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THE GIRL

with

SPACE

IN HER

HEART

EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS



INTRODUCTION

Suitable for: Ages 9+

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

Themes: Worrying and Anxiety; Myths; Mystery; Magic; Space; Change

CONTENTS

EXTRACT 1: Worrying and Anxiety (taken from The Worry Suitcase List)

Objectives: List things that make us worry, reflecting on how this affects us; create a poem in '(e)motion' and share it with classmates.

Subjects: Creative Writing: Writing a Poem, Art, Design and Technology, PSHE

EXTRACT 2: Myths, Mystery, Magic (taken from Reveals and Heals)

Objectives: Identify examples of myths, mystery, and magic in the text; create a myth using an object as inspiration.

Subjects: Creative Writing, Speaking and Listening, PSHE

EXTRACT 3: Space (taken from The Observatory)

Objectives: Explore the significance of 'space' in relation to central characters; design a detailed star constellation for a mythical object.

Subjects: Art, Design and Technology, Science, Speaking and Listening

EXTRACT 4: Change (taken from The Rucksack)

Objectives: Mindmap how the lives and relationships of characters change over time; roleplay two key scenes from the text discussing what each character has learned.

Subjects: Drama, PSHE





ABOUT THE BOOK

Mabel Mynt knows a lot about space...like how we feel connected to the stars because we are all made of stardust. And that Mum's new boyfriend, Galactic Gavin, has eyes that twinkle like Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky. And that sometimes the perfect place for her sister, Terrible Topaz, would be a black hole.

But Mabel doesn't know how to fill the space in her heart that Dad left when he walked out. And so she sets out on a mission of discovery...

A heart-warming and laugh-out-loud story about learning that love is never lost and change doesn't have to be scary.



EXTRACT 1:

WORRYING AND ANXIETY (TAKEN FROM THE WORRY SUITCASE LIST – P33)

But as I wander through the school gate, I know that Gavin and Blonde Ponytail Woman weren't a mirage and now I've seen them together there's no point in pretending I haven't. So, I have a whole new worry to add to my worry suitcase after all. That's what I call it, by the way: my worry suitcase. One weekend a while ago, Mum had to go away on a work course and I had to stay at Nana Anna's house. When Mum was zipping up my pink kitty suitcase she said it was fit to burst. I said there was still room for my favourite teddy and I made Mum unzip it so I could squeeze it in. Mum smiled and said it was funny how there was always room for more no matter how full it already was. It got me thinking about suitcases and how you could always squeeze in another thing, if you tried hard enough. That's how I felt about my worries – that there was always room to squeeze in another worry and then another one... And that's how I came up with the name.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is a 'worry suitcase'? Why is this a good analogy to explain how Mabel feels?
- Who does Mabel worry about most and why?
- What advice would you give Mabel if you could? What might help her to feel less anxious?
- Can you think of other examples of things that students your age might worry about? Give examples.
- Why is it sometimes difficult to talk about what is worrying us?

ACTIVITY: POETRY IN (E)MOTION SUBJECTS: CREATIVE WRITING, WRITING A POEM, ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, PSHE

- Throughout the text, Mabel makes lists of things that are in her 'worry suitcase'. Start off by making a list of around 10 things that worry you. They should be a mixture of both small and bigger things that have been on your mind recently. For example, a small worry may be that you forgot your PE kit. A bigger worry may be that a friend or family member isn't very well at the moment.
- Then, on a piece of card, write a poem about one or a number of your worries, just like the task Mr Spooner gives his class in the book. Try to 'think deeper, look deeper, write emotionally'. Remember, you don't need to write your name on it, you can keep your poem anonymous!
- Your teacher will then hand out a balloon to you. Blow up your balloon and stick your 'Poetry in (e)motion' card onto it, all the time being careful not to let it float away.
- On the count of 3, your teacher will ask you to let your balloon float up to the ceiling or you can throw it up in the air. As you do so, imagine your troubles being lifted out of your suitcase. Walk around and read at least one other person's poem. Remember the point of this activity – that it is important to let our worries out rather than squashing them down inside our 'worry suitcases.'



EXTRACT 2:

MYTHS, MYSTERY, MAGIC (TAKEN FROM REVEALS AND HEALS – P61)

Mr Spooner inhales and puffs his chest out. “Ah, but is it a plain cup again, Lee? You tell me.” Lee shrugs as Mr Spooner goes on. “It reveals and heals. So, it reveals three lies, which will break your heart, but then hopefully it will reveal three truths, which will heal your heart again.” Lee sucks in air, which is hardly surprising because we’re all doing that. “However, don’t be mistaken in believing that the cup will definitely mend. It may not. Perhaps you could be left with a broken heart for ever.” Mr Spooner frowns and then gives a lopsided smile. “It’s just a myth though. Some will believe the story, some will not. A myth is what you make it.” He goes back to the bookcase and picks up Myths, Mystery, Magic again and thumbs through it. “There is a chapter here on Rún and that’s what I was checking before I told you the story. Now, I don’t imagine this is the original mythological goblet but if you found it, it could have the same magic. It might still reveal and heal a heart. What do you think?”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What do the words ‘myth’, ‘mystery’, and ‘magic’ all mean? How are they connected?
- Why do people love to hear or read about myths, mystery, and magic? What do they give us?
- What is the myth of the Golden Goblet of Truth? How does it affect Mabel and her family?
- Can you think of any other examples of myths, mysteries, or magic in the story? Give examples.

ACTIVITY: THE MYTH OF... SUBJECTS: CREATIVE WRITING, SPEAKING AND LISTENING, PSHE

- The goblet is a highly significant object in the story. As a class, have a discussion about other mythical, mysterious, and magical objects that you have heard of or learned about. Talk about what is interesting about each mythical object. How or where did you learn about it? What hidden meanings or messages lie behind the myth that you have discussed?
- Use your class discussion to inspire a creative piece of writing based on your own myth. Before you start writing it, you need to pick an object that will be the focal point of your myth. It could be something that looks like an everyday object or it could stand out like the goblet.
- Once you have chosen your object, consider: what are its powers? Who are the characters in your myth? How are they affected by the object? What is your setting? What messages are behind the object and/or the myth? What will make it a story worth re-telling? Be sure to include mystery and magic in your myth!
- Share your writing together as a class and put your myths on display as a reminder of the power of stories!



EXTRACT 3:

SPACE (TAKEN FROM THE OBSERVATORY – P223)

Gavin reappears and sits down in his seat just as Patience Gambo says, “Together we will travel on a journey of billions of years. We will see new life – the birth of a star – and we will witness its death. We will feel hope like we have never felt before. Space is behind us and space is before us – let us watch the heavens unfold and let us discover how the stars are in our souls. Let us feel their magnificence in every fibre of our being. You are a child of the cosmos...”

There’s a round of applause from everyone (except Topaz, who is playing with her new glittery bracelet) as everything goes dark and then the dome comes alive, scattered with billions of stars, and the music swells and I let the stars sink into my soul for the next hour. We see all the stars and constellations from Antares to Zibal, and when it finishes I feel like I’m floating on a carpet of space dust as I leave the room.

Gavin looks over at me and asks if I enjoyed it and I say it was cosmic and it really was. Gavin agrees and says he loves it so much he’s always here. He laughs again – clearly it’s a private joke, but I just don’t get it. And then he says that this place is special.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why is Mabel so excited to hear Patience Gambo speak at The Observatory? Why is ‘space’ so important to Mabel?
- What does she mean when Patience Gambo says, ‘you are a child of the cosmos?’
- Why is it significant that Mabel shares this experience with Gavin? What does this reveal about their relationship?
- How is Topaz behaving in this extract? What does this suggest about her feelings at this point?
- What other meanings or significance does the theme of ‘space’ have in the story? For example, think about the book’s title.



ACTIVITY: MY OWN CONSTELLATION SUBJECTS: ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, SCIENCE, SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- It's no secret that Mabel is very knowledgeable about space and the stars. To begin with, fill in the blanks of the sentences below with as much detail as you can and feedback your answers as a class to see what you already know:
- A star is.....
- Sirius is.....
- A constellation is.....
- Canis Major is.....
- An observatory is.....
- A galaxy is.....
- The universe is.....
- Imagine that, like Mabel, you are able to look through a telescope in an observatory. Using the mythical object from the previous lesson's creative writing task, paint or sketch a constellation of your mythical object. You may add as much detail to the universe as you like including other constellations, it's up to you!
- You could take your constellation home and put it on your bedroom ceiling to remind you to look up to the stars in the night sky.



EXTRACT 4:

CHANGE (TAKEN FROM THE RUCKSACK – P305)

According to Mum, I can write to Dad. We both can. Topaz says she's not good with words and she doesn't think she wants to write to him yet and Mum says that's okay – that no one is going to force her to make any decisions or to rush things. We can deal with it all in good time. Mum says we can visit Dad too, maybe one day in the future. Dad made a mistake doing what he did, stealing and selling the items on, but mistakes only stay with you if you don't do anything about them. Mum says Dad is doing something about it – he's going to change. Not change completely, because he's still our dad and that will remain the same. But he's not going to keep selling stuff he shouldn't be selling. He told Mum it was wrong and he was sorry to put us all through this. He's learned from his mistakes. Mum also explains that the other thing that has changed for good is them not being together any longer. As much as she cares for him, they won't be getting back together. Sometimes things don't always work out the way you expect and although some things change, what never changes is that Dad is important. He is part of our family and that makes him special and we will always respect that. Mum says she is happy that she met Dad all those years ago because it meant she had us and we mean the world to her and we're part of Dad too.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How have Mabel's and Topaz's feelings towards their dad changed over the course of the text?
- Why won't Mabel's mum and dad be getting back together? What has/hasn't changed between them over time?
- Why can change be frightening sometimes? Give examples from your own life and from the story.
- How can change also be exciting? Give examples from your own life and from the story.
- Which character do you think has changed the most by the end of the text? Explain your ideas.

ACTIVITY: FREEZE FRAME SUBJECTS: DRAMA, PSHE

- On a large piece of coloured paper, write the name 'Mabel' in the middle. Then, write the names; Mum, Dad, Gavin, Topaz, and Dolly-Rose, spacing them out around Mabel. Make sure you leave enough space between all the names to make detailed notes.
- Create a mindmap by drawing arrows and making notes between the names of characters to show how their relationships and lives have changed over the course of the story. For example, between Dad and Mabel you could write about their lack of contact at the start, but then how Dad apologises and has learned from his mistakes by the end. Try to include as much information as possible!



- Finally, with a partner, choose two characters connected on your mindmaps and roleplay a scene from early on in the story. Then, freeze frame and cut to a scene between them at the end and roleplay again. In your conversations, think about the feelings and emotions of each character and why they behave the way they do. When you have done both roleplays, discuss what lesson(s) each character has learnt. Who has helped them along the way? What have they managed to get rid of from their own 'worry suitcase'?

