

TEACHING RESOURCE PACK

KS2 / KS3

THE BOY WHO MADE MONSTERS



JENNY PEARSON

ILLUSTRATED BY KATIE KEAR

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Explore themes of:

Family / Friendship / Imagination / Dealing with change / Understanding emotions / Grief

Subject checklist:

Literacy / PSHE / Art and Design

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

ABOUT THE BOOK

Benji McLaughlin is a visionary. He believes in things other people think are impossible, like that he and his brother Stanley will be happy living with their uncle, and that the Loch Lochy monster is real, and that his parents will come home safely one day.

So when he finds out that Uncle Hamish's holiday business is struggling, Benji's not worried. He has a visionary plan. Together with his new friends, Murdy and Mr Dog, he sets off to prove that the Loch Lochy monster exists, and bring tourists flooding in.

But Benji might have to confront different monsters to the one he expects.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jenny Pearson has been awarded six mugs, one fridge magnet, one wall plaque and numerous cards for her role as Best Teacher in the World.

When she is not busy being inspirational in the classroom, she would like nothing more than to relax with her two young boys, but she can't as they view her as a human climbing frame. Her debut novel, *The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates*, was shortlisted for the Costa Children's Book Award and selected as a Waterstones Book of the Month.



THE BOY WHO MADE MONSTERS
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SPOTLIGHT ONE: NEW BEGINNINGS

Themes:

Family / Dealing with change / Understanding emotions

Objectives:

Infer a character's thoughts and feelings from their words and actions; learn about dealing with change.

Activity One:

My Special Items – choose five significant items to pack in your suitcase.

SPOTLIGHT TWO: DAD AND UNCLE HAMISH'S TREE

Themes:

Family / Understanding emotions / Grief

Objectives:

Identify key language features including narrative voice, imagery and sensory language. Develop emotional literacy and explore ways of dealing with emotions.

Activity Two:

A Family and Friendship Tree – record special people to you on the tree.

SPOTLIGHT THREE: MAKING A MONSTER FROM JUNK

Themes:

Friendship / Understanding and communicating emotions / Imagination

Objectives:

Learn about the importance of friendship; practise extended writing skills; explore the importance of imagination.

Activity Three:

A Postcard to Someone Special – write a postcard to someone special to you.

Activity Four:

Design your own Loch Lochy monster from household items.



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SPOTLIGHT ONE: NEW BEGINNINGS

Pages 10–11

Uncle Hamish met us at Edinburgh train station in his beat-up old Land Rover. It seemed like ages since he'd first rushed down to London. That meeting was a bit of a blur. I can remember our social services lady, Maria, and Uncle Hamish and the bright red beanbags we all sat on. But I don't remember what was said. We'd seen him a few times after that, but always with someone official in the room, checking that everything was going okay.

I spotted him first, standing the other side of the barriers. I remember exactly what he was wearing – a pair of cargo shorts and a very-not-white T-shirt that looked like it had muddy paw prints on the front. Over the top, despite it being the summer, he had chosen to wear a blazer. It was like he'd remembered last minute that he should make an effort and grabbed the first thing he could to smarten himself up.

“What is he wearing?” Stanley said, clearly not impressed.

As the train pulled away behind us, I gripped hold of my suitcase handle tighter and whispered, “He really does look so much like Dad. Well, a taller, lingier version of Dad.” I couldn't tear my eyes from his face, even though it kind of hurt to look at him.

I think Stanley must have felt weird about seeing Dad's almost face again too, because he snapped at me. “There's no such word as lingier.”

“Longer and stringier, then.”



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SPOTLIGHT ONE: NEW BEGINNINGS

Inference / retrieval questions

1. In this scene, Benji, the main character, and his brother Stanley are meeting their Uncle Hamish who they're going to live with. What are your first impressions of Uncle Hamish?
2. Is this the first time that Benji and Stanley have met their Uncle Hamish?
3. Without looking back at the extract, can you remember the description of what Uncle Hamish is wearing? See how many items of clothing you can remember.
4. Who does Uncle Hamish remind the two boys of? How does this make them feel?

Discussion Questions

1. What are your first impressions of Stanley and Benji in the extract?
2. Change can be challenging; how do you think Stanley and Benji might be feeling about moving to live somewhere new?
3. What emotions do you think you might be feeling if you had to move away? Make a note of them below.



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Challenge

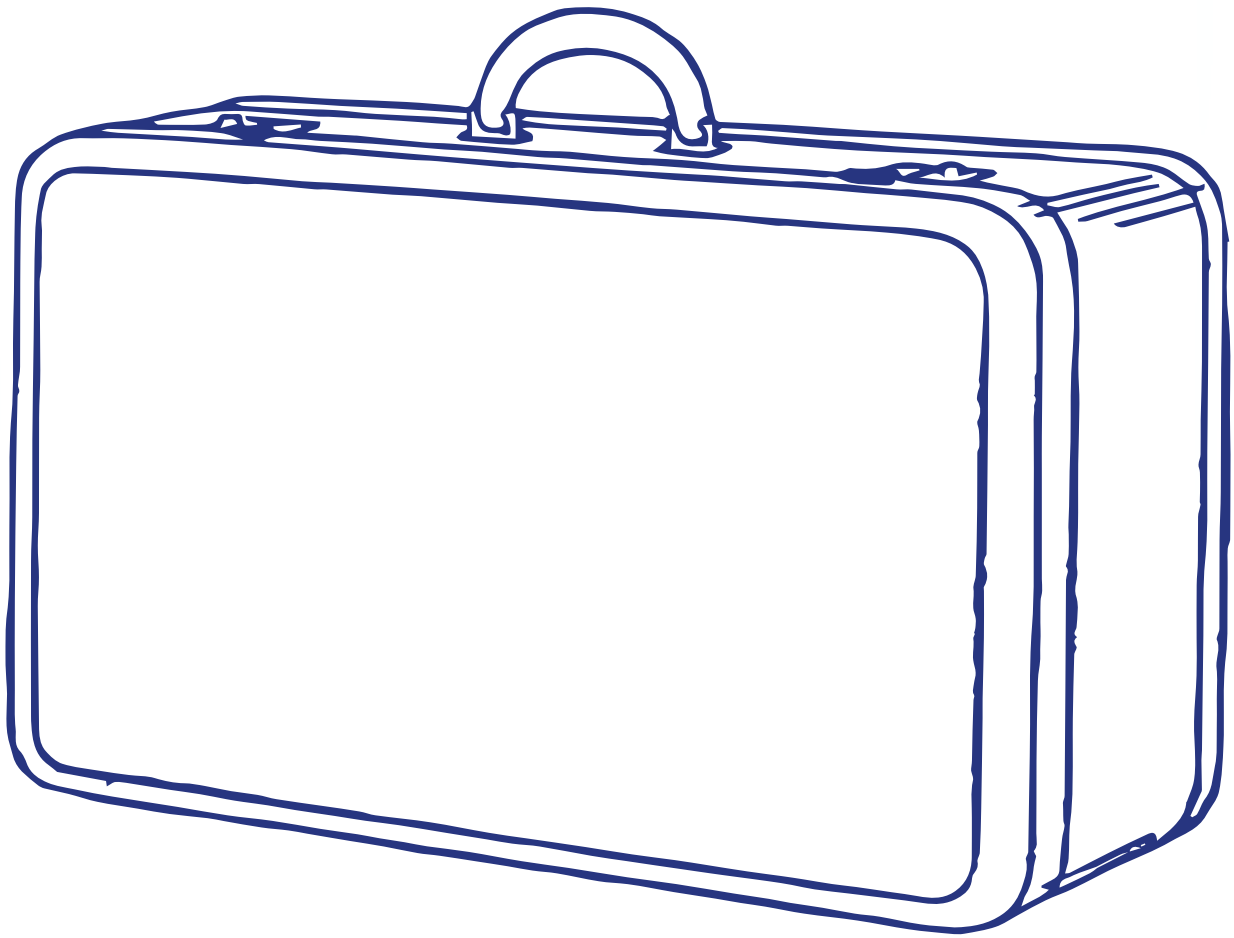
Benji describes his uncle Hamish as 'lingier' or 'longer and stringier' than his dad. Can you think of two other describing words that you could combine to make one new one? Note your new words below.



ACTIVITY ONE: MY SPECIAL ITEMS

Packing is a big part of moving and everyone has things that are extra special to them. For example, in the book we learn about Benji's favourite T-shirt that says, 'The Owner of this T-shirt is Awesome'. Like Benji, you might have items that are important to you, and you would take with you if you moved.

Draw your five special items and note down your reason for choosing them in the suitcase below. Then, discuss your items and reasons for choosing them with a partner.



If you've read the book, why not include FIVE ITEMS that you think your favourite character might pack in their suitcase?



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SPOTLIGHT TWO: DAD AND UNCLE HAMISH'S TREE

Pages 69–71:

Further down the track, there were some excellent climbing trees set back from the lake. Stanley and I had our very own excellent climbing tree in the park near us back in London, though we hadn't climbed it for ages. Stanley was probably either too old or too sad for climbing these days.

I took a moment to choose my tree and then I climbed up into the best-looking one. I shuffled along a big sturdy branch so I could eat my Wagon Wheel with a treetop loch view. I was about to take my first mallow bite, but stopped when I spotted something carved into the trunk of the tree.

I don't know if my breath rushed into me or out of me.

"Oh, Stanley," I heard myself say. "You have to see this."

Two names, carved into the wood.

"Uncle Hamish," I whispered, touching the scarred bark and feeling how deep the letters had been cut. My fingers moved on, tracing their way round the capital *S* of *Stuart* and ever so slowly looping round all the letters until I reached the final *t* and came to a stop.

Stuart. Dad. My dad.

Dad had sat in this tree. He'd been here – exactly where I was sitting. He'd sat on this very same branch with his brother, and they'd carved themselves into Loch Lochy for ever. I didn't know whether I was happy or sad or some other kind of emotion that no one has ever managed to come up with a name for, because it's too big to understand.

Marvin, the counsellor man back in London, had asked me to name my emotions in our sessions. I think I said what he wanted to hear in the end. But how can you even begin to know what to call some feelings? I could swallow a whole dictionary and I still don't think I'd find the words.

One thing I did know was that it was the closest I'd felt to Dad since he'd gone missing. The thought of Gregor McGavin cutting down Dad's tree made my insides burn. Uncle Hamish couldn't lose the place. He just couldn't.



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SPOTLIGHT TWO: DAD AND UNCLE HAMISH'S TREE

Inference / retrieval questions

1. Benji mentions his brother Stanley a lot in the extract, why do you think this is?
2. Why does Benji choose that spot to stop and eat his Wagon Wheel?
3. What can Benji see from the tree if he has a loch view?
4. What does he discover about the tree and why do you think this might be important to him?
5. What do you think he means when he says his dad and uncle had ‘carved themselves into Loch Lochy for ever’?

Language spotting

1. *The Boy Who Made Monsters* is written in the first person from Benji’s point of view. Which one-letter word tells us this? Can you spot it in the extract?
2. Even though he is on his own, Benji still talks to his brother. How can we tell this from the punctuation used in the extract? Go back and highlight this.
3. There is a lot of sensory language used in the extract. Read through and highlight the descriptions to do with the senses — taste, touch, sight and hearing — in four different colours.

Challenge

Benji has trouble naming some of the emotions that he is feeling. This can sometimes be a tricky thing for all of us to do. Using a thesaurus, find different words to express the emotions below.

Happy	Sad	Scared	Angry



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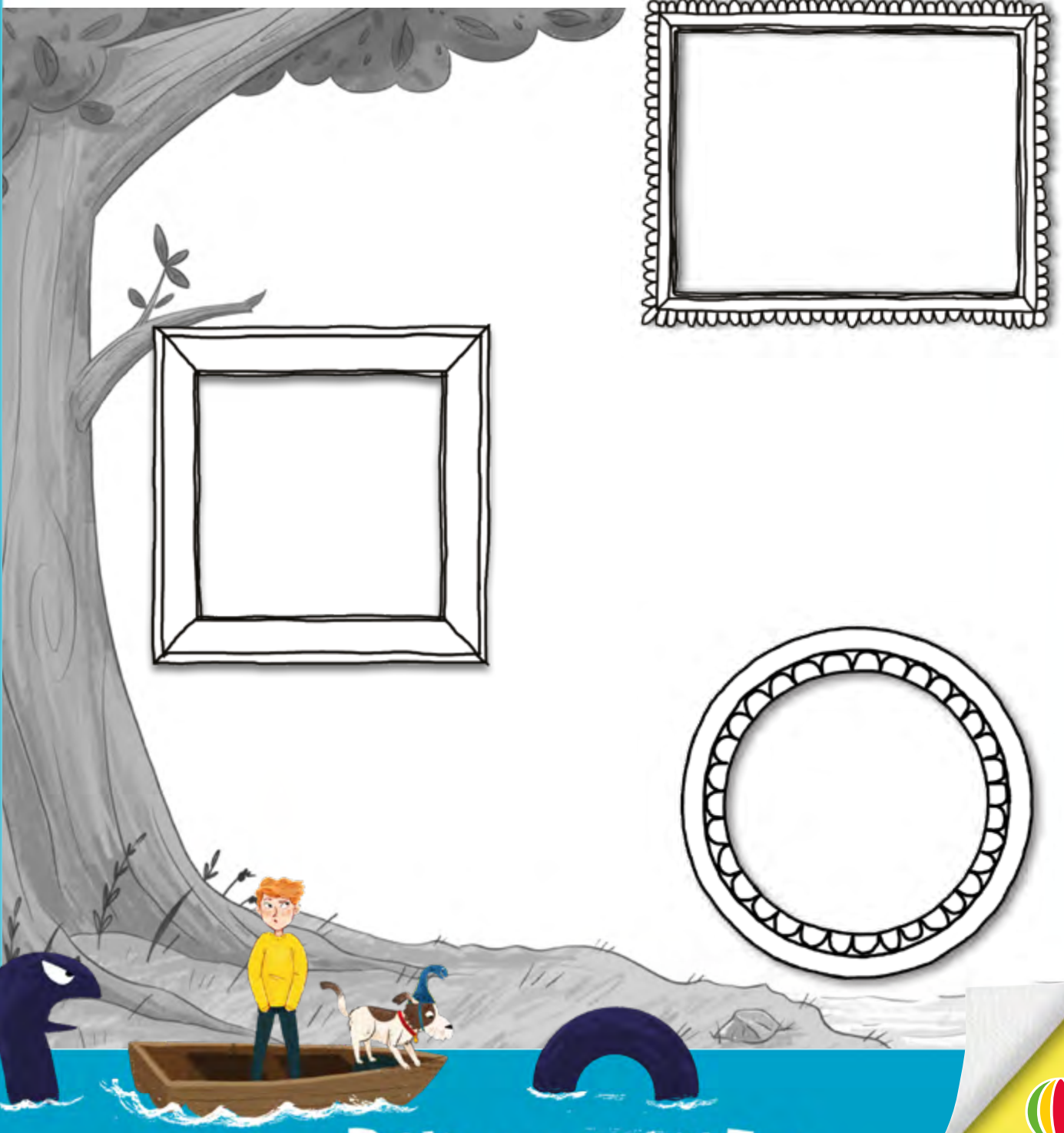


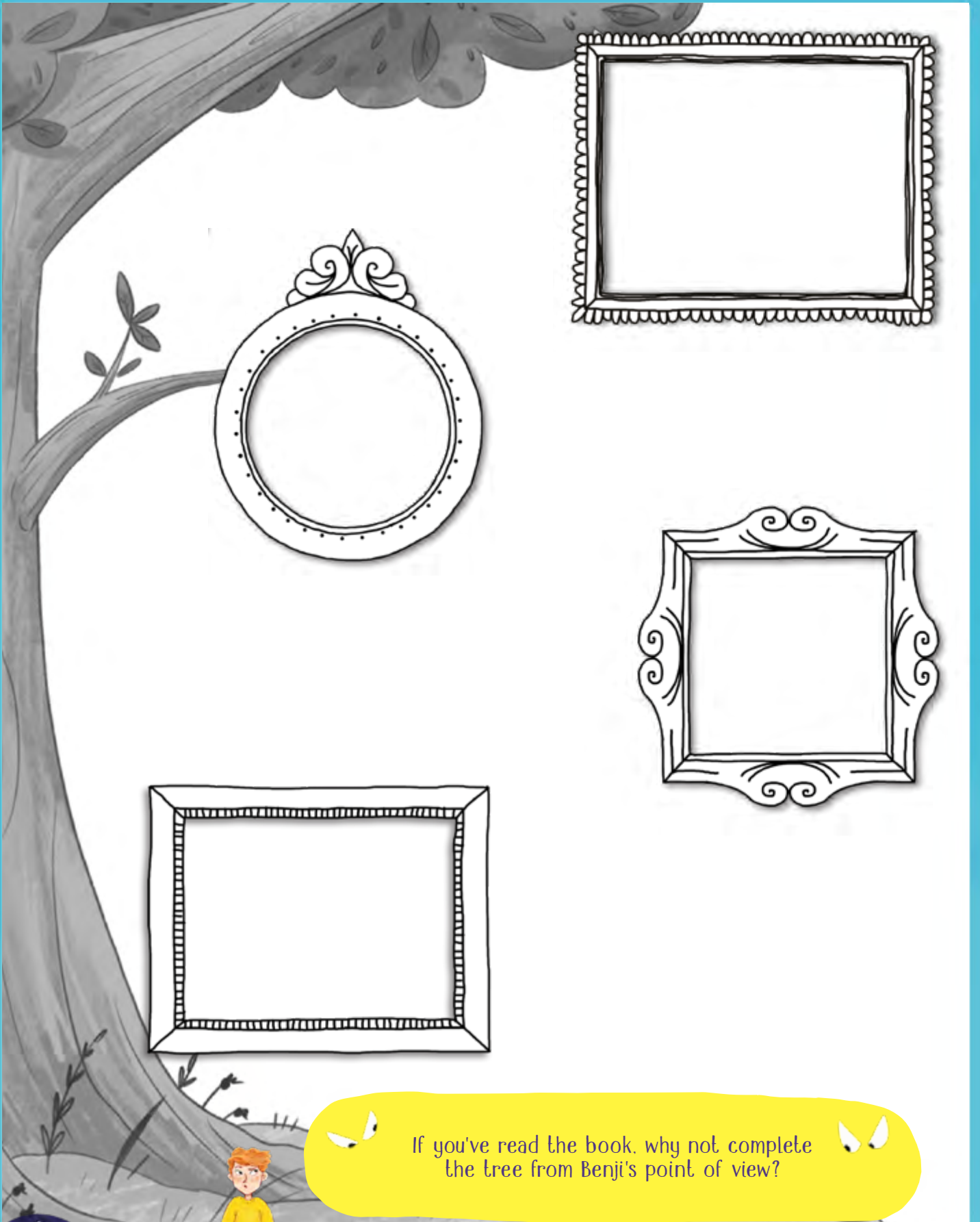
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ACTIVITY TWO: A FAMILY AND FRIENDSHIP TREE

Like Benji, we all have people who are special to us. Whether it's a new friend like Murdy, a long-lost relative like Uncle Hamish, or even people who are no longer with us, they can all be special to us for different reasons. The activity below is designed as a place where you can keep a record of those people who are special to you.

In each picture frame on this page, draw a picture of your chosen person and write why they are special to you and a memory you share with them. You can even include a special pet like Uncle Hamish's dog, Mr Dog.





👁️ If you've read the book, why not complete the tree from Benji's point of view? 👁️



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SPOTLIGHT THREE: MAKING A MONSTER FROM JUNK

Pages 174–175:

One end of the shed was packed full of junk. Fishing rods, tyres, a bag of shoes, a watering can with a hole in the bottom, several buckets, two rolls of faded carpet, an exercise bike, two mouldy-looking buoys, a surfboard, numerous cracked flowerpots, a long silver tumble-dryer hose, some sheets of metal, some old sacks and a load of other stuff.

“What is this place?”

“This is what Mum used to call my dad’s man-cave.”

“There’s a lot of junk.”

“Dad never liked to throw anything out. Used to drive Mum mad. Shame he wasn’t as attached to people.”

I did not quite know what to say to that. I wanted to say something supportive like, *You seem very attachable to me*, so she knew I felt bad for her, but I instead heard myself saying, “Oooh, is that a pogo stick back there?” I don’t know why. I suppose I panicked. Maybe I didn’t want another thump. And I’ve always wanted a pogo stick.

Murdy didn’t seem to mind my total lack of consideration. She gave herself a little shake and then got practical or, some might say, bossy. “Fill up the cart with whatever you think looks monstery.”

I scanned over the jumble again. Nothing leaped out as being particularly monstery. I almost said something along those lines, but stopped when I realized those were the thoughts of a person with no vision. I would never be that person. I had to keep hoping and believing even when things didn’t look great.

Especially when things didn’t look great.

Murdy must have realized what I was thinking because she said, “I know it doesn’t look like much now, but with little a bit of imagination I’m sure we can cobble a monster together from this lot.”

“You’re absolutely right,” I said, although we wouldn’t need a little bit of imagination. We would need enormous amounts of imagination to make a monster from the pile of rubbish we put in that cart.



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SPOTLIGHT THREE: MAKING A MONSTER FROM JUNK

Inference / retrieval questions

1. What does Benji think of the state of Murdy's dad's shed?
2. What is the reason for so much stuff having piled up in the shed?
3. Without looking back, how many of the items can you remember? Make a note of them below and put a tick next to the ones you remembered correctly.

Discussion questions

1. Benji finds it difficult to say what he is thinking to comfort Murdy. Is it always easy to tell our friends and loved ones what we're thinking and feeling?
2. In the story, Benji prides himself on being visionary. Look back at the extract. What's another way of describing someone who's visionary?
3. Do you think having imagination is important?
4. Benji thinks that it's important to keep hoping and believing even when things aren't looking positive. Do you agree with him?
5. Benji and Murdy are planning to make a Loch Lochy monster model out of the junk. How confident do you think both characters are feeling about being able to achieve this?

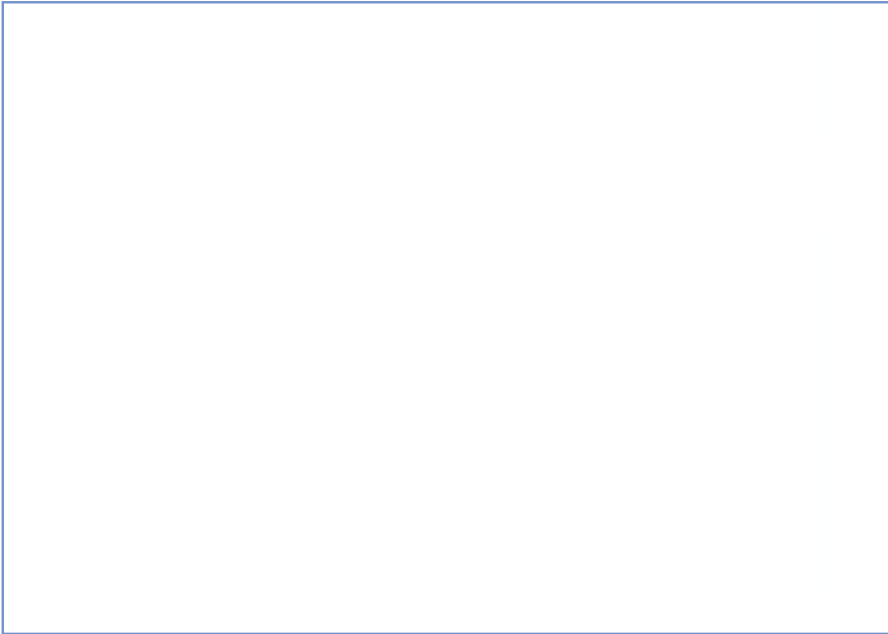


ACTIVITY THREE: A POSTCARD TO SOMEONE SPECIAL

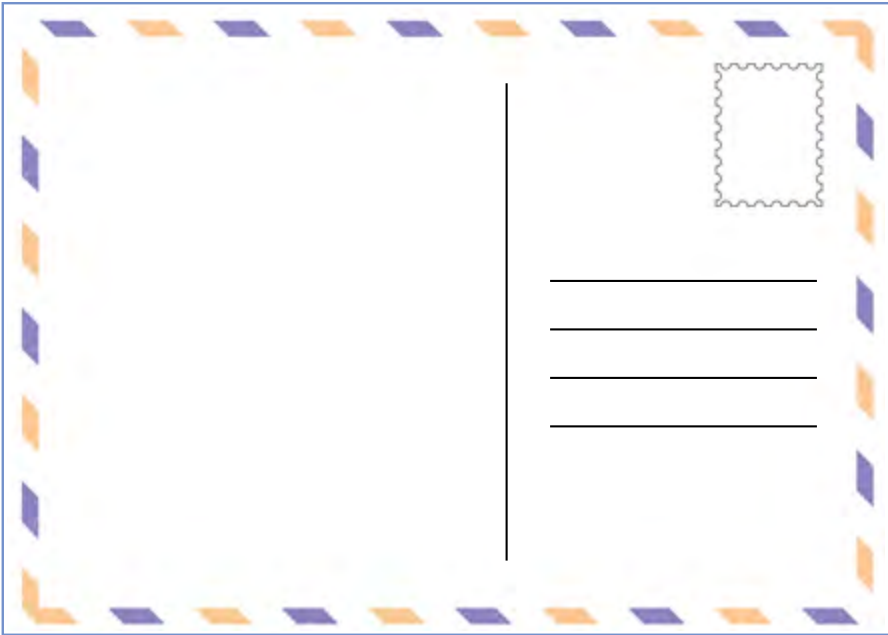
We can sometimes have trouble telling people how we feel, or what we think of them, like Benji in the previous extract. Writing can be a good way of expressing things we find difficult to say out loud.

In the activity below, write a postcard to someone special (this could be someone you mentioned in the Family and Friendship Tree activity) and let them know what they mean to you.

Front



Back



THE BOY WHO MADE MONSTERS

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CREATE YOUR OWN MONSTER



Benji has a visionary plan to save Uncle Hamish's holiday business.
He just needs to prove that the Loch Lochy monster exists!

Design your own Loch Lochy monster in the space below, and then bring it to life using household objects, cardboard boxes or anything you can find!



WIN A SIGNED BUNDLE OF JENNY PEARSON BOOKS

Illustrator Katie Kear will be judging the entries!



Send a photo of your monster with 'Loch Monster'
in the subject line to marketing@usborne.co.uk for
the chance to win. Competition closes 01.09.23.
For full terms and conditions please scan the QR code.



WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR TRIP TO LOCH LOCHY!

We would love to see any work you have created.
Please share with us on [TWITTER @USBORNE](#).



DON'T MISS JENNY PEARSON'S OTHER BRILLIANT BOOKS!



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