

Deadline by Chris Crutcher A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

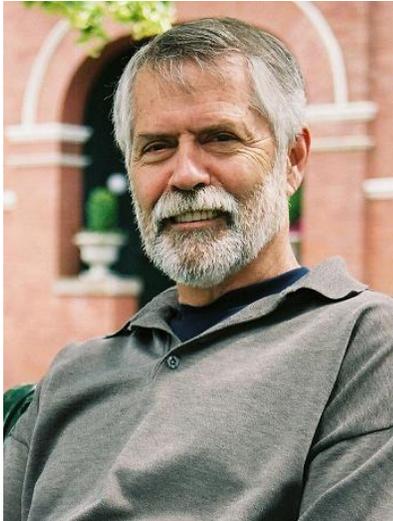


About the Book

After being diagnosed with an aggressive form of leukemia, 18-year-old Ben Wolf elects to forgo treatment and keep his illness secret from his family and friends in an attempt to have a "normal" senior year at his small Idaho high school. He doesn't reveal his condition to his parents, his brother, Cody, or his stunning crush, Dallas Suzuki.

Free from long-term consequences, he connects with his crush, frustrates his biased U.S. Government teacher, and tries out for football. Events lead Ben far from his plan to live normally. On his way to death, Ben learns about life, relationships, and the truth.

Crutcher brings his signature blend of sports action and human emotion to this powerful novel. Emotionally spare but deeply touching, the relationship between Ben and his brother will resonate with many readers, while others may find the several strong father figures comforting.



About the Author

Chris Crutcher is an author, educator and family therapist known for his realistic fiction. Born on July 17, 1946 in Dayton to a WWII bomber pilot and a homemaker, Crutcher grew up in Cascade, Idaho (a tiny logging town north of Boise). He graduated from Eastern Washington State College (now EWU) with a BA in psychology and sociology.

He later earned his teaching credential and taught primary and secondary school in Washington State and California. He was offered a job directing a "last chance" alternative school in Oakland. He served at-risk K-12 students for almost a decade before returning to the Pacific Northwest to write his first book, **Running Loose**, for Greenwillow in 1983.

Eight other novels (**Stotan!**, **Chinese Handcuffs**, **The Crazy Horse Electric Game**, **The Deep End**, **Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes**, **Ironman**, **Whale Talk** and **The Sledding Hill**), a collection of short stories, **Athletic Shorts**, and his autobiography, **King of the Mild Frontier**, followed. **Deadline** was published in 2007 and Crutcher's latest book, **Angry Management**, in 2009.

Crutcher's fast-paced fiction -- heavily influenced by his work as a therapist and child protection advocate -- is known for its expert balance of comedy and tragedy, as well as its unflinching honesty and authentic voice. He has been honored with dozens of awards and honors including the California Library Association's 2005 St. Katharine Drexel Award, *Writer Magazine's* 2004 Writers Who Make A Difference Award, the ALA's 2000 Margaret A. Edwards Lifetime Achievement Award, the NCTE's 1998 National Intellectual Freedom Award and the ALAN Award.

A popular columnist (*Voices from the Middle*, *Family Energy Magazine*, *the Signal Journal*, *iParenting*) and public speaker, Crutcher lectures at universities, conferences, libraries, schools and bookstores across the U.S. He makes his home in Spokane, Washington.

Author Resources:

Chris Crutcher's Official Website

<http://www.chriscrutcher.com/>

Learning About Chris Crutcher

<http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/professional-development/childlit/crutcher.html>

from Kay E. Vandergriff's Learning About the Author and Illustrator Pages

San Mateo High School Author Visit: Chris Crutcher

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHbezR2xusg>

Biography of Chris Crutcher from Teen Reads

<http://www.teenreads.com/authors/au-crutcher-chris.asp>



Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about Ben's decision to keep his diagnosis from family and friends? Would you want a friend or a family member to tell you if he or she was given Ben's diagnosis? What do you think you would have done if you were in Ben's position?
2. What do you think people fear about death? Why is death difficult to talk about? Should it be?
3. What does this story have to say about secrets? About the truth?
4. Why does Ben decide to continue helping Rudy McCoy even after he learns about Rudy's past? Do you agree with Ben about Rudy?
5. Sylvia Longley expresses her opinion that burning books should be okay since it's okay to burn the American flag. What do you think about burning, or banning, books? What do you think about burning the American flag?
6. Running helps Ben calm down when he's overwhelmed. What helps you?
7. Ben has "Too Old to Die Young," sung by Ann Savoy and Linda Ronstadt, on his playlist for loss. What other music might Ben have on this iPod playlist?
8. If you had to write a list of things you wanted to do or learn before you die, what would be on your list?

Cited Resources:

Reading Group Guide from HarperCollins
<http://files.harpercollins.com/PDF/ReadingGuides/0060850892.pdf>

Dr. Christian Z. Goering. "The Fragility of Life" Lesson Plan on LitTunes
http://www.corndancer.com/tunes/tunes_lp019/lp03_fraglife.html



Extension Projects

Language Arts

Carpe diem means "seize the day". Have students research the lyrics from popular songs like "My, My, Hey, Hey (Out of the Blue)" by Neil Young, "Dust in the Wind" by Kansas, "Sing for the Moment" by Eminem, and "Gravedigger" by the Dave Matthews Band. Discuss how these songs embody the sentiment of *carpe diem*.

Library skills

Use the library's catalog and the online databases provided by INFOhio (<http://www.infohio.org/>) to research some facts about leukemia, including causes and treatment.

Geography

Using the book **1000 Places to Visit Before You Die** by Patricia Schultz as a jumping-off point, have students write down and discuss the top 10 places they would like to see in their lifetimes. Chart their destinations on a world map.

Social Studies

A Socratic Circle opens with a question either posed by a leader or solicited from participants. An opening question has no right answer; instead, it reflects a genuine curiosity on the part of the questioner. A good opening question leads participants back to the text as they speculate, evaluate, define, and clarify the issues involved. Responses to the opening question generate new questions from the leader and participants, leading to new responses. In this way, the line of inquiry in a Socratic Circle evolves on the spot rather than being pre-determined by the leader.

Create a Socratic Circle for **Deadline** and open the discussion with a question from the "Discussion Questions" section of this toolkit.



Additional Resources

Chris Crutcher's Letter to Readers about Deadline

<http://www.harpercollins.com/author/authorExtra.aspx?authorID=16156&displayType=essay>

Chris Crutcher on Writing for Teenagers, Intellectual Freedom, The Sledding Hill & More

<http://news.bookweb.org/news/chris-crutcher-writing-teenagers-intellectual-freedom-sledding-hill-more>

Interview for the American Booksellers' Association's *Bookselling This Week*, May 24, 2005.

Literature Map

<http://www.literature-map.com/chris+crutcher.html>

What else do readers of Chris Crutcher read? Check this interactive map. The closer two writers are, the more likely a reader will like both of them.

Author Series: Interview with Chris Crutcher

<http://reach.vantagelearning.com/2008/08/27/author-series-interview-with-chris-crutcher>

Interviewed by Drew Sterner for Vantage Learning Community. Includes audio and transcript.

Book details:

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About Choose to Read Ohio

Choose to Read Ohio (CTRO) spotlights Ohio authors and promotes reading across Ohio. The State Library of Ohio, in partnership with Ohioana Library Association, developed this initiative to encourage Ohioans of all ages to share literature by authors native to, residing in, or associated with Ohio. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: <http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>.