



THE  
LION *above  
the*  
DOOR

TEACHER RESOURCES





# INTRODUCTION

**Suitable for: Ages 9–11**

**Includes:** Extracts from the text + corresponding discussion questions and activities

**Themes:** History, forgotten stories, racism, historical racism, World War Two, bullying, friendship, justice, equality, identity, family.

## CONTENTS

- EXTRACT 1: Nobody looks like me (*taken from Chapter Three*)

*Objectives:* Infer Leo's thoughts and feelings from the text; collect and record words and phrases to describe Leo's thoughts and feelings.

*Subjects:* PSHE, Literacy (reading comprehension), History, Citizenship.

- EXTRACT 2: Forgotten heroes (*taken from Chapter Twenty*)

*Objectives:* Understand that people from all over the world were involved in World War Two; research some of the real historical people mentioned in the text.

*Subjects:* History, PSHE, Literacy (reading fiction and non-fiction texts), Geography.

- EXTRACT 3: A Memorial (*taken from Chapter Twenty-Three*)

*Objectives:* Consider the importance of remembrance and memorials; design a memorial to honour all the people from around the world who were involved in the Second World War.

*Subjects:* History, PSHE, Literacy (reading comprehension and writing an information text), RE, Art, Design and Technology, Geography, Citizenship.

- EXTRACT 4: Making history (*taken from Chapter Twenty-Three*)

*Objectives:* Understand that 'History' is made up of lots of different people's stories and experiences; consider what skills and qualities a good historian needs.

*Subjects:* History, PSHE, Literacy (reading comprehension, speaking and listening), Citizenship.



## ABOUT THE BOOK



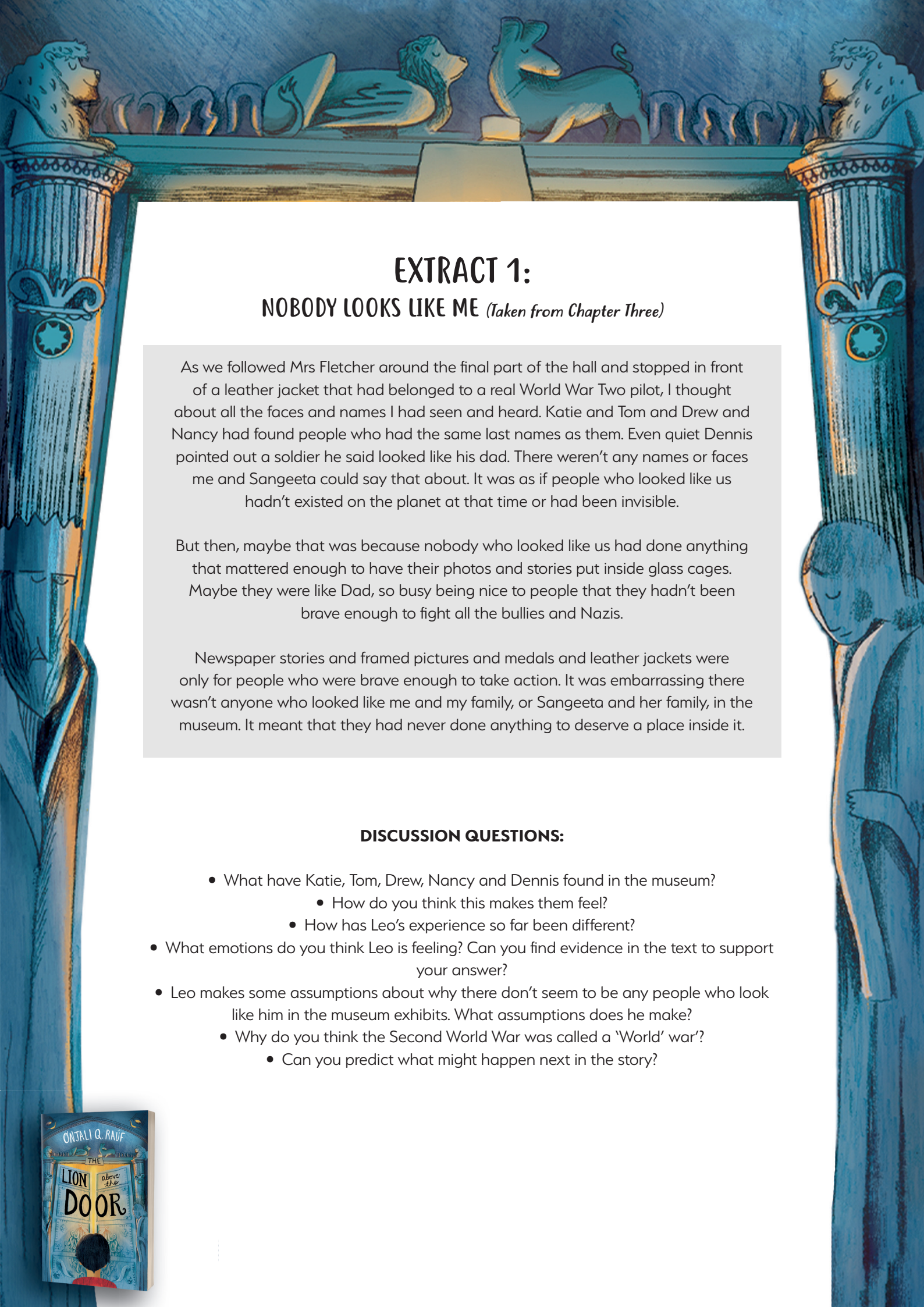
Leo and his best friend Sangeeta are the odd ones out in their school. But as Leo's dad is always telling him, it's because they're special. Only thing is, if they're so special, how come they never see anyone who looks like them in their school history books?

Then, on a class trip to a nearby cathedral, Leo's attention is drawn to a large marble slab high above the doors of the hall. Right there, bang in the middle of a list of war heroes, Leo finds himself staring at something incredible: his own name.

Desperate to know who this other Leo was, the two friends embark on a search. And together, they begin to uncover missing stories from the past, ones which they are determined to put back into their rightful place in the pages of history.

Touching on themes of historical racism, *The Lion Above the Door* shines a light on the stories our history books have yet to contain and the power of friendships that can last through generations.





## EXTRACT 1:

### NOBODY LOOKS LIKE ME *(Taken from Chapter Three)*

As we followed Mrs Fletcher around the final part of the hall and stopped in front of a leather jacket that had belonged to a real World War Two pilot, I thought about all the faces and names I had seen and heard. Katie and Tom and Drew and Nancy had found people who had the same last names as them. Even quiet Dennis pointed out a soldier he said looked like his dad. There weren't any names or faces me and Sangeeta could say that about. It was as if people who looked like us hadn't existed on the planet at that time or had been invisible.

But then, maybe that was because nobody who looked like us had done anything that mattered enough to have their photos and stories put inside glass cages. Maybe they were like Dad, so busy being nice to people that they hadn't been brave enough to fight all the bullies and Nazis.

Newspaper stories and framed pictures and medals and leather jackets were only for people who were brave enough to take action. It was embarrassing there wasn't anyone who looked like me and my family, or Sangeeta and her family, in the museum. It meant that they had never done anything to deserve a place inside it.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What have Katie, Tom, Drew, Nancy and Dennis found in the museum?
  - How do you think this makes them feel?
  - How has Leo's experience so far been different?
- What emotions do you think Leo is feeling? Can you find evidence in the text to support your answer?
- Leo makes some assumptions about why there don't seem to be any people who look like him in the museum exhibits. What assumptions does he make?
  - Why do you think the Second World War was called a 'World' war'?
  - Can you predict what might happen next in the story?



## ACTIVITY 1:

**LEO'S FEELINGS** *Subjects: PSHE, literacy (reading comprehension).*

How do you think Leo is feeling at this point in the story? In the space below, write down any words and phrases you can think of to describe Leo's feelings and emotions. What might Leo be thinking? Write any thoughts that might be going through Leo's mind in the thought bubble.



Can you predict what might happen next? Write your ideas in the space below:

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray background, intended for writing predictions.





## EXTRACT 2:

### FORGOTTEN HEROES *(Taken from Chapter Twenty)*

'Leo, where do you think we should put the other Leo?' asked Evelyn, as the whole group stood around the four tables and tried out different places for all the stories.

I pointed to the top right-hand corner. That was the corner that was closest to the top of the painted cathedral doors, where I had first seen the real Leo's name. Picking up my portrait of him, which had taken me thirteen attempts to get perfect at the weekend, along with my newspaper clip and a map of Singapore, I placed them all neatly in my chosen spot.

'I want to place mine here,' said Sangheeta, grabbing her paintings of Noor Inayat Khan and Assa Singh and the photo of the Indian women officers, all of which were glued inside a map of India, right next to Leo's section.

'Oh wait,' I added, grabbing the extra drawing Sangeeta had done of Olivia's great-grandad Richard Morris, the slightly wonky map of Ghana I had drawn, and a brightly coloured-in photocopy of the memorial invitation. 'These need to go ... here.' I put them next to Sangeeta's drawings, so that all three of our projects were in a straight line. Nobody except Nancy and Drew knew that Richard was Olivia's great-grandad – yet! It was fun having him on the board as a secret addition. Even Mr Scott didn't know. He had been so interested in his story, that he hadn't asked a single question about how we had found out about him.

As I watched everyone squeeze and position and push and pull their stories to fit on our make-believe board, I realised that the whole thing looked like a giant family tree. Except, this wasn't a normal family tree where everyone came from the same place and knew each other. This one was made up of people belonging to families who had never met and who all came from different parts of the world, but who became a family because they had all been through the same thing and fought the same enemy. With every name, the branches grew and grew and would never end, so long as everyone remembered their stories.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What items does Leo contribute to the display?
- How important is this display to Leo? Can you find evidence in the text to support your answer?
- What pictures does Sangeeta stick up on the display?
  - What does the display remind Leo of and why?
- What do all of the people whose pictures and stories are on the display board have in common?
  - In what way are the people on the display board like 'family'?
- Why do you think it is important to Leo, Sangeeta and Olivia that these forgotten heroes are remembered?





## ACTIVITY

### DISCOVER A WORLDWIDE FAMILY *Subjects: History, PSHE, Literacy, Geography.*

- 'The Lion Above the Door' is a fiction text. However, Onjali Q. Raúf has included some real historical people in the story. Some of the real people mentioned in the book so far include:

- Assa Singh, Manta Singh and George Henderson (page 227)
  - Noor Inayat Khan (page 252)
  - Hazel Hill (page 32)
  - The Bengal Sappers (page 39)
- The Women's Auxiliary Corps, India (page 226)

There are also several real people from the past mentioned on the dedications page. But who were these people, where were they from and what are their stories?

- Use books or online sources to research these real historical people or groups of people. Can you discover where in the world they were from and what they did during the war? Can you find any pictures of them?
- On the world map on the following page, label where each of the people you have researched is from. You might need to use an atlas to help you to locate different countries.
- Do you know of any other people who contributed to the Second World War? This could be local people, family members or famous people such as Captain Tom Moore or Alan Turing. Add them to your map.
- Read on and when you get to page 279, focus on this quote:

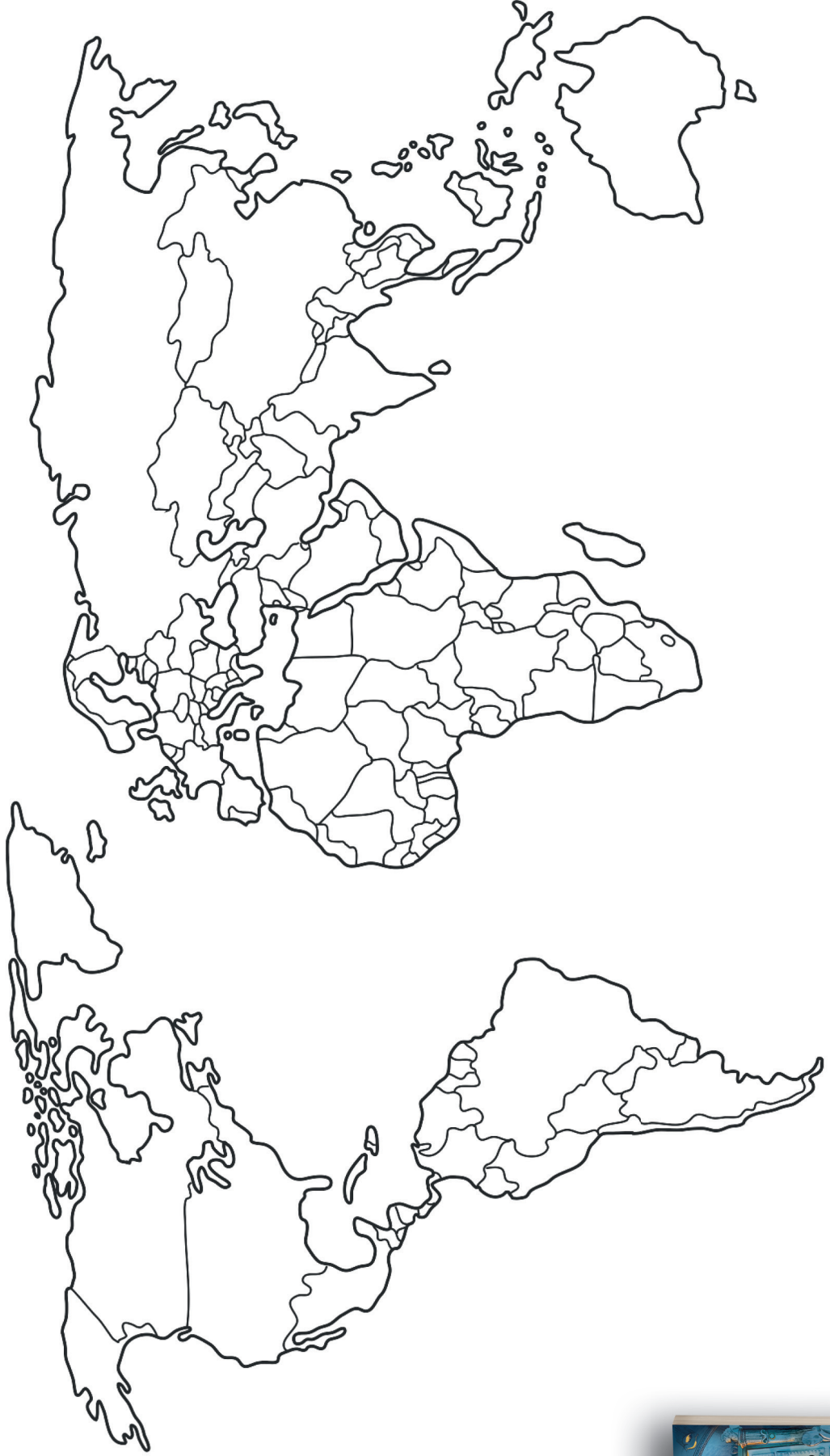
'Good,' said Annie. 'And you will also know, since you have been studying it in detail, that the Second World War – a war fought by the whole world – was won by the allies. And that those allies worked together to stop the most terrible, racist people from being in power.'

- Reflect upon how all of the people on your map worked together to achieve a shared goal. How do you feel when you think of these people and what they fought for? Can you see them, as Leo does, as a 'family' of people who weren't related and never met but were brought together by a common cause?

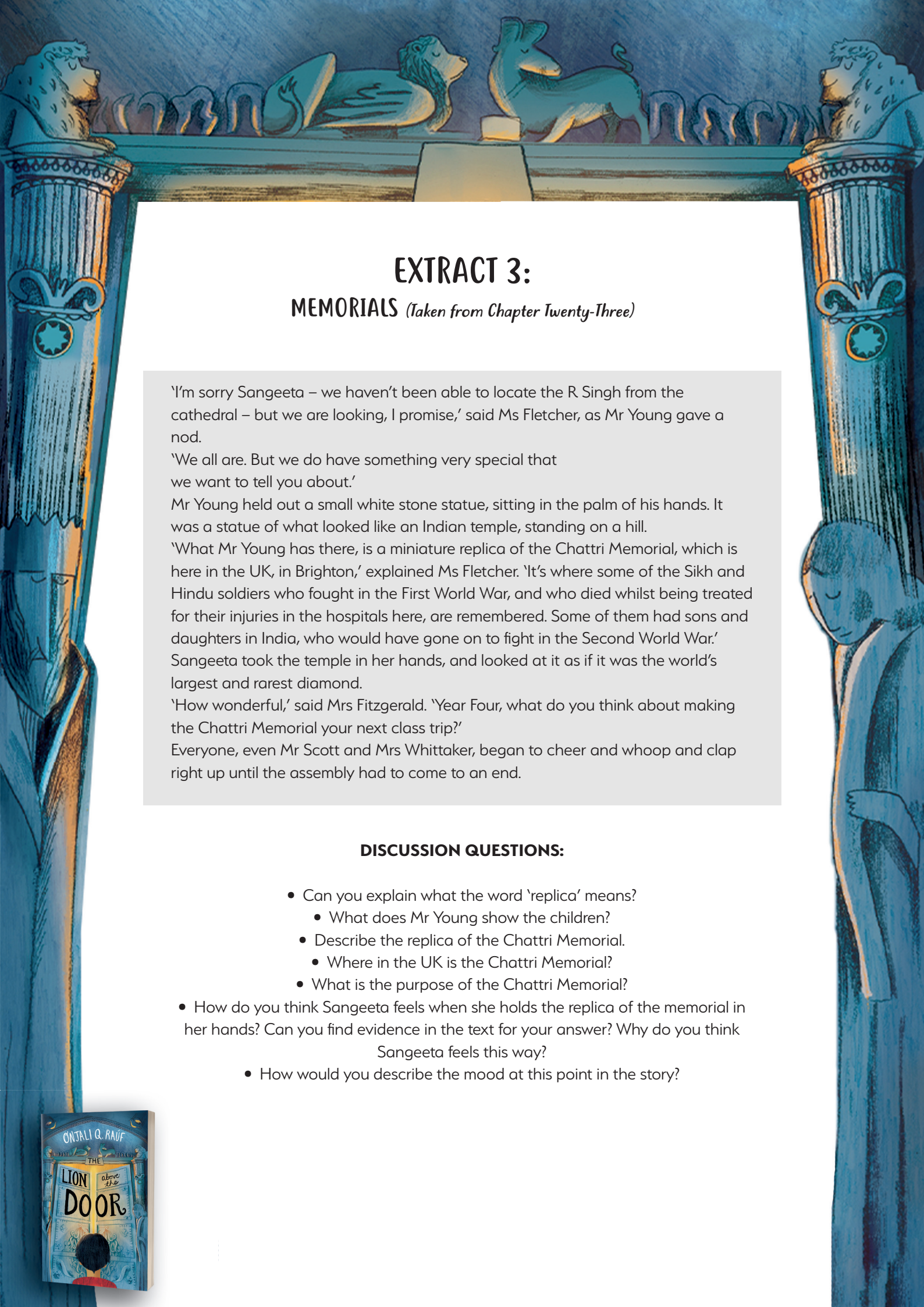


## World War Two Heroes

Where in the world did the heroes of World War Two come from? Add the names of some of the brave people who contributed towards the war to the map below.







## EXTRACT 3:

### MEMORIALS *(Taken from Chapter Twenty-Three)*

'I'm sorry Sangeeta – we haven't been able to locate the R Singh from the cathedral – but we are looking, I promise,' said Ms Fletcher, as Mr Young gave a nod.

'We all are. But we do have something very special that we want to tell you about.'

Mr Young held out a small white stone statue, sitting in the palm of his hands. It was a statue of what looked like an Indian temple, standing on a hill.

'What Mr Young has there, is a miniature replica of the Chattri Memorial, which is here in the UK, in Brighton,' explained Ms Fletcher. 'It's where some of the Sikh and Hindu soldiers who fought in the First World War, and who died whilst being treated for their injuries in the hospitals here, are remembered. Some of them had sons and daughters in India, who would have gone on to fight in the Second World War.' Sangeeta took the temple in her hands, and looked at it as if it was the world's largest and rarest diamond.

'How wonderful,' said Mrs Fitzgerald. 'Year Four, what do you think about making the Chattri Memorial your next class trip?'

Everyone, even Mr Scott and Mrs Whittaker, began to cheer and whoop and clap right up until the assembly had to come to an end.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Can you explain what the word 'replica' means?
  - What does Mr Young show the children?
  - Describe the replica of the Chattri Memorial.
  - Where in the UK is the Chattri Memorial?
  - What is the purpose of the Chattri Memorial?
- How do you think Sangeeta feels when she holds the replica of the memorial in her hands? Can you find evidence in the text for your answer? Why do you think Sangeeta feels this way?
- How would you describe the mood at this point in the story?





## ACTIVITY

### DESIGN A WW2 MEMORIAL

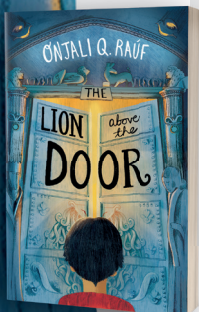
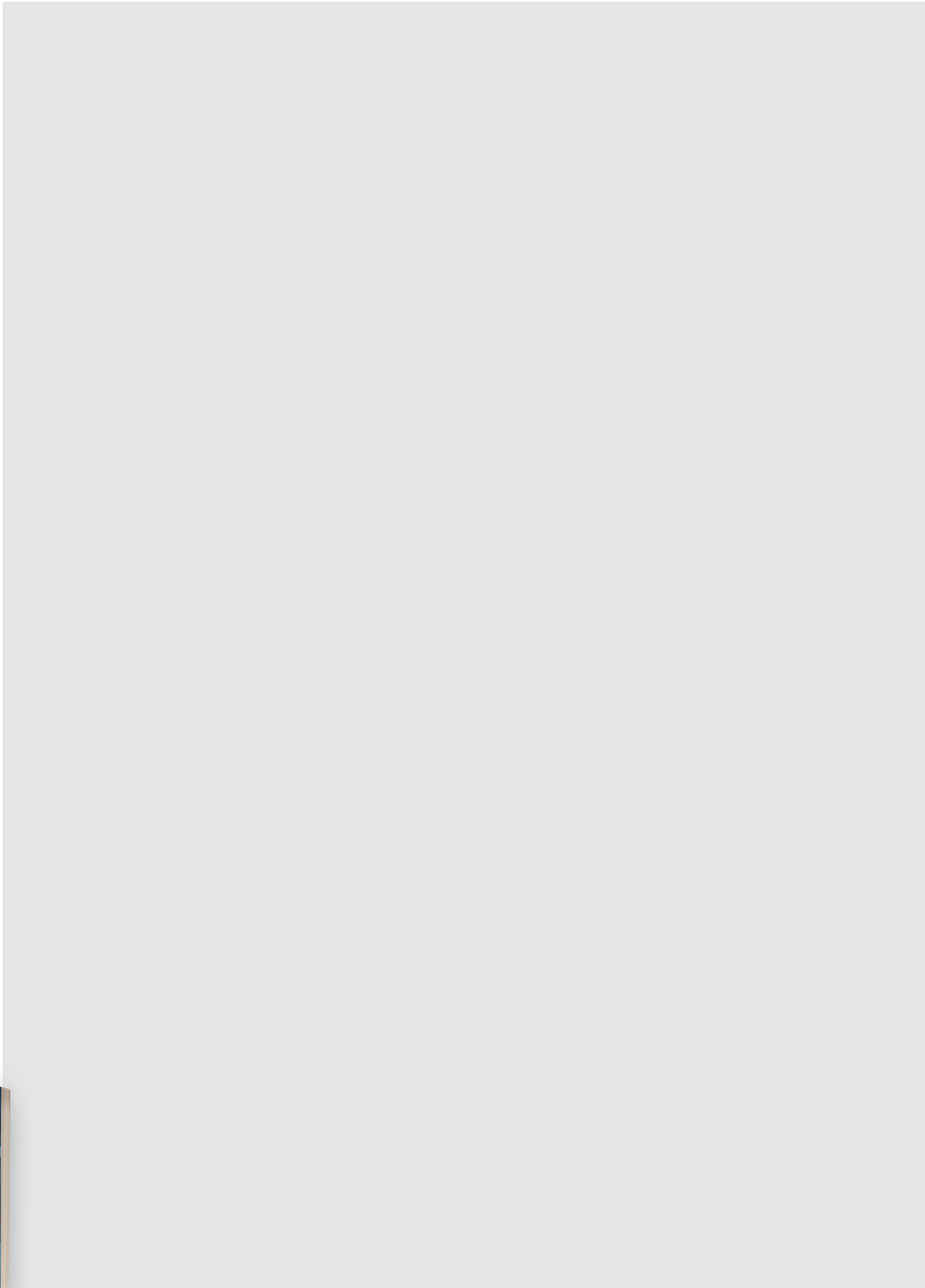
*Subjects: History, PSHE, Literacy, Art, Design and Technology, Geography, Citizenship.*

- The Chattri memorial is a place to remember Sikh and Hindu soldiers who fought in the First World War. As a class, research the Chattri Memorial online. Can you answer the following questions?
  - When was the memorial built?
  - Who designed it and what does its shape symbolise?
  - What words are inscribed on the memorial and in what languages?
- There are many war memorials around the country. Perhaps there is a war memorial in your local area? If so, what can you find out about it? Maybe you could visit it with your class?
- Discuss the purpose of memorials, what they mean to people and why they are important.
  - Design a memorial to honour and remember everyone who played a part in the Second World War. Your memorial should commemorate and pay tribute to all those who were involved including the men and women from India, Ghana, Singapore, Britain and all around the world. It should be a place where people can go and pay their respects to the heroes of the Second World War and reflect upon the bravery they showed and the importance of the freedoms they were fighting for. Consider the following questions:
    - How do you want people to feel when they visit your memorial?
  - What images, shapes or symbols will you incorporate into your design and why?
  - How will your memorial reflect the contributions of people from all around the world?
    - What words will you inscribe on your memorial?
    - Where would you like your memorial to be built?
    - What do you want visitors to learn from your memorial?
- Write a visitor's plaque explaining the purpose of your memorial and the reasons behind your design. (You might like to look online for an image of the noticeboard at the Chattri Memorial for ideas.)



## My World War Two Memorial

Can you design a memorial to honour all the people from around the world who played a part in World War Two? Draw your design in the space below.





## EXTRACT 4: MAKING HISTORY

Now that I know about the real Leo, and Richard, and Noor and Assa too, I want everyone in the whole world to know about them. So do Olivia and Sangeeta and our parents and Bo and Jules. That's why we're all on a new mission now: to find out about all the other brave heroes whose names shouldn't be hidden away on old cathedral walls or in dusty folders, but who should be alive in all our school books and display boards and films and assemblies too. Ms Fletcher and Mr Young have said they're going to help us, and Ben and Lily and Annie and Lenny from the Real Kidz Rule show have all said they want to help too. Because after we were on the programme, it turned out lots of kids like me and Sangeeta and Olivia wanted help finding heroes they might be related to as well.

Now every time I think about the other Leo, I can't help wondering about all the names and stories and histories that are waiting to be heard. Especially from places like Singapore and India and Ghana – the countries that me and Sangeeta and Olivia are lucky enough to belong to – as well as Britain. Mum and Dad feel the same and have said it's about time the whole family went to Singapore for a visit, which is exactly what we're going to do this summer! It will be our first trip since I was almost as small and as noisy as Jingyi!

My Aunt Su has promised that she's going to take me to visit the other Leo's resting place so that I can say thank you to him properly. She's still searching for the descendents from his family who survived the war, so that maybe, one day, I can meet them too. If I ever do, I'm going to invite them to come and visit me, so I can take them to say hello to their Leo in the cathedral. After all, people like him, who were as brave as lions and whose secret roars live on through every person they helped save, deserve to be known about and thanked for ever and ever and ever.

And, for as long as I can live and roar, I'm going to keep my promise to him, and make sure we never forget.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What 'mission' is Leo on now?
  - What happened after Leo and his classmates were on Real Kidz Rule?
- Why do you think it's important that these hidden stories from WW2 are heard?
  - How do you think Leo feels at this point in the story?
- Why do you think Leo compares the other Leo, and people like him, to 'lions'?
- What does Leo mean when he says their 'secret roars live on through every person they helped save'?
  - How do you think Leo has changed since the beginning of the book?
- What have you learnt from reading this book that you didn't know before? Has anything surprised you?





## ACTIVITY

### BECOME A HISTORIAN

*Subjects: History, PSHE, Literacy, Citizenship.*

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- As a class, discuss what happens if we only listen to and remember one version of an event. Does a good historian listen to the story of one group of people or many different groups? Why?
- History is made up of many people's stories and experiences. A historian's job is to discover and share different people's stories to help us to build an understanding of the past. On the following page are some of the skills and qualities a good historian needs. Discuss why each one is important for a historian and add any more that you can think of. Which of these qualities do you think Leo showed in the book? In the Leo column, give Leo a score out of 5 for each skill or personal quality. Now give yourself a score out of 5 for each of the skills. Which are you best at and which would you like to improve? Which of these characteristics or skills do you think are the most important for a historian? Colour in the three that you think are the most important for historian.
  - Why not carry out a class history project of your own to find out more about what the world was like when your grandparent's generation was young? Each of you should could interview an older person you know (perhaps a family member or friend) and talk to them about what everyday life was like when they were your age. You could record your interview or write notes. Make sure you prepare lots of good questions ready for your interview. What would you like to ask your interviewee? Perhaps you could find out what their favourite foods or games were? Remember to use your listening skills, patience and empathy to help you conduct your interview. When you have all carried out your research, share your findings with your class. Notice how every single person's story is important and how each story adds to your understanding of the past.



## What makes a good historian?

In the grid are some of the skills and personal qualities that make a good historian.

What does each one mean and why is it important? Can you think of any more? Add them to the boxes at the bottom of the grid. Now rate Leo and yourself out of five for each skill. Finally, colour in the three skills or qualities you think are the most important for a historian.

Skills and personal qualities	Leo	Me
Curiosity		
Passion for the stories of the past		
Ability to ask lots of questions		
Good listening skills		
Ability to work well as part of a group		
Persistence		
Ability to retrieve information from texts and images		
Open-mindedness and willingness to change views when new evidence is discovered		
Empathy		

