BEFORE YOU START

Prepare a group journal to help you record group discussions and responses to the text as you work through the book.

Prepare an outline of the character Manju, ready to complete using the Role on the Wall technique.
SESSION 1: COVER AND CHAPTER ONE

Focus: Predicting, Questioning and Visualising

Share the illustrations from the front cover and inside title-page with the group, without yet sharing the title.

- Who do you think these two characters are?
- What do you think you know about them?
- How do you think they might be connected?

Consider their facial expressions and body language, especially the genie in the second illustration.

- How do you think each character is feeling? How do you know?
- Why do you think the purple character is wearing a scarf and holding a box of tissues? What might this tell you about him?
- What do you think this story will be about?
Unpick the children’s understanding of the purple character, whom children may observe is a genie. Stick a picture of the genie in the group journal and ask the children to note down all of the things they know about genies.

- What other stories do you know that have genies in them?
- What kinds of characters are genies?
- What do you associate with them?
- How does this guide your predictions about what might happen in this story?
- Do genies usually wear scarves? What might this detail, and the tissues he is holding, suggest?

Children might suggest that the genie has a cold.

- How do you feel when you have a cold?
- How does it affect you? How might it affect him?

Share the title with the children, inviting them to say it for themselves to appreciate its alliterative quality.

- Who do you think Manju might be – the girl or the genie?
- Does the title change any of your predictions?

As a group, come up with three key questions that you would like answered over the course of the story and note them down in the journal. Examples might include:

- Who is Manju and how do they get into a muddle?
- What is ‘magic’ about the muddle in the story?
- Why is the genie wearing a scarf?
Read aloud Chapter One to the end of page 4, ‘naughty giants and curious fairies.’ Share the illustrations.

- Why do you think Cumin the cat thinks ‘That doesn’t sound like a good idea’ when Manju suggests making a wish?
- What do you think might have happened before when she made a wish?
- What might happen now?

Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine what they might wish for if they were bored like Manju. Then ask them to open their eyes, and ask each child in turn to share their wishes. Establish if anyone wishes for the same thing.

- Who does everyone agree had the best idea for a wish?

Read on up to the end of Chapter One, “Greetings to you.” Invite children to discuss whether the lamp and this method of summoning the genie reminds the children of any other stories they know in books or films, such as Aladdin, whether as a film or as a retelling from The Book of the Thousand and One Nights. Ask them to look closely at the illustration of the genie on page 7.

- What do you think you can now say about the genie? Does it confirm any of your predictions?
- Do you think he will still be up to the job of granting wishes?
- What do you think will happen next?

Ask the children to complete a Role on the Wall for Manju. Ask the children to come up with words or phrases to describe Manju’s feelings or personality and her outward appearance or behaviour.

To promote a higher level of thinking, ask the children to consider what they know from her speech and what they have to infer from her body language and gestures. For example, we know Manju lives with her mum, dad, grandma and cat, but also has access to a genie who grants wishes, which has previously led to problems. Offer prompts to support thinking:

- What do we know about Manju at this point in the story?
- What do the illustrations add to what we know?
- How do you think she is feeling at this point in the story?
- What does she like doing, or not like doing?

Revisit the Role on the Wall outline at key points in the story as we find out more about Manju.
SESSION 2: CHAPTER TWO AND CHAPTER THREE

Focus: Close Reading, Empathising and Thinking Aloud

Read aloud page 7, sharing the illustration. Invite the children to reflect on the genie’s illness, drawing on their own experience.

- How do you think the genie might be feeling if he is suffering from a terrible cold?
- Have you ever had a bad cold? How did it make you feel?
- How did it affect you, and your ability to carry on with normal life?
- How do you think being ill is affecting the genie here?
- What do you understand by the phrase “Too many lamps are being rubbed”? Why does it mean the genie doesn’t have time even to drink hot tea?

Invite the children to discuss the different cures or treatments someone suffering with a cold might consider, then ask each child to write a note of advice, perhaps with a ‘Get Well Soon’ message, suggesting what the genie could do to feel better. Ask the children to pass their note to another child to read and reply writing in role as the genie.
Read to the end of page 9, ‘Until…’ Ask the children to consider whether they think Manju made a good wish.

- Do you agree with the genie in thinking this is an unusual wish?
- From your knowledge of other stories where magic wishes are granted, what do you think the genie might previously have been asked for?
- Is it what you would have wished for?
- Have you ever heard the saying Cumin uses, ‘Be careful what you wish for’? What do you think this proverbial phrase means?
- What do you think might be the risk involved in wishing for a water slide?

Read on to page 11, “NO!”, and ask the children why they think the genie brought otters and a slide to Manju’s bedroom. Consider what Verónica Montoya’s illustration adds to Chitra Soundar’s words, and how it helps the reader to understand why Manju and Cumin react as they do.

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Read aloud to the end of page 13, ‘The otters vanished.’ Unpick the problem the genie is having in hearing and understanding what is being asked of him.

- Have you ever misunderstood someone because you couldn’t hear exactly what they were saying?

Support the children in identifying the features of water slide / otter slide and go away / go grey the genie can hear, and what is causing confusion because his cold has blocked his ears. Children may observe that the rhyme of water/otter and away / grey is the same, but that the onset ‘w- / o-’ and ‘aw- / gr-’ is different. Invite them to think of other pairs of words that differ in this way and might be confusing for the genie, e.g., ‘wish / fish’, ‘dog / log’, ‘rat / bat’ and so on.

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Reread Chapter Two and Chapter Three to the children and ask them to consider how the genie might be feeling as the story unfolds.

- Do you think the genie should be granting wishes? Why / why not?
- Do you think it is right for Manju to continue asking him to perform wishes given his difficulties in carrying them out accurately?
- What would you do if you were the genie, or if you were Manju?

Explain to the group that you are going to hot-seat in role as the genie while they role-play giving the genie some advice. Ask them to reflect on what they do when they are sick, and what they think the genie should do. Consider what the genie might say to Manju so that he can have some time off granting wishes. Allow all of the children the opportunity to share their advice. Reply in role to the advice you are given and perhaps use a signifier like a box of tissues or a lamp to indicate you are in role as the genie.

End by asking the children to summarise the events of the story so far by beginning to draw a story map.

- Do the events so far remind you of any other stories you have read?
- Do the events so far remind you of any events in your own lives?

Reflect as a group on times where there have been misunderstandings based on mishearing what someone said; or where someone tried to carry on as if they were not ill, rather than stopping to rest and recover.

- What do you predict might happen next?
SESSION 3: CHAPTER FOUR AND CHAPTER FIVE

Focus: Summarising, Scanning the Text and Clarifying

Read on to the end of page 14, ‘angry blue goats.’ Invite the children to think about how we gain an added insight into the story through Manju’s sidekick, the cat Cumin.

Draw an outline of a cat in the journal and ask the children to consider what they know about cats, especially if they have a cat themselves or know someone who does.

• What kind of things do cats like doing? How do they respond to changes in their surroundings?

Make a note of everything the children volunteer about cats around the outside of the Cumin outline; they may identify that cats enjoy sleeping and resting calmly, and do not enjoy disturbance, loud noises and excitement. Then ask the children to reread the story so far, skimming and scanning for evidence of Cumin’s feelings towards the genie and the events of the story. Pages 4, 6, 10 and 14 are particularly useful. Write keywords inside the outline of the cat, such as snotty, naughty, loud, hid under the bed, MIAOW, snarled and snorted, as well as any additional evidence they can gain from Cumin’s facial expressions and body language. Then read on to the end of page 15, ‘for the genie too.’

• Why do you think Cumin’s feelings towards the genie change? What language does the author use to tell us this?

Read on to the end of Chapter 5, ‘This wasn’t going well at all.’ Return to the story map that you began at the end of the previous session, adding the important events from Chapter Four and Chapter Five. Before finishing the session, ask the children to think about the phrase retirement centre. Ask them to consider what the word retirement means and whether or where they have heard it before.

• Do you know anyone who has retired? [Some children may recall that Mum helps her friends at the retirement centre (page 3).]

• Why do you think the genie might have been summoned there?

• Who might be living there that might have summoned him?

• What do you predict will happen next?
SESSION 4: CHAPTER SIX AND CHAPTER SEVEN

Focus: Scanning, Questioning and Clarifying

Read Chapter 6 to halfway down page 23, ‘Some mistakes were soft.’ Share the illustrations, and ask the children whether their predictions about the retirement centre were correct. Reflect on how the genie might be feeling now that he has made three mistakes, given what they know about being ‘struck off the Genie Register’ (page 15). Ask the children how they feel when they make mistakes.

- Does it make you sad, anxious, cross...?

Together, try to remember all of the mistakes that the genie has made in the book, rereading the pages where he makes them (pages 10, 14, 21 and 23). Ask the children to recall why the otter slide appeared instead of a water slide, blue goats instead of a blue boat, etc. Consider the word bless that summons a chess set and the silk cloth that appears instead of milk.

- Can you think of other words that rhyme with bless that the genie could have conjured up?

Reread pages 21–23, from ‘Manju stepped out from behind...’ to ‘Manju sat opposite to her.’

- Why do you think Mrs Cox gasped and is pleased that the chess set arrives?
- Can you remember why Manju summoned the genie in the first place?
- Why do you think Mrs Cox might have wanted to make a wish?
Read on to the end of page 25, ‘under the silk.’ Write the word bored in the middle of a page in the journal, and ask the children what it means.

- Can you define the word bored? Or tell me other words that mean the same or mean the opposite, or phrases associated with boredom, such as bored to tears, bored stiff, bored silly, bored to death, bored out of my mind, watching paint dry, I’m falling asleep?

Then prompt them to answer the following questions, filling the space around the page with their answers.

- Why do you think Manju was bored?
- Why do you think Mrs Cox was bored?
- What else could they have done to entertain themselves?
- What do you do when you’re bored?

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Read the first page of Chapter 7, ending ‘appeared in front of Cumin.’

- What do you think is happening on this page?
- Why do you think the bowl of milk appears?
- What has happened to the genie? How does his wish-granting now compare to what happened before?

Read to the end of Chapter 7, ‘...and a plate of biscuits.’ Ask the children to predict how the story might go on to end, now that the genie appears to be able to grant wishes accurately once more.

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Return to the Role on the Wall you began in Session 1. See if the children can add any more words or phrases to Manju’s outline, now that they have found out a little more about her.
SESSION 5: CHAPTER EIGHT

Focus: Summarising, Empathising and Close Reading

Read to the end of the book. Ask the children to summarise how the book ends, then to add the final details from the story to the story map. Invite them to retell the story, giving each child a chance to share one sentence in sequence and then move on.

Revisit the Role on the Wall and ask the children to reflect on how Manju has changed over the course of the story.

- How has Manju’s problem of being bored been solved?
- What sort of things might she do with Mrs Cox when she visits the retirement centre in the future?

Talk about the book as a whole. Engage the children in book talk, discussing how the book made them feel and allowing them time and space to tell you their likes and dislikes, with reference to different parts of the text or particular illustrations.
Review the story in chronological order and consider the different emotions that Manju has felt throughout the story, her high and low points, and how the illustrations support the text. You could use hot-seating again to explore her feelings further, or work collaboratively to choose words that describe her emotions at different points of the story. Write these on sticky notes and then organise them to demonstrate shades of emotional intensity that she has felt in the story so far. You could join up Manju’s highs and lows with a pen to demonstrate the basic narrative shape of this story or and compare it to other stories they know that share a similar narrative pattern.

Through modelling, ask the children to describe their favourite part of the story. Provide the children with an oral scaffold, such as: the most memorable part of the story was... because... ; my top moment in the story was... because... and ask them to discuss their favourite part of the story in pairs. Encourage children to give reasons for their choices and invite some children to share these.

Explore their responses to the story with the help of the four basic questions. These questions can also be used as a basis for discussion throughout the sessions.

- Tell me... was there anything you liked about this text?
- Was there anything that you particularly disliked... ?
- Was there anything that puzzled you?
- Were there any patterns... any connections that you noticed... ?

As children respond it can be useful to write down what they say under the headings ‘likes’, ‘dislikes’, ‘puzzles’ and ‘patterns’. Record the children’s responses in the journal.

Finally, consider how Manju or the genie would retell the story of the magic muddle to another member of their family, or a friend or colleague.

- Which bits would Manju or the genie include?
- How would they describe them?

Ask the children to write a short postcard in role as Manju or the genie to another character in Manju’s life or a fellow genie, noting down the most important parts of the story. The children can then decorate the other side of the postcard with what they think would be Manju’s or the genie’s best memory.

As an extension activity, the children could write and illustrate a short story about Manju’s next visit to the retirement centre.
IDEAS TO SUPPORT THE SESSIONS

These are areas you could further develop depending on your professional judgement of the children’s learning needs and their interests.

Developing wider reading experiences

Read and explore stories with similar themes involving wishes, such as:

- *Please, Mr Magic Fish!* by Jessica Souhami
- *Grendel: A Cautionary Tale about Chocolate* by David Lucas
- *Lulu Gets a Cat* by Anna McQuinn, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw

They could also join Manju and Mrs Cox in finding out how to play chess, from:

- *The Foolish King* by Mark Price, illustrated by Martin Brown
- *Chess for Children* by Murray Chandler and Helen Milligan

Supporting reading fluency

- While reading with the group, model skills and strategies such as predicting, sampling, confirming, self-monitoring, self-correcting, ‘thinking aloud’, interpreting things which are only implied, and the full range of cueing systems (semantic, syntactic and graphophonic).

- Occasionally, you could hide some words with a sticky note, asking the children to refer to the illustration for ideas. You could give another clue by revealing the first syllable or letter.

- You could make a pairs game to develop visual memory and book language, creating cards using laminated images from the book. Make pairs of cards, one card for an illustrated location or character and one for matching words from the story. Spread these out face down. Children take turns to turn over two cards. If they match, they can keep them. If not, they have to turn them back over again. The game proceeds until all the pairs have been found.

- You could create a simple jigsaw by writing questions with corresponding answers directly underneath on one side of a piece of paper, then printing an illustration on the reverse and cutting the sheet of paper up to separate the questions and answers. The children lay out the questions and answers in order. They can check their layout by turning them over to see if they have created the illustration correctly.
**Vocabulary building**

- Children could make **word collections** which describe a particular character and their feelings or a place, event or situation, such as retirement, muddle, snotty, various, cupboard, whiff, greetings, summon, otter, squeal, huddled and shawl.

- The text could also be used to investigate the structure, impact and placement of a wide number of prefixes and suffixes. For example, children could investigate any patterns in adding -ing (reading, being, pulling) to the verb; they could look at regular and irregular past tense verbs (was, had, agreed, warned, had, picked, remembered, closed, darkened, rose).

**Opportunities to revisit the text independently**

- With the children, make a set of magnetic or stick story props to use in a retelling of the story and to support children in their own independent retellings. If possible, provide extra copies of the book to support this.

- If the children have a good memory of the text through repeated readings, they can be given copies of the story to read to partners. This helps children to see themselves as readers.

- Allow the children to re-enact the story through play. Revisiting stories through a range of play-based experiences helps children to step into the world of the book and to explore it more completely.

- Use **hot-seating** to explore the main characters further. One member of the group **role-plays** a character and is interviewed by the other children. This activity involves children closely examining a character’s motivation and responses.
• Make a **story map** as a way of retelling the story. This breaks the story down into episodes and sequences its events. This kind of graphic representation helps children to hold on to the shape of the story more confidently.

• Encourage the children to take the book home to read alongside a parent or carer and suggest that they use the ‘Tips for grown-ups’ pages to support their discussions.

**Experiences linked to the text**

• Children could devise ways to overcome boredom in case they don’t have access to a wish-granting genie.

• Children could plan their own activities that they could enjoy with a grandparent or someone of Mrs Cox’s age, if they were to visit a retirement centre. Invite children to write about and illustrate their experiences of or aspirations for such a day.

These resources were created by Bloomsbury and The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE). For more teaching resources, visit:

www.bloomsburyguidedreading.com

www.clpe.org.uk