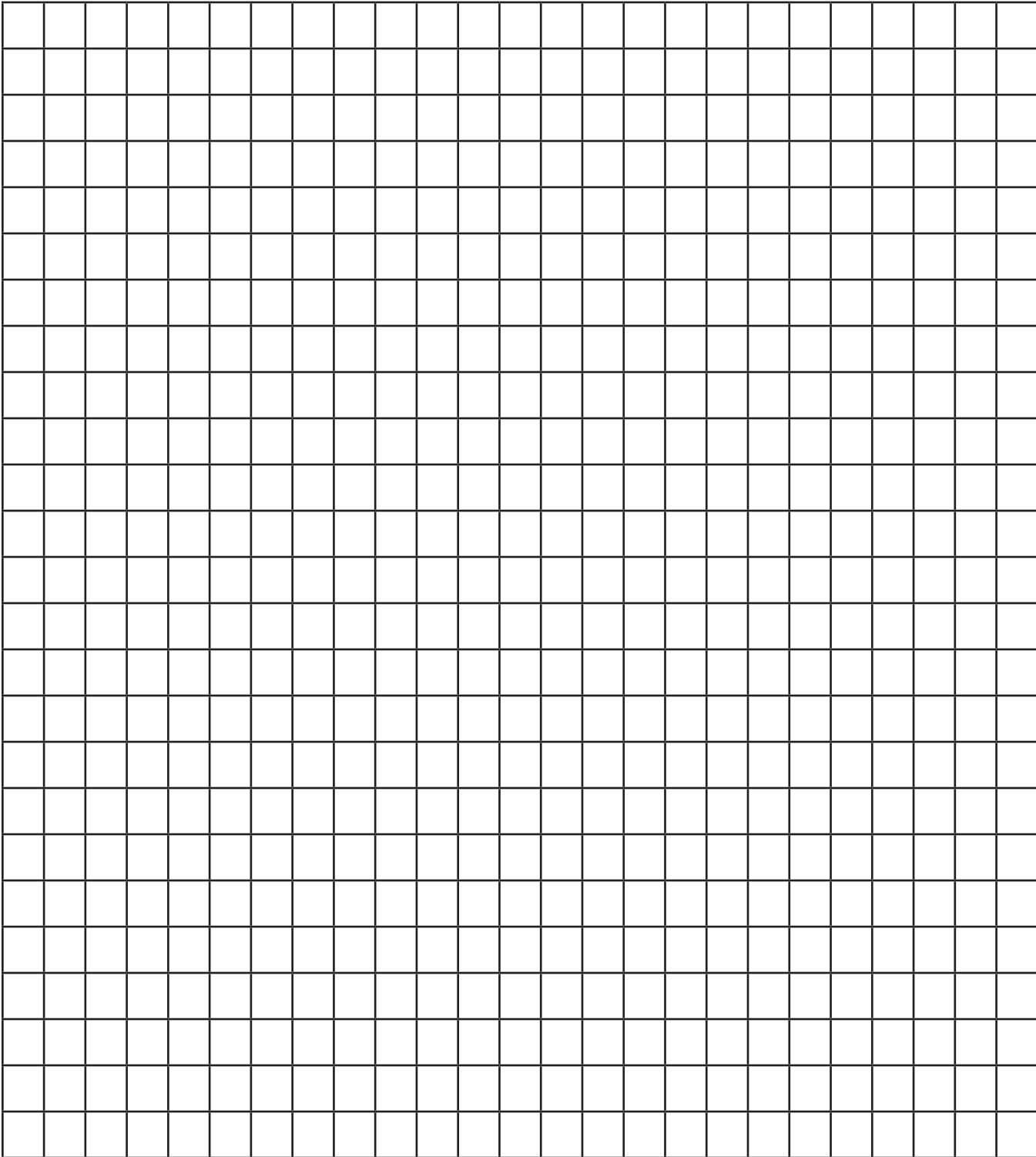
#### Down

1. mysterious or obscure (p.50)
2. obtain by force, threats or other unfair means (p.83)
3. the action or practice of concealing or misrepresenting the truth (p.84)
4. so foolish or out of place as to be amusing (p.81)
5. derogatory or mocking in an indirect way (p.65)
6. scattered or spread untidily (p.87)
7. feeling great anger (p.28)
8. a person who believes that certain persons deserve favored treatment (p.93)
9. the complete loss or absence of hope (p.26)
10. hypnotic state (p.45)
11. of little value or importance (p.70)
12. a thing that blocks one's way or hinders progress (p.18)

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE



**BLM 3: Blank Crossword Puzzle**

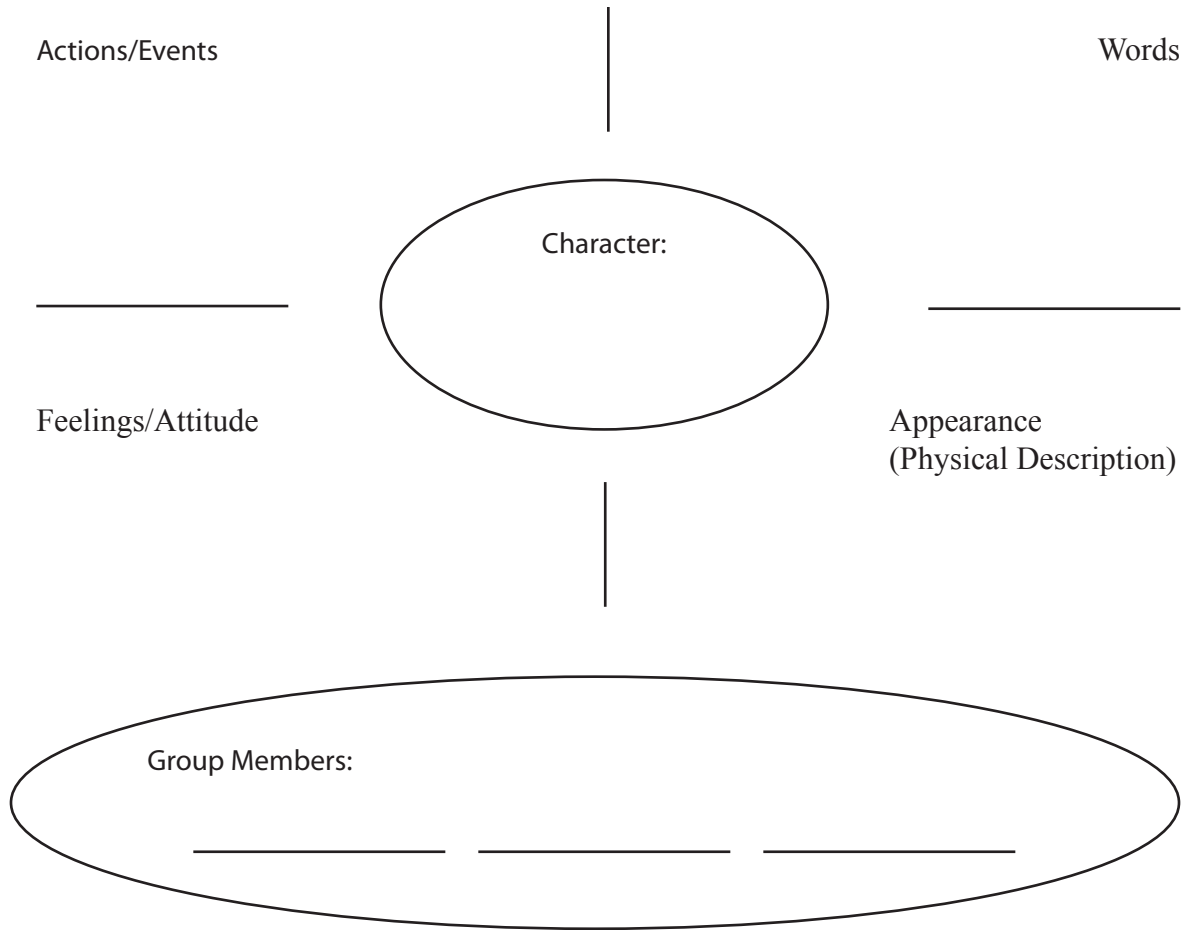


#### BLM 4: Context Clues

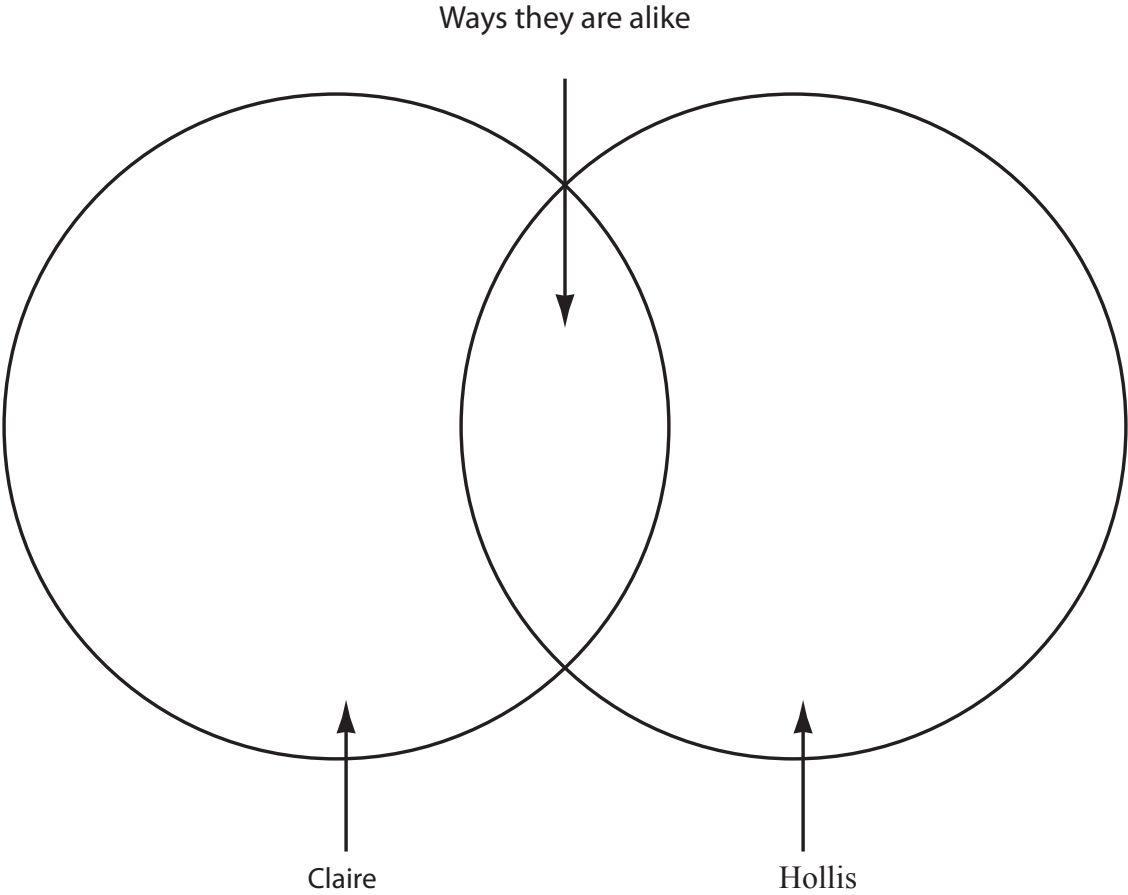
Being able to decide on the definition of a word from its context (the examination of the parts of the sentence or sentences surrounding the word) is one way to find meaning. Below are ten sentences from *Chasing the White Witch*. The page number on which each appears is in parentheses following the sentence. Read each sentence and then, using the context of the underlined word, make an educated guess about the meaning of the word. Following completion of the exercise, discuss as a class, using a dictionary as required.

1. "Hey," I said, trying to sound as casual as possible just to gauge whether or not Paula-Jean would even talk to me. (p.73)  
gauge means \_\_\_\_\_
2. The digital alarm read 5:22 a.m. when I skulked into Jordan's room. (p.79)  
skulked means \_\_\_\_\_
3. With what light there was from the nearly full moon creeping into the room from between the slats in the blinds, I could make out his dark silhouette. (p.80)  
silhouette means \_\_\_\_\_
4. Her expression remained skeptical, but there was something in her eyes that said she hoped I was right. (p.90)  
skeptical means \_\_\_\_\_
5. I had my own concerns about ascending those stairs, but I wasn't about to let Hollis know that. (p.97)  
ascending means \_\_\_\_\_
6. (The giant clown was waiting patiently-perhaps to welcome me, or perhaps to bludgeon me-at this point, his motives were unclear.) (p.100)  
bludgeon means \_\_\_\_\_
7. Luckily, the clown was too engrossed in cyberspace to notice the two of us peeping round the corner at him. (p.99)  
engrossed means \_\_\_\_\_
8. The ensuing episode wasn't pleasant to say the least. (p.110)  
ensuing means \_\_\_\_\_
9. I was too far gone now to respond in any sort of coherent manner. (p.140)  
coherent means \_\_\_\_\_
10. Her face contorted. (p.138)  
contorted means \_\_\_\_\_

## BLM 5: Character Web



**BLM 6: Venn Diagram**





**BLM 7: KWL Chart**

K What I Know	W What I Would Like To Know	L What I Learned