

Maggie Blue and the White Crow
by Anna Goodall:
4x Lesson Plans and Ideas - Educational Resource Pack

Suitable for:
Ages 9+



Explore themes of:

- The enduring power of friendship and loyalty
- Overcoming personal trauma and confronting the past
- Greed and power struggles
- Embracing the unknown and finding courage in unexpected places
- The bond between humans and animals
- The struggle for independence and self-discovery
- Confronting darkness and finding inner strength
- The importance of family and the lengths we'll go to protect them
- Facing one's fears
- The transformative power of love and sacrifice
- War and climate disaster

Subject checklist:

- Literacy ● Science ● Outdoor Education ● PSHE

ABOUT THE BOOK

She could see it again – the window into another world. There was the familiar dark forest, the same but so frighteningly different. And yet, for a moment, its darkness comforted her, too . . .

Maggie Blue's life is beginning to look vaguely normal after her traumatic experiences in the Dark World, she has friends at school, and a new makeshift family in her beloved one-eyed cat Hoagy and eccentric Aunt Esme.

Unbeknownst to Maggie, however there are eyes constantly upon her. And when an unexpected visitor sends a hurdling back to the place she so desperately wanted to leave behind, Maggie finds a world where greed and power struggles are causing war and climate disaster.

Why will this place not let her go? The Dark World is calling once more, and it's not certain she will be able to resist . . .

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - ANNA GOODALL

Anna Goodall was born in London into a family of musicians. But amidst all the instruments and piles of music, there were also an awful lot of books. Her granny used to read to her every night, and family folklore has it that she loved to write little notes to herself before she could read properly. (The content of these notes is still unknown, but we strongly suspect that they contained gibberish.) Even so, writing has always been a way for Anna to connect with herself and the world, and, alongside reading, the most important thing in her life. She also has a great interest in animals (including talking ones), other worlds, families, friendship, football, how other people might be feeling and coffee.

After working in publishing, running a small literary magazine, bookselling and very occasional journalism, Anna took a Masters in Scriptwriting at Goldsmiths. But instead of doing what she was meant to do after that (ie, write a film or at least a short film) she decided to write a novel instead. .
MAGGIE BLUE AND THE WHITE CROW is the sequel to MAGGIE BLUE AND THE DARK WORLD, her first book.

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EXTRACT 2: STOP AND SHELTER (pages 205 – 206)

ACTIVITY 2: SUSTAINABLE SHELTERS

ACTIVITY SHEET 2: BUILD YOUR OWN SHELTER

Objectives: Plan and design a shelter using natural materials, considering factors such as stability, size and protection from the elements; collaborate and communicate effectively within a group while constructing a shelter, developing teamwork skills.

EXTRACT 3: : WHISPERS OF WISDOM (pages 210 – 211)

ACTIVITY 3: CONVERSATIONS AND CONNECTIONS

ACTIVITY SHEET 3: TALKING TO TREES

Objectives: Develop their descriptive skills by generating words and phrases to inspire their writing; write a conversation with a tree, applying the structure of dialogue including the use of punctuation like speech marks.

EXTRACT 4: THE GRIP OF GREED (page 224)

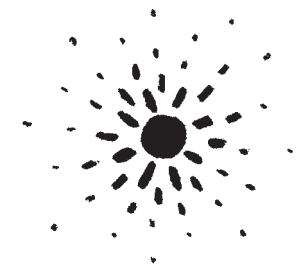
ACTIVITY 4: GREED OR NEED?

ACTIVITY SHEET 4: : NEEDS VS WANTS

Objectives: Understand the definition of greed as the excessive desire for more at the expense of others; define needs as essential for survival and well-being, and wants as desires that enhance our lives but are not essential.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS



EXTRACT 1: FEATHERED FRIENDS



EXTRACT 1: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

1. Can you identify the names of the birds you can see on the cover? (*White crow, heron, owl, wren*)
2. Have you ever seen any of these types of birds in real life? Is there such a thing as a white crow?
3. Which bird on the cover is your favourite? Can you describe what you like about it? Why do you think the author chose these specific birds to be on the cover?
4. The title of the book, *Maggie Blue and the White Crow*, suggests a bond or relationship between Maggie and the white crow. What kind of connection do you think exists between them? How might their relationship evolve throughout the story?
5. Look at Maggie's expression on the cover. How do you think she feels when she sees the birds? What emotions do you think she is experiencing?
6. If you were Maggie in the picture, what would you say to them? How do you think they would respond?
7. Compare the sizes of the birds on the cover. What do you think the difference in size means? How might it show us who is more powerful or important among the birds in the story?
8. Imagine you could shrink down to the very small size of the wren. How do you think your view of the world would change? How would your interactions with nature be different?
9. Think about the different abilities each bird on the cover might have. How could they use these abilities to help Maggie on her journey? How might their unique skills complement each other?
10. Did you notice something strange about the owl? Why do you think it has a pair of human hands? Investigate to consider people's emotions and mental states when solving a case?



ACTIVITY 1: WINGS AND WONDERS

- Begin by asking students about the different types of birds they have seen. Encourage them to share their experiences and observations. Record their responses on the board and document the specific locations where they have encountered these birds, such as in their own gardens, local parks, nature reserves or any other natural habitats they might have visited.
- Show the cover illustration of the book and point out that it includes an owl, heron, crow and wren
- Choose one bird to start with (e.g. owls) and discuss the unique characteristics of owls, such as their large eyes, silent flight and ability to rotate their heads. Talk about the habitats where owls can be found, such as forests, woodlands or even in urban areas and that they reside in tree hollows, nest boxes or perched on high branches, using their sharp talons and powerful beaks to capture and consume small mammals, birds and insects
- Repeat this process for the remaining birds, highlighting their distinctive features and habitats.
- Herons: Herons are known for their long legs, slender bodies and long, sharp beaks that help them catch fish. They are commonly found near bodies of water, such as rivers, lakes, or wetlands, where they wade in shallow water to search for their prey
- Crows: Crows are highly intelligent birds with glossy black feathers. They have strong beaks and are skilled at problem-solving. Crows are adaptable and can be found in various habitats, including forests, urban areas and agricultural fields, where they scavenge for food and build their nests.
- Wrens: Wrens are small birds with round bodies and often display intricate patterns on their feathers. They are known for their melodious songs and active nature. Wrens typically inhabit shrubs, gardens, woodlands and forest edges, where they build their nests in tree cavities, bushes or crevices.
- Next, distribute the activity sheet to each student. Instruct them to fill it in using the knowledge gained in the previous discussion. The activity sheet can include sections for drawing the birds, labelling their characteristics, behaviour and adaptations, and writing a short description of each bird.
- After this, provide an opportunity for students to share their completed activity sheets with their classmates. Ask a few students to describe the birds they drew and explain their favourite characteristics or behaviours. Recap the key points discussed during the lesson, emphasising the individual diversity and beauty of these birds to provide background knowledge and context for the rest of the story.



BIRDS IN FOCUS

Instructions: Draw and label each of the birds below and write a detailed description of what they look like.



Owls:



Crow:

Heron:



Wren:

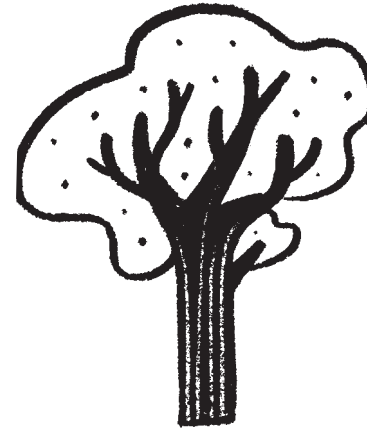


EXTRACT 2: STOP AND SHELTER

(pages 205 – 206)

They came to a slight clearing in the trees where someone before them had built a makeshift shelter: slender twigs threaded through some sturdier branches, all covered with leaves. There was only really room for one person, but it was the best version of cover they had come across in all their tramping, so he forced himself to speak for the first time in many hours. The words felt heavy and difficult to form. ‘We should stop here.’

The girls did not object. They were exhausted. Everything was soaking, but they tried to make themselves comfortable with their heads in the sheltered area, at least. He covered them both with the one dry blanket, and they were asleep before he had finished. They had barely spoken a word to him all day. As they slept, Oz watched the bedraggled white crow emerge from Maggie’s pocket and perch beside her, keeping watch.



EXTRACT 2: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

1. Why do you think the characters decided to stop and rest in the shelter? What clues from the text support your answer?
2. Describe the shelter the characters found in the clearing. What materials do you think were used to build it?
3. How did the characters react when they found the shelter? How do you think their exhaustion affected their response?
4. What do you think the white crow symbolises in the story? Why do you think it emerged from Maggie's pocket and perched beside her while they slept?
5. If you were one of the characters, what adjustments or improvements would you suggest to make the shelter more comfortable?
6. How do you think the characters' relationships might change after finding the shelter? Do you think they will start talking to each other more? Why or why not?
7. Why is finding shelter important in survival situations? What are some risks or dangers that a shelter can protect you from?
8. What are some basic materials you could use to build a makeshift shelter in the wilderness? How would you collect these materials?
9. Why is it important to make your shelter waterproof and insulated? What materials or techniques could you use to achieve this?
10. Can you think of any real-life experiences or examples from books or films where people have used their shelter-building skills for survival? What lessons can we learn from them?



ACTIVITY SHEET 2: SUSTAINABLE SHELTERS

- Begin by reading the extract aloud, emphasising the description of the makeshift shelter and the use of natural materials. Encourage them to think about the challenges the characters faced and why they decided to stop and use the shelter. Discuss the importance of having shelter in various situations, such as during camping trips or in emergency situations.
- Share real-life examples of different types of shelters, such as tents, cabins and huts, and discuss the materials typically used in their construction. Explain that in outdoor environments, people often rely on natural materials to build temporary shelters.
- Introduce the activity by explaining that students will have the opportunity to build their own shelter using natural materials found in the school grounds.
- Before collecting materials, ask students to brainstorm and plan their shelter design. Remind them to consider factors such as stability, size and protection from the elements.
- Divide the class into small groups of 3-4. Provide each group with the activity sheet and instruct them to read the instructions carefully. Afterwards, ask them to go outside to the designated area in the school grounds to gather natural materials for their shelter. Emphasise the importance of not damaging plants or trees and only collecting fallen branches and leaves.
- Encourage the students to work together as a team to build a shelter following the instructions on the activity sheet. As the groups start building their shelters, encourage them to communicate and collaborate. Remind them to listen to each other's ideas and try to solve any challenges they encounter.
- Offer guidance and support to the groups as needed. Ask them questions to foster critical thinking and decision-making skills, such as: How can you make the structure more stable? Can you find additional materials to enhance the shelter's comfort? How can you ensure the shelter provides adequate protection from rain or wind?
- Allow the students enough time to complete their shelters. Encourage them to be creative in using the natural materials and adapting their designs based on their observations and experiences.
- Once the shelters are built, conduct a group review session. Ask each group to present their shelter to the rest of the class, explaining the design choices they made and how they addressed challenges.
- Facilitate a peer feedback session, where students can provide positive and constructive comments on each other's shelters. Encourage respectful discussion and highlight the unique aspects of each shelter.
- Conclude the activity by reflecting on the process and outcomes. Engage students in a discussion by asking questions such as: What did you enjoy most about building the shelter? What were some of the challenges you faced and how did you overcome them? How did teamwork contribute to the success of your shelter? What would you do differently if you were to build another shelter?
- Point out the valuable skills they've developed, such as teamwork, problem-solving and creativity, and to disassemble their shelters, ensuring that the natural materials are returned to their original environment. Talk about the importance of environmental responsibility and leaving no trace.

ACTIVITY SHEET 2: BUILD YOUR OWN SHELTER

To survive in an outdoor environment for a sustained period of time, shelter is essential. If you are camping in the wild, you may need to rely on natural materials to construct your shelter.

1. Find a suitable location in the school grounds for building your shelter.
2. Collect fallen branches, twigs and leaves from the ground. Do not damage any plants or trees.
3. Arrange the larger branches in a triangle shape, with one end stuck into the ground and the other ends meeting at the top.
4. Secure the branches together by threading slender twigs through them.
5. Cover the structure with leaves or another material such as tarpaulin, ensuring that the shelter is well-protected from the elements.
6. Test the stability and comfort of the shelter by entering and sitting inside it.
7. Take a picture of your completed shelter as evidence of your work.
8. Discuss your experience and what you learned with your group members.



Safety Guidelines: Only collect materials from the designated area in your school grounds. Be careful when handling natural materials and be mindful of those around you.

EXTRACT 3: WHISPERS OF WISDOM (pages 210 – 211)

‘Do you still know where we’re going, Oz?’ Maggie asked at once.

‘Um, we’re not quite where I thought we were.’ He sliced off some bread and then passed it to her. Quietly, he said, ‘The trees are guiding me.’

But Maggie’s voice was louder. ‘The trees?’

‘I mean, I’ve spoken to them.’

Behind him, the other girl gave a short brittle laugh.

‘Oh God, this is hopeless.’

But Maggie ignored her. ‘You can understand them?’ Oz nodded. ‘The murmurings I could always hear have turned into words, words I can understand. I think the trees are passing messages between themselves all the time, all through the forest. They’re constantly talking. And they know where your mother is; they’re going to show me.’

‘They are?’

Oz nodded. He said nothing about the Terrible Ones; he would hold that fear to himself. But the fear was in his voice when he said, ‘And we have to go now.’

The girls looked at each other and got up just as more shards of ice-rain began to fall.



EXTRACT 3: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

1. Describe Oz's emotions and thoughts when the trees guide him. How does he perceive his special connection with them? Would you trust the trees if you were in Oz's position? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think it's important for people to listen to nature and the world around them? Do you think it's important for people to have a connection with nature? Why or why not?
3. What are some advantages of being able to communicate with nature, as Oz claims he can? How would this ability benefit him?
4. Why is Maggie interested in Oz's experiences with the trees? What fuels her curiosity?
5. If you could talk to trees, what questions would you ask them? Imagine a conversation with a tree and consider the knowledge, insights or stories you could seek from them. How would this interaction expand your understanding of the world?
6. Can you think of other ways in which nature could guide or assist someone?
7. Why do you think Oz chooses not to share his fear of the Terrible Ones with Maggie and Ida?
8. If you discovered that trees could communicate with each other, how would you react? How would it alter your perception and interaction with trees in your daily life?
9. How does the ice-rain influence the characters' decision to leave? In what ways does the weather create a sense of urgency or danger? How might it impact their navigation and safety in the forest?
10. How would the story be different if the characters lacked the ability to understand the trees?



ACTIVITY 3: CONVERSATIONS AND CONNECTIONS

- Set the scene for the lesson by creating an ambiance that transports students to a magical forest. Dim the lights and display a forest scene on the board or use nature-inspired props. Enhance the atmosphere further by playing soft forest sounds or gentle rain in the background.
- Read the extract aloud and engage students in a discussion about it by asking questions such as: What do you think about the idea of trees communicating with each other? Have you ever felt a strong connection with nature? How did it make you feel? Encourage them to share their thoughts and build upon each other's ideas.
- Instruct students to close their eyes and transport themselves to a magical forest. Encourage them to vividly imagine the sounds, scents, and sights of this enchanting place. Ask students to visualise the wise tree they will be conversing with and prompt them to brainstorm descriptive keywords, phrases, and emotions that arise from this imaginary encounter. Create a forest word bank on the board, incorporating their responses to inspire their writing
- Review the structure of dialogue with students, including the use of punctuation like speech marks, attributions and line breaks for different speakers. Model an example conversation on the board, showcasing imaginative language. Encourage the students to create a balanced conversation, giving both the tree and themselves a voice. Remind them to consider the thoughts and messages they want to convey in their conversation.
- Instruct the students to use their brainstormed ideas and the provided extract as inspiration to write their conversation with a tree, using the activity sheet as a helpful guide. Remind them to incorporate descriptive language, sensory details and emotions into their writing to make it engaging and realistic. Circulate around the classroom, providing individual guidance and feedback as needed.
- After the conversations have been written, create a supportive environment for students to share their magical conversations. Invite volunteers to read their conversations aloud, reminding them to use expressive voices. Following each reading, encourage classmates to provide positive feedback, ask questions and highlight their favourite magical elements.
- Conclude the lesson by emphasising the importance of appreciating and respecting nature. Encourage students to explore other forms of creative writing that involve nature, such as poetry or short stories. Suggest that students continue their conversations with nature outside the classroom, by spending time in natural environments and observing the world around them.





ACTIVITY SHEET 3: TALKING TO TREES

Imagine having a conversation with a tree and write a dialogue that captures the magic of this encounter



Describe the appearance of the tree you're conversing with

Blank white writing area for describing the tree's appearance.

What emotions are you experiencing during this magical conversation?

How does the tree respond? What wisdom does it impart?

EXTRACT 4: THE GRIP OF GREED

(page 224)

‘Who’s the Great O?’ the old lady called Esme cut in. The girl’s leg was bouncing up and down in a manner Ulrich found intolerable and the cat was purring and shooting him daggers concurrently. He felt exhausted by the whole thing, and all he wanted to do was sleep and forget about everything. But he ploughed on.

‘The Great O is the protector of nature. She creates harmony and balance in our world. Or, well, she used to. Warrior shifters are born to protect her. We are born, live and die for her. All other shifters are banished from the Magic Mountains at birth. They are lowly, useless creatures. Many of them have lowered themselves to being scouts and spies for the Islanders, and they cross through the portals to bring them whatever their greed desires.’

The purple girl was frowning. ‘Well what else are they supposed to do? They get banished from the good place.

Are they just supposed to die or something?’

Ulrich stared at her. He opened his mouth but nothing came out. He had never thought of it quite like that.



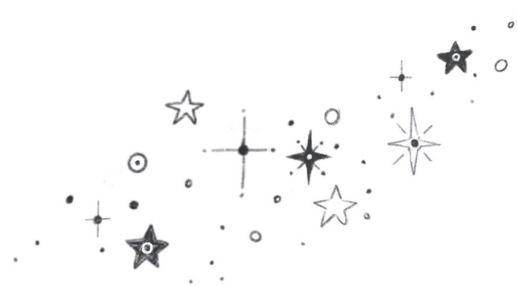
EXTRACT 4: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

1. What does the word 'greed' mean? Can you think of a time when someone wanted something so much that they didn't want to share?
2. How would you describe greed based on the story? What did the characters do that showed they were being greedy?
3. Do you think it was fair to banish the shifters in the story? Why or why not? How does this relate to the theme of greed?
4. What can we learn from the story about the problems that come with being greedy? How can we apply these lessons to our own lives and the world around us?
5. Can you think of any real-life examples where people work together and share resources instead of being greedy? How does that make a difference?
6. Are there any historical events or examples that illustrate the destructive power of greed?
7. Can greed ever be a good thing? Are there any times when it's okay to want something for ourselves without thinking about others?
8. Why do you think it's important to be fair and share with others instead of being greedy?
9. How do you think the world would be different if everyone acted with kindness instead of greed?
10. What are some small things we can do to stop greed from taking over? Can you think of a time when you shared something with others instead of being greedy? How did that make you and others feel?

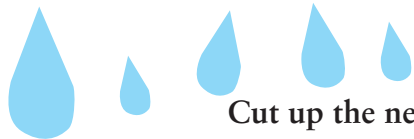


ACTIVITY 4: GREED OR NEED?

- Begin the lesson by asking students if they have heard or encountered the word 'greed' before. Discuss their prior knowledge and understanding of the term.
- Read the provided extract aloud to the students and encourage them to share their initial thoughts and reactions to it. Ask them to identify key characters, their actions and any instances of greed they notice.
- Display a dictionary definition such as 'Greed is the excessive desire for more, often at the expense of others.' Talk about it with the students, using examples from the extract to support the discussion
- Focus also on the dialogue between the girl and Ulrich in the extract. Discuss how the girl's question challenges the prevailing beliefs about the banished shifters and the consequences of their banishment. Ask students to think about her perspective and her concern for the banished shifters. Have a class discussion on whether they agree or disagree with her viewpoint and why.
- Next, transition the discussion into greed in our world. Ask students to think about examples of greed they have witnessed or heard about in their own lives or in the world around them. Encourage them to share their examples with the class.
- Facilitate a group discussion on the impact of greed in our society. Prompt students with questions such as: How does greed affect individuals and their relationships? What are some consequences of greed in our communities and the world? Can greed lead to inequality and unfairness? How?
- Next, explain to the students the difference between needs and wants:
 - Needs:** Things that are necessary for survival and well-being, such as food, shelter, clothing and education.
 - Wants:** Desires and preferences that are not essential for survival but can enhance our lives, such as toys, gadgets and entertainment.
- Help students understand that it's natural to have desires, but it becomes greed when those desires are excessive and come at the expense of others.
- Distribute the 'Needs vs Wants' handout to each student. Instruct students to read the statements on the handout and categorise each item as either a need or a want. Allow students time to complete the activity individually. Discuss the answers as a class, addressing any questions or doubts that may arise.
- Explain to the students that it is essential to prioritise needs over wants, especially when resources are limited. Divide the class into small groups or pairs. Distribute sticky notes or index cards to each group and ask them to write down five needs from their sheet that they consider most important. Instruct the groups to discuss and rank the needs in order of priority, from most important to least important. Once they have ranked their needs, have each group share their rankings with the class.



ACTIVITY SHEET 3: NEEDS VS WANTS



Needs are things that you must have to live. Wants are things you wish for or desire.



Cut up the needs and wants cards and decide whether each item is a need or a want. Stick it in the correct column.

NEEDS

WANTS?

WATER



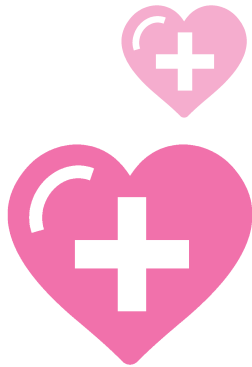
WATER

SHELTER



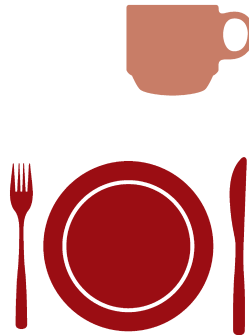
SHELTER

HEALTH



HEALTH

FOOD



FOOD

SAFETY



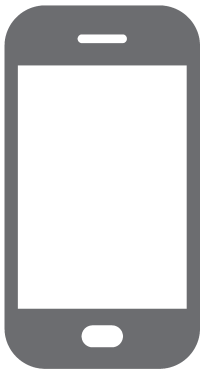
SAFETY

MONEY



MONEY

PHONE



PHONE

SWEETS



SWEETS

FRIENDSHIP



FRIENDSHIP

WARMTH



WARMTH

LOVE



LOVE

HOLIDAYS



HOLIDAYS

NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES - Key Stage 2/3

English

Spoken language

Pupils should be taught to:

- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings

Reading – comprehension

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:
 - being encouraged to link what they read or hear read to their own experiences
- Understand both the books they can already read accurately and fluently and those they listen to by:
 - drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
- Participate in discussion about what is read to them, taking turns and listening to what others say
- Explain clearly their understanding of what is read to them.

Writing: composition

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
 - writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)
- Consider what they are going to write before beginning by:
 - planning or saying out loud what they are going to write about
 - writing down ideas and/or keywords, including new vocabulary
- Make simple additions, revisions and corrections to their own writing by:
 - evaluating their writing with the teacher and other pupils

Science

Pupils should be taught:

- take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team

PSHE (taken from PSHE Association's Programme of Study)

Pupils should have the opportunity to learn:

- to resolve differences by looking at alternatives, seeing and respecting others' points of view, making decisions and explaining choices
- that resources can be allocated in different ways and that these economic choices affect individuals, communities and the sustainability of the environment

The page is framed by a colorful illustration of a village. At the top, there are several houses with different colored roofs (brown, grey, red) and windows. The background is a mix of green and blue, suggesting trees and a sky. At the bottom, there's a large tree trunk and a character's face with long blonde hair looking upwards. The overall style is whimsical and hand-drawn.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS

- Have the students create artwork inspired by the return to the Dark World described in the book. They can use various mediums like paints, pastels or even digital art tools to bring the world to life.
- Divide the students into small groups and assign them different themes from the book, such as greed, power struggles, or climate disaster. Ask each group to discuss and present their findings on how these themes are portrayed in the story.
- Provide the students with a blank map and ask them to create a map of the Dark World based on the descriptions in the book. They can label important locations and include symbols or illustrations to represent significant events or creatures in the story.
- Explore the theme of climate disaster in the book and connect it to real-world environmental issues. Engage the students in discussions about climate change, its causes, and potential solutions. Encourage them to think of actions they can take to address these challenges.
- Select key scenes from the book and create a soundtrack or playlist that captures the mood and emotions of those moments. Students can choose songs, instrumental pieces or even compose their own music.
- Give each student a strip of paper and ask them to write or draw an act of kindness they can do to counteract greed. Connect the strips together to create a 'Kindness Chain' that visually represents their collective efforts to combat greed.
- To link the two themes of greed and trees in this book, read the book *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein and discuss how the tree in the story represents selflessness and generosity. Then, have the students create their own artwork depicting a tree and illustrate how acts of giving can combat greed.
- Ask the students to imagine they are reporters in the Dark World and have them write newspaper articles reporting on the war and climate disaster happening there. They can also write articles from the perspective of characters in the book, expressing their experiences and opinions.
- Assign different characters from the book to each student and have them participate in a role-play activity. They can act out scenes, engage in dialogue, and explore the relationships and conflicts between characters.
- Ask the students to compare and contrast the Dark World with the real world. They can create Venn diagrams or make presentations highlighting the similarities and differences in terms of society, environment and challenges.
- Explore the theme of nature and its connection to emotions. Have the students write nature-inspired poems, using vivid imagery and descriptive language to express their feelings and thoughts.
- Present the students with various ethical dilemmas or challenges related to the Dark World, and ask them to brainstorm solutions or make decisions based on their understanding of the characters and their motivations.