
Teachers' Notes



SIX TAKE ONE

R. A. Stephens

ISBN: 9781761113598

Reading level: reading age of 12+, interest age 14+

BOOK SUMMARY

A fast-paced, teen-party-gone-wrong, crime novella.

Cassie wonders why she agreed to a New Years Eve party on Johnny's farm.

A car crash. No phone. A storm. And now Kiah is crying murder. Cassie is at the wrong party.

Who is dead? And is one of them a murderer? Can Cassie escape? Can she get home?

THEMES

Crime & Murder • Justice • Trust & Betrayal • Teen Parties

Consequences • Consent • Friendship & Peer Pressure

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

Six Take One is an accessible crime novella for teenage readers that explores social and ethical issues, including peer pressure and consent. The text provides opportunities for critical analysis of language and perspective, and how truth is constructed and hidden. They will also see how bias, fear, and power influence decision-making and character growth. The relationship dynamics between the characters will allow for discussions on respect, consent, justice and personal responsibility. The relatable characters and contemporary setting will encourage students to reflect on their moral choices and consider decision-making and consequences.

CONTENTS

Book Summary.....	1
Themes.....	1
Reasons for Studying This Book.....	1
About the Author.....	3
Discussion Questions.....	4
Classroom Activities.....	6
Key Curriculum Areas.....	8

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**R.A. Stephens is available for author talks and workshops.
Contact Rhiza Edge for more information.**

Six Take One Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rochelle Stephens writes under R. A. Stephens. She is published in both educational and trade markets. Her *Riz Chester* series included *The Fingerprint Code* which was shortlisted in the Speech Pathology Awards in 2024. She completed her Masters in Editing in Publishing with a thesis exploring middle fiction for teens and is passionate about motivating young people to read with relevant and interesting stories. Rochelle started the Rhiza Shorts list of teen stories for young adults who are busy or reluctant readers. She has contributed two titles for the list: *No Dress*, *No Idea* and *Six Take One*. She loves introducing Maths to young readers as seen in her two picture books, *Apples Not Orples* and *Connected*, which explore maths for kids in alternate ways.

AUTHOR NOTES

I enjoy crime and mystery stories so this was the first time I have written one in novella format for the Rhiza Shorts. My desire is to write stories that are accessible for any reader, whether you are busy or not and a prolific or only occasional reader. I desire in my stories to write a range of hopeful stories. Despite having a murder and being a crime story this story also explores teen friendships, overcoming challenges, overcoming misunderstandings and forgiveness and grace as we learn what's important to us.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What does the cover suggest about the book?
2. Name some other books that have similar themes or structure.
3. What makes crime or thriller genres popular?
4. How does Cassie change through the course of the story?
5. Which decisions have the biggest consequences?
6. Is any character totally innocent? Explain why or why not.
7. Which character is the least trustworthy? Why?
8. Do any of the characters remember the exact truth? What does that mean for human memory and the nature of truth?
9. How does the author build doubt about what really happened?
10. What red herrings were in the story?

FRIENDSHIP & PEER PRESSURE

1. Why does Cass go to the party?
2. Why does Kiah believe Johnny over Cass? What does that say about who she trusts? In the end is there a different explanation than the one Cass would have assumed throughout the story.
3. What are some bad decisions made by Oshiro? Johnny? Aidan? Dylan?
4. Why did Dylan cheat on school work?
5. Who holds the most power at the party? How does this affect others speaking up?
6. How does the power shift throughout the story? How does it change how the characters see each other?
7. Should friendship come before everything? Where is the line between doing the right thing and remaining loyal to a friend?

CONSENT

1. Why did Dylan take photos of Cass while she was sleeping?
2. How did Cass feel about this?
3. What was the outcome of this?
4. Why was it wrong?
5. How is accountability and responsibility seen in the actions of the characters?

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JUSTICE

1. Why didn't Johnny want to call the police?
2. Why was it important that Kiah and Cass not clean their clothes?
3. Why did Johnny want everyone to lie and tell the same story to the police?
4. Why was it important for Cass to be honest with the police?
5. How does secrecy shape the events? Or how does it destroy relationships?
6. Is there a single 'true' version of events?

CONSEQUENCES

1. Which decision had the biggest impact on what happened at the party?
2. At what point could events have been changed or prevented?
3. How do fear and panic influence the characters' choices? Is there anyone in particular that could have handled things better, i.e. Johnny?
4. Who takes responsibility for their actions—and who avoids it?
5. Do the consequences faced by Kiah feel fair? Why or why not?
6. What about Cass and the consequences for her?
7. How do the events of the night continue to affect all of the teens afterwards?

CONSENT

1. What does consent mean in the context of the story?
2. When is consent ignored or violated by the teens?
3. How does Cassie respond when her boundaries are crossed?
4. Why is it important to respect someone's privacy and personal space?
5. How do power and peer pressure affect someone's ability to give or refuse consent?
6. What should accountability look like when consent is not respected? Does anyone crossing boundaries hold themselves accountable throughout the story?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

MISTAKES AND CONSEQUENCES

What are some of the mistakes the teens make throughout the novel?

- a) Draw a decision chart and discuss what other points Cassie could have left the house. Could there have been a point where the outcome could have been prevented?
- b) Kiah seems to go along with what she is told and doesn't admit she could be wrong until later in the book. What would have happened if she spoke up sooner? How could this help Cassie or other friends?

CHANGE THE NARRATIVE

How might things have turned out differently?

- i. Rewrite the Ending: What if there was a different twist to the ending of *Six Take One*? Change a few character decisions and create a new ending.
- ii. Rewrite the Murder: What if Aidan wasn't really dead but just faking death? How would this change?
- iii. Create a New Victim: What if someone else was murdered? Take the story in a new direction and have a different teen at the party be the murder victim. What would change and what would stay the same? Where would the story go?

ROLEPLAY AND RESEARCH

The scene showing Cassie and her friends being interviewed is only a snippet of what would happen in a police station. Additionally, as the book is fiction, there are sometimes streamlining for length purposes. The Australian Justice System is an interesting topic, so let's find out more about true crime procedures.

For this task:

- a) Research how police conduct interviews with suspects and witnesses, and what techniques they use.
- b) Determine what would happen if *Six Take One* was a real event, and what police might do in order to uncover the truth in the murder of Aiden.
- c) Extension: In pairs, roleplay a police interview.

RURAL CRIME

Rural crime is popular as a genre in modern teen and adult writing. Investigate why crime is popular to read. Why do we like the good guy to win? Is it popular because readers want to guess what happened?

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Write a newspaper article about teen crime or alcohol use. You can imagine you are interviewing Cassie

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about her experience at Johnny's farm.

EXPANSIONS & GAPS

Six Take One is a short crime fiction novel, but a much longer novel in the genre would see more twists and turns.

- **Write a Scene from a New Perspective:** Write a scene from Kiah's perspective.
- **Write a Scene Cass thinks About:** Write Dylan's interview with the police officers.
- **Write a Scene out of Time:** Write a scene set before or after the novel, perhaps involving a lesser used character like Aiden.
- **Write a Gap or Missing Scene:** Write a scene we didn't get to see due to scope of the novel, this can be an event Cass wasn't there for, or something not shown due to condensed nature of the short novel. Perhaps you want to explore Cass and Kiah's friendship, or Aiden's interactions at the party before Cass arrived, or run through an interaction between more secondary characters.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

CURRICULUM V9

YEAR 9

English, Civics and Citizenship, Health & PE

AC9E9LA01 - recognise how language empowers relationships and roles

AC9E9LA02 - understand how evaluation can be expressed directly and indirectly using devices such as allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor

AC9E9LA08 - analyse how vocabulary choices contribute to style, mood and tone

AC9E9LE01 - analyse the representations of people and places in literary texts, drawn from historical, social and cultural contexts, by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors

AC9E9LE04 - analyse texts and evaluate the aesthetic qualities and appeal of an author's literary style

AC9E9LE05 - analyse the effect of text structures, language features and literary devices such as extended metaphor, metonymy, allegory, symbolism and intertextual reference

AC9E9LY01 - analyse how representations of people, places, events and concepts reflect contexts

AC9E9LY03 - analyse and evaluate how language features are used to represent a perspective of an issue, event, situation, individual or group

AC9E9LY04 - analyse the organisation of ideas in paragraphs and extended texts, and evaluate its impact on meaning

AC9E9LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to compare and contrast ideas and opinions in and between texts

AC9HC10S05 - create descriptions, explanations and arguments using civics and citizenship knowledge, concepts and terms that incorporate evidence

AC9HP10P04 - evaluate the influence of respect, empathy, power and coercion on establishing and maintaining respectful relationships

AC9HP10P05 - propose strategies and actions individuals and groups can implement to challenge biases, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination, and promote inclusion in their communities

AC9HP10P06 - evaluate emotional responses in different situations to refine strategies for managing emotions

YEAR 10

English, Drama

AC9E10LA01 - understand how language can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people

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AC9E10LA02 - understand that language used to evaluate, implicitly or explicitly reveals an individual's values

AC9E10LE03 - analyse how the aesthetic qualities associated with text structures, language features, literary devices and visual features, and the context in which these texts are experienced, influence audience response

AC9E10LE04 - evaluate the social, moral or ethical positions represented in literature

AC9E10LY03 - analyse and evaluate how language features are used to implicitly or explicitly represent values, beliefs and attitudes

AC9E10LY04 - analyse and evaluate how authors organise ideas in texts to achieve a purpose

AC9E10LY05 - integrate comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to analyse and interpret complex and abstract ideas

AC9ADR10D01 - develop performance skills and/or techniques to manipulate elements of drama and/or use conventions to communicate the physical and psychological aspects of roles and characters consistent with intentions

AC9ADR10D02 - reflect on their own and others' drama or practices to refine and inform their use of elements of drama, conventions and/or approaches to shape and sustain dramatic action

AC9ADR10C01 - improvise and devise drama, and interpret scripted drama, using elements of drama and conventions to shape and manipulate dramatic action and convey intended ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

AC9ADR10C02 - rehearse and refine drama making deliberate aesthetic choices to unify dramatic meaning

AC9ADR10P01 - perform improvised, devised and/or scripted drama to audiences, using performance skills and conventions to shape the drama

CURRICULUM 8.4

SENIOR SECONDARY

English

Six Take One can be used as a text for Years 11 and 12. It can be used in English, Literature and Essential English. The applications can include the intersection of Health, Civics and Drama. Character arcs and motivations can also be observed.