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SHARED READING

Extract 1

- Display and read Extract 1, from the first chapter. Underline the sentence 'She was running away from the shelter' and ask the children why this is puzzling to Olive. (An air raid is on, and everyone should be heading towards the shelter where they will be safe from the bombs.)
- Encourage the children to pick out words or terms associated with World War II. Circle the term 'air-raid warden' and ask the children if they can explain what his job was (to try to make sure everyone went into the safety of a shelter during an air raid). Circle or underline the acronym 'WRVS'. Can a volunteer recall what it stands for? (Women's Royal Voluntary Service)
- Focus on Olive's description of Sukie. Ask: *What was Sukie really doing? Which words that Olive uses about her sister are true?* ('she wouldn't think to keep herself safe')
- Circle or underline the words 'arms pumping like pistons' and ask a volunteer to explain the comparison. (Sukie's arms remind Olive of the mechanical parts driving a train.)
- Consider how the author creates drama and pace in this passage. Ask the children to pick out strong, active verbs ('sucked', 'smashed', 'fell', 'droned', 'swirled'). Ask: *What effect do they have?* (They suggest the sudden impact of the bomb.)
- Can they identify an onomatopoeic word which describes the sound of the bomb? ('WHUMP') Ask: *Why do you think the author uses both capital letters and italics?* (to emphasise how loud the sound is and how hard the bomb hits the ground) Highlight the use of ellipses. *What do they suggest?* (a tense pause before the bomb explodes)

Extract 2

- Read together Extract 2, from the chapter 'Hitler will send no warning'. Ask a volunteer to explain what is happening. (A German bomber plane has lost control and is heading for a crash landing.) Can they suggest what is wrong with the plane? (One of its engines is on fire.) Underline the phrase 'The truth was worse' and ask the children to explain what Olive most fears (that the plane will hit the lighthouse where Cliff and Pixie are).
- Ask: *Which words tell us how Olive is feeling?* ('I couldn't even scream: my heart was jammed in my throat.') *Why do you think she wants the other children to shut up?* (They are making it worse by excitedly saying the plane will hit the lighthouse.)
- Circle tricky vocabulary ('compelling', 'lurch', 'veered', 'bail') and ask volunteers to provide meaning and suggest replacements. Ask: *Why do you think it would be a compelling sight to watch?* (to see how and where the plane finally lands) Focus on words that describe the plane's erratic movements ('lurch', 'veered'). Ask: *What do they remind Olive of and why?* (someone drunk – 'almost drunkenly' – because it is lurching from side to side).
- Challenge the children to identify onomatopoeic words which describe the sounds the plane makes ('spluttering', 'splutter', 'shuddered').
- Highlight short and incomplete sentences ('Then silence. Another splutter. Silence.') Ask the children what impact they have. (They change the pace and enhance the drama.)
- Ask: *Can you recall why the German pilot does not bail out?* (He stays in the cockpit to try to steer the plane away from the lighthouse, as Cliff later tells his sister.)



Extract 1

'Sukie!' I yelled, waving madly. 'Over here!'

She was running away from the shelter. And fast too – faster than I'd ever seen her run before – her arms pumping like pistons. She didn't turn, or slow down. I don't think she even heard me.

The air-raid warden was yelling now. 'Bomb incoming! Get down!'

He threw himself on to the pavement. I wasn't quick enough. The telltale whistling came next... An eerie silence...

Then a *WHUMP* as the bomb hit just a few hundred yards away. The ground rocked underneath me. Air was sucked from my chest, making me gasp and stagger backwards, though somehow I stayed on my feet. Glass smashed, bricks fell, planes droned onwards. Everything swirled dizzily together. For a moment I didn't know which way the sky was.

As the dust cleared, my stunned brain did too. Twenty yards or so up ahead was my sister. She was limping slightly, with one of her shoes missing, but still rapidly disappearing down the street.

'Sukie!' I cried again in frustration. 'Wait! We're here!'

She was searching for us, I was certain, and knowing her, she wouldn't think to keep herself safe. She'd stay out here, not giving up until she found us. This was what terrified me. Cliff would be all right in the shelter with the WRVS lady. What mattered was getting hold of Sukie.

Side-stepping the air-raid warden as he got unsteadily to his feet, I ran after my sister. The warden shouted something, I didn't hear what.

'Sukie! Slow down!' I cried, gas-mask box bouncing at my hip.

She was too far ahead. A silly, random thought came to me of how nice her hair still looked as it swung against the green of Mum's coat.

Then panic. I'd never catch up with her.

I'd a stitch in my side and even

hobbling with one shoe,

she was still too

quick for me.



PLOT, CHARACTER & SETTING

1. Key events

Objective

To identify how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning.

What you need

Copies of *Letters from the Lighthouse*; scissors; glue; photocopiable page 29 'Key events'.

What to do

- Challenge children to summarise the main narrative of the novel. Encourage them to suggest one event in the novel which is crucial to the plot and one event which is dramatic or exciting but which does not drive the plot. (For example, the rescue of the refugee boat is crucial to the plot; the crash of the German plane is dramatic, but not crucial to the plot.)
- Arrange the children into pairs and hand out photocopiable page 29 'Key events'. Explain that they need briefly to describe how each event drives the plot then cut and paste them in the order in which they happen.
- When they have finished, bring the class back together. Suggest that these are the key events which help to structure the novel.
- Challenge volunteers to cite examples of events which make the plot more interesting or exciting, but which do *not* drive the main narrative (for example, Olive having a fight with Esther or Pixie falling into the quicksand). Encourage the children to back up their suggestions with reasons. Reflect how, although these events do not directly drive the plot, they contribute to the way the author builds character and setting.

Differentiation

Support: Explore the images together, checking that the children can interpret the events.

Extension: Challenge pairs to add more events to the sequence.

2. Britain at war

Objective

To summarise the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas.

What you need

Copies of *Letters from the Lighthouse*.

Cross-curricular link

History

What to do

- Tell the children they are going to focus on the novel's wartime setting. Invite them to come up with key facts about the period and locations of the novel, noting them on the board (1941/2; London and the Devon coast).
- Challenge them to cite some of the ways the war affected life in Britain in the early 1940s which we can learn from the novel. List ideas on the board such as 'bombing raids (the Blitz)'; 'men away fighting'; 'home defences/safety precautions'; 'child evacuees'; 'food shortages'.
- Ask pairs to use the headings listed on the board to skim and scan the novel for information about life during the war, and to note their findings.
- When they have finished, bring the class back together to share findings. Encourage children to volunteer other information they may know about the war from family history and experiences.
- Ask children to choose one of the headings and to develop their notes into a paragraph, with illustrations.

Differentiation

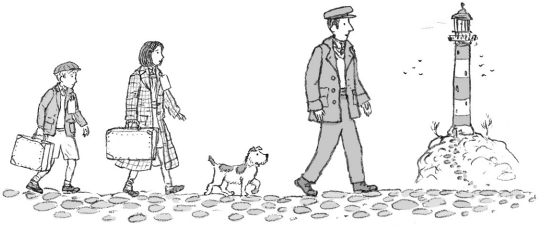
Support: Briefly discuss each topic before children begin work, referring to relevant detail from the novel.

Extension: Let children use their own research from books, the internet or their family history to add detail.



Key events

- Write a sentence describing how each of the following events drive the plot of the novel. Then cut out the boxes and place them in the order they happen.





DAY 9
 I 26 8 T/U I
 J 26 9 16 19 12 6 8 I
 B 26 T - 50.26
 B 12 13 20 + 3.6

