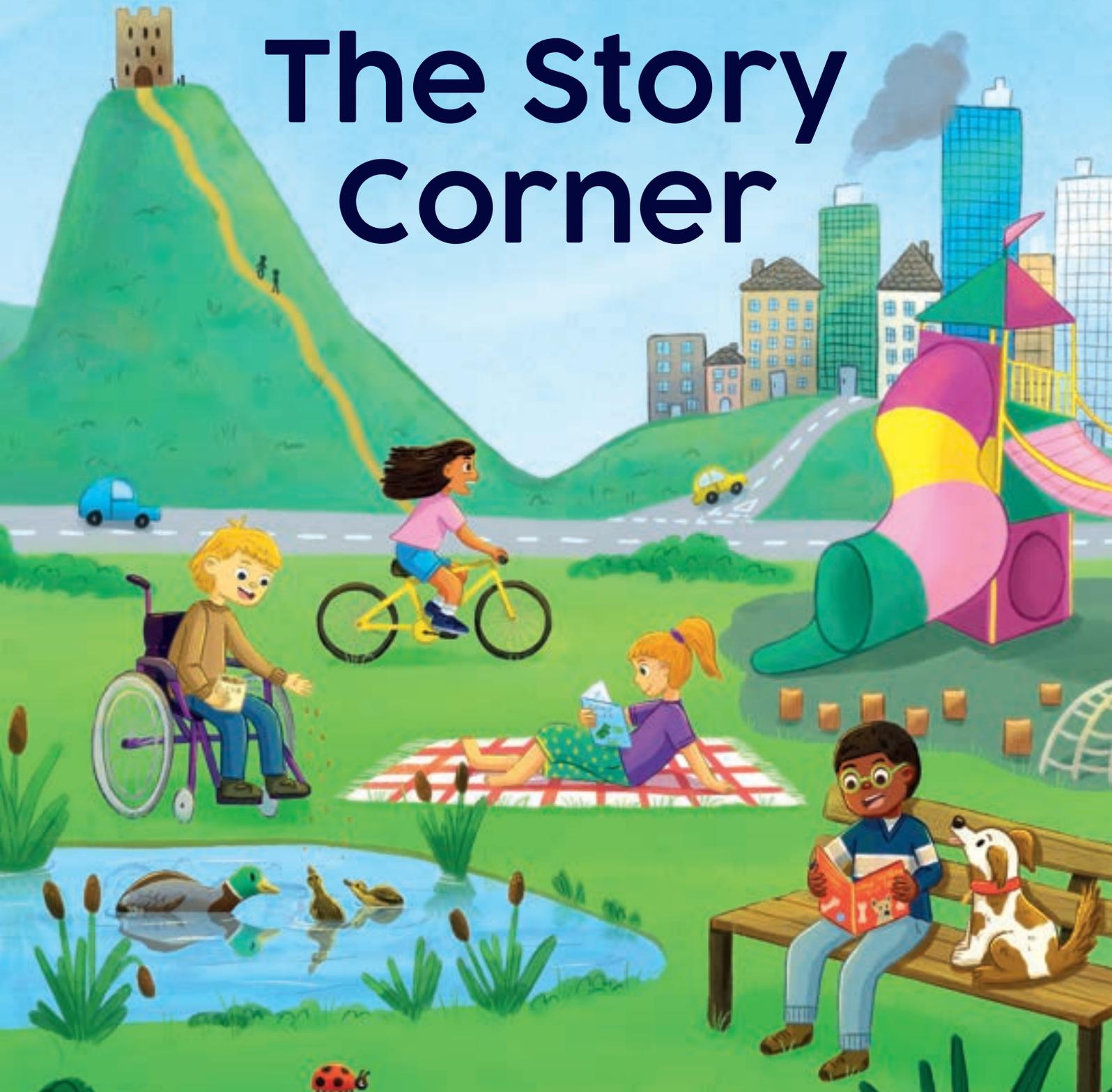




Bookmark
Reading Charity



The Story Corner



Packed with fun!

Stories, games and activities for ages 5-10

Enter our competition to win a prize bundle!

Hey there, Reader!

My name is Tola Okogwu and I believe that reading is one of the most magical things you can do. But for the magic to happen, it has to be fun.

Right now, my house is full of reading in all its wonderful forms. My eldest daughter likes to snuggle under the covers with an audiobook at bedtime whilst my youngest can often be found hanging off the end of the sofa, a graphic novel in hand. I'm a big fan of eBooks and I have hundreds of books in my library, many waiting to be read. We even watch TV together as a family with the subtitles on!

Books have always been my happy place, even as a child. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was my favourite book growing up and I still cannot pass a wardrobe without wanting to check for a secret doorway in the back.

Now, as an author, I get to create stories I hope will become happy places for others. From the superpowered adventures of *Onyeka* to the funny, everyday dramas of *Bim Blake*.

I believe we all have a superpower inside of us. Something that makes us special and unique. My hope is that reading helps you discover yours.

Happy reading!

Tolá Okogwu



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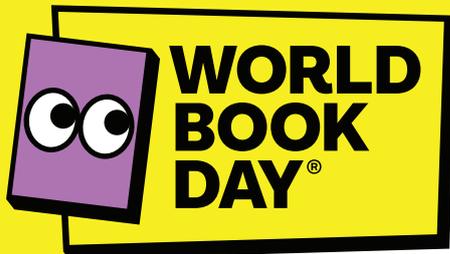


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All content curated & adapted by **Bookmark Reading Charity** for *The Story Corner* magazine.

Special thanks to all our contributors | Front cover artwork by **Sasha Stowe (c) 2025**.



AUTHOR Q&A ROSE AYLING-ELLIS



What was your favourite book when you were a child, and why did you love it so much? Robert the Rose Horse by Joan Heilbronner. I loved this as a child because it had my name in it. It is about a horse that is allergic to roses. He struggles to keep his job despite it not being his fault at all, but then he learns to use his allergy to his advantage. I can relate to this a lot.

World Book Day is all about celebrating stories - what does reading mean to you? Reading books was a huge part of my childhood. Some of my earliest memories are of my dad reading to me at bedtime. As I got a bit older, I remember staying up past my bedtime, reading under the duvet with a torch, hiding the fact that I was up late. I truly value books, but when I was younger, I never encountered any deaf characters in them. I am so glad to see changes happening in terms of disability representation, but we still have a long way to go.

Your World Book Day book is called The Big Bang. Can you tell us what inspired you to write this story? My story all began with a book my mum wrote when she was just 11 years old, about a new cat named Casper moving into a new home where the other cats weren't too thrilled and chased him away. But my story is completely different, no chasing anyone out! Still, it was inspired by that original tale.

What do you hope children will learn or feel after reading The Big Bang? I hope it makes them think about all the ways they can communicate with each other.

If you could add one more animal friend to the story, who would it be and what would they bring to the adventure? It would have to be another cat! Maybe a cat with a moustache and a French name.

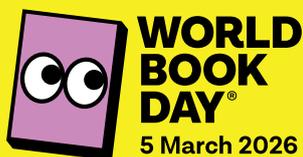
Why did you choose kittens for your story? Are their names significant to you? Yes, these cats are based on my family pets. Casper is a cat that my mum had before I was born in the seventies. He was deaf and had white fur and blue eyes. I've also included my childhood pets Halo and Rocky. Halo was a stray cat that decided to move in with us. She had a white ring around her tail, which is why we named her Halo. Rocky is our most recent cat and is so cuddly!

How do you imagine your characters would sign their names in BSL? The cats have tiny paws, which makes BSL a bit tricky, but nothing is impossible, there's always a way! The book will feature fun phrases and words for families to try at home. At its heart, though, the story celebrates deaf awareness, deaf culture, and the joys and challenges of communication, sharing real experiences of being deaf and living among deaf communities.

What's something fun about BSL that you think every reader should know? You can communicate through a window, underwater, or in the middle of a dance floor with music blaring. But as long as it has good lighting!

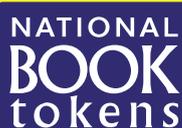
Rose Ayling-Ellis

Rose Ayling-Ellis portrait © YellowBellyPhoto



£1 Book Token

Sponsored by



View the full line-up at worldbookday.com/books



Valid from
12 February -
15 March
2026

Un i Ti ac Un i Fi is exclusive to Wales only. Against All Odds is not suitable for younger readers.

Choose your £1 book for free!

Children, families & educators: This token is for single-use only and entitles children (under 18) to **ONE FREE World Book Day 2026 book** or £1 off a book or audiobook costing £2.99 or more in participating booksellers only, subject to stock availability.

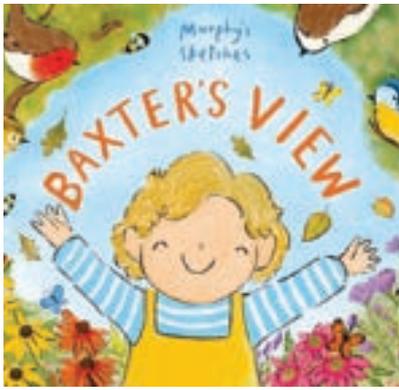
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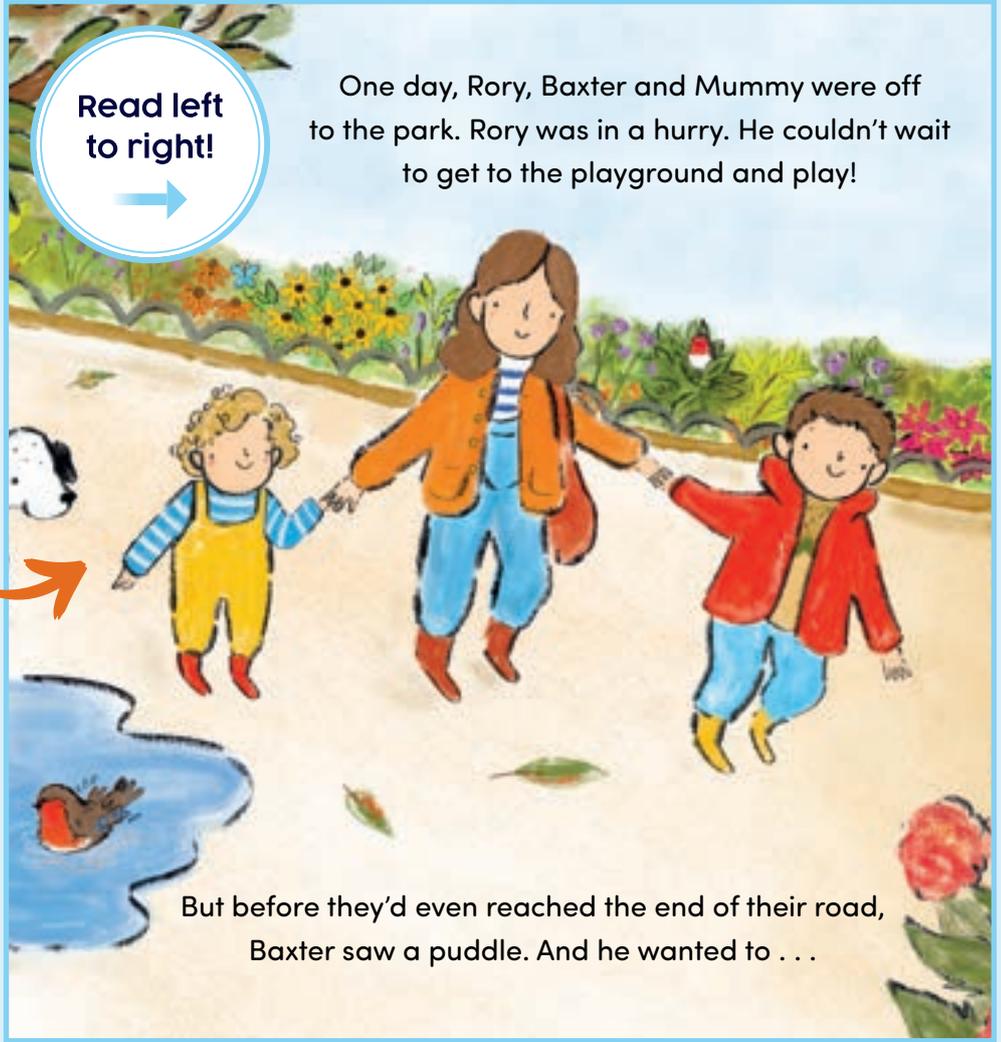


Written and illustrated by
Kerri Cunningham (Murphy's
Sketches), published by
Fox & Ink Books

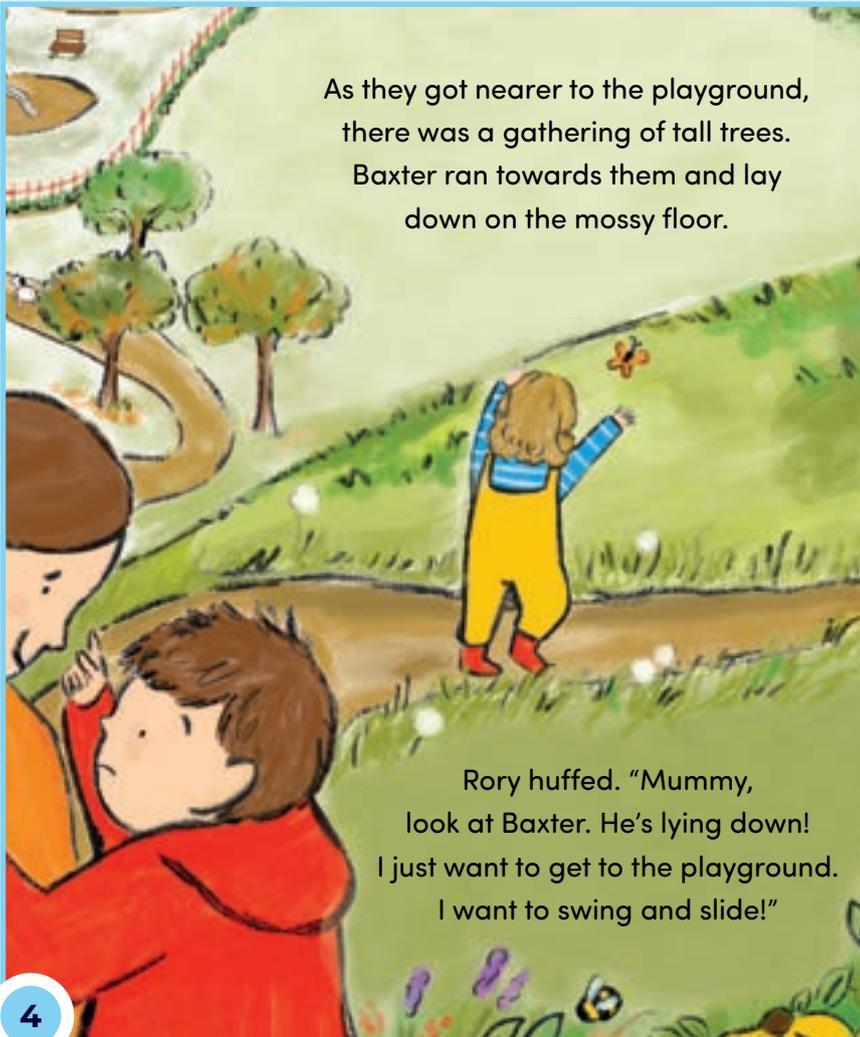
Read left
to right!



One day, Rory, Baxter and Mummy were off to the park. Rory was in a hurry. He couldn't wait to get to the playground and play!

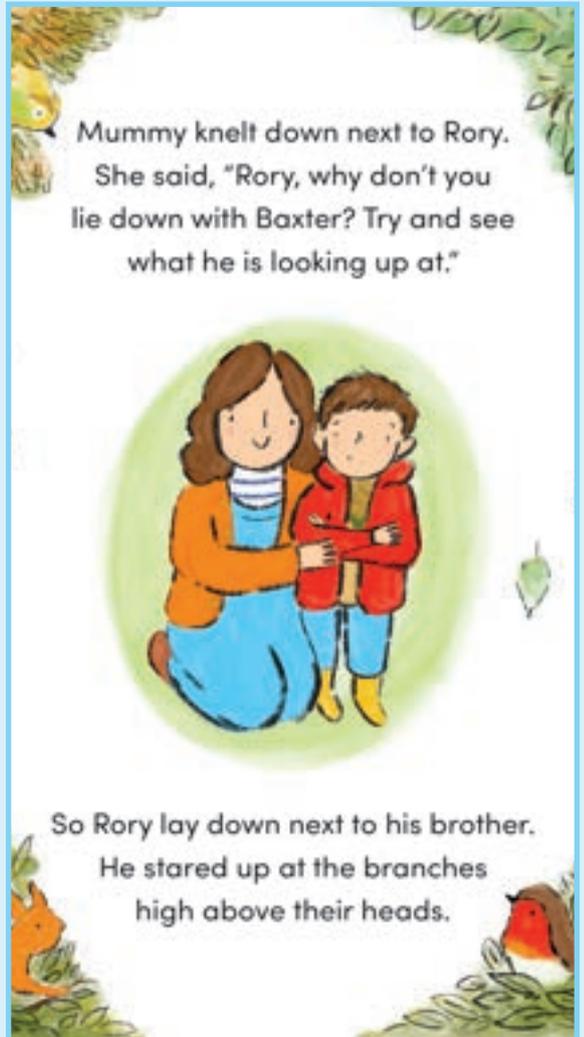


But before they'd even reached the end of their road, Baxter saw a puddle. And he wanted to . . .



As they got nearer to the playground, there was a gathering of tall trees. Baxter ran towards them and lay down on the mossy floor.

Rory huffed. "Mummy, look at Baxter. He's lying down! I just want to get to the playground. I want to swing and slide!"



Mummy knelt down next to Rory. She said, "Rory, why don't you lie down with Baxter? Try and see what he is looking up at."

So Rory lay down next to his brother. He stared up at the branches high above their heads.



"Just a second, Rory," said Mummy.
"Baxter wants to paddle. He loves to
see the colours and the ripples."



Rory huffed, and waited. He was
thinking about the playground.



Rory thought it was beautiful.
It was nice to see things
from Baxter's view.



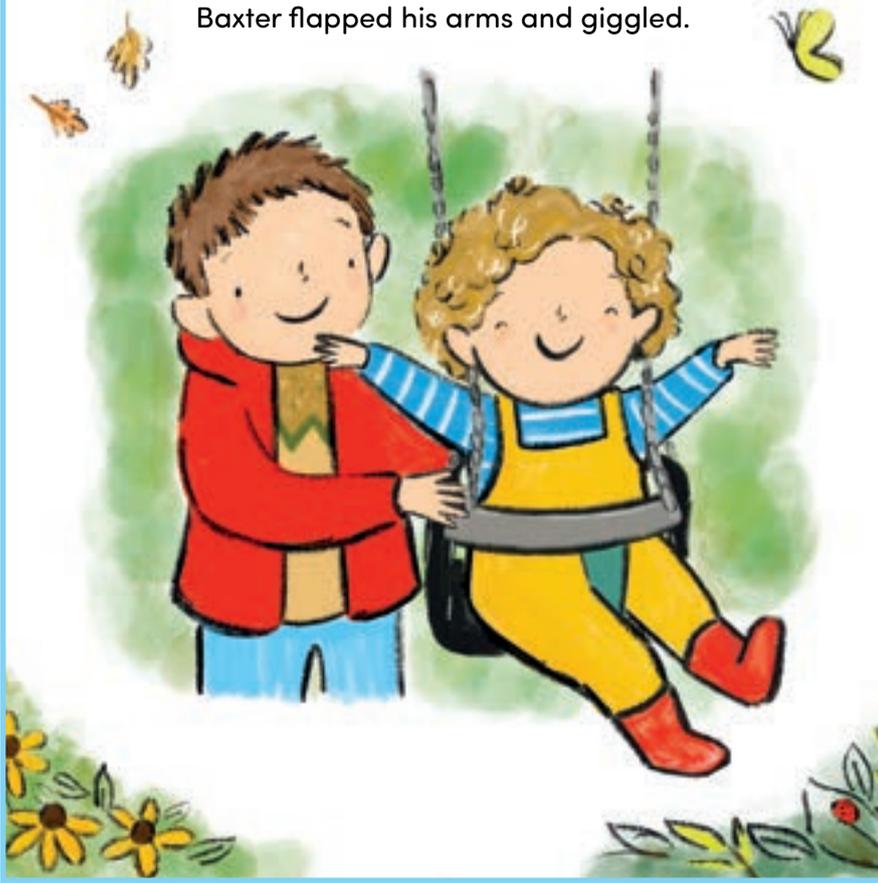
To notice things
he hadn't before.



He understood now why Baxter liked to take his
time. They stayed there for a while, then set
back off to the playground...

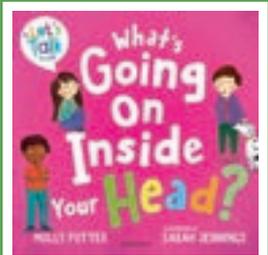


Rory pushed his little brother on the swing.
Baxter flapped his arms and giggled.



TIME TO COLOUR IN BAXTER AND FRIENDS!





Extract from *What's Going On Inside Your Head?*

How does looking after my body help my mind?

Our body carries our brain around, protects it and makes sure it has what it needs to work properly. If our body is working well, our brain is more likely to be working well too. If we do the things that we know keep our body fit and healthy, then our brain and mind are more likely to be healthy.



It's good to know...
 Sometimes when we feel a bit sad or low, exercise can make us feel so much better, especially if it's outdoors in a park, a wood or in the countryside where there are trees and grass.

What's Going On Inside Your Head?
 © Molly Potter 2025. Illustrations © Sarah Jennings 2025.

For a healthy body and mind, we need to make sure we...



Get plenty of good sleep



Eat lots of fresh fruit & vegetables



Exercise & spend time outside



Drink plenty of water



Make time to relax

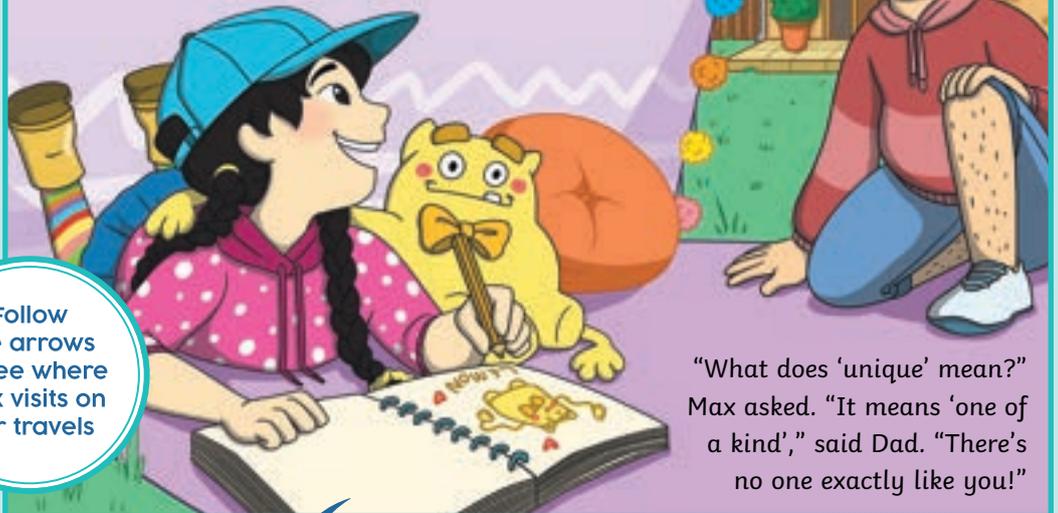


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Follow the arrows to see where Max visits on her travels

Max was in her tent drawing a picture of Lemon. "There are no other toys that look like you, Lemon," she said. Dad popped his head inside. "That's because Lemon is unique!"

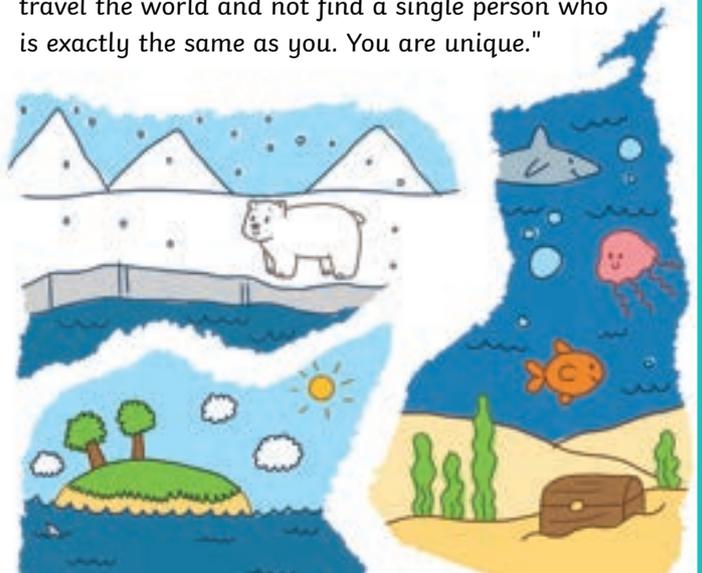


"What does 'unique' mean?" Max asked. "It means 'one of a kind'," said Dad. "There's no one exactly like you!"

"Not even up a mountain?" asked Max. "Not even in the desert or the jungle" said Dad.



"Not even in the Arctic or the ocean?" asked Max. "Not even on a faraway island" said Dad. "You could travel the world and not find a single person who is exactly the same as you. You are unique."

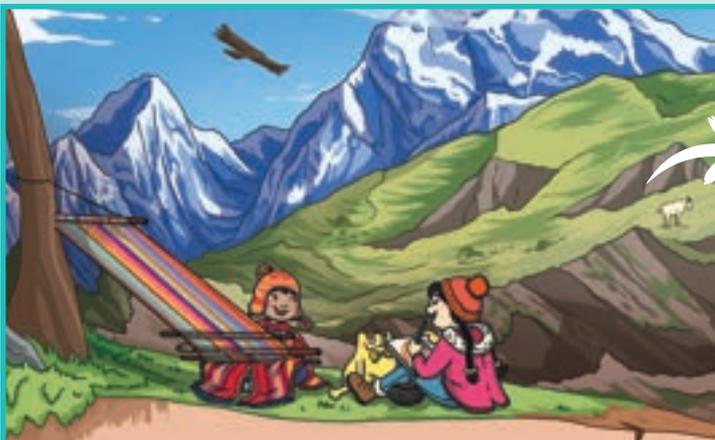


"Hmm, I'm not sure," said Max. "Come on, Lemon. Let's find out for ourselves." Max packed a rucksack with everything that she and Lemon would need.



She waved goodbye to Mum and Dad, then headed off on her scooter to find out if she really was one of a kind.





On a tall mountain, Max made a friend called Anka, who loved bright colours.
“Just like me!” said Max. “Do you like to do colourful paintings?”
But Anka preferred to weave colourful patterns.



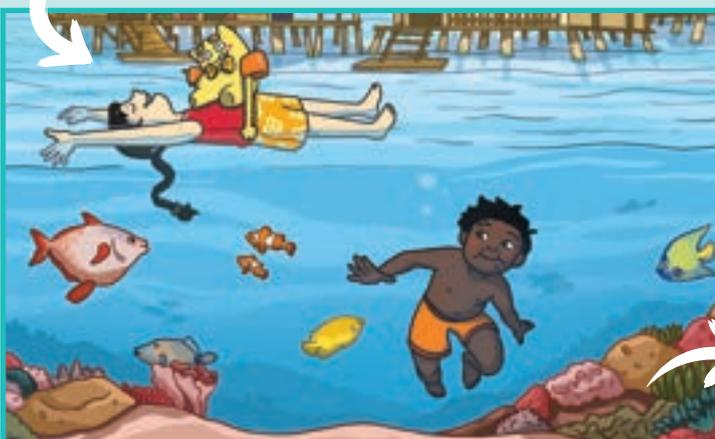
In a dry desert, Max made a friend called Noor, who loved music.
“Just like me!” said Max. “Do you like to sing?”
But Noor preferred to play lovely tunes on her favourite instrument.



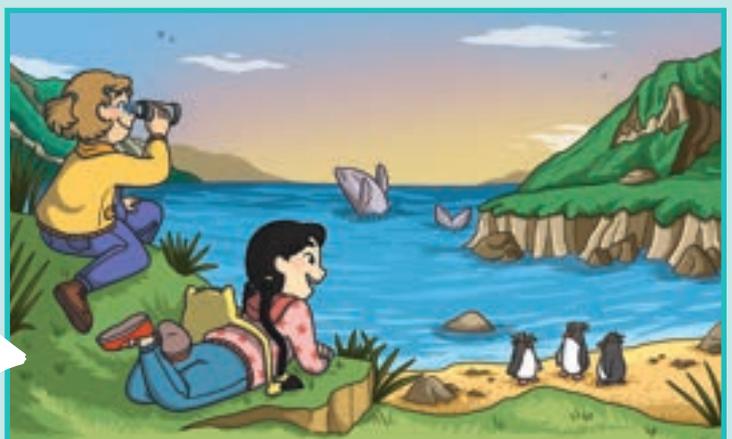
In the cold Arctic, Max made a friend called Gertrude, who loved the snow.
“Just like me!” said Max. “Do you like to whizz down hills on a sledge?”
But Gertrude preferred to go snowshoeing.



In a thick jungle, Max made a friend called Pakaya, who loved stories.
“Just like me!” said Max. “Do you like to read them in books?”
But Pakaya preferred to listen to tales sung by his dad.



In the blue ocean, Max made a friend called Adam, who loved to swim.
“Just like me!” said Max. “Do you like to float on the surface?”
But Adam preferred to dive deep under the water.



On a faraway island, Max made a friend called Chloe, who loved animals.
“Just like me!” said Max. “Do you like penguins best?”
But Chloe’s favourite animal was the enormous humpback whale.

Who did Max meet on her travels?

Can you name them? Why are they different to Max?



Scan the QR code to double check your answers!



Around the World with Max and Lemon

Where Would You Go?



I would like to go to

because

.....

.....

I think the weather will be

.....

For my trip, I would pack

.....

.....

.....

.....



WORD SEARCH

The tourist destinations in this list are just some of the reasons people flock to Europe. Can you find all of them in the grid? They are hidden horizontally, vertically or diagonally and may read forwards or backwards.

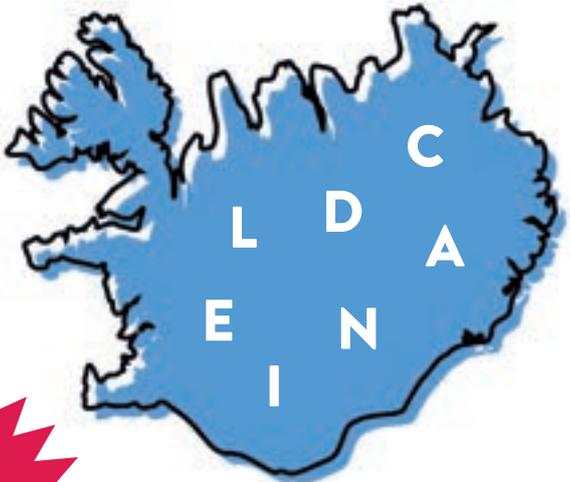
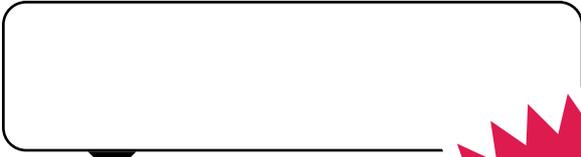


- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| ACROPOLIS | PARTHENON |
| BIG BEN | POMPEII |
| COLOSSEUM | RIJKSMUSEUM |
| EIFFEL TOWER | STONEHENGE |
| GUELL | |



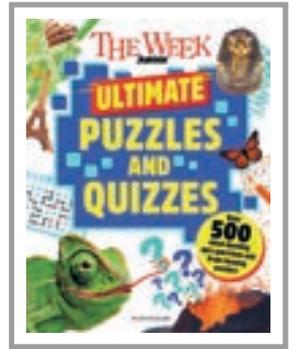
ANAGRAMS

Unscramble the names of these European countries. Their shapes might give you hints!



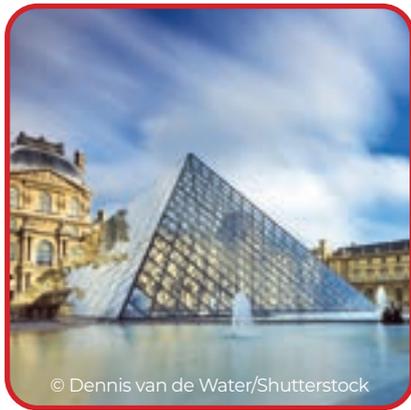
DID YOU KNOW?
Europe is the most visited continent in the world. Some reports say it's responsible for more than half of tourist arrivals anywhere.



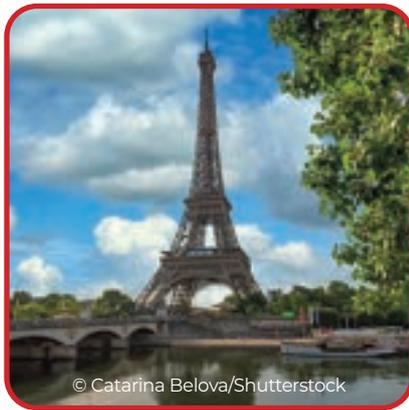


LOGIC PUZZLE

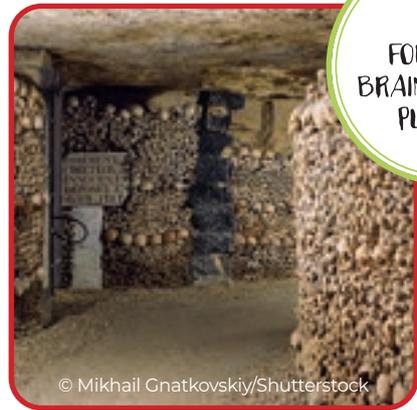
Can you work out the best order to see these attractions in Paris?
Your guidebook says you should visit the Louvre before the Eiffel Tower,
but after the Catacombs. The Seine should be seen before the Moulin
Rouge but after the Eiffel tower.



The Louvre



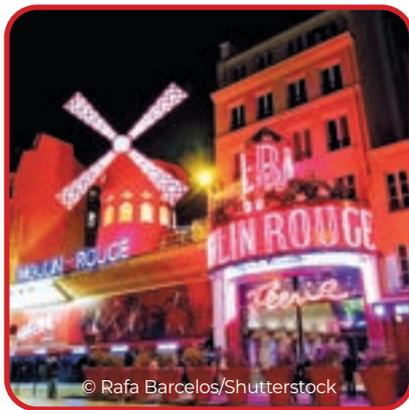
The Eiffel Tower



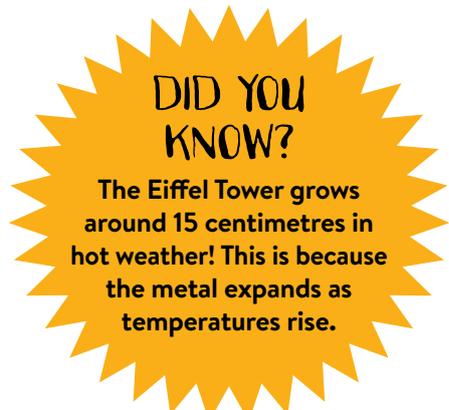
The Catacombs



The Seine



The Moulin Rouge



1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____



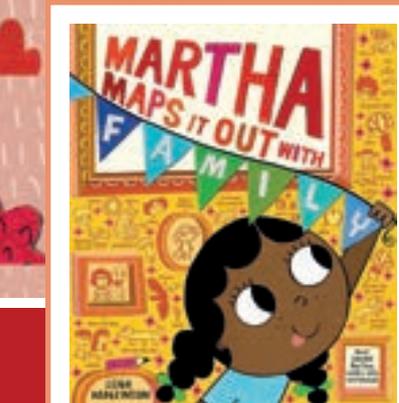
Families can be made up of anything really.



our library

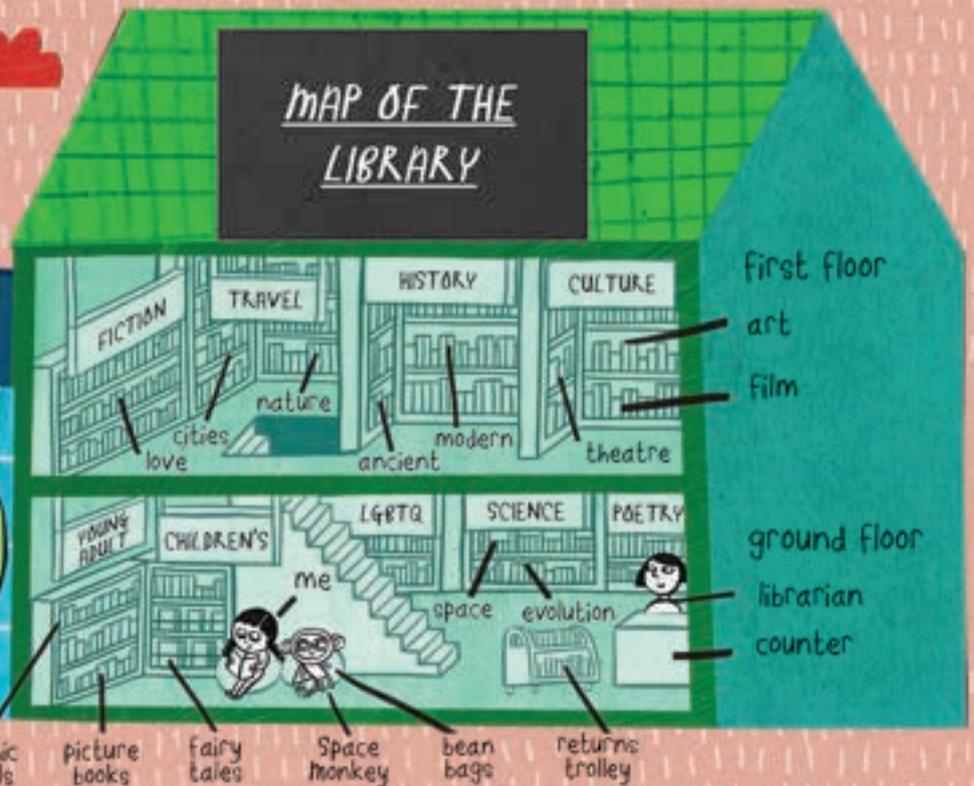


my school

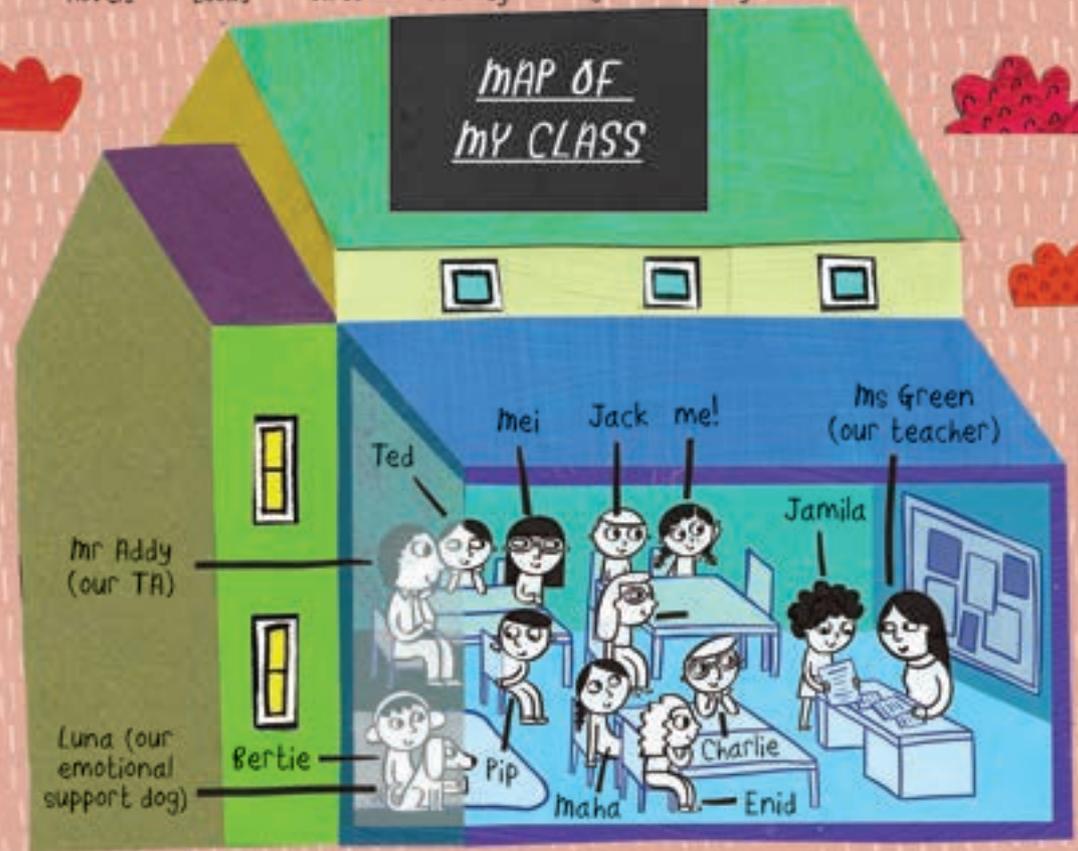


Artwork from Martha Maps It Out with Family by Leigh Hodgkinson.

Publishing in August 2026 with Oxford Children's, part of Oxford University Press.



graphic novels picture books fairy tales Space Monkey bean bags returns trolley



Mr Addy (our TA) Luna (our emotional support dog) Bertie

Activity: Can you answer all these questions?

QUESTION 1

Can you find the graphic novel section of the library?

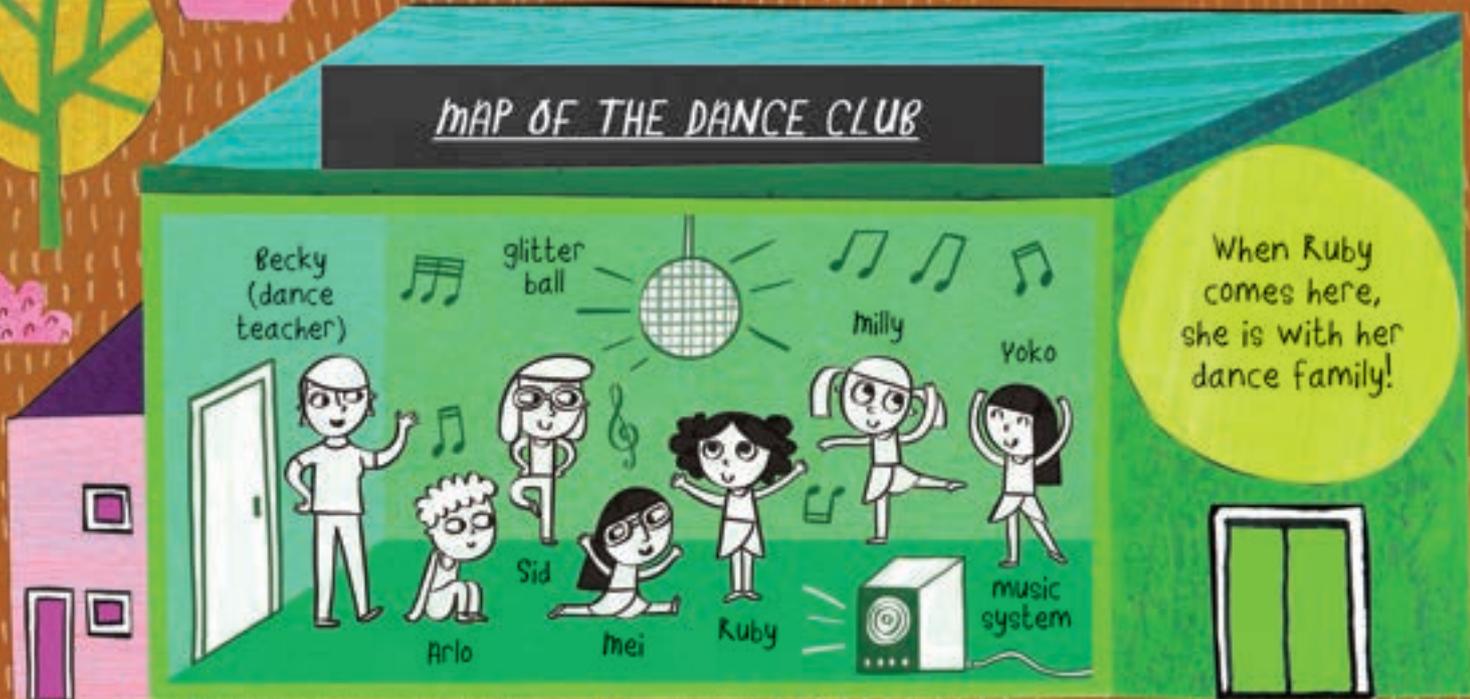
QUESTION 2

Where is Yoko and what activity is she doing?

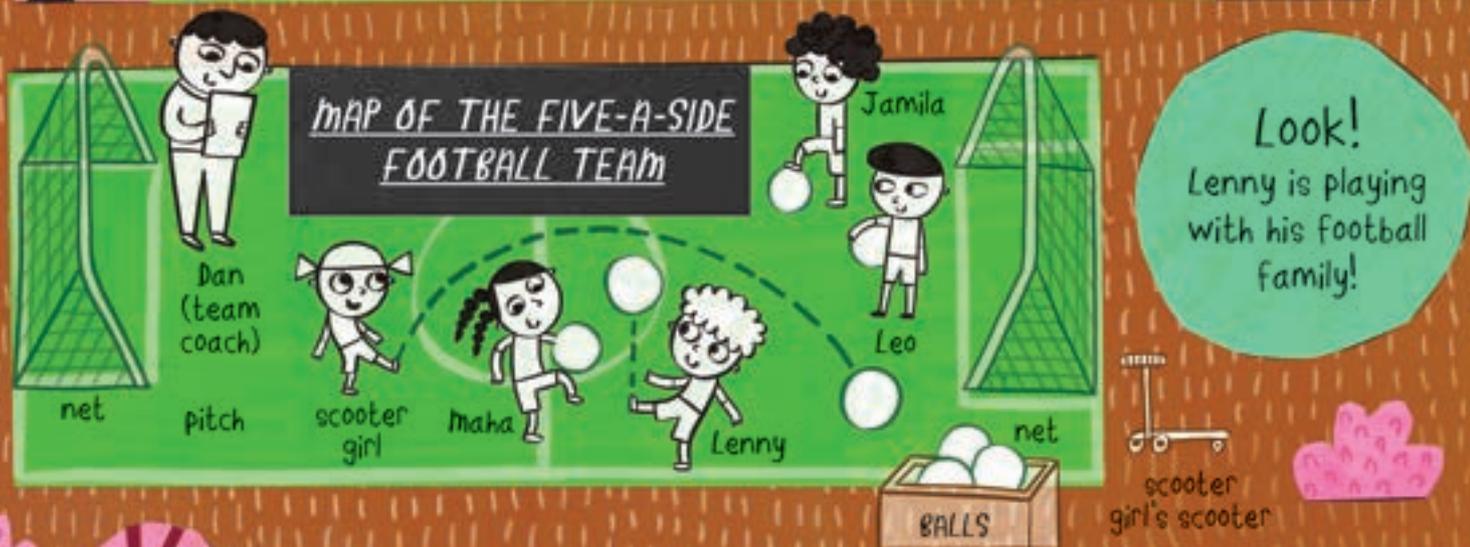
They just have to have something special that connects them.



MAP OF THE DANCE CLUB



MAP OF THE FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL TEAM



Did you know that families don't even have to be in the same place? Sometimes they are somewhere completely different . . .

QUESTION 3

Which floor is the film section located on?

QUESTION 4

Who is Dan and how many children are with him?

QUESTION 5

Who is sitting with the emotional support dog?

Scan the QR code to double check your answers!



Reducing Our Carbon Footprint

Lowering your carbon footprint would reduce the amount of greenhouse gases created every day and help to reverse climate change.

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

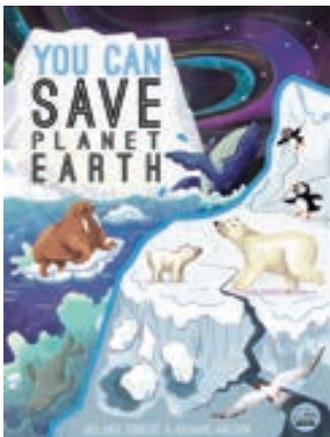
We can reduce the amount of waste being thrown away every day and limit the impact our daily lives have on the Earth by recycling materials, reusing clothes, books and other items, and reducing the amount of energy we use.

Reduce Waste

You can reduce your waste by recycling or donating to charity, and by using reusable bags and drinking bottles.

Carbon Footprint

The measure of CO₂ that all of your daily activities release into the atmosphere is called your 'carbon footprint'.



YOU CAN Save Planet Earth
by Melanie Hibbert. Illustrated by
Richard Watson (Gemini Children's)

Activity: How many of each item can you see in the picture?



Yellow tagged rubbish bags



Recycling bins

How Can YOU Help?

Buy Less: Buy only what you need so you can help reduce waste.

Buy Responsibly: Avoid fast fashion and disposable gadgets and toys.

Buy or Repair: Repair, don't throw away and buy second-hand if you can.



Imagine!

About 75% of all the rubbish we throw away is recyclable.



Always Check!

Check packaging so that you dispose of rubbish in the correct bins.



Recycle!

Remember to recycle cardboard, paper, glass jars, cans and plastic packaging!

And you could share this book with your friends, too!



Windows



Recycling logos



Wind turbines



Wheels

Scan the QR code to double check your answers!



An extract from

'Are you sure this is a good idea, Ollie?' Alex said.

I turned to him and pulled a face. 'What are you talking about, Al? It's an amazing idea.'

In fact, it was probably one of the best ideas I've ever had (and I have a lot of really great ideas).

'Ollie's right,' Jenson said. 'If we pull this off, we could go viral!'

'We'd be famous!' Josh chimed in excitedly.

'But what if we crash?' Alex asked, eyeing the BMX track nervously.

'We're not going to crash,' I said, turning to the others. 'Right, guys?'

'Right,' Jenson, Josh and Rohan replied.

'Yeah, but what if we do?' Alex asked.

'Then we crash,' I said with a shrug. 'It's not like it's that big a deal.'

'But I didn't bring my bike helmet,' Alex said.

'Helmets are for people who don't know what they're doing.'

'Yeah, Alex,' Jenson said. 'Only babies wear helmets.' The others snickered.

'I just don't see why I have to be the one in the trolley,' Alex said.

I rolled my eyes. 'We've gone over this ten times already – because you're the smallest.'

'But when we stood back-to-back the other day, we were the exact same height.'

'No, we weren't.'

'Yes, we were.' Alex turned to Rohan. 'Tell him, Rohan. You were there.'

'It doesn't matter either way,' I said quickly before Rohan had the chance to reply. 'It's been decided – you're going in the trolley, Alex.'

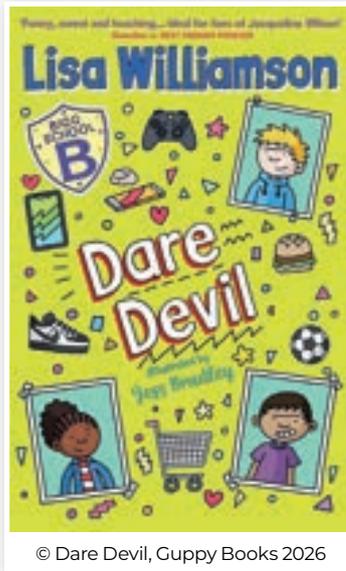
'But this was your idea.'

'Exactly. So that means I get to say who does what.'

I dreamed up the idea last Saturday when I just so happened to watch a YouTube clip of the Shopping Trolley Racing World Championships.

Teams competed to see who could get around the course the fastest. Later that day, while riding my bike around the BMX park, I had a brainwave. We could recreate the race, only ours would be way better because instead of racing in a straight line, we'd be on a twisty-turny BMX track!

I shared my plan at school on Monday, and we'd been waiting all week to put it into action, whispering excitedly about it any second we got.



© Dare Devil, Guppy Books 2026



'We might need to get on with it,' Josh said, checking his watch. 'My curfew is up in twenty minutes and my mum says she'll ground me if I'm late again.'

It had taken a lot longer to smuggle a trolley out of the Sainsbury's car park than we thought it would.

'Don't worry,' I said. 'We'll only need a few minutes tops once we get going. C'mon, Alex, stop holding us up and get in.'

Alex took a step backwards instead.

'If he really doesn't want to, we probably shouldn't make him,' Rohan said.

I turned to him. 'Fine, you get in then.'

Rohan's eyes grew wide.

'That's not what I meant,' he said quickly.

'Well, someone's got to go in the trolley. How else are we going to go viral?'

I glanced at Josh. He immediately looked at his feet.

'I thought you wanted to be famous,' I pointed out.

'I do. It's just that I get travel sick.'

I turned to Jenson. He wouldn't let me down, I was certain.

'Looks like you're up, Jens.'

'Me?'

'Yeah.'

'But I'm the biggest by miles.'

This was true. In fact, Jenson was one of the tallest boys in the whole of Year Seven at Henry Bigg Academy. But if none of the others were brave enough to step up, it didn't leave me with much choice.

'The extra weight will give us some speed,' I said.

'But I thought I was going to be the cameraman.'

'Alex can do that instead.'

'Yeah, totally,' Alex said eagerly.

'But Alex's phone is rubbish,' Jenson said.

'Let him borrow yours then.'

Jenson hesitated. 'I dunno, Ollie, I'm not really prepared.'

'What do you mean – prepared? All you have to do is sit in a trolley. Easy peasy. It's the rest of us doing all the hard work pushing you around.'

'Yeah, but ...'

'But what? You're not too chicken, are you?'

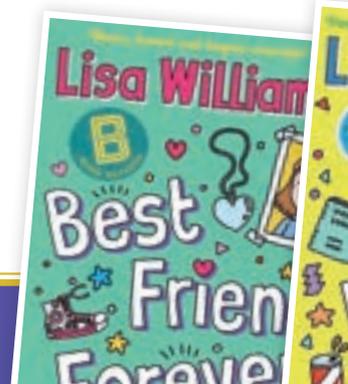
I began to cluck and flap my arms.

It did the trick. Within seconds, Jenson had given Alex his phone and hopped in the shopping trolley.

'Make sure you get all the action,' I told Alex.

If we really were going to go viral, we needed to record every second.

Carefully, Josh, Rohan and I guided the trolley up the slope to the starting line. I was in the middle, my hands gripping the handle tightly, with Josh clinging onto the left side of the trolley, Rohan doing the same on the right, and Jenson crouching in the trolley itself, his long legs jammed up under his chin. Meanwhile, Alex had scampered ahead so he





could capture the moment we set off. 'It's pretty steep,'

Rohan said as we stood at the top of the slope.

'Yeah, isn't it great?' I said. 'The speed will give us the momentum to get us over the first jump.'

I gave Alex the thumbs-up to start filming.

'And . . . action!' he yelled.

'Hey, guys,' I bellowed at the camera. 'I'm Dare Devil Ollie, and you're about to watch us make it around this BMX track in record time. On your marks . . .'

Jenson peered over his shoulder. 'Um, Ollie . . .'

'Get set . . .'

' . . . I think I might have changed my—'

'Go!' I roared.

As we set off down the slope, Jenson let out a blood-curdling scream that I couldn't wait to tease him about later.

The trolley flew, just like I knew it would, but we still had to push pretty hard to get it up and over the first jump. On the way down, we picked up speed again, only for Rohan to get his foot stuck under the back wheel.

'Man down! Man down!' I yelled in glee as he tumbled down the grass verge.

I hoped Alex was getting all of this on film. It was content gold!

The next jump was even steeper, the trolley almost tipping backwards as Josh and I used all our might to push it up the slope, laughing our heads off the entire time.

As we clattered down the other side, I jumped on the back of the trolley and let out a whoop of triumph. This was turning out even better than I hoped!

'Corner!' Jenson screamed. 'Corner!'

I put my feet back on the ground and did my best to lean into the turn, the way I did when I was on my bike, but the trolley was too heavy and travelling way too fast.

Realising we were about to leave the track, I let go, hurling my body sideways, landing on the grass



commando style. On the other side of the trolley, Josh tried to do the same, only he didn't quite make the grass, hitting the asphalt track instead. Meanwhile Jenson let out a yell as the trolley careered up and over the bank like a runaway train, disappearing from view before slamming into the chain-link fence with an almighty crash.

For a second there was silence. I jumped to my feet and sprinted up the bank, Alex close behind.

'Oh my God, Jens!' I cried as I scrambled over the top. 'That was epic, totally epic!'

I froze.

The trolley was turned on its side while Jenson lay on the ground, one hand clasped over his mouth.

Then I saw the blood on the grass.

Alex hurried past me down the bank. 'You OK, Jens?' he asked.

Jenson didn't reply, just stared up at Alex with big, frightened eyes.

Rohan and Josh appeared at my side.

'Is he all right?' Rohan asked, the panic in his voice obvious.

'I think he's in shock,' Alex reported, crouching at Jenson's side. 'Jens, mate,' he said. 'Can you take your hand away for a second?'

Slowly, Jenson removed his hand. I heard Rohan and Josh let out a gasp.

Jenson's face was covered with blood. Not only that, there was a massive gap where his front teeth used to be.

My stomach lurched. I didn't know why but suddenly I felt really sick and dizzy.

'He must have knocked them on the front of the trolley or something,' Alex said.

'We need to find them then,' Rohan said. 'And fast!'

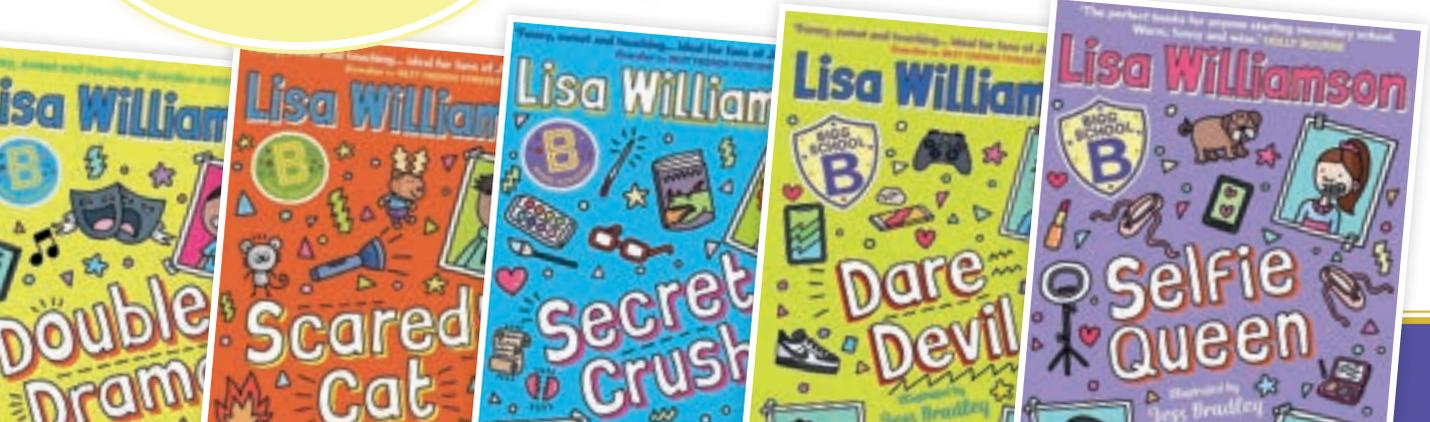
I remained glued to the spot as Alex, Rohan and Josh immediately started combing the grass for Jenson's missing teeth.

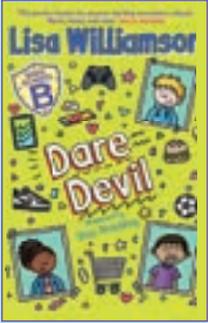
'C'mon, Ollie, help!' Josh yelled over his shoulder.

I wanted to, I swear, but every time I even looked in Jenson's direction, I went all wobbly.



Enter our competition on page 22 for the chance to win a set of signed Lisa Williamson books!





Which character are you?

START HERE

The Big School series by Lisa Williamson and Jess Bradley follows a different character in the same class of kids navigating the ups and downs of fitting in and friendships in Year 7. Collect all six books!



You are Evie

Evie is excited about secondary school and is keen to understand new things like make up and hair. She's ready to take on the world!



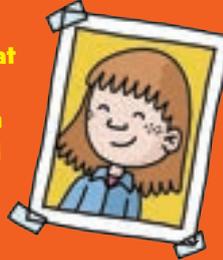
You are Ollie

Ollie is popular and sporty. He loves taking risks and playing football with his mates...



You are Lola

Lola is a cat loving bookworm and a loyal friend. She loves to write stories, play games and dress up.



You are Astrid

Astrid is a costume designer. She loves fantasy stories, using her imagination to create new worlds.





Little People, BIG DREAMS

Celebrating 10 years in 2026! Little People BIG DREAMS, created by Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara, is the multi-million copy bestselling children's biography series that introduces young readers to the lives of inspiring figures.

Hello!

My name is Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara (but you can just call me Isa!) and I'm the author of the *Little People, BIG DREAMS* series.

Ten years ago, I went from bookshop to bookshop looking for a story about real life inspiring women to read to my nieces Alba and Claudia. I searched everywhere... but I couldn't find the book I was looking for. So, I decided to write it myself!

That book became the first book in the *Little People, BIG DREAMS* series, and now – ten years later – I've written nearly 150 books! That's a LOT of amazing people, each with big dreams and incredible stories.

I truly believe I have the best job in the world. I get to learn about inspiring people every single day. Every time I write a book, I discover something new – and the best part is sharing these stories with YOU.

This job comes with lots of surprises, like the new series music album that came out in February! Never in a million years would I have thought that would happen.

People like to ask me lots of questions about being an author, so I thought I would share all my answers with you, but you've got to keep them secret!

When did you know you wanted to become a writer?

I have always loved books, even when I was little. Sometimes I stayed up past my bedtime, reading under the covers with a torch! I did not know I would become a writer one day, but I knew that stories made me happy.

Where do you get your ideas from?

From real people! History is full of true stories that are even better than fairy tales.

What is your favourite part of making books?

I love working with the amazing illustrators. Did you know that almost every book in the series has a different illustrator? Their drawings help bring the stories to life!

Who is your favourite book in the series?

The truth is that the book I'm writing now is always my favourite! Because I'm learning incredible things I never knew before.

What do you hope readers learn from your books?

I hope they learn to believe in themselves, to be kind, and to dream BIG.

Do you have a secret you want to share with our readers?

Yes! Believe in yourself, stay curious, and never stop dreaming big.

What is your big dream?

You can include:

- What you dream of being or doing
- Why it makes you happy
- One thing you could do to get started

Enter to win!

Send your writing to lpbd@quarto.com to be in with the chance of winning a bundle of *Little People, BIG DREAMS* books!



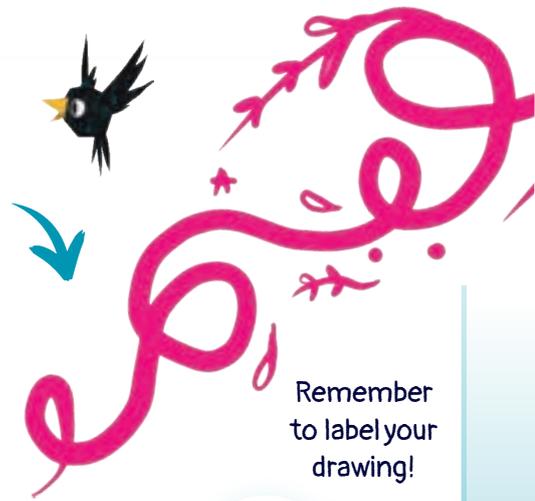


CLOUD BOY

Enter our competition!

Here is your imagination line. Draw yourself at the end of the line, and then use your imagination to draw or write...

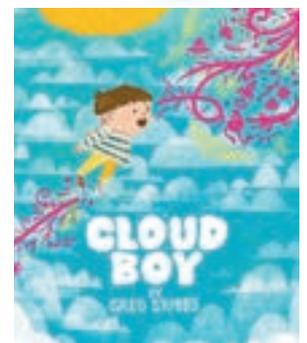
- * A real memory but with an imaginary dinosaur in it
- * A brand new invention
- * Or whatever else your imagination comes up with!



Remember to label your drawing!

Name

Age



Cloud Boy by Greg Stobbs is published by Oxford Children's, part of Oxford University Press

HOW TO ENTER

Ask a grown-up to take a photo of your picture and email it to thestorycorner@bookmarkreading.org

Grown-ups
Terms and conditions plus the closing date are available on our website



bookmarkreading.org/the-story-corner

Drawing Competition Winner!



Ibtesam, age 10

Issue 14 – Imagine you could get into a time machine and go to your favourite historical era. Where would you go?





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ISSUE 15
PRIZES!

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If – A poem extract from *I Tell Myself I'm Awesome*

If you were a radio
I'd listen to you all day.

If you were a pair of shoes
I'd walk with you everywhere.

If you were a chocolate bar
I'd savour your flavour forever.

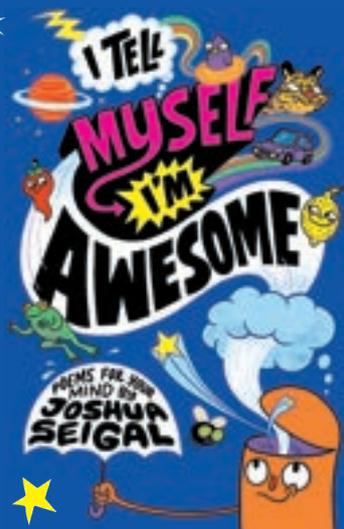
If you were a pillow
I'd bury my face in your softness.

If you were a tree
I'd get to know the wisdom of your years.

If you were a bird
I'd build my nest with you.

If you were a road
I'd find out where you lead.

If you were the stars
I'd capture the whole night sky.



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The Story Corner
Magazine

Issue 15



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