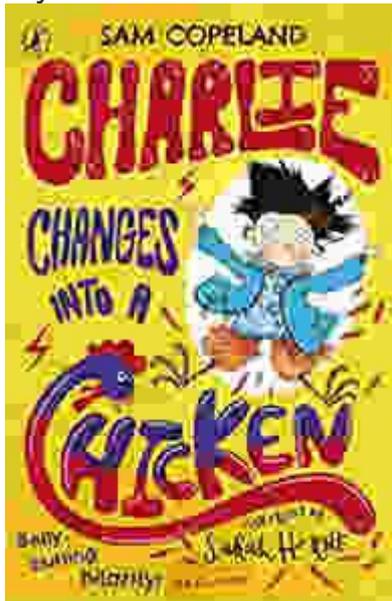


# Charlie Changes Into a Chicken

Sam Copeland

It's absurd. Not the book – well, yes the book. But what I'm talking about is the fact that I haven't read this sooner. *Why haven't I read this sooner?* I don't know. But having just this minute finished it, I am still chuckling and shaking my head in disbelief.



*Charlie Changes Into A Chicken* is right up my alley with its flagrant disregard for serious debate and its page-after-page of ridiculousness. It's right there from the off, from the premise (a boy that changes into animals) down to the details (which mainly involve poo) and even the marvellous characters, such as the formidable, ferocious and fiercely loyal Flora Fawner. That's right – Flora Fawner. See, there isn't any part of this story that's not jokey. I did wonder if I could ever enjoy a book that had a title so immature. But it turns out that immature in name and nature is just fine with me. More than fine. I can't wait to read the next in the series... But let's get back to the review of this one.

With his brother ill in hospital and his parents stressed, the last thing Charlie wants is to get into trouble. But Charlie discovers to his alarm that he changes into animals – all sorts of animals, and rather suddenly, at some very awkward moments. Moments that could cause TROUBLE. And turning into an animal doesn't come without its own worries – such as what happens if he turns back into a normal boy (with no wings) at 10,000 feet up in the air? Or stuck in an insect-sized confined space? Or in front of Dylan, the school bully? And why does it happen in the first place? Charlie

is blessed with some loyal friends who investigate the phenomenon – with science – and stick by him through thick, thin, hairy and slithery.

As Charlie comes to term with his affliction, the events that support it are inventive and superbly silly. And if that wasn't enough, there are tangents that take you to dizzy heights of hilarity. The footnotes, which take turns to explain or confuse the text, are brilliant additions.

*The story is riddled with silly skirmishes, my favourite being a group of the brainless, love-struck pigeons with dodgy French accents. That in itself is worthy of an entire spin-off.*

If you love *Mr Gum*, *Stinkbomb And Ketchup Face* or anything in that ilk then you'll love *Charlie Changes into a Chicken*. But *Cha-Cha-Chick* is kind of special. It's surreal but it has substance. I say that, because while the idea is clearly bonkers, the story line is very much grounded. You care about the characters. You care about Charlie's home life. You care what happens from the moment he sprouts extra eyes to the moment he is forced to face his demons. And I guess that could be daemons (*Dark Materials* reference).

Put bluntly, Snort endorses this book. And it's no laughing matter. Although, it is.

Reviewer: Rachel  
Publisher: Puffin