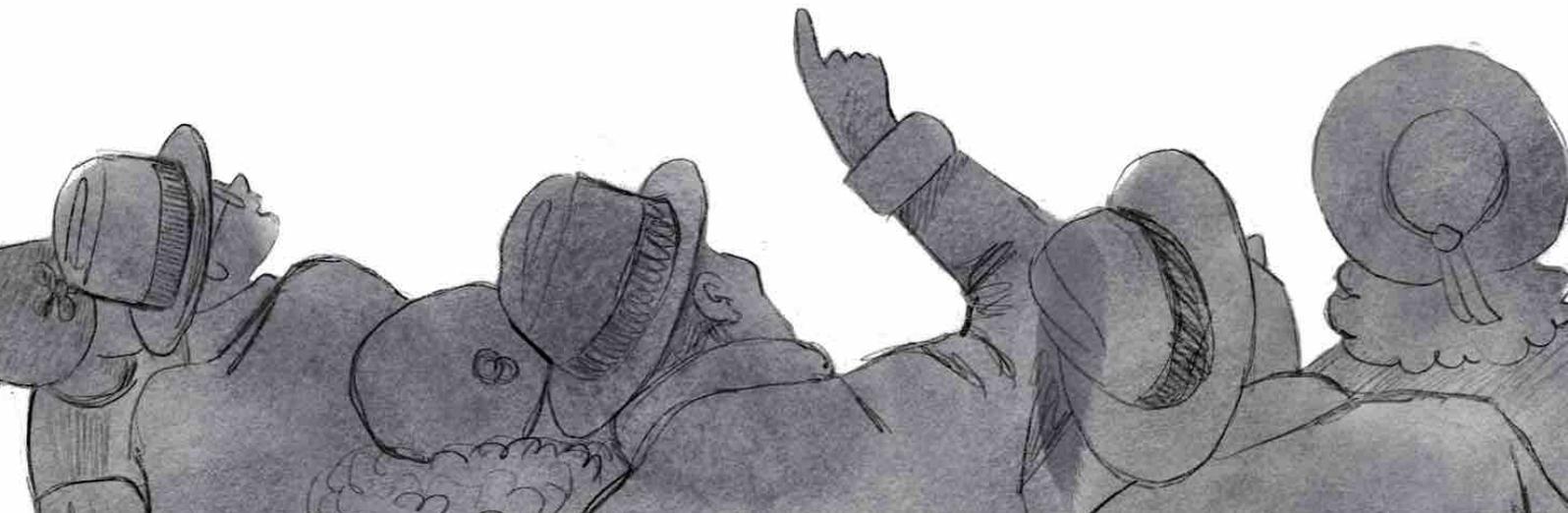




THE REINDEER AND THE SUBMARINE

BY BEVERLEY MCWILLIAMS

TEACHERS' NOTES



About the book

An orphaned reindeer with no antlers, Pollyanna is raised by Igor, a Sámi herder, and is more at home in the company of people than other reindeer. When she discovers Igor is leaving for war, Pollyanna decides to follow, but en route, she is captured and gifted to the crew of a British submarine, the HMS *Trident*. Life on board the *Trident* brings more than a few surprises, and Pollyanna – with her love of food – gets into all sorts of trouble. While she misses her Arctic home, her courage and cheekiness help comfort her companions in the dark days of the war. But what will happen to Pollyanna when the submarine reaches its destination?

A timeless story of adventure, hope, bravery and facing change, told through the eyes of Pollyanna, the real-life reindeer who proves that heroes come in all shapes and sizes.

Recommended for readers 8–12 years.

About the author

Beverley McWilliams loves sharing history with young children. In August 2019, she published her debut picture book *Born to Fly*, which tells the story of South Australian aviator Captain Harry Butler. *Born to Fly* was a CBCA Notable book.

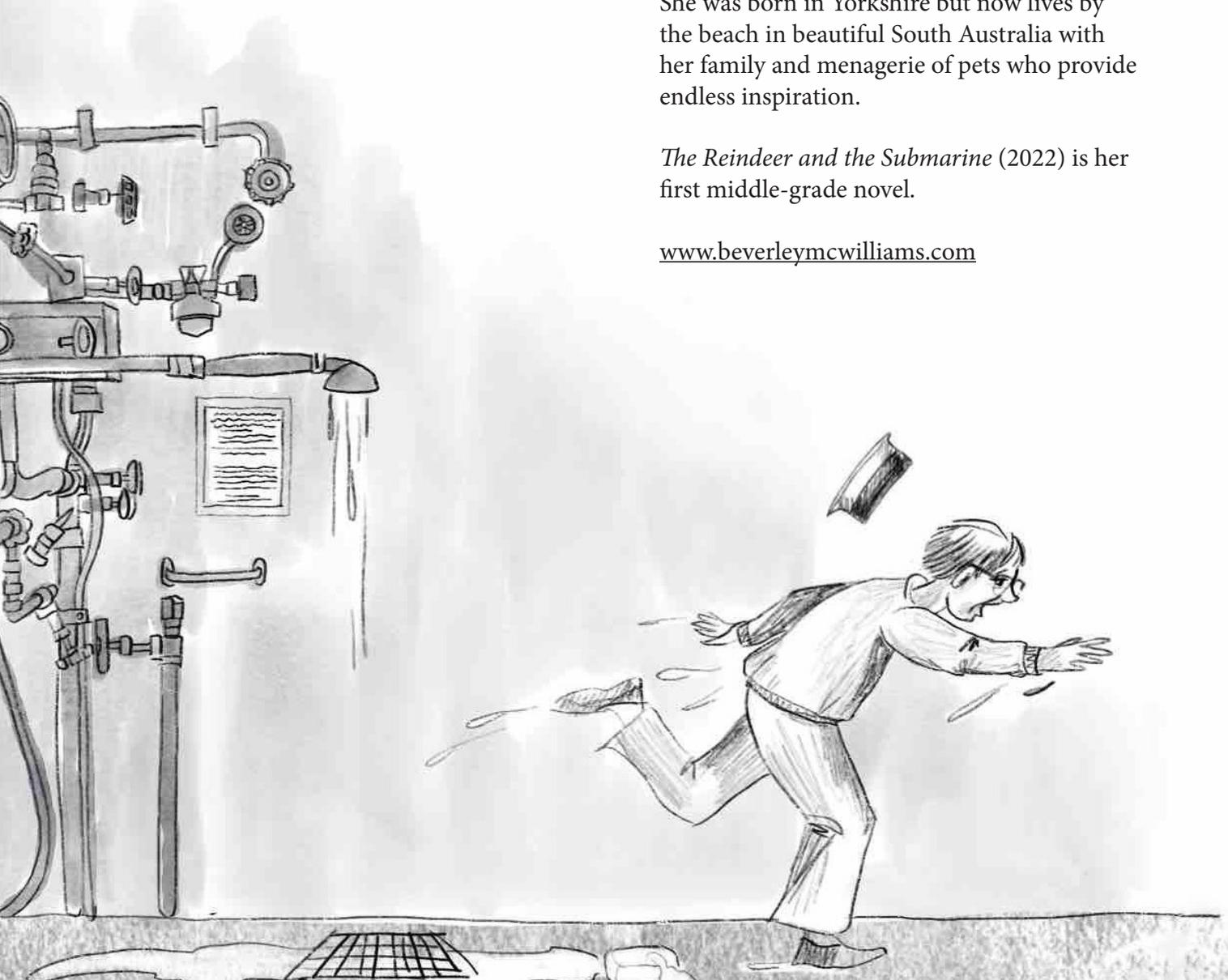
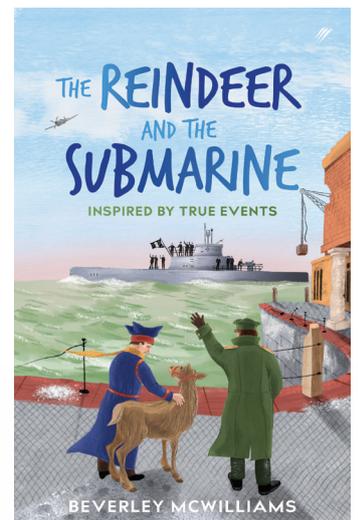
Beverley’s writing has also been published online and in magazines. She is a regular contributor to *The School Magazine*, Australia’s longest-running literary publication for children.

Beverley is the South Australian event coordinator for the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators, and a member of the Australian Society of Authors and Writers SA.

She was born in Yorkshire but now lives by the beach in beautiful South Australia with her family and menagerie of pets who provide endless inspiration.

The Reindeer and the Submarine (2022) is her first middle-grade novel.

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Themes

- friendship
- courage
- individuality/ embracing differences
- resilience
- teamwork

Genre: Historical fiction

Historical fiction stories are set in real places during a particular period, but characters and events may be fictionalised. Historical fiction combines both elements of non-fiction and fiction. *The Reindeer and the Submarine* is inspired by true events that took place in 1941. The story gives an insight into World War II and, in particular, submarine warfare.

Before reading

Discuss as a class what you know about World War II. For example, when did the war start/end? What countries were involved? How did the war affect peoples' lives?

Themes

Friendship

We sat huddled together: brash, burly Bob; young, timid Henry and me, a reindeer with no antlers. A strange combination of friends. A special one. (p. 140)

Discuss

- What qualities makes a good friend?
- Why is it important to have friends who are different from you?

Activity

- Make a list of the many special friendships Pollyanna shares during the book.
- Choose one of these friendships. How does this friend help Pollyanna and how does Pollyanna help her friend?

Courage

Adventures were for daring reindeer, and I was not one bit brave. (p. 36)

Discuss

- Why do you think Pollyanna believes she's not brave?
- Sometimes you can be brave in invisible ways. On several occasions, Pollyanna shows great bravery to protect her friend, Misha. Discuss one of these instances.

Activity

- Sometimes we need the support of others to have courage. Find an example where someone's support helped Pollyanna show courage. Find an example of Pollyanna helping someone else be brave.
- What do you think it means to be a hero? Make a list of qualities and characteristics you associate with a hero.

Individuality/ embracing differences

A reindeer with no antlers is like a bird with no wings. I'll always be a disappointment. (p. 26)

Discuss

- Pollyanna struggles to fit in with her herd because she has no antlers. Discuss how differences can make someone feel like an outsider.
- Why is it important to embrace an individual's differences?
- How do Pollyanna's feelings about having no antlers change over the course of the story? Discuss what triggers this change?

Activity

- Everyone is unique, and that's what makes us special. Create a mind map of what makes you special (use images, drawings and words).





Resilience

Sometimes things have to change even though we might not want them to. (p. 180)

Discuss

- Discuss what it means to be resilient and what tools we can use to help us ‘bounce back’ in difficult times.
- From losing her mama to leaving her home, Pollyanna faces many obstacles in her life. How does Pollyanna show resilience?

Activity

- Think about a time of your life that was challenging. How did you handle the situation? Make a list of skills you could use to build resilience.

Teamwork

Everyone worked together in a frenzy of action, desperately trying to stop the leaks which sprung from seams. They were battered and bruised and covered with oil, but no one faltered. (p. 133)

Teamwork is vital on board a submarine. The men work in ‘watch’ teams and although they have specific roles, they often perform each other’s jobs when needed. As the above quote shows, successful teamwork could mean the difference between life and death on a submarine.

Discuss

- What skills do you think are most important for successful teamwork?
- What teams are you part of, and how do you contribute to those teams?
- Find some examples of teamwork in the story. How did the teams work effectively and what did they achieve?

Activity

- Work in pairs. One person closes their eyes. The other person uses commands to guide their partner across the classroom, being careful to avoid any obstacles.
- Using paper cups, cards or blocks, work in small groups to create the tallest structure.

English

Narrative voice

My nose twitched. A familiar, mushroom-like smell made my stomach rumble. I sniffed at the ground, then shovelled it with my front hooves, sending a flurry of soft snow flying. (p. 2)

The Reindeer and the Submarine is written in first-person narrative and told from the point of view of Pollyanna, a reindeer.

Discuss

- What distinguishes first-person, second-person and third-person narrative?
- Why might writers choose to use first-person narrative?
- Why do you think the author told the story from a reindeer’s point of view?
- How might the story differ if it had been told by a human character?

Activity

- Select a scene from the book and tell it from the point of view of another character. Rewrite the same scene using third-person narrative.
- Choose an animal and write a short story from their point of view.

Literary Techniques

Literary techniques are tools writers use to enhance their writing and communicate ideas. These include figurative language (simile, metaphor, alliteration and personification) and imagery (the use of words to create vivid pictures through appealing to our senses).

Discuss

- Discuss the meaning of the above terms and think of some examples.
- Can you think of any other literary techniques?
- Why do you think it is important to use literary techniques in writing, and how do these techniques affect the way you feel?

Activity

- Identify literary techniques used in the book and complete the below table. An example has been given.

Vocabulary

The story incorporates language that you may not be familiar with, including Sámi words and submarine terminology.

Discuss

- How can vocabulary enrich a story and its setting?

Activity

- Consider the following words: joik (p. 23); lavvu (p. 25); the mess (p. 66); stoker (p. 73); galley (p. 84); helm (p. 133) Can you deduce what these words mean from their context? Check your conclusions against the glossary.
- Complete the attached submarine word search.

Poetry

Discuss

- As a class, brainstorm ideas for a poem about a submarine. Think about what you have learned about submarines. Think about specific words associated with submarines.

Activity

- An acrostic poem is a poem where the first letter of each line spells out a word when read vertically. This word relates to the theme of the poem. Write your own acrostic poem using the theme word 'Submarine'. Your poem does not need to rhyme, but you still need to use poetic devices such as rhythm, alliteration and simile.
- A shape poem uses the words of a poem to form the shape of what is being described. Use the attached template to write a shape poem about a submarine.

Simile	'Misha flew across the tundra like a feather in a blizzard' (p. 19)
Metaphor	'His hair was a thicket of curly strands' (p. 75)
Alliteration	'white wilderness', 'frantic flurry' (p. 21)
Personification	'sparks danced, and flickering flames leapt' (p. 10)
Imagery	'freshly baked bread drenched with butter or a bowl of piping-hot porridge with creamy milk.' (p. 2)

Humanities and Social Science (HASS)

History

World War II

Discuss

- Discuss what you have learned about World War II from reading the story. Was there anything that surprised you?

Activity

Further research one of the following topics (some possible questions have been suggested):

- **Rationing** *'My grandma's recipe.'* George grinned. *'I've had to adapt it for wartime rationing, of course – a few more carrots and a little less sugar.'* (p. 155)

What was rationing in World War II? What foods were rationed and why? How did rationing differ in Australia compared to Britain?

- **The Reindeer Battalion** *'I was going to war. I was going to be part of the battalion.'* (p. 32)

What was the reindeer battalion, and why was it formed? What tasks were assigned to the battalion? Why was the work of the reindeer so important?

- **London Zoo during World War II**

What impact did the war have on London Zoo? Which animals were removed from the zoo and why? Why do you think it was important the zoo remained open during the war?

Submarines

HMS *Trident* was one of the many British submarines that served during World War Two. Between August and November 1941, *Trident* was based at Polyarny and patrolled the waters off Northern Norway. Conditions on World War II submarines were incredibly unpleasant. They were cramped and smelly, the crew had little access to fresh water and the submarine could only come up for air during the night.

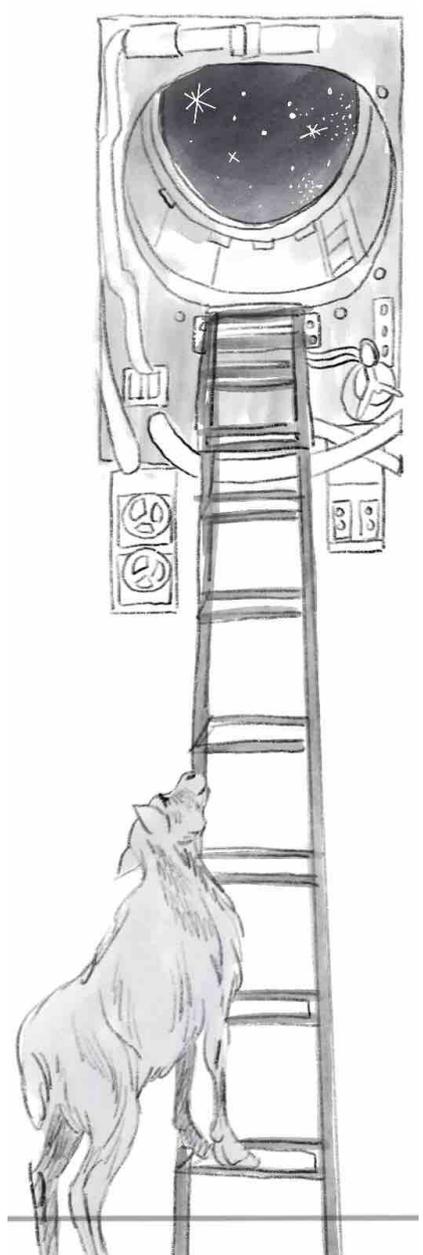
Discuss

- Imagine sharing your home with more than fifty other people and not even being able to open a window! What day-to-day challenges

- do you think the men faced? How would you feel about living on a submarine for weeks?
- How do you think the men would have felt about having a reindeer on board? What would they have been concerned about?

Activity

- From the information available in the story, draft a map of the inside of the submarine and label the different rooms.
- Watch the following video showing the inside of HMS *Alliance*, Britain's only remaining World War II submarine. [Walk through of HMS Alliance | The National Museum of The Royal Navy - YouTube](#) Do you recognise any features from the story?
- Compare modern submarines to those in World War II. How do you think life differs on a submarine today?



Animals in war

'Why is the herd on the move?' I asked. 'Where are you all going?'

'We're the first of the reindeer battalions.' He lifted his head and shook his broad, branching antlers. 'We're going to war, of course.' (p. 22)

Many animals served in World War I and II, including horses, dogs and pigeons. There are a number of memorials which commemorate the role animals have played in war. As well as working in specific roles, animals provided a vital service as 'mascots', providing companionship and hope. Australia recognises 24 February as a National Day for War Animals, and people are encouraged to wear purple poppies as a mark of respect.



Discuss

- As a class, discuss the contributions animals have made in war.
- Why do you think animal mascots were so important?
- Consider the relevance of war memorials and why we should remember what happened in wars.

Activity

- Read the 'Feathered Heroes' and 'Unlikely Heroes' articles written by the author that discuss the roles different animals have played in war.
- <https://www.beverleymcwilliams.com/children-s-non-fiction>
- Choose an animal that served in war and design your own war memorial.

Geography

The Kola Peninsula is located in the far northwest of Russia and is almost entirely within the Arctic Circle. Tundra covers most of the north of the peninsula. As a result of its arctic location, at certain times of the year, the sun does not set and in mid-winter it does not rise above the horizon.

Discuss

- *The lights curved, curled and danced across the sky (p. 1)* – what do you think Pollyanna is referring to here?
- Imagine going to school in the dark and trying to go to bed when it's light. As a class, discuss what it would be like to live and work in the arctic.

Activity

- Locate Polyarny, Lofoten, Lerwick and Blyth on a map. Plot the journey of HMS *Trident*.

Civics & Citizenship

Cultural identity

'For hundreds of years, the Sámi people had lived nomadic lives, roaming the land alongside their reindeer. Then, one by one, families were forced to move into permanent settlements and work in collective farms called kolkhozes. But Igor promised that wouldn't happen to us. He said this was our heritage. Sámi were herders, not farmers.' (p. 15)

Discuss

- Discuss the importance of recognising different cultures and the impact of our modern world on traditional cultures.

Activity

- Watch the following video for an introduction to the Sámi way of life and the importance of reindeer.
- [My people - the sami people](#)

Science

Physical science

In the centre of the room, two brass towers extended from the floor, one thick and one thin. They looked like shiny tree trunks. Jim told me these were the periscopes. When the submarine was just below the surface, the captain looked through them to see what was happening overhead. They were windows to the world above – like the smoke hole in the roof of a lavvu. (p. 78)

A periscope uses mirrors to reflect light, allowing the user to view objects not in their line of sight. Periscopes are used on submarines to see above the surface when a submarine is submerged.



Discuss

- Why do you think periscopes are so important on board a submarine?

Activity

- Watch this youTube video to learn about periscopes and how they work
- [How a periscope works ? Animated In a nutshell - YouTube](#)
- Make your own periscope using cardboard and mirrors. Download a template from the internet or use a box/milk carton. The following video may help you.
- [How to make a periscope | The Kid Should See This](#)

Technology

Digital technology

The most important messages came in a secret code called Morse. I hadn't figured out how to understand these, but Jim could hear di-dah-di-dit and know what it meant. (p. 89)

Morse code is a system of encoding messages using dots and dashes to show letters, numbers and punctuation. The dots are short sounds known as *dits*, and the dashes are long sounds known as *dahs*.

Discuss

- Do you think morse code is used as widely today as it was during World War II and why?
- Can you think of other ways people communicated over distances before the use of telephones?

Activity

- Using the attached morse code alphabet, write a message using the code. Swap messages with a classmate and have a go at solving each other's message.

The Arts

Music

He prodded a stick into the crackling flames and began to sing – the mesmerising chant of a joik – the music of the tundra. I shuffled closer and rested my head on his knee. Although it had no words, I knew the song was for me. (p. 14)

A joik is a traditional form of Sámi singing. They have few or no words and are often performed a cappella (without instruments). A joik is dedicated to a person, animal, or place.

Discuss

- Why is music an important part of cultural identity?

Activity

- Listen to the following examples of a joik:
- [Tribe of Northuldra Song - Frozen 2 - YouTube](#)
- [Jon Henrik Fjällgren performing Daniels Joik for OSCE. - YouTube](#)
- How does this music make you feel and why? Identify the elements of music used and how they communicate mood and meaning. Consider and compare music of other cultures, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music.

Visual art

Silhouettes were often used by artists in World War II. A silhouette is the shape and outline of someone/ something typically coloured solid black. These silhouettes were placed on contrasting (often colourful) backgrounds to create striking art.

Discuss

- Look at some examples of silhouette art and discuss why these images are so effective. How does this art make you feel? Why do you think this was a popular form of art during World War II?



Activity

- Create your own piece of silhouette art. First, paint a background (for example, yellows/oranges for sunset or blues for the ocean). Then use one of the silhouettes attached or make your own.
- Watch this video to learn to draw a World War II submarine (you could also use this for your silhouette).
- [How to draw a WW2 Submarine Real Easy - YouTube](#)

Drama

The control room buzzed with action. Eyes pored over charts and gazed at gauges. Hands adjusted controls. Wheels swung and orders echoed. This was different from the other dives. It was faster, steeper. The submarine shuddered as we hurtled forwards and down. (p. 127)

Discuss

- How do you think Pollyanna is feeling at this moment? How might her emotions differ from those of the crew who understand the submarine is under attack?

Activity

- In small groups create a freeze frame of an action scene such as the one above. Remember to use body shape and positioning to show ideas and emotions. Develop these freeze frames through thought tracking, expressing feelings and thoughts of your character using words.

SUBMARINE WORD SEARCH

G C H G T R I D E N T E E V S
N O X A L K S S L S Z P X O S
R C I L T M J K A Z O L T I E
E V E L Y C M R C C W S Y C M
K D V E D E H L S A A E V E N
O X O Y U Y I I G L R E D P H
O N X C D L R E L G Z D J I B
B H T H E E W A M V X W M P Z
G F P O P S B K Q S T O K E R
O Z K A R D R S V P M U K S A
L J P W I P R O O O J S D S X
A I B V I E E R M F A A Q R M
K L E U K F T D U D F R T P K
V C M C D D R A O B R A T S Q
O K U I L J W U B Z P H R E X

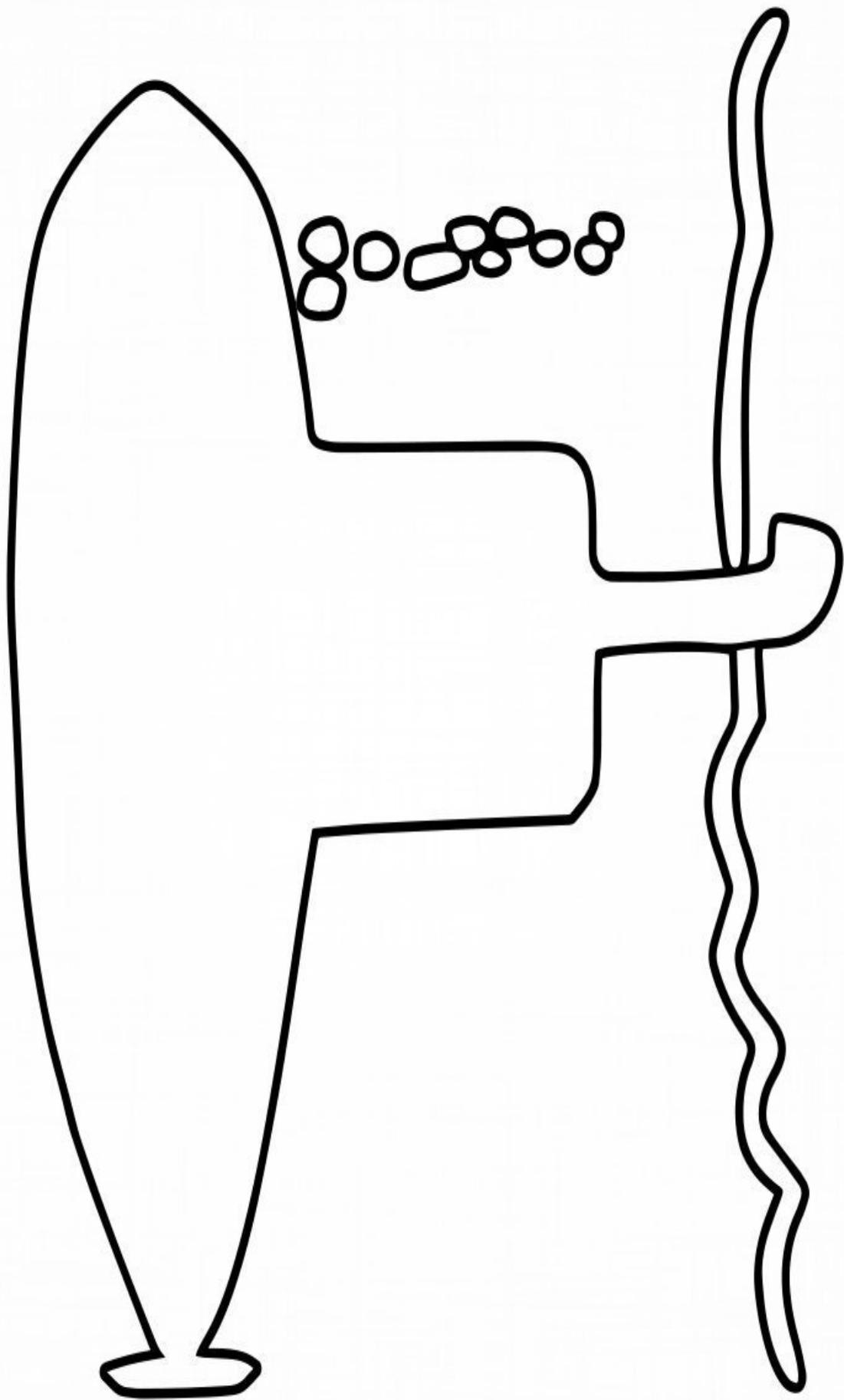
WORDS

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| BALLAST | HATCH | GALLEY | PERISCOPE |
| DIVE | KLAXON | VOICEPIPE | TRIDENT |
| LOGBOOK | PORT | MESS | UCKERS |
| MORSECODE | STARBOARD | RACKS | STOKER |

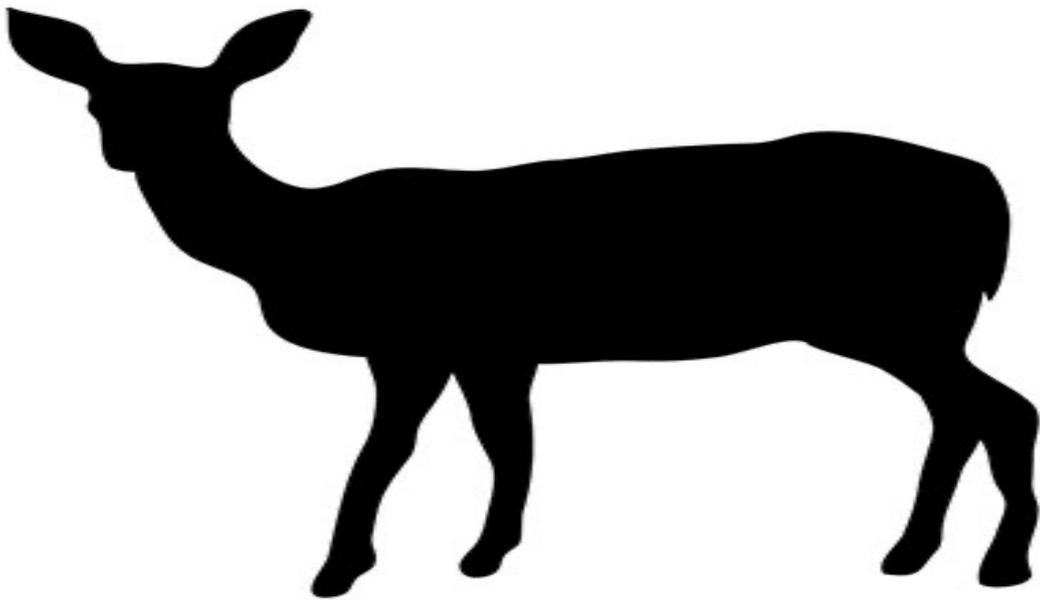
There is one secret word hidden in the word search. See if you can find it!

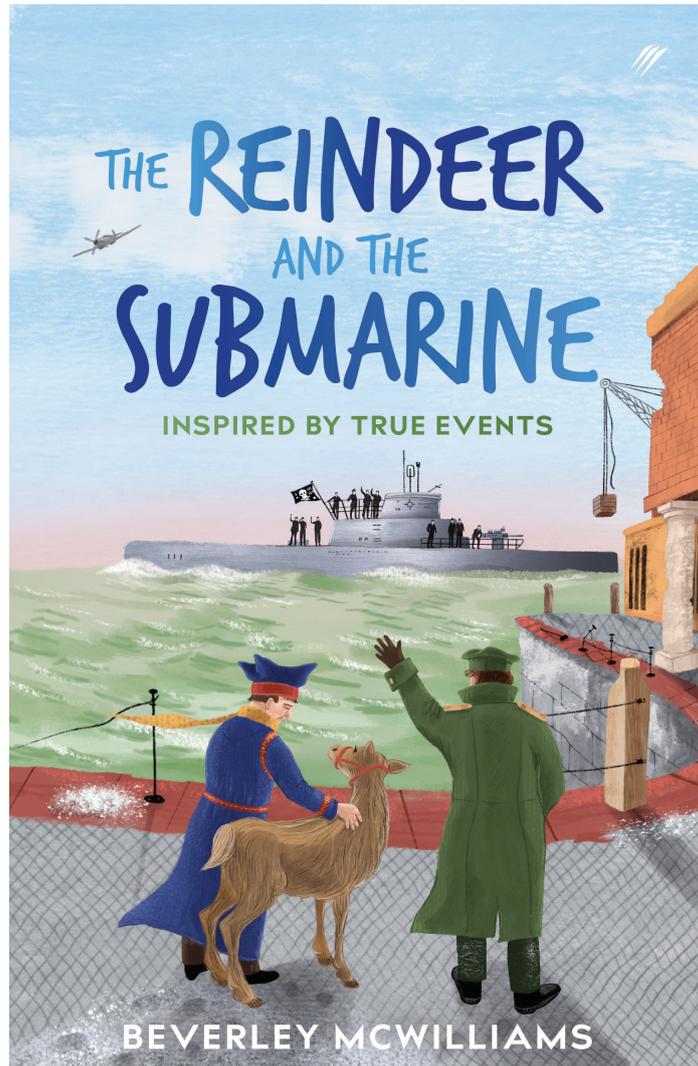
MORSE CODE ALPHABET

A	•-	N	-•	0	-----
B	-•••	O	---	1	•-----
C	-•-•	P	•--•	2	••-----
D	-••	Q	---•-	3	•••---
E	•	R	•-•	4	••••-
F	••-•	S	•••	5	•••••
G	--•	T	-	6	-••••
H	••••	U	••-	7	--•••
I	••	V	•••-	8	----••
J	•---	W	•--	9	----•
K	-•-	X	-••-	•	•-•-•-
L	•-••	Y	-•--	,	--••--
M	--	Z	--••	?	••-••



SILHOUETTE ART TEMPLATES





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& CHANGE