

Teacher Guide

Friendship or Fame: Mia Finds Her Voice

Grades 4–7 | Contemporary MG | Music • Friendship • Identity

Book at a Glance

- Themes: friendship vs. fame; jealousy and belonging; bullying and allyship; courage, voice, and integrity; coping with family change (divorce).
- Setting & context: elementary senior choir, auditions, and Winter Festival; mentorship under Miss Charlotte; peer dynamics (Emily/Taylor).
- Why it works in class: short chapters, clear voice, built-in music concepts (posture, solfège, sections), and SEL-ready moments (inner critic, bystander to ally).
- Content notes: peer teasing/nicknaming; anxiety around performance; amicable parent separation; positive adult supports.

Big Ideas & SEL Connections

- Finding your voice: performance confidence grows alongside ethical choices (loyalty vs. ambition).
- Managing jealousy and comparison: reframe competition as collaboration; celebrate others without losing self.
- Community matters: mentors and peers (e.g., Miss Charlotte, Taylor, Siarra) shape belonging and resilience.

Pre-Reading Mini-Lessons (10–15 min)

1. Name your inner critic: Give it a silly name and one line it often says; write one helpful reply you can use.
2. Choir 101: posture and sections (soprano/alto/tenor); try a quick solfège warm-up (do-re-mi).
3. Prediction carousel: Using chapter titles (Outside Looking In, The Posture Police, Seeds of Doubt, This Is It), predict turning points.

Discussion Questions (with Answer Starters)

Ch. 1 — Outside Looking In

4. How does the opening scene set up Mia's desire to be seen?

She watches Emily sing and imagines herself on stage; the fall and being ignored reinforce her 'invisible' feeling.

5. **What emotions drive Mia here—jealousy, admiration, or both?**

Both; she admires the performance but feels left out, which primes later choices.

Ch. 2 — Cat Got Your Tongue?

6. **What do we learn about Mia's home life and how it affects her voice?**

Her parents' divorce dampens family rituals; she withholds feelings to avoid upsetting Mom, which mirrors staying quiet at school.

7. **How does the senior choir poster function as a call to action?**

It externalizes her dream and forces a decision despite fear.

Ch. 3 — Run, Run Away

8. **What triggers Mia's flight response at the sign-up table?**

Emily's challenge and public pressure; tears well and she bolts—classic avoidance under stress.

9. **Where does Mia show growth by the chapter's end?**

She returns and signs herself up, a first act of agency.

Ch. 4 — Down, But Not Out

10. **What flips Mia from panic to performance?**

She reframes the moment, breathes, and just sings—leading to acceptance; Emily's reaction foreshadows rivalry.

11. **How does friendship support show up?**

Siarra encourages and later seeks reassurance herself—support goes both ways.

Ch. 5 — Why Are You Here?

12. **How do Taylor and Emily model two different cultures for the choir?**

Taylor defuses with humor/inclusion; Emily leads with status/competition.

Ch. 6 — Mysterious Miss Charlotte

13. **What does 'vigore' (force) symbolize for Mia?**

Permission to speak/sing with strength; identity reframed by a mentor.

14. **Why teach solfège and posture?**

To create shared language and technique that builds confidence and blend.

Ch. 7 — The Posture Police

15. What might Emily's smile/wink mean?

Possible kindness—or strategic flattery; invites readers to question motives.

16. How does structure (rules, checks) affect Mia?

Predictability calms her; fear of messing up remains.

Ch. 8 — Music to My Ears

17. How does Dad's mic-stand lesson function beyond mechanics?

Repairing a ritual with Dad; turns a fear trigger into mastery through practice.

Ch. 9 — The Joke's on You

18. What are the risks of 'us vs. them' jokes?

They bond in-groups but can hurt friends (altos vs. sopranos) and escalate rivalry.

19. Where does Mia cross a line and why?

She lands a big laugh at altos' expense, chasing approval and visibility.

Ch. 10 — Head Over Heels

20. What does the riser pile-up show about community?

Shared laughter resets tension; humans make mistakes together.

Ch. 11 — Battle Stations

21. Why does Miss Charlotte stop the high-note duel?

Choir ≠ solo contest; blend > brag; sets norms before Winter Festival auditions.

22. What new goal reframes the stakes?

Audition sign-ups for the finale raise pressure and temptation.

Ch. 12 — Seeds of Doubt

23. How does Emily sow doubt about Siarra?

She flatters Mia privately, implying Siarra holds her back; frames 'serious' singers as soloists.

24. What choice tension is Mia now facing?

Loyalty to her friend vs. pursuit of a solo and status.

Ch. 13–16 — Fighting Friends • Forget Me Not • Slam Dunked! • Get Me Out of Here

25. Where do misunderstandings harden into conflict?

Mixed signals, public moments, and outside pressures; avoidance makes rifts grow.

26. Who acts as a bridge and how?

Taylor or a mentor names the issue, offers perspective, models boundaries.

Ch. 17–20 — Tea and Talk • Ghosted • Spit Duty • Get Lost Stinkface!

27. What restores momentum for Mia?

Honest conversations; owning mistakes; updating her self-talk to counter ‘Stinkface.’

Ch. 21–24 — Time to Sing for My Supper • Taylor Talk • This Is It • Making Amends

28. What evidence of growth appears by performance time?

Grounded posture/breath; collaborative choices; clearer values around friendship.

29. How does reconciliation look in action?

Apologies with repair behaviors, not just words; sharing spotlight, giving credit.

Ch. 25–26 + Bonus — My Big Surprise Plan • My New Normal

30. How does Mia redefine ‘fame’?

Visibility becomes secondary to meaningful connection; voice used to lift others.

Vocabulary & Word Work (sample)

- Choir/Music: soprano, alto, tenor, solfège, posture, risers, encore, audition, duet, finale.
- SEL/Conflict: jealousy, rivalry, allyship, integrity, reconciliation, bystander, escalation.
- Academic: camaraderie, enunciate, mentorship, regulate.

Cross-Curricular Projects

31. Music/Phys Ed — Posture Lab: test singing posture elements; reflect on breath/support.
32. Health — Inner Critic Reframe: write ‘Stinkface’ lines and your evidence-based replies; practice a 60-second breathing routine.
33. ELA/Media — Audition Pitch: craft a 150-word audition blurb and 30-sec live read; peer feedback on clarity and tone.
34. Arts — Lyric Mood Board: design a visual palette for a choir piece (color, texture, movement).

Writing Prompts

- Narrative: ‘The moment I almost ran—but stayed.’
- Opinion: Should school showcases emphasize solos or ensembles? Defend your view with examples from the book.
- Letter: Write to a friend you’ve hurt (or who hurt you). Include a concrete repair plan.

Quick Assessments

- Exit slips: one body-cue of nerves + one strategy Mia (or you) can use.
- Discussion rubric (4 levels): cites text, builds on peers, explains reasoning, connects SEL theme.
- Project rubric: accuracy (music concepts), clarity, collaboration, reflection.

Standards Snapshot

- BC ELA 4–7: Comprehend & Connect; Create & Communicate.
- CCSS ELA (Gr. 4–7) anchors: RL.1, RL.3, RL.4, SL.1, W.1, W.3.