

Teacher’s Pack for “Bree McCready and the Half Heart Locket” by Hazel Allan

This “Bree McCready” teacher’s guide includes 18 classroom activities and lots of discussion questions intended to extend the use of the novel “Bree McCready and the Half Heart Locket” into schools and book clubs. It should promote discussion on the themes of the novel including adventure, friendship, choices, bullying, and change. There are no charges for using this pack.

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Workshop 1 - Personal and Social Development

Read excerpts from “Bree McCready and the Half Heart Locket” which raise the topic of bullying.

Discuss Alice Renshaw’s behaviour towards Bree. Is it acceptable?

What is bullying? Does it always have to be physical?

Is Alice a bully?

How does Alice make Bree feel?

Read from Chapter 14 “Being Alice” and discuss some of the reasons why Alice perhaps behaves the way she does.

Imagine you have come face to face with Alice Renshaw. What would you like to say to her?

Write down the conversation that ensues.

Goals

To address the issue of bullying and to facilitate discussion around this topic

To foster understanding and respect of others

Useful websites :

http://www.bullying.co.uk/links/antibullying_websites.aspx

http://www.kzoo.edu/psych/stop_bullying/resources/websites.html

<http://www.nobully.org.nz/guidelines.htm>

Workshop 2 - Creative writing

Create a new character.

Let’s imagine you have entered an undiscovered room in Castle Zarcalat and you have come face to face with a new character.

Describe what they look like and how they move.

Are they male/female, old/young, half human/half beast?

Are they a “goodie” or a “baddie”?

Try to convey their personality in the things they do, for example -

Careless or clumsy

Lazy or slow

Cowardly or nervous

Posh

Angry/aggressive

Try to show how they feel using adjectives and adverbs, for example -

Tired, excited, grateful, angry, happy, sad, curious, worried, relieved, nervous

Next, you should come up with some extra characteristics that will help distinguish your character from other people - *limps, freckles, scars*. Also watch out for nervous habits like *hand wringing and nail biting*.

Now give them a name!

Write down a conversation between you and this character (or if you’d prefer, between Bree/Sandy/Honey and this new character).

How do they ‘fit in’ with the story/what part do they play?

Goals

Stimulating imagination

Vocabulary building

Team work

Using adjectives and synonyms

Developing creative awareness

To familiarise student with the process by which authors create characters

Useful websites :

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2233/>

http://www.essortment.com/all/creatingcharact_rtsl.htm

Workshop 3 - Literacy development

“Bree glanced at the shabby, threadbare bag. ‘This must be an old favourite of yours...’ she said, trying to find something positive to say about it. Underneath the dirt and grime, the bag had once been a mish-mash of rainbow colours. The zip only closed halfway and the shoulder strap was ripped and frayed. Honey gave her a lopsided smile and stopped chewing long enough to explain.

‘This goes everywhere with me,’ she smiled affectionately, stroking it with her painted fingertips. ‘It’s filled with absolute junk, but I’ve had it for ages and I’ve kind of gotten attached to it.’”

Honey has an old, grotty satchel which she insists on taking everywhere with her. Inside it are some ordinary things which come in *very* handy during the adventure.

Imagine that you have a satchel or a bag.

What does it look like - what colour, what pattern, what size?

Is it just an ordinary bag or does it have magic powers?

What do you keep inside the bag?

Try to imagine you have found yourself in a dangerous situation. Is there something inside your bag that might save you?

Goals

Problem solving

Fostering artistic expression - “*draw a picture of your bag and its contents*”

Use of descriptive words

Stimulating imagination

Literacy development

Workshop 4 - Creative writing/Art & Design

“I’ve just the thing for you,’ Agora soothed, rummaging in an oversized bag that hung from the arm of her rocking chair. Bree could hear rustling and popping and glass clinking and suspected there were things at the bottom of that bag even Agora Burton did not know were there.”

“Around her, Agora’s kitchen was piled high with clutter. Every surface was stacked with canisters of herbal remedies – Valerian, St John’s Wort, and Chamomile. Ceramic bottles filled the windowsills and glass phials of coloured liquids were lined up on high wooden shelves”.

What do *you* think is inside Agora’s bag? - think about the words ~ *popping, rustling, clinking*.

Agora has a cure for Sandy’s allergy to cats. What other weird and wonderful things might she have?

What’s inside those ceramic bottles and glass phials in her kitchen?

Draw a picture or use textured paper, foil, tissue to depict what Agora has in and around her cottage.

Goals

Stimulating imagination

Engaging senses

Workshop 5 - Blurb/Front cover discussion

What is a blurb?

Read the blurb for “*Bree McCready and the Half Heart Locket*”

Why do you think a blurb is important?

What catches your eye about this blurb?

What do you learn about Bree, the setting and the plot?

Try writing your own blurb for “*Bree McCready*”!

Why is the cover of a book *very* important? Is there truth in the saying “*Don’t judge a book by it’s cover?*”

What do you like about the cover of this book?

Draw your own front cover for “*Bree McCready*” - Try to capture the mood of the story by choosing appropriate colours and shading. Think about what the characters would be doing/feeling and what their facial expressions would be like.

Useful website :

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/LAArt-BookBlurbs-IdentifyClimaxAndReadingComprehension14.htm>

Workshop 6 - Your wish

Suppose you had the magic book in your possession for just one day.

The locket starts to glow and some words appear on the screen!

What do they say?

What would your wish be?

How would you get the book back to Ramthorpe Junior library?

Workshop 7 - Prequel

Imagine a scene for your favourite character that may have happened *before* the start of the book.

Had they met the other characters yet?

Are there any warnings of what is to come?

Workshop 8 - Art & Design

Design a costume.

Pick any character from “*Bree McCready and the Half Heart Locket*” and design a costume for them.

Think about their personality and reflect on the choice of colours and styles.

How practical is your design?

Does it have any special or magical touches?

Workshop 9 - Art & Design

“As they floated closer, Bree pointed out a large crimson flag that snapped and fluttered angrily on one of the turrets. Squinting through the sleet she noticed a solitary silver letter in the centre: Z”.

“Hanging from the keystone of the arch was a huge shield decorated with a coat of arms. On it, two flaming torches formed a diagonal cross. On the top half was a letter Z and directly underneath it the outline of an open book”

Castle Zarcalat has its own flag and coat of arms (*a design on a shield that signifies a particular family, university or city*).

Design a flag or a coat of arms for your school - think about what your school motto is, what matters most to your teachers and are there any symbols or designs that are relevant to your school?

Useful website :

<http://www.storyboardtoys.com/gallery/coat-of-arms-lesson-plan.htm>

<http://www.crayola.com/lesson-plans/detail/golden-coat-of-arms-lesson-plan/>

Workshop 10 - Drama

Divide your class into small groups of three or four.

Explain that you would like them to create a photograph of a moment from the story.

Take on the roles of characters and stand frozen still using only body language, facial expression and positioning to show what part of the story you are recreating.

See if the rest of the class get it right!

Workshop 11 - Art & Design

Draw round someone in the class.

Decide which character you would like to discuss.

Fill in the outline with appropriate items of clothing (the class may want to use felt pens but may also like to extend this by using fabric and textured materials to bring the outline to life)

Down the right hand side of the character write down all the things you know about them.

Down the left hand side of the drawing write down all the unanswered things about the character and possible answers.

Workshop 12 - Creative Writing

“Super Granny Annie”

“Everyone who visited Flat 7B on the Rockwell Estate was instantly captivated by the relics Annie Hooten had brought back from her outlandish travels. Honey was no exception. She was mesmerised by the tribal masks, lanterns, batik cloths and framed black and white photos on the walls. One showed Annie at the peak of an impossibly high mountain, her feet obscured by cloud, and gloved hands punching the air with pride. Another had been taken underwater, with Annie wearing nothing more than an orange bikini and some scuba gear. There were countless others, far too many for her to study: Annie sitting on the ledge of an aeroplane about to jump; Annie smiling between a crocodile’s jaws; Annie snow-boarding down a steep slope”

Write a biography of Annie Hooten.

How old is she?

What do you think she would have been like as a little girl?

Where has she worked?

Where do you think the scariest place she has travelled to is?

Has she met any famous people?

Who was Sandy’s Grandfather and how did Annie meet him? Where is he now?

Where did her psychic powers come from and have they ever gotten her into trouble?

Useful website :

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/LASSIntroToWritingABiography46.htm>

Workshop 13 - Invent a sweet!

“Sandy quickly popped the shiny drop into his mouth and closed his eyes. He swirled his tongue around its cool ceramic texture. Almost immediately, the Hoochie Koochie burst open allowing warm sticky syrup to ooze out. It was not dissimilar to cherryade and flowed like lava across Sandy’s tongue, filling the cavities of his mouth with a tantalising, sugary smoothness.

“At’s ‘elishus!’ mumbled Sandy.

Suddenly he felt his lips vibrate with a warm tingling and he had an overwhelming urge to get out of his seat and dance around the room“.

What would your sweet look like? What colour, does it have stripes, spots?

What flavour is it? Nice or nasty?

Does it have any magical properties?

What’s your new sweet called?

Useful website :

<http://www.sweetsentiments.co.uk/>

Workshop 14 - Wish five

“You must decide which one of you,
Will separate from the other two,
And step into another’s shoes,
You’ll learn so much from who you choose.
Is the gap between you wide?
Find the truth on the other side.
Who do you most want to be?
Whose life have you longed to see?
Discover if the grass is green,
If all’s as rosy as it seems?
A bell will chime when it is time,
To leave your chosen soul behind”

Wish five gives Bree the opportunity to spend time in someone else’s shoes and she gets more than she bargained for!

What if you were granted the wish to be someone else for the day.

Who would you choose to swap places with?

Would they be famous or someone you know well? Would you like to teach them a lesson or make them do something funny?

What would you find on the other side of the mirror? Is it good or bad?

What might you find out about yourself?

Workshop 15 - Limerick writing

“Bree’s heart sank faster than a brick in a swimming pool as Mrs Matlow eagerly informed the class about an impending limerick competition. Everyone had to take a partner and write a short verse about them using a festive theme. They would then have to read it out in front of everyone in the class – and their families – at the Christmas party on the second last day of term at Ramthorpe School”.

Explain what a limerick is - “A limerick is a five line poem which is usually funny and which has a very strong rhythm and a particular way of rhyming. The first two lines rhyme, the second two lines are shorter and *they* rhyme then the last line rhymes again with the first two”.

Here’s Bree’s limerick -

*‘There was a young lady called Alice,
Who lived in a glorious palace.
When Christmas arrived,
She was never deprived,
Making all of her friends very jealous.’*

Begin by choosing a character and/or a location - hint! Don’t end the first line with something that is impossible to find something to rhyme with.

Think of some action or problem for your character and write about it in your two shorter lines.

Finally, try and finish with an ending which will make the reader laugh *and* which rhymes with the last word of lines one and two.

Remember - no nasties like Alice Renshaw’s!

<http://www.channel4learning.com/sites/bookbox/games/limericks/home.htm>

Workshop 16 - A Miniature Adventure

“Bree followed Honey’s gaze. Above them towered her bed. They were still in her bedroom. In fact they were standing in exactly the same spot.

‘We’ve been shrunk!’ cried Bree incredulously.

They were now no more than a couple of centimetres high, dwarfed by everything in the room. The wardrobe had taken on the dimensions of a monolithic skyscraper and the doll’s house stood in the middle of the room like a castle, its once little bulbs now shedding a brilliant light across what seemed to be a vast pink field”.

Imagine you have been shrunk down to no more than the size of an insect.

How do you think you would feel? Scared, invincible?

What does the world around you look like? What dangers might you face?

What adventures might you get up to?

Drama extension - pretend to be tiny people in a giant world. How would you negotiate things? How would you move? Slowly, cautiously, fast? How would you react if you saw a giant cat behind you?

Useful literature :

Mrs Pepperpot stories

The Borrowers

Alice in Wonderland

Gulliver’s Travels

Workshop 17 - Friends

Bree, Sandy and Honey face many challenges and adventures together. Their friendship helps them through some very tough times.

What qualities do *you* look for in a friend?

Are friends more important now than when you were younger?

What is a best friend? Is it possible to have more than one best friend?

What is more important - being popular or being a good friend?

In what ways are Bree, Sandy and Honey good friends to one another?

Bree, Sandy and Honey are all very different and yet they are still fantastic friends - what are the benefits of having friends who are different from us?

How many synonyms can you think of for the word friend? (*pal, buddy, chum, mate, companion...*)

Create a collage that expresses friendship/draw the *feeling* of friendship

Useful websites:

<http://www.goodcharacter.com/BCBC/Friendship.html>

http://www.humanityquest.com/topic/art_activities/index.asp?theme1=friendship

Workshop 18 - Recipes

Madeleine’s Chocolate Tiffin Squares (Chapter 2)

(Makes approximately 16 squares)

8oz/225g Digestive biscuits (or Ginger Snaps for added spice)

5oz/150g raisins

4oz/100g butter

1oz/25g brown sugar

45ml/3 tablespoons of Hot Chocolate powder

60ml/4 tablespoons Golden syrup

8oz/225g milk chocolate

Place the Digestive biscuits into a plastic food bag and SMASH! them to smithereens with a rolling pin (Great if you’re having a bad day..)

Meanwhile, melt the butter, sugar, syrup and chocolate powder in a saucepan over a gentle heat.

Pour the crushed biscuits and raisins into the melted butter mixture.

Press the mixture firmly (a potato masher is ideal for this task) into a greased, square 8 inch tin and leave to cool.

Melt the chocolate in a bowl over simmering water until silky smooth, and then spread it over the cooled biscuit mixture.

When the chocolate is partly solidified again, mark the Tiffin into squares - but leave to cool in the fridge completely before cutting (if you can wait that long).

Delicious with a glass of cold milk.

Top Tip! To get the syrup out of the tin easier, dip the spoon into boiling water first

No baking required!

Annie’s Banana Muffins (Chapter 4)

Makes approximately 15 muffins

**1oz/25g caster sugar
12oz/340g self-raising flour
Half a teaspoon of salt
12floz/340ml milk
1 egg
2oz/55g butter or margarine
1 teaspoon of vanilla essence
2 medium bananas (mashed)**

Pre-heat the oven to 400F/200C (Gas Mark 6)

Lay 15 muffin cases out onto a baking tray

Place the sugar, flour and salt into a mixing bowl

In a separate bowl beat the egg, milk and vanilla essence together

Make a hole at the centre of the dry mixture, and then pour the wet mixture into it

Stir briefly (do not beat all the air out of the mixture though!)

Melt the butter in a small saucepan then add it to the batter. Stir well and don’t worry if it all looks a little bit lumpy, it’s supposed to!

Add the mashed bananas to the sticky mixture and stir again (Annie sometimes adds broken walnuts too for extra crunch!)

Spoon the batter into the muffin cases and bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes, until golden on the top

Remove carefully from the hot oven and leave to cool before tucking in.

Delicious for breakfast served warm with runny honey...Mmm!

Castle Zarcalat Scones (Chapter 15)

175g/6oz self-raising flour Pre-heat oven to 220C/
1 teaspoon of baking powder 425F or Gas Mark 7
1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
75g/3oz butter, cut into small pieces
75g/3oz caster sugar
50g/2oz oatmeal
75g/3oz dried cranberries
5-6 tablespoons milk
Beaten egg to glaze

Grease a baking sheet.

Place the flour, baking powder and cinnamon in a bowl.

Add the butter and mix with fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.

Add the sugar and oatmeal and stir with a big spoon.

Add the cranberries and milk and blend until the mixture forms soft dough. You might have to get your hands in there so check they’re clean!

Turn out dough onto a floured surface and roll out to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thickness.

Cut out rounds using a 2” cutter.

Transfer the dough circles to the greased baking tray and brush with the beaten egg - this recipe should make around 10 scones.

Sprinkle some additional oatmeal over the top.

Bake for 10-12 minutes until risen and golden. The scrumptious scent of cinnamon should fill the house.

Transfer to a wire rack to cool slightly, but best served still warm.

Serve split and buttered - delicious!

*I hope this resource pack has been useful to you and that you enjoy reading and discussing “**Bree McCready and the Half Heart Locket**” with your class. Please don’t hesitate to email me at the above address if you have any questions about the book or if you would like to leave comments.
Best wishes,*

Hazel Allan