

"A story of magic, friendship and
theatre that shines star-bright"
Maria Kuzniar

THE SPECTACULARS

The Four Curses



Teaching Resource Pack
For ages 9+



THE SPECTACULARS

Notes for teachers

Explore themes of: Fantasy / Adventure / Magic / Friendship

Subject checklist: Literacy / Art and design / PSHE

In this resource pack, you will find extracts from the book with discussion questions and activities for KS2/KS3 pupils.



Scan the QR code, or go to <https://qr.usborne.com/29rz4> to watch an introduction to *The Spectaculars* from author, Jodie Garnish.

About the book

When three figures arrive at Harper's window in a flying canoe, informing her that she is due to start her apprenticeship, Harper discovers she is a Spectacular a magical performer, gifted special powers from the stars.

Harper is thrilled to be part of the Spectaculars' travelling theatre and boarding school, until everything is plunged into great danger.

With her new friends Trick and Thief, Harper sets out to save her school... But while dreams come true at the Wondria, nightmares might just be lurking in the wings.



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Contents

Spotlight One: Who are the Spectaculars?

Objectives: analysing and retrieving descriptive information from a text, writing to describe and inform, and producing creative artwork.

Activity: design and draw a poster to a Spectaculars' show.

Spotlight Two: The Teapot Trait Ceremony

Objectives: exploring character, retrieving descriptive writing from a text, and discussing imagery.

Activity: choose your own teapot traits.

Spotlight Three: Design Your Own Magical District

Objectives: exploring setting, retrieving descriptive writing from the text, building vocabulary, and producing creative artwork.

Activity: design a map of your own magical district.

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Spotlight One: Who are the Spectaculars?

pp. 11-12

Harper closed her eyes and tried to pretend that she wasn't sitting in a stolen tram, being chased by the police forces of the Sunless Provinces. Instead, she pictured home: the city of the Smoke, the largest – and dirtiest city – in the Provinces.

Specifically, she pictured the borough that she'd grown up in: a borough lined with grand theatres and music halls, lit up by neon lights, rich with the smell of buttered popcorn and roasted nuts. She could practically hear the sounds of the ushers as they tried to attract people into their venues...

“Adriana Phillips she can sing up a storm! No, literally – watch as she conjures thunder and lightning with her repertoire of tempestuous tunes! Half-price tickets for seats in the ‘Splash Zone’, complimentary rain ponchos provided.”

“The Utterly Un-Royal Theatre Troupe presents ‘Lost in the Jungle’, complete with immersive scenery – watch as the theatre around you transforms into a real-life jungle! Patrons enter at their own risk; compensation not offered for tiger bites.”

“For one night, and one night only, presenting Buster Yang and his reflection – the greatest comedy duo in town! Tickets on special offer, six bob each!”

Harper's reminiscing was cut off by a huge shudder that suddenly rocked the tram. A blinding flash burst out from the driver's cab, and Harper and Trick both threw themselves away from the door as a roar of triumph rose up from the crowd gathered around the window. Harper and Trick glanced at each other, then ran towards them, elbowing their way through the mob to get a look outside.

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Discussion questions

- Harper, the main character, is on the run, how do you think she might be feeling? Why do you think she chooses to think of home?
- She pictures the 'borough' she grew up in. What's another word for a borough?
- She remembers the sights, the smells, and the sounds of her old neighbourhood. Can you spot these? Would you like to live in this area? Why?
- Using the text and a dictionary, or thesaurus to help, can you find the meaning of these keywords to do with the theatre? **venue, patrons, ushers**
- Harper describes three magical performances. What's the name for this type of magical performer?
- Which performance seems the most dangerous? Why?
- Which of the three Spectaculars' performances would you choose to see? Why?
- What does 'six bob' mean?
- What wakes Harper from her daydream?

Challenge: If you had to describe the sights, smells, and sounds from your area, what would you choose? Write them down.

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Activity One: Design Your Own Spectacular And Their Show

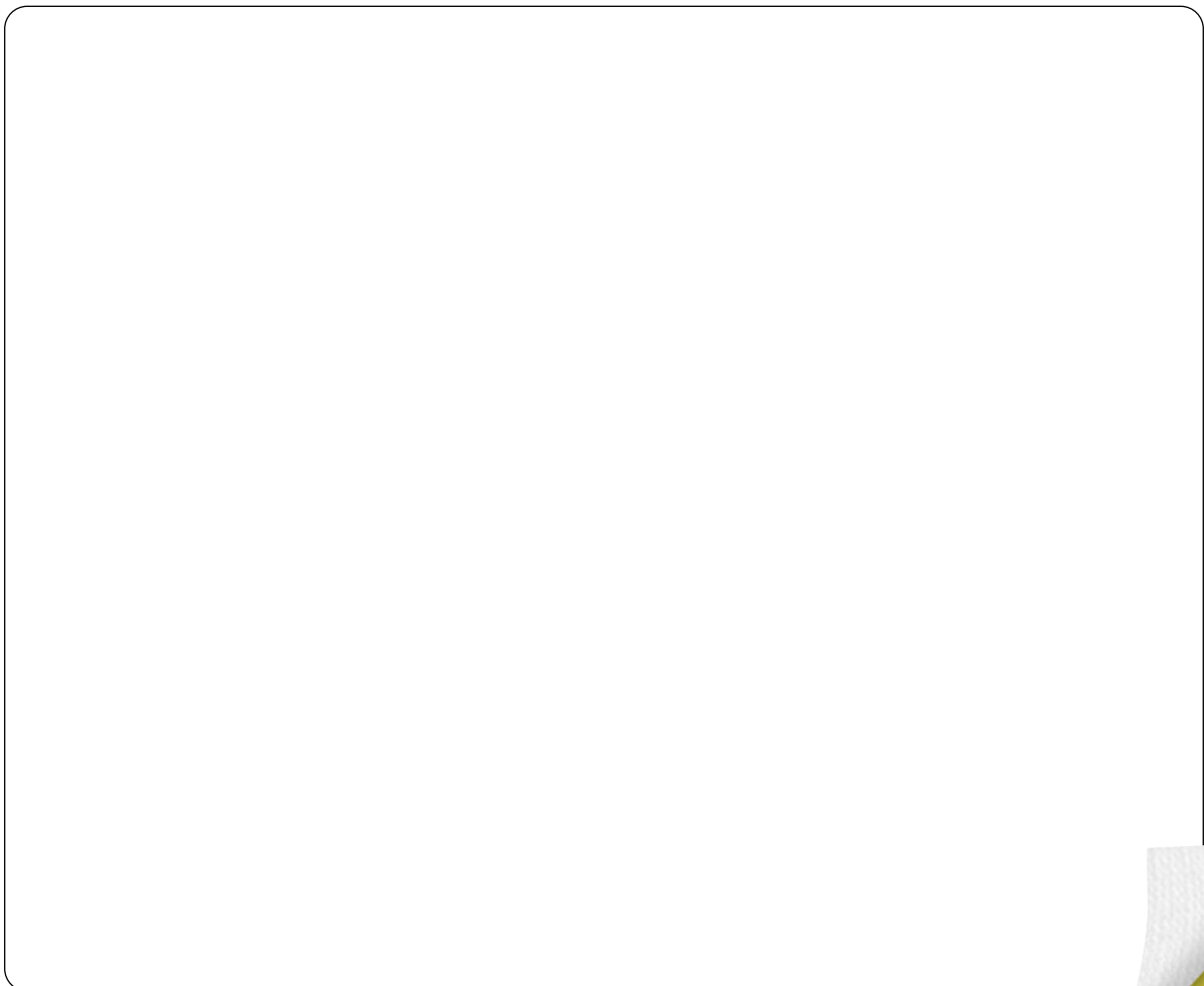
A Spectacular is a magical performer, gifted special powers from the stars. They can be musicians, actors, comedians, and more. Their breathtaking performances are made extra special by their magic.

Your task is to invent your own Spectacular and their show and to create a poster to attract visitors to that show below.

Top tip: Make the act extra magical – use the examples in the extract to inspire you.

Tell people which theatre it will be in, when it will be on, and how much it'll cost.

Add a splash of colour to your poster to attract spectators.



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Spotlight Two: The Teapot Trait Initiation Ceremony

pp.67- 68

“To all the young Spectaculars who are beginning training this year, we wish you the best of luck. Your years as an apprentice will be some of the most rewarding years of your life. So, without further ado-ing or adon’t-ing, let’s begin the initiation!”

Fletcher gestured over to one side of the clearing, where a round table had suddenly appeared. At the centre of the table was a large willow-patterned teapot, with teacups and saucers arranged in rings around it.

The new apprentices – thirty or forty, as far as Harper could see – began hurrying towards the table. Trick grabbed Harper’s arm and pulled her forwards as well. Apprentices were milling about in front of the teapot, swiping for the biggest teacups or the ones with the brightest patterns. Once they each had a teacup in hand, they lined up, single file, before the teapot.

Harper followed suit, selecting a crimson teacup and clutching on to it as she joined the queue. Visions swam wildly in her head of a boxing glove protruding, jack-in-the-box-like, from the spout of the teapot and punching each of them on the nose. She shook her head and tried to calm her breathing.

The teapot sat silent and still for a moment, before starting to whistle. The apprentice at the front – a fair skinned girl with a plum purple bob – stepped closer and held her teacup up to the spout, and the teapot leaned forwards and poured a stream of burgundy liquid into her cup.

The colour of the tea was unusual, but it wouldn’t have been entirely extraordinary if the next apprentice to proffer their teacup – which happened to be Anvi Patel – hadn’t received a thick peach liquid from the very same pot. This went on down the line. Each apprentice had their cup filled with a different type of liquid: a syrupy marigold brew, a watery stream of jet black, a gooey violet substance. As Harper got closer, she also noticed that once each teacup was full, a little tag appeared on the handle of the cup, with squiggly writing that she couldn’t quite read.

When Trick’s turn came, he ran forwards and stood in front of the table, looking unconcerned. A few moments passed before the teapot started to whistle, and as Trick held his cup up, it poured out a pale-green liquid. A tag appeared on Trick’s cup, and he held it out for Harper to read too: *Honey-pineapple and spearmint: flair and cool-headedness.*

“What does it mean?” Harper whispered.

“The teapot assesses each new apprentice: their ambitions and fears, their intelligence and passion, their talents and shortcomings. Then it picks out the two core personality traits that it thinks will help them in their training. Your Teapot Traits, we call them,” Trick explained.

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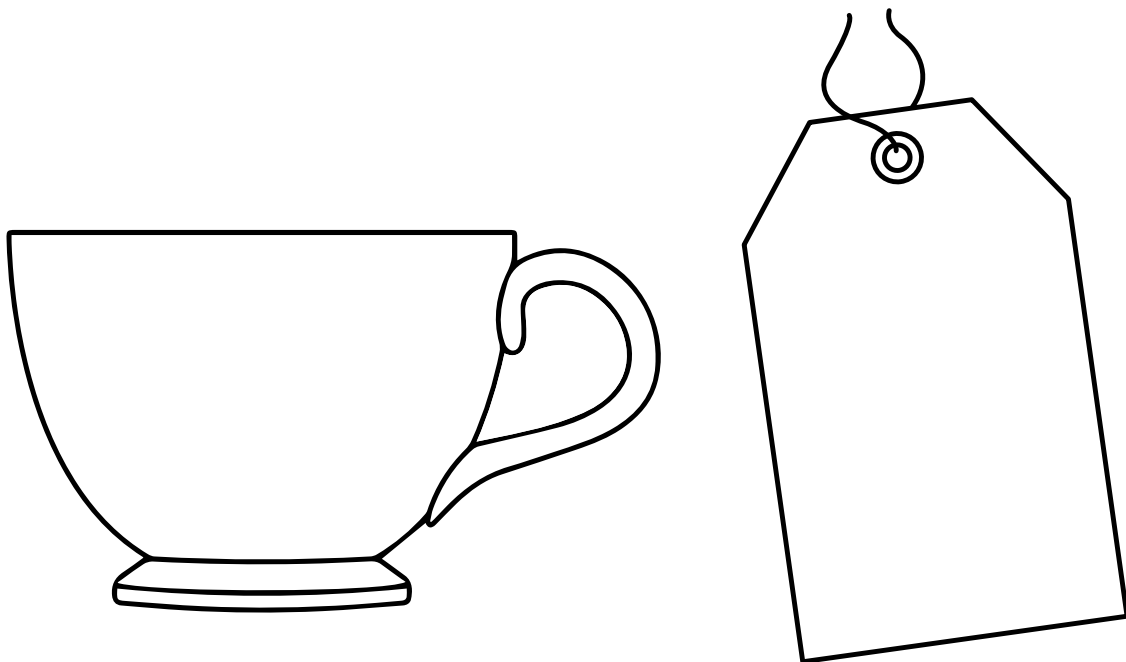
Discussion questions

- How do you think Harper is feeling about the Teapot Trait Ceremony? Why?
- What do you think your reaction to the ceremony would be? Why?
- Do the apprentices all get ordinary tea as part of the ceremony?
- Can you go back and highlight the different coloured teas?
- Why do you think everybody's tea is a different colour?
- Trick's teapot traits are 'flair' and 'cool-headedness'. What does this tell us about his personality?
- Can you think of any more adjectives to describe someone's personality? Use these three examples: **kind, brave, stubborn.**

Activity Two: Decide Your Own Teapot Traits

In the story, Harper's tea is chilli pepper and sea salt and it's orange in colour. Her teapot traits, based on her personality, are bold and practical. Can you invent your own tea?

Decide on the colour, the ingredients and your teapot traits. Colour in the teacup and fill in the label.



Challenge: Describe your tea's colour and ingredients to a partner. See if they can guess your teapot traits.

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Spotlight Three:

The *Magical* Districts Of The Hidden Peaks

pp.147-148

The Wondria had moved overnight: they'd travelled further into the Free Winds district and were now overlooking a series of winding canals that formed a large, meandering city. The canals were lined with boats that formed little floating neighbourhoods. Some of the boats were several storeys high, and boasted rustic signs declaring themselves to be restaurants, hotels, and *The Hidden Peaks' only glass-bottomed bowling alley!* Early-morning commuters were making their way to work by rowing boat, or bicycles that skimmed the top of the water. A large sign just to the left of where they sat announced:

*Welcome to Richton-on-the-Water
The proud home of the Underwater Cabaret Club,
featuring the Mega Mermaid Ukulele Band!
A Hidden Peaks Council Grade Five Listed Municipality.
Please do not feed the swans*

Just below this a smaller wooden sign had been somewhat haphazardly tacked on. This one read:

*The Old Town Ruins in the East End of the city have now been
certified as a Fallen Site. Please proceed with caution.*

Discussion questions

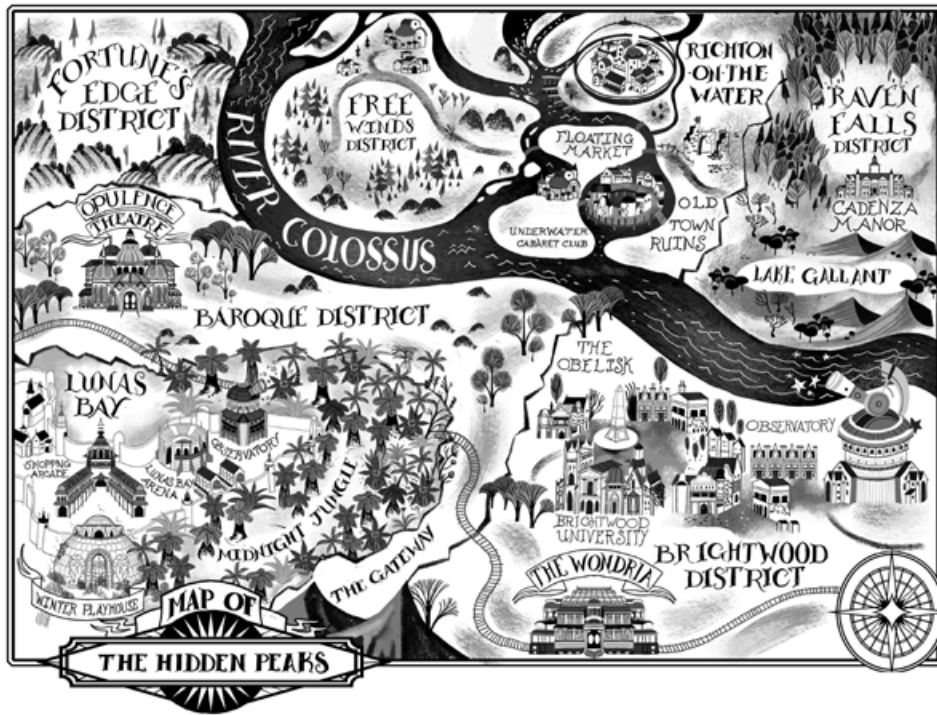
- What are your first impressions of the Free Winds district?
- What's unique about all of the buildings in the Free Winds district?
- What does it mean when it says some of the boats are several storeys high?
- Can you use a thesaurus to find synonyms for the following two keywords?

Municipality –

Cabaret –

- What do you think the second sign suggests about the Old Town Ruins?

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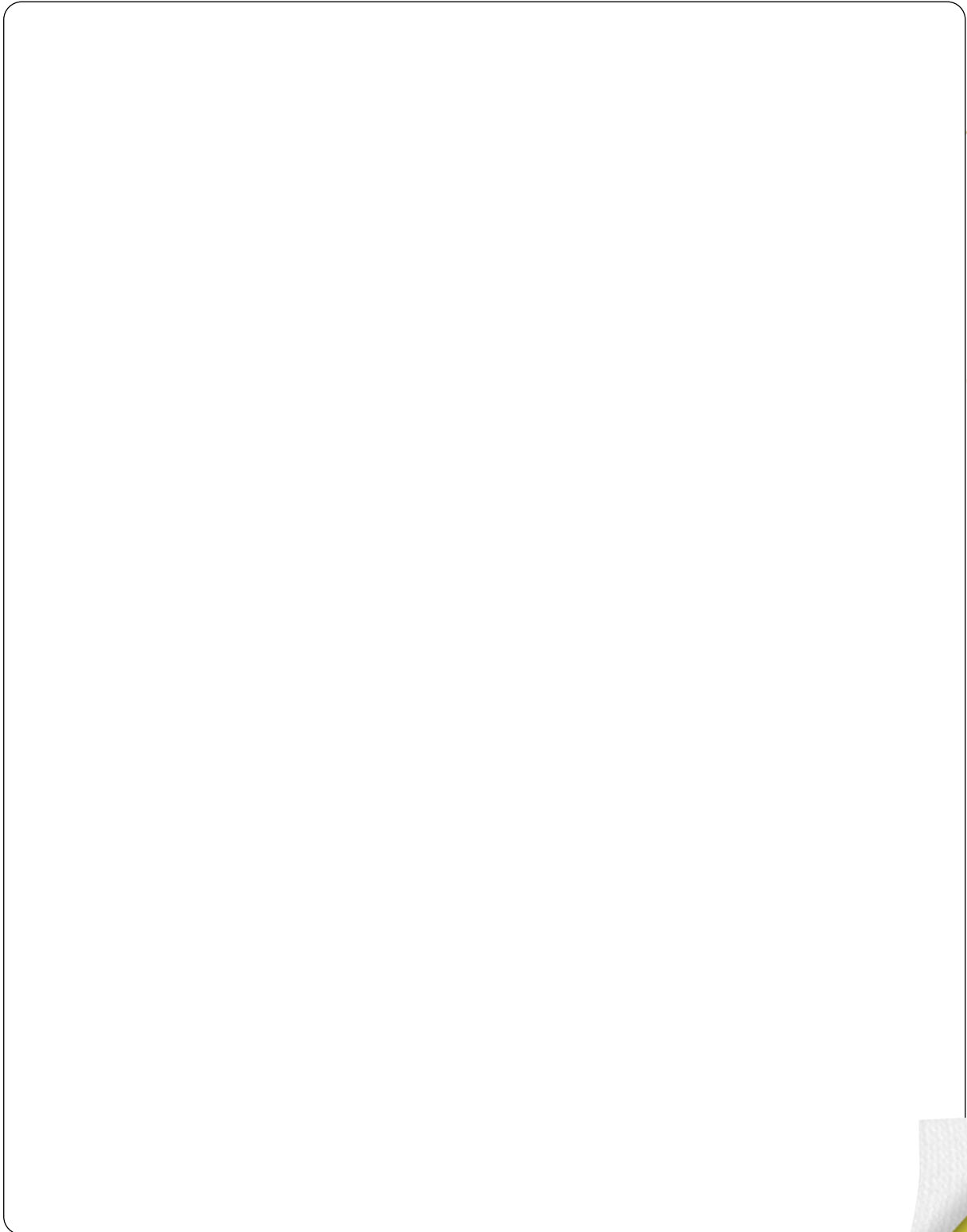
Activity Three:

Design Your Own Magical District

Imagine that you arrive in the Hidden peaks with a new group of Spectaculars and need to set up a new district. Write a description of your new district including details about the buildings and attractions.

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Now draw a map of your district based on your description.



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Thank you for using these resources!

We hope you enjoyed your trip to the world of the Spectaculars! We would love to see any work that you have created. Please share with us on

Twitter @Usborne #TheSpectaculars

