



NEW READINGS OF
PHILIP PULLMAN'S
GRIMM TALES

TEACHER RESOURCE PACK: YEAR 7 PROJECT



A Unicorn and Illuminations Production

PHILIP PULLMAN'S GRIMM TALES ONLINE

Directed by Justin Audibert, Rachel Bagshaw, Polly Findlay, Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu, Ola Ince and Bijan Sheibani

FOR PUPILS IN YEARS 4 – 7

**NEW THEATRICAL READINGS FOR DELICIOUSLY
GRUESOME TALES.**

Enter a perilous world of murderous step-mothers, devious kings and fearless children...

Adapted by Philip Pullman (*His Dark Materials*), we're thrilled to present a deliciously gruesome selection of theatrical readings from ***Philip Pullman's Grimm Tales***, re-told for the whole family by an extraordinary cast.

Philip Pullman's Grimm Tales are classic fairy tales, distilled from centuries of storytelling, timeworn but honed for the next generation to discover anew. This collection of readings, combining classic favourites with new discoveries, takes us to the very heart of imagination and speaks of the things it finds there - fear, courage, compassion and wonder.

Filmed at the Unicorn, these short, vivid new readings will be on our YouTube channel for free. As part of Unicorn Online, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are offering a range of free online theatrical experiences that we hope will be enjoyed by children across London, the UK and beyond.

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THE YEAR 7 PROJECT AIMS

The Year 7 Project consists of a six-week scheme of learning which explores the themes and ideas in the Unicorn Online digital theatrical readings of *Philip Pullman's Grimm Tales*, while also linking to students' experience of transitioning from primary to secondary school.

The scheme aims to use the shared experience of watching the Grimm Tales online stories to address some of the priorities schools have with students in their first year of secondary school; forming positive relationships with peers, adapting to increased responsibility, and the importance of building confidence, resilience, a sense of self and autonomy in the context of a larger school community.

The scheme of learning is designed to be useful to Drama teachers and accessible to non-Drama specialists who want to run the Year 7 Project as part of their English or PSHE curriculum. The activities in each session aim to engage students with the content of the production and create a meaningful context for learning, allowing them to explore their own thoughts and feelings in relation to the play and share these with their peers. Activities will promote collaborative working, asking students to work together to create their own drama and theatre responses to the stimuli, building in the key Drama skills and conventions used at Key Stage 3.

The six session plans are designed to be run as a complete scheme of learning. The sessions will build sequentially, but be flexible enough for teachers to adapt to their needs.

This year's project feels more needed than ever, with the transition from primary to secondary having been so radically impacted by lockdown. To that end, the scheme of learning has been devised in collaboration with Dr Sarah Wassall, clinical psychologist, who has worked with us to adapt the work and ensure it is sensitive and supportive throughout.

While the resource has been written with Year 7 students in mind, KS2 primary teachers can also adapt the resources for use with children in Years 5 and 6.

Three additional Grimm Tales, directed by Rachel Bagshaw, were filmed as a Christmas special after this pack was produced, which is available for viewing on the **Unicorn's YouTube channel** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_heai7YBau8) alongside those described in this pack. These stories are 'Little Red Riding Hood', 'The Shoes That Were Danced To Pieces', and 'Briar Rose'.

THE SCHEME OF LEARNING AIMS TO:

- Create a sense of safety in the classroom to facilitate creativity
- Explore the concepts of transition, change and adaptation in relation to students' experiences of starting secondary school and the particular challenges of Covid-19
- Increase students' confidence, self-expression and self-esteem
- Build positive relationships between peers through creative group work and collaboration
- Develop emotional empathy and the ability to think and interpret from multiple perspectives
- Give insight into key professional roles in the theatre
- Develop core drama skills
- Develop literacy and communication skills and provide meaningful opportunities for speaking, listening and reflection
- Promote inclusive practice and allow students to explore difference in a safe and supportive context
- Encourage imaginative engagement and provide space for students' own creative responses
- Develop students' capacity to engage with the online stories in an active, self-reflective way and become confident and articulate digital theatre-goers

INTRODUCTION

By Dr Sarah Wassall, Clinical Psychologist, Connected Futures Psychology Ltd.

The 2020 Year 7 cohort started their journey to secondary school in a unique way. There is great concern that the impact of COVID-19 and the consequent restrictions on community interactions are likely to have affected the emotional wellbeing of society. Professor Cathy Creswell, Professor of Developmental Clinical Psychology, and co-leading the COVID-19 Supporting Parents, Adolescents, and Children in Epidemics study stated *“Prioritising the mental health of children and young people throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond is critical”* (Oxford University news, 2020). Transition to secondary school is a challenge for any child, but within the context of this year’s collective trauma experiences, the Unicorn Theatre has taken the initiative to adapt the curriculum of their typical transition work to be sensitive to the needs of this particular cohort.

Typically, the Unicorn’s Year 7 Project would address some of the priorities schools typically have with regards to students in their first year of secondary school; forming positive relationships with peers, adapting to the increased responsibility and the importance of building confidence, resilience, a sense of self and autonomy in the context of a larger school community. This year the curriculum is adapted further. Firstly, given the suspected emotional vulnerability of the cohort, and indeed the school staff delivering lessons, the activities have been designed to ensure themes are explored in a contained, safe and accessible manner for children.

Secondly, in line with Professor Carpenter’s proposal ‘A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and life for our children and schools post pandemic’, which advocates a *“systematic, relationships-based approach to reigniting the flame of learning in each child”* and influenced by collective trauma-informed practice and research, the focus on creating safe connections between pupils is prioritised. Creating connections with others is key to developing a sense of safety in the classroom, which is the foundation of children’s wellbeing at school and ability to be creative within the drama work (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). This is done through ensemble work where the children must be sensitive and responsive to each other, and pair/small group work which includes offering each other positive reassurance.

Thirdly, the opportunity has been taken to weave skills into the drama activities that provide the foundation for developing coping strategies for emotional difficulties, thereby supporting the children’s resilience. Of course, within a six session curriculum, there is a limit to the depth of this teaching, but the curriculum aims to introduce them to psychologically healthy approaches, and at a minimum to leave the children feeling positive about their presence within lessons and contributions to their creative tasks.

Influenced by Compassion Focused Therapy (Gilbert, 2014), the learning scheme supports the children to develop the idea of a compassionate supporter who can be helpful to them at times of difficulty. *“There is increasing evidence that cultivating compassion for yourself and others can have a profound impact on your physiological, psychological and social processes”* (Irons & Beaumont, 2017). This is embodied in the role of the trees who watch Hansel and Gretel on their journey. Activities will allow the children to consider the perspective of these trees who see the siblings’ difficulties and offer compassionate support. Homework and pair activities then support the children to practice applying

this compassionate approach to themselves and each other.

There is evidence to suggest that interoception (the ability to notice and connect bodily sensations with emotions) is a fundamental building block of developing emotional regulation (Mahler, 2016). To strengthen these and emotional literacy skills, the lessons include ‘body scan’ activities and opportunities to consider naming emotions and the inner world of characters and the audience.

Last but not least is the therapeutic value of the Hansel and Gretel story itself. Stories are widely used to support children’s psychological health. This particular story of children working together and developing the courage to cope with abrupt transitions and face challenges will be a relevant and helpful tool for the children to safely process their own transitions and challenges. The *“metaphorical images provide the means for a child to look at his powerful feelings from a ‘safe distance’”* while presenting *“important psychological messages concerning a common dilemma”* (Sutherland, 2000).

INTRODUCING HANSEL AND GRETEL

By Justin Audibert, Artistic Director of the Unicorn Theatre

The Grimm Tales are stories that we come back to time and time again. They are fascinating for children and adults alike, because they can be endlessly reinvented and reinterpreted. They are like a series of short, sharp shocks; by turns funny, shocking or tragic, yet all with the safety and security that good will ultimately triumph over evil. They don't follow the rules of detailed psychological character development. They are continually surprising. They have at the heart of them something about how you experience the world as a child. Not as one full of hierarchy and structures but as a series of seemingly random events where characters can seize their own destinies, like the young hero who sets off to find out about the shivers. On the one hand, they are action packed with adventure, blood, romance and magic like in the tale of 'The Boy Who Left Home To Find Out About The Shivers', or 'The Brave Little Tailor', whilst also being filled with rich, vivid, unforgettable imagery to make the imagination run wild. This ranges from Rumpelstiltskin spinning straw into gold, to Cinderella trying on her glass slipper, or the image of plucking the three golden hairs from the Devil's head.

I was personally drawn to telling the story of 'Hansel and Gretel' because of imagining the moment when those two siblings are abandoned together in the dark, cold forest by the two adults who are supposed to be protecting them. This feels like a hugely important moment in any child's life: when they realise that adults are not always responsible and will not always do the right thing. They first learn this from their father and stepmother but then they get that learning reinforced by the witch. At the end of the story, Hansel and Gretel are older, wiser and smarter. You feel as though now they are ready to face the world. Gretel in particular goes from always weeping and feeling helpless to being the one who ultimately vanquishes and kills the witch. They learn that in this world it is not enough to just be good yourself, you have to be on guard for others who are wicked. This felt like an important story to tell at this moment and because of coronavirus, the way in which we decided at the Unicorn to revisit these stories was by making some filmed readings.

When you direct a play you are trying to create a world onstage and performances that will grow as the show progresses through its run. No two performances will ever be the same and so you hope that the actors keep on discovering things as they perform. As the director, you provide the framework for them to explore the play but ultimately each night the show relies on the connection between the actors and the audience. The actors are the primary storytellers. When you make a film, as a director, your control of the whole story is much greater. You make something that lives forever and is frozen in that moment. You can use the edit to tell the story, and the actors don't know what you will do with their performances. They don't even know what shots of them you will use. You work very closely with the director of photography to get the shots you want, and then you work with an editor to choose those shots, and then you work with the composer to work out how you will underscore the piece. This process involves much less time with the actors than when you direct a play – which typically takes between 3-5 weeks. On these *Grimm Tales* we only had the actors for a day on each story, but each director will be working on their play for over seven days.

They are very different processes, but you are still trying to do the same thing in both theatre or film; to tell the story in the best way possible.

We hope that you enjoy them.

A SUMMARY OF HANSEL AND GRETEL

HANSEL AND GRETEL

During a period of famine, a father is persuaded by his wife that they can no longer feed their children, and that they must take them into the forest and leave them there, to fend for themselves.

The two children overhear this discussion and Hansel has a plan to protect them. He goes out that night and collects white pebbles ready for the next day. The next morning before they set off the woman gives the children a chunk of bread each. As they are walking along Hansel drops the pebbles behind him as they walk deep into the forest.

The father and his wife leave the children in the forest and say they will return for them when they have chopped the wood. When night has fallen and the adults haven't returned, the children follow the trail of pebbles by the light of the moon and find their way back home. The father is overjoyed to see them.

Some time passes and eventually the woman persuades her husband they cannot go on any longer and must try again to leave the children. But being wise to Hansel's plan, she locks them in their room overnight so they can't collect any pebbles. Hansel leaves a trail of breadcrumbs behind him, in the hope that will guide them home. But when night falls, all of the breadcrumbs have been eaten by the birds, so they are lost in the forest.

As they are trying to find their way out the children come across a house made of bread, cake and sweets and hungrily start to eat it. The owner of the house, an old woman, kindly asks them inside. But when she has them there, she turns out to be a witch, and puts Hansel in a cage behind the house to fatten him up to eat, and makes Gretel do all the housework.

Hansel tricks the witch – each day she comes to feel how he is fattening up, but instead of putting his finger through the bars of the cage, he puts a chicken bone through, so the witch thinks he is too thin to eat.

Eventually the witch loses patience and orders Gretel to get the oven ready. She asks Gretel to put her head inside the oven to see if it is hot enough. Gretel pretends she doesn't understand what the witch wants her to do. The witch angrily pushes her aside to show her, and as she puts her own head in the oven, Gretel gives her a great shove, and the witch is burnt to death.

The children find jewels and gold in the house which they gather up to take home with them. On their journey back they have to cross a river on the back of a goose. When they arrive home, they find their father, alone, desperately missing them.

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEME OF LEARNING

In our online production of *Grimm Tales*, the stories are set in a den or shed in the heart of the forest.

These stories show how the young heroes and heroines find their own inner resources and face challenges alone. The resolution to the stories comes from them: their initiative, creativity, resilience and ingenuity.

The resource focuses on one story, 'Hansel and Gretel', where the children outwit the witch and return to their father, who had abandoned them to their fate in the forest.

The world of the Grimms' tales is a place where different rules apply, a place where adults are either absent, or a threat to our heroes and heroines. Here, the young people can rely only on themselves, and here they face their hardest challenges, resolving them alone.

On the cusp of adulthood and transitioning from childhood, the journey in many of the familiar fairy tales takes the child figure from innocence to experience.

TRANSITION AND WELLBEING

The resource has been created in consultation with clinical psychologist Dr Sarah Wassall, and we have integrated activities in each session which ensure the themes we are exploring are contained in a way that is safe and accessible to all children, whatever experience they bring into the space.

This scheme of work is planned to run at a gentle pace, with lots of repetition and building on exercises. The structure enables students to feel safe and secure with the work and each other, enabling them to take time to experience the practical tasks in a whole-bodied and whole-minded way. We hope this mindful pacing will allow everyone to explore and retain the self-regulation aspects of the tasks.

Our approach is rooted in the PACE model: Play, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy. Each session has been built with these concepts in mind, both in the delivery and in what we hope to engender within the students. Play is at the heart of drama; it enriches our experience of the world and enables us to be receptive to difficult or challenging areas of life. The warm-ups will get the class ready to work through simple techniques using physical awareness, breath, and other activities which help with self-regulation; the creative activities are designed to develop the idea of the compassionate friend and form connection with others.



THE SOCIALLY-DISTANCED CLASSROOM

All activities have been designed to provide active, creative, and collaborative drama activities that can be used in a socially-distanced drama studio, or at desks in the classroom.

ADAPTING FOR HOME LEARNING

The activities are also suitable for home learning; students can watch the short films at a time which suits them and when they have access to the internet. The creative tasks can be adapted for students to do at home, either individually or in small groups with their classmates.

ACCESS

Please note: exercises can be adapted to suit access requirements of the group as needed. For example, a student with mobility impairments might need to sit during a standing exercise, a Deaf or Hard of Hearing student may need to face their partner to lipread, etc. Please feel free to adapt the work as needed to meet the specific needs of your students.

SESSION ONE: HANSEL AND GRETEL

Introduces the overview of the scheme of learning and the central stimulus - the story of 'Hansel and Gretel'. There is a simple small group and whole class devising activity, looking at the themes within the story.

The class watch the digital Unicorn storytelling version of 'Hansel and Gretel' and, in pairs, retell the story through a simple actor/narrator drama exercise.

SESSION TWO: ADAPTING A STORY

Meet the director

The class are introduced to the role of a director through a short film and then are set the task of finding the key story moments they would choose if adapting the story for the stage.

SESSION THREE: CHARACTERISATION

Meet the actor

The actor, Andy Umerah, takes the class through a simple warm up, designed to be done at desks or distanced in the drama studio. Pupils then select a key moment of challenge or crisis for Hansel and Gretel from the story to explore. They improvise, write and perform short scenes that show what is happening for the characters in these moments and how they respond to the crisis they face.

SESSION FOUR: CREATING THE WORLD

Meet the designer

“Anyone familiar with the Grimms’ fairy tales knows how prominently forests figure in the collection as a whole. These forests typically lie beyond the bounds of the familiar world. They are the places where protagonists get lost, meet unusual creatures, undergo spells and transformations, and confront their destinies. Children typically “grow up” during their ventures in the forests.” **Robert Pogue Harrison**

This session focuses on the role of a designer. First, pupils watch the short film with the *Grimm Tales* designer. Then, in small groups, they create a model that represents the visual and physical world their drama takes place in.

SESSION FIVE: THE TREES IN THE FOREST SPEAK

Meet the musical director

In this session, students continue to develop work on their ‘Hansel and Gretel’ scenes and the concept of the compassionate friend is introduced through the trees of the forest coming to life and supporting the characters. They also watch a short film with the musical director, Jon McLeod, of *Grimm Tales* and start to explore the world of music and sound in theatre.

SESSION SIX: BRINGING ALL ELEMENTS TOGETHER

In this final session, students bring all the elements together to create group presentations which can then be either performed to the class, filmed or audio versions made with images. They also have the opportunity to reflect on the whole six-week process.

SESSION ONE

HANSEL AND GRETEL

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Introducing Hansel and Gretel and the Brothers Grimm
- Unpacking what a fairy tale is and why we still tell them

TRANSITION FOCUS

- Working collaboratively with others
- Developing a sense of safety to facilitate creativity in the classroom+

RESOURCES

Themes (**resource one**), text extracts (**resource two**), 'Hansel and Gretel' video.

STRATEGIES

Ensemble warm up, check-in warm up, simple devising using still image and text, narrator and actor in pairs, check-out body scan.

ACTIVITY ONE: PASS THE CLAP (5 minutes)

As a whole class, send a clap around the room.

Ask the students to each clap in turn, passing the clap around to the next person, and back to the teacher.

This warm-up is designed to ask students to collaborate, tune in to each other, and develop focus and concentration. The idea is to work to find a common pace, so that the clap is passed without losing the beat. If you are in rows at desks, and not able to utilise eye contact with everyone, each person will need to listen carefully for when it is their turn.

Play the game again, but in the opposite direction. This time, if you are able to, add in the instruction that now, each pair should clap at the same time as they are passing and receiving, and, if possible, make eye contact with each other.

Try to make sure this game is playful and that those who drop the clap are encouraged, not castigated. If someone gets it 'wrong', you could choose to celebrate the moment with a whole class round of applause before starting again.

ACTIVITY TWO: THERMOMETER (5 minutes)

Ask the class to come to a resting position and close their eyes, or look down to the floor if this feels more comfortable. Ask them to move their hands as a way of answering the following statements – raise them towards the ceiling if they agree, down towards the floor if they disagree and somewhere in the middle if they're undecided.

Today I feel happy

Today I feel calm

Today I feel sad

Today I feel bored

Today I feel excited

Today I feel nervous

Today I feel strong

To finish, ask everyone to have a quick shake-out of their whole body, and especially the arms and out towards the fingertips, like they're flicking paint from the end of their fingers.

ACTIVITY THREE: WHAT IS THE WORLD? (10 minutes)

Explain that you are going to explore one of the Grimms' stories together, and make short devised moments from the story.

In groups of four, give each group a different title to respond to (**resource one**) - *abandoned - the forest - lost - hope - safety - despair - relief - home*.

Ask them to make a still image between them to embody their word. This should be a quick, intuitive response and involve all of them - they can stand, sit, use their desks and chairs, but they are all part of the image. If they are arranged in rows, they will need to think about how they can make one image with all of them in a row.

Now give them a corresponding line of text from the story 'Hansel and Gretel' (**resource two**) to add to their image. They can now move their image, and add some controlled movement to it, but must include their original still image somewhere.

Ask them to choose how they share out and speak their lines of text; individual lines, speaking in unison, repetition, etc.

See each group's moments of devising around the room and discuss: *What do you think the story is about?*

The lines of text don't explicitly mention Hansel and Gretel, but it might be apparent that this is the story we're exploring. Some additional questions you can discuss about the kinds of story are:

- What is the world we're in?
- Where are we?
- Who might the characters be?
- What kind of story is this?

ACTIVITY FOUR: HANSEL AND GRETEL (20 minutes)

if you haven't already, acknowledge this is the story of 'Hansel and Gretel' and you are going to explore the story throughout the rest of scheme of learning. Discuss:

- What is a fairy tale?
- Why do we tell stories?
- Why are some stories told and retold, passed down through the generations?

Briefly touch on the way in which these stories have been passed down, and with each new telling they contain and reflect meanings for the specific times: we're going to see how the Grimm Tales resonate with us today.

The Grimms were two brothers who gathered these stories from the oral tradition and wrote them down in the 19th century. Many of the stories have stood the test of time and are well known to us now. The Unicorn's videos take the versions written by Philip Pullman in 2016 and adapt them for this medium. These videos are made by theatre artists - so they are also adapting their way of working to a new form!



Task: watch the Unicorn storytelling video of ‘Hansel and Gretel’ on the **Unicorn’s YouTube channel**.

https://youtube.com/watch?v=_XVbCmy4bco

ACTIVITY FIVE: ACTOR/NARRATOR (15 minutes)

Now that your students have heard and seen the story being read, ask them to tell and act out ‘Hansel and Gretel’ in pairs.

Ask one person to be the narrator, telling the story. Their partner should act out the key actions as they hear them on the spot.

Explain they shouldn’t worry about getting the story ‘right’, the challenge of this activity is to work together, responding to each other. These ancient stories evolve and change with each new telling, so if you have invented new detail in the story, that’s fine.

After a few minutes, ask students to swap over roles and continue to the end of the story. In their pairs, ask students to identify three words which the story makes them think of. Use these words to identify the themes in the story.

If you have the time, see a few moments of some of the pairs’ improvisations. If you have time, see a few moments from some of the pairs’ improvisations. Ask the audience to notice one thing they thought the improvisers did well in the activity. Discuss when the activity worked well, and what they were doing to make the activity flow.

CHECK OUT (5 minutes)

Ask students to turn to a partner and say one word about how they’re feeling at the end of this class. They could think about something they’ve enjoyed or are proud of in the session, or how something in the session has made them feel.

Finally, ask everyone to stand in their own space and do a quick body scan to check in with different body parts. How do their toes, knees, legs etc feel? Their stomach, their back, their arms, face and head? Now give one big final shake-out, again like you’re flicking paint from the end of their fingers and toes.

SESSION TWO

ADAPTING THE STORY

The class are introduced to the role of a director through a short film and then are set the task of finding the key story moments they would choose if adapting the story for the stage.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Exploring the role of director
- Adapting a story from page to stage
- Identifying key moments of dramatic action

TRANSITION FOCUS

- Exploring challenges, risk and resolution
- Developing peer relationships
- Developing emotional literacy and awareness
- Creating a sense of safety in the classroom to facilitate creativity

RESOURCES

The forest warm up script (**resource three**), 'Meet the director' video.

STRATEGIES

Ensemble warm up, physical warm up, still images, check out pairs discussion.

ACTIVITY ONE: WARM-UP 1, 2, 3 (10 minutes)

Ask the class to get into pairs and to count to three, taking it in turns to say the numbers alternately.

Replace “one” with a clap and continue counting. Then replace “two” with a click and repeat, and finally replace “three” with a stamp (or a nod).

Acknowledge when and why the activity is difficult and what they were doing, and how they felt when it went well. When students get the pattern wrong, encourage them to quickly start again and have another go.

ACTIVITY TWO: THE FOREST WARM-UP (10 minutes)

A physical warm-up to get body and brain engaged.

Ask the class to stand up and find a space, facing different directions in the classroom if possible.

Resource three is a script to use or adapt for this body check-in exercise.

ACTIVITY THREE: MEET THE DIRECTOR (10 minutes)

As a class, watch the video of Justin Audibert talking about his role as a director, and the story he directed, ‘Hansel and Gretel’.



<https://youtube.com/watch?v=fdBgH4B5A6U>

ACTIVITY FOUR: STORY BEATS (20 minutes)

Move the class into groups of four, and ask them to fulfil Justin's directing task and find the story beats of 'Hansel and Gretel'.

Ask them to identify the **five** key moments of action that they are drawn to that show them the arc of the story. These will often have a crisis or a challenge in there, but not necessarily all of them.

Ask them to create a still image and title for each moment, and make sure someone in their groups writes down the titles.

- Which are the key moments they would want to dramatise if adapting the story for the stage?
- What images does the story conjure for them?

Share back as a whole class: start with one group sharing their first beat, then ask another group to share one that either follows on or shows the same moment in a different way, until you get to the end. They won't all share all of their moments and there will be overlaps or jumps in time! When you've seen something from everyone and completed the narrative, discuss:

- Were there moments of the story that we all found important?
- Were there any moments that we feel got missed out in this exercise?

ACTIVITY FIVE: THE CENTRAL IMAGE (5 minutes)

In the same groups, ask students to now choose, from their five images, the one moment that they think is the central moment, or heart of the story. If they were to make a poster for the story, what image would they use?

If you have time, see a few examples and reflect on the differences and similarities within the class.

ACTIVITY SIX: CHECK OUT (5 minutes)

Ask the class to turn to a partner and each share one thing they're proud of at the end of this session. Now tell their partner something that they think they did well in the session.

Homework: Ask students to watch the film of 'Rumpelstiltskin' on **the Unicorn's YouTube channel** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5YYc6HI7Bg>). Ask them to report back next week: *where were the moments of challenge for the characters in this story? What emotions did they feel when watching the challenging moments? What makes it a fairy tale? Is there a happy ending?*

SESSION THREE

CHARACTERISATION

The actor, Andy Umerah, takes the class through a simple warm up, designed to be done at desks or distanced in the drama studio. Pupils then select a key moment of challenge or crisis for Hansel and Gretel from the story to explore. They improvise, write and perform short scenes that show what is happening for the characters in these moments and how they respond to the crisis they face.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Exploring an actor's approach to warm-ups
- Creating a character
- Understanding dramatic conflict
- Writing dialogue and stage directions
- Exploring internal dialogue

TRANSITION FOCUS

- Dealing with challenging moments
- Developing emotional literacy and awareness

RESOURCES

'Meet the actor' video, pens and paper.

STRATEGIES

Discussion, check-in warm up, physical warm up, script writing, voicing inner thoughts, check-out.



ACTIVITY ONE: THERMOMETER (5 minutes)

Repeat the check-in exercise from Session One.

Ask the class to come to a resting position and close their eyes or look down to the floor if this feels more comfortable. Ask them to move their hands as a way of answering the following statements - raise them towards the ceiling if they agree, lower them down towards the floor if they disagree, and somewhere in the middle if they're undecided.

Today I feel happy

Today I feel calm

Today I feel sad

Today I feel bored

Today I feel excited

Today I feel nervous

Today I feel strong

To finish, ask everyone to have a quick shake-out of their whole body and especially the arms and out towards their fingertips, again as if they're flicking paint from the end of their fingers.

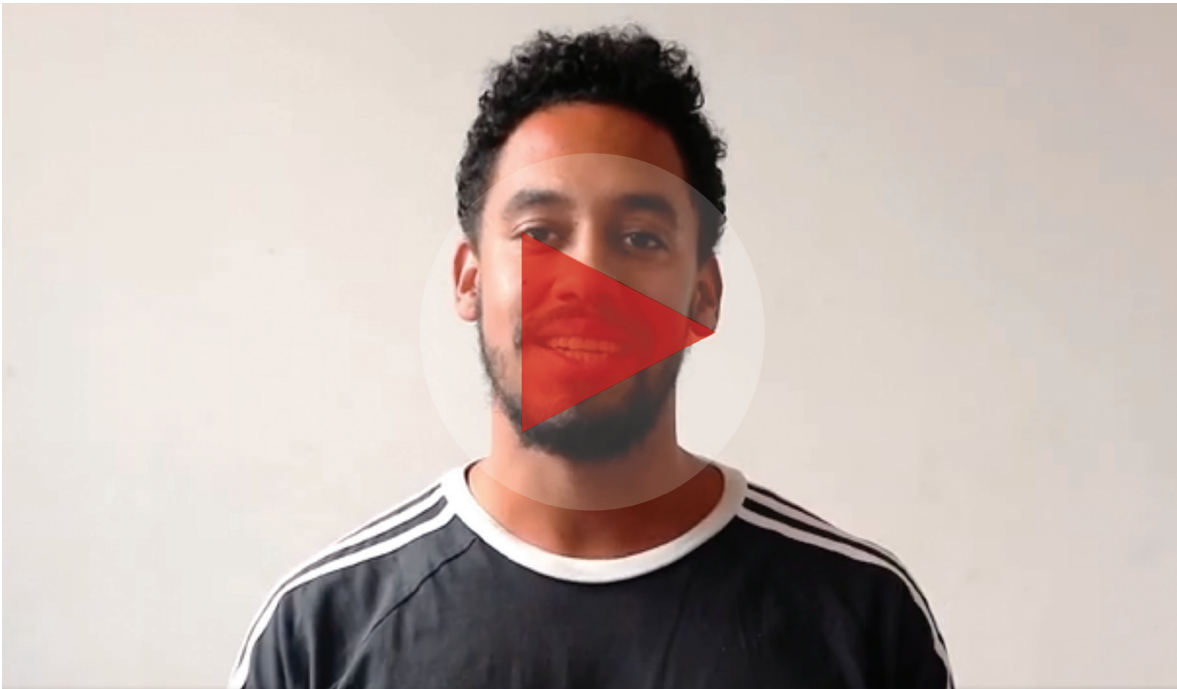
ACTIVITY TWO: HOMEWORK FEEDBACK (5 minutes)

Hear back from students about their experience of watching 'Rumpelstiltskin'.

Discuss: where were the moments of challenge for the characters in the story? What emotions did they feel when watching the challenging moments? What makes it a fairy tale? Is there a happy ending?

ACTIVITY THREE: WARM-UP (10 minutes)

Introduce the video with one of the actors, Andy Umerah, from the Unicorn Online production of *Grimm Tales*. Explain that he will take us through the warm-up today.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Is11ydYIFqs&t>

ACTIVITY FOUR: MOMENTS OF CHALLENGE (15 minutes)

Start with a brief discussion with the whole class - asking the question:

- What emotions do 'Hansel and Gretel' feel at the beginning, middle and end of the story?

Now in pairs, ask students to choose one moment of challenge from the story that they want to work on.

Ask them to write a short scene from the perspective of Hansel and Gretel; decide where they are and what they are doing in the moment. Up to ten lines in total is plenty for this exercise.

- What do they say to each other in this moment?
- What do they not say to each other? (What is going through their heads, what are they thinking? Maybe there is something they are thinking that they decide not to say.)

Ask students to write their scripts, including dialogue, and any important stage directions which include actions, for example '*Hansel looks back to the cottage and the trail of breadcrumbs.*'

ACTIVITY FIVE: INNER THOUGHTS (20 minutes)

Now put two pairs together and ask each pair to take it in turns to perform their work for each other. They may not be able to fully act out what happens; ask them to see how they can show the action within the constraints of the distanced classroom - they may need to show an action on a smaller scale, in slow motion, or speak each other's actions between the dialogue.

Now ask Pair A to repeat their scene, but this time without words. Taking one character each, Pair B now voice over the inner thoughts of Hansel and Gretel. What are the characters thinking in the moments of challenge? Is anything new revealed to the actors? Now swap over and repeat.

As a whole class, discuss:

- What more did they learn about the characters and the situation from listening to the inner thoughts provided by the other pair they were working with?

ACTIVITY SIX: CHECK OUT (5 minutes)

As a whole class, ask the students to check out, saying one thing they are proud of from this session.

Have a final physical shake-out, as you leave the forest and rejoin the world.

Homework: Ask the students to make a tree at home to bring in. They can make them out of paper, cardboard, tissue, foil, clay - whatever materials they wish. Examples can be found at the back of the pack (**resource four**). The trees ideally should be around 15 - 20cm high as they will be used to make a tabletop set of the forest in the next lesson.

Explain that next week we will be doing design work, and that they will also need to bring in a visual image - a painting, drawing, photograph, which they feel connects to the fairy tale forest of the story. This can be an image that evokes a feeling or atmosphere that they associate with the story - it shouldn't be an image of Hansel and Gretel, or of a fairy tale. It can be abstract, figurative, old-fashioned or contemporary, a portrait of someone, a landscape (maybe a forest, but maybe not) or some clothing, or a building - anything that strikes them that has a feeling of the story and the world we're in.

SESSION FOUR

CREATING THE WORLD

“Anyone familiar with the Grimms’ fairy tales knows how prominently forests figure in the collection as a whole. These forests typically lie beyond the bounds of the familiar world. They are the places where protagonists get lost, meet unusual creatures, undergo spells and transformations, and confront their destinies. Children typically “grow up” during their ventures in the forests.” Robert Pogue Harrison

This session focuses on the role of a designer. First, pupils watch the short film with the *Grimm Tales* designer. Then, in small groups, they create a model that represents the visual and physical world their drama takes place in.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understanding the role of the designer
- Making design choices
- Creating the visual world of the story

TRANSITION FOCUS

- Introducing the use of ‘compassionate friend’ techniques
- Developing peer relationships

RESOURCES

‘Meet the designer’ video, shed and Hansel and Gretel templates (**resource five**), scissors, coloured pens, paper, materials to make trees.

STRATEGIES

Ensemble warm up, physical warm up, drawing and making.

ACTIVITY ONE: PASS THE CLAP (5 minutes)

Play pass the clap again, building on the game from Session One. Work for the feeling and dynamic of ensemble; working together to communicate and connect.

ACTIVITY TWO: WARM-UP (10 minutes)

Develop the 'in the forest' warm-up from Session Two.

Ask students to stand (or sit if needed) and imagine the ground beneath their feet. Ask them to feel the darkness around them, and look up and see the trees close together, with only a few shards of light coming through, above you.

Now imagine they hear a twig snap behind them - they look back, and see a glimpse of something rushing through the trees, or in the undergrowth. What do they think it is? What do they see a glimpse of?

Hear from different students, asking them what they think they saw, and whether they can describe it.

Ask them to think about the animal or creature they imagined they saw, and in their seats, to begin to embody their creature. How much space does it take up - is it small, large, tall, wide? Has it got feathers, fur or scales? Can they use their arms and legs to make the shape their creature moves in?

Once you've played with space a little bit, try a breath as the animal, and use the sounds on the out breath, for example;

Bumblebee breath - bzzzzz

Wolf breath - whooooooh

Bear breath - haaaaah

Dragon fire breath - chhhhh

ACTIVITY THREE: SHARING YOUR IMAGES (5 minutes)

In pairs, ask students to take it in turns to share the visual images they found for the homework task. Explain to each other why they chose that image - what drew them to it and why does the image make them think about fairy tales? Ask them to compare the similarities and differences between the images they've chosen.

ACTIVITY FOUR: THE DESIGN PROCESS (10 minutes)

Watch the video with designer Charlotte Espiner.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3RoPoa05dE>

Discuss how a designer brings a story to life, and where they saw the choices Charlotte made for the production in the Grimm Tales videos they have watched.

ACTIVITY FIVE: MAKING THE FOREST (20 minutes)

Put the class into groups of four. Explain that each group is going to make a model of the forest, the cottages, and the characters in the story and will make design choices about the environment, just as Charlotte has talked about in the video.

First, share the trees everyone has made for homework - these are the starting point for the forest and the world of the story. You may want to have some materials - tissue, other paper or modelling clay for students who haven't brought a tree in with them.

In their groups, ask each individual to take responsibility for one item - so one person makes the family cottage, another the witch's house, and the other two take Hansel and Gretel.

Begin by asking the group to agree on their design concept before undertaking their specific tasks.

Things to think about:

- What are Hansel and Gretel wearing - are they in contemporary clothes or fairy tale clothing? What is the weather like in the forest? Have they had time to prepare for their journey?
- What does the forest feel like - what is the atmosphere?
- Where are the cottages in relation to each other?
- What is different about each cottage - one is a family home, and the other is the witch's gingerbread house. How can their design tell the story of what's inside?

When they have finished their individual elements, ask the students to set up their scene on the desk (or drama studio floor), placing the trees, cottage and witch's house in relation to each other, and finally placing Hansel and Gretel into the image.

Reflect on your Hansel and Gretel worlds, and the feelings that they evoke as you look at them.

- How does the forest sit around the cottage and the witch's house?
- What words would you use to describe the forests you have designed? Are they threatening, dark, natural, warm, enveloping, etc?
- What emotions do the worlds evoke?

Ask students to think back to when they embodied the trees in some of the warm-up activities, where they were strong and connected at the roots. Explain that we are going to come back to the forest and think about how it might be a place that offers comfort and security and the feeling of being looked after.

ACTIVITY SIX: CHECK OUT (10 minutes)

Ask students to sit down and close their eyes.

'Think about a moment from this session that you found challenging.'

When you were challenged, how did it feel? Did it feel stressful, worrying, exciting? Did you notice where in your body you felt it? Was it in your tummy? Your chest? Your head, hands, or feet, for example?

What did you or anyone else in your group do that helped you overcome that challenge? If you felt you didn't completely tackle it, what could you do differently next time?

In pairs, take turns to be each other's supportive tree, and say one thing that is positive or reassuring to the other person about how they did in the lesson today.'

Homework: Think about the story of 'Hansel and Gretel' and how they experience the challenges they face. Imagine you know someone who has had a challenging time this summer. It could be a real person or someone made up. This is a person who you care about and respect, that you want to offer helpful, wise advice to. Write a supportive letter to them. You could describe the way in which Hansel and Gretel find their way through the challenges in the story, if you think that your friend could learn something from their story.

SESSION FIVE

THE TREES IN THE FOREST SPEAK

In this session, students continue to develop work on their 'Hansel and Gretel' scenes and the concept of the compassionate friend is introduced through the trees of the forest coming to life and supporting the characters. They also watch a short film with the musical director, Jon McLeod, of *Grimm Tales* and start to explore the world of music and sound in theatre.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Writing and performing as chorus
- Exploring music and sound effects in theatre and film

TRANSITION FOCUS

- Developing understanding of challenges and how to face them
- Introducing 'compassionate mind' approaches to emotional regulation

RESOURCES

'Meet the musical director' video, pens and paper, 'Compassionate Imagery' script (**resource six**).

STRATEGIES

Ensemble warm up, physical warm up - emotional memory, working in role, discussion.

ACTIVITY ONE: ENSEMBLE WARM UP (10 minutes)

Ask students to stand up with their chair behind them. Explain that the aim of this exercise is to work as an ensemble and that three people - no more, no fewer - should be sitting down at all times. And no-one should remain seated for longer than twenty seconds.

See if they can do the activity without relying on eye contact or giving each other visual cues; it's about non-verbal negotiation, using peripheral vision, sensing the room and giving way to others.

When they are good at the activity, you could try challenging the group by changing the number, so that four, or five people are sitting down at any one time.

ACTIVITY TWO: THE COMPASSIONATE TREES (10 minutes)

Remind the class that they've created their own forests - the forest in which Hansel and Gretel got lost, rescued themselves from the witch's house, and made it back home. Explain that we are going to think a bit more about the forest in this session.

Traditionally, the forest is a place of danger and uncertainty, but today we are going to create a different feel for the forest in this story. We want to imagine these trees are benign, compassionate and wise; they are sensitive friends to Hansel and Gretel, who want the best of them. To help create the right emotional atmosphere for the forest we are going to do a visualisation exercise to help us conjure up the feeling of compassion. Actors use exercises like this to inform and enhance their performances. 'The Compassionate Imagery' script can be used for this exercise (**resource six**). The script should be delivered in a calming, soothing voice with a slow pace.

ACTIVITY THREE: REVISIT THEIR SCENES (10 minutes)

Ask the pairs to revisit their 'Hansel and Gretel' scenes and run through the scripts to rehearse what happened in the moment of challenge, and remind themselves of the inner thoughts they heard from the other pair in their small group work.

ACTIVITY FOUR: WHAT THE TREES SAY (15 minutes)

Now move back to their groups of four and ask Pair A to play out their scene whilst the other pair imagine they are trees in the forest, witnessing what is happening in this moment.

For this exercise we are going to imagine the trees in the forest having all the qualities of the compassionate image that we thought about at the beginning of the session. These trees are kind, wise, strong, and non-judgemental. The exercise will focus on two trees who see everything that happens in the forest and can give encouragement and support to Hansel and Gretel. Think about the trees as the voices of the forest - the rustling of the leaves which Hansel and Gretel might hear.

The two trees see everything that happens in the forest and can give encouragement and support. Think about the trees as the voices of the forest - the rustling of the leaves that Hansel and Gretel might hear.

As the trees, Pair B can pause the action at any time. They can ask questions about how Hansel and Gretel are feeling or thinking, and offer words of comfort or advice about what they're seeing.

The trees can't solve the challenge - for example, they can't make the witch disappear. But think about what support they can offer in these moments of difficulty for the characters. You might think about some of the warm-up exercises we've been doing - can the trees help the characters to breathe, or to slow down?

- What might someone in your moment of challenge want to hear from the trees?
- What might help them at this moment?
- What would the forest say to them on their journey through the forest?

Swap over so Pair B plays Hansel and Gretel and Pair A are the trees.

Now ask the groups to write ten sentences together as the trees, speaking to Hansel and Gretel. How can the trees support the characters? Can you make them laugh, comfort them, advise them, support them?

Now ask students to use the ten lines to create a piece of choral performance - they can say all the lines all together, divide them up, use repetition, speak in unison. Play with where they want the emphasis to be, when they want to stress importance or support, when they want to whisper or to be louder.

ACTIVITY FIVE: SOUND AND MUSIC (10 minutes)

Watch the video of Jon McLeod, sound designer and composer.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZ1JPtNsABM>



Discuss what Jon said about the role of music in a production; what it adds to a theatre or film piece, and the way in which it can:

- establish place
- add atmosphere
- support a particular character

Think back to examples of the way music and sound were used in the online versions of 'Hansel and Gretel' and 'Rumpelstiltskin'.

ACTIVITY SIX: CHECK OUT (5 minutes)

Ask the whole class to say one word each about something they're proud of at the end of this lesson.

Homework: Choose some music to add to your choral piece about the trees. This music will need to be decided on in your groups, and it can either be recorded or live. Think about the atmosphere you want to create, or whether there's a specific moment in your piece where you want to use music. You might even want to create your own foley sound; recording something with everyday objects on your phone that can be added into your choral piece.

SESSION SIX

BRINGING ALL ELEMENTS TOGETHER

In this final session, students bring all the elements together to create group presentations which can then be either performed to the class, filmed or audio versions made with images. They also have the opportunity to reflect on the whole six-week process.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understanding how music and sound can impact on a theatrical world.
- Creating your narrative for an audience.
- Sharing and recording the final scenes.

TRANSITION FOCUS

- Developing peer support
- Working collaboratively
- Negotiating shared meaning

RESOURCES

Models from the design session, scripts of scenes and choral work.

STRATEGIES

Ensemble warm up, physical warm up - check in, sequencing work, rehearsal and performance, being an audience, reflection and evaluation, final check out.

ACTIVITY ONE: ENSEMBLE WARM UP (5 minutes)

Revisit passing the clap with the class. Can you pass a smile around the class, this time saying 'Zip' instead of the clap?

ACTIVITY TWO: THERMOMETER (5 minutes)

Repeat the thermometer exercise:

Ask the class to come to a resting position and close their eyes or look down to the floor if this feels more comfortable. Ask them to move their hands as a way of answering the following statements - raise them towards the ceiling if they agree, down towards the floor if they disagree, and hold them somewhere in the middle if they're undecided.

Today I feel happy

Today I feel calm

Today I feel sad

Today I feel bored

Today I feel excited

Today I feel nervous

Today I feel strong

To finish, ask everyone to have a quick shake-out of the whole body and especially the arms and out towards the fingertips, like they're flicking paint from the ends of their fingers.

ACTIVITY THREE: COMBINING YOUR ELEMENTS (20 minutes)

Each group should now have the following:

- Two duologues with Hansel and Gretel
- A model of the forest with the cottage and the witch's house
- A 10-line choral piece, 'What the trees say'
- Music to add - this could be live sound or recorded

Students have 15 minutes to bring all the elements together and rehearse their piece.

Ask them to decide how they want to start and end their pieces and combine all the elements to tell the story.

- How can they use the design model as part of their storytelling?
- How do the chorus trees speak to Hansel and Gretel - is it part of the duologues, or do you use the choral work in conjunction with the design work?

Think about how they want the audience to experience the scene. Do they want to make the model their focus, or will the actors be the focus? How will each element have a relationship with each other?

ACTIVITY FOUR: SHARING AND RECORDING (20 minutes)

The final part of the session is an opportunity for the class to share their work and for it to be documented if possible and useful. The ideas of recording below will also shape what you would like the students' final work to be, and can be shaped by your own distancing guidelines and what is possible.

You might choose just to share the group work back live, or otherwise here are some options for recording it:

- Film each scene as a whole piece of live action with the students acting
- Film the characters on their journey through the table-top forest with students narrating live as part of the recording
- Take still images of the forests and record audio to add to these images

ACTIVITY FIVE: CHECK OUT (10 minutes)

In pairs, ask students to share one thing that they're proud of from the whole six weeks' work. Now ask them to say one thing they have noticed that their partner did really well over the sessions.

Go around the whole class and hear students sharing the thing they're proud of.

Finish with one final thermometer exercise:

Now I feel happy

Now I feel calm

Now I feel sad

Now I feel strong

Now I feel excited

Now I feel content

Everyone should have a quick shake-out of the whole body and especially the arms, and out towards the fingertips, like they're flicking paint from the ends of their fingers.



RESOURCE ONE: THEMES

abandoned

the forest

lost

hope

safety

despair

relief

home

RESOURCE TWO: TEXT EXTRACTS

Abandoned

Early tomorrow morning we'll take them into the thickest part of the forest, make them comfortable, light a fire to keep them warm, give them a little bit of bread, and leave them there by themselves.

The forest

There's not just wild animals in the forest, you know. There are goblins and witches and lord knows what.

Lost

But no matter which way they went, they couldn't find the way home. They walked all through the night and then all through the day, and still they were lost.

Hope

But at midday, they saw a little snow-white bird sitting on a branch nearby. It sang so beautifully that they stopped to listen, and when it stretched its wings and flew, they followed it.

Safety

Don't be frightened, my little dears! Who brought you here? Just come inside, my darlings, come and rest your poor selves in my little box of treats. It's as safe as houses.

Despair

She wept and wept, but she had to fetch water as the witch ordered. 'Please, God, help us,' she sobbed. 'If only the wolves had eaten us in the forest, at least we'd have died together.'

Relief

They were so happy! They threw their arms around each other's necks, they hugged, they jumped for joy, they kissed each other's cheeks. There was nothing to fear anymore.

Home

When they were safely ashore they walked on further, and soon the forest began to grow more familiar. At last, they saw their own home in the distance, and they ran up and rushed inside and threw themselves into their father's arms.

RESOURCE THREE: FOREST WARM UP SCRIPT

Plant your feet into the ground, softening your knees, like a tall oak tree in the middle of the forest.

Take a breath in. What can you smell?

Take another breath in, but this time imagine you can smell the forest around you.

Turn to another tree in the room. Give them a wave. Notice how far away from them you are. You're physically distanced, like the trees in the forest.

Look around at the other trees. Know that all of the other trees in the room are safe. They aren't judging you. They wish you well.

Now notice how your feet are feeling on the ground. Imagine that growing out of your feet are all the roots pushing through the ground, underneath the forest floor. They run underneath all of the trees, meeting the roots of all the other trees you can see. Imagine that that could feel good, like you are not alone, that you are safely connected, together, not touching but underneath the earth, your roots meet.

Stretch your arms up and imagine they're the branches reaching out to the air, then up to the sky. Use your fingers as individual leaves, all reaching out as far as possible to the light. Imagine feeling the warmth of the sunlight on your branches and leaves. The light makes you feel safe and energised. Notice the stretch in your arms, notice it in your fingers.

The trees can move in the same direction - imagine the wind blowing gently shifting you one way then the next. Sway a little like a tree would in the wind. Now try, without saying anything, to see if you can all sway in the same direction, the same amount, as if you were all facing the same challenge together, of being blown by the same wind from the same direction.

Now this bit might feel the most silly, but go with it! Imagine there is a huge storm that shakes all your leaves and branches. Slowly at first, then as it comes nearer shake more and more and more. Then stop. Look around, check your tree, are you ok? How does your trunk feel? How do your branches and leaves feel? Do they feel and look different now? You are one strong tree who survived the huge storm! Glance over the other trees and check that they have survived. Gradually, come to a standstill and then relax. Take a deep breath in and out. Take a moment to feel good about you and the other trees surviving.

Shake out your arms and legs to finish.

RESOURCE FOUR: PAPER TREE GUIDES

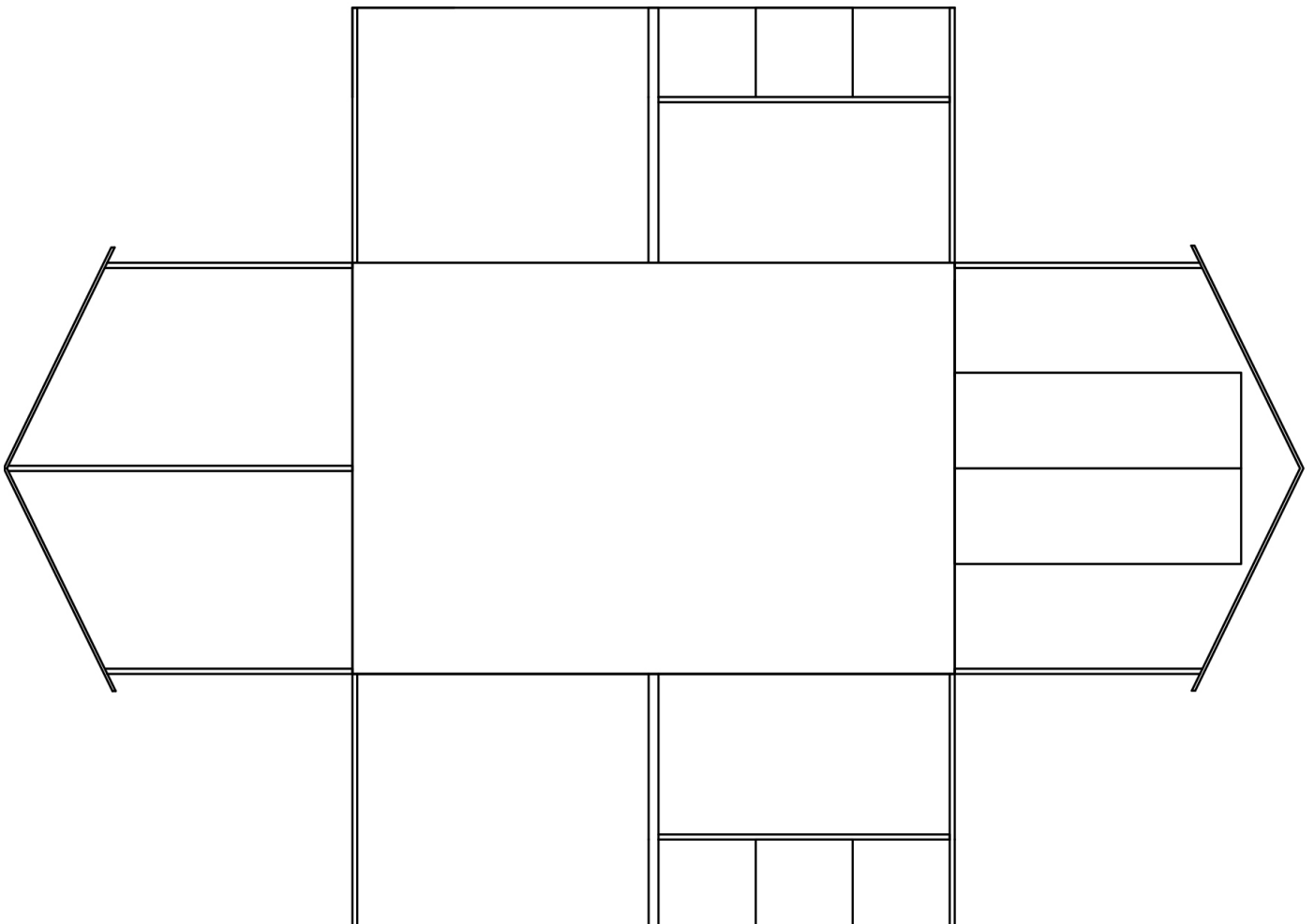
'3D Paper Christmas Tree | How to Make a 3D Paper Xmas Tree DIY Tutorial' (duration 7 mins 43 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZAsOQiZMEs>

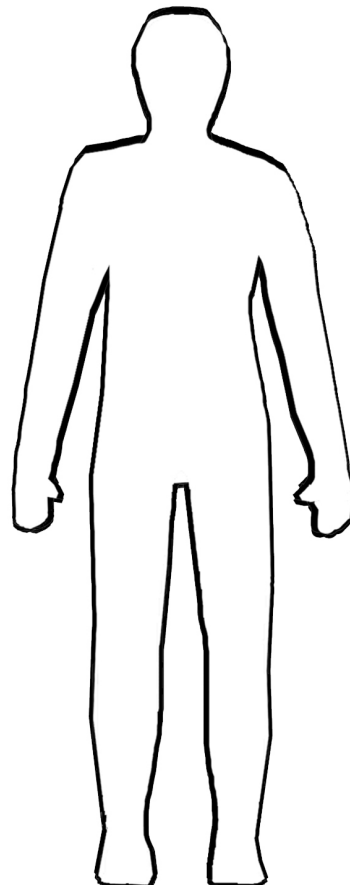
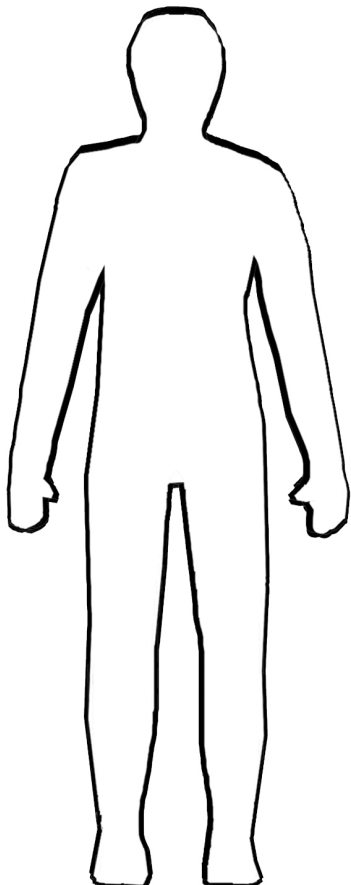
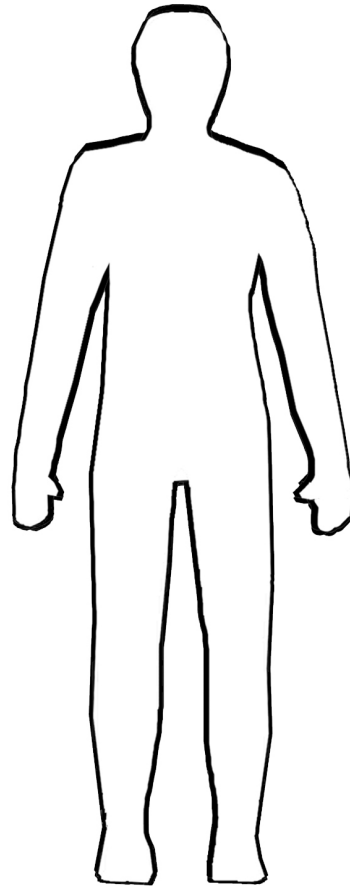
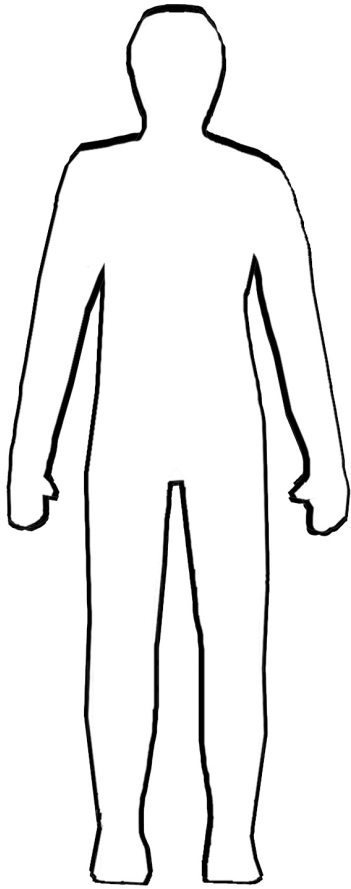
'Easy Paper Tree - Origami Christmas Tree Tutorial (Henry Pham)' (duration 7 mins 8 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-CriO8W10c>

RESOURCE FIVE: TEMPLATE FOR SHED



RESOURCE FIVE: TEMPLATE FOR SHED



RESOURCE SIX: COMPASSIONATE IMAGERY SCRIPT

Ask students to sit for this exercise. If students don't feel comfortable during the exercise, they shouldn't worry about it; instead they should just think of something that makes them happy - it is all inside their head, so no-one can tell if they are pretending or not!

Make sure that you are comfortable in your seat. Roll your shoulders slightly back and hold your head as if you are both confident and relaxed. You can choose to close your eyes, or look at the floor or desk in front of you.

Take a breath in. Take a breath out. Notice your breathing.

Now try to make your breath just a little deeper and a little slower. Notice the rhythm of the breath. Try to imagine that each breath in and out is soothing you, like a baby being rocked gently back and forth.

Carry on noticing your breath, but this time move your mouth into a relaxed smile, like you've just noticed someone you really like has come into the room. Does this make you feel a bit different? Keep breathing with this relaxed smile. Try to keep this relaxed smile for as much of the exercise as possible.

Now we are going to try to imagine something or someone who we think is compassionate. This means that they are someone who really cares and wants to help. Do not worry if nothing comes to mind, or you start to think about other things. That's ok, the mind is a tricky thing to focus. Sometimes this can take some practice.

Notice if someone or something comes to mind as I say the following words.

Non-judgemental. Accepting. Wise. Strong. Warm. Kind.

It might help to think of someone who has been kind and helpful to you, someone you can trust. A friend or teacher or family? Sometimes it is hard to think of someone, but you might think of something that makes you feel safe and comforted, like drinking hot chocolate, or favourite soft jumper or the feeling of the warm sun on you. It will be different for every person.

I'm going to say the words again. Notice if the words remind you of anyone? Or if any sounds or colours come to mind when I say them.

Non-judgemental. Accepting. Wise. Strong. Warm. Kind.

If you have a person or image in mind then take a moment to think about how that image looks? What do they sound like? What do they feel like? How does it make you feel to be near it?

Hold on to that feeling. That feeling of being close to something or someone that makes you feel warm, that you can trust to be wise and kind, that will be strong for you, and that accepts you as you are, without judgement.

That image or person, that feeling, is something you can come back to in your mind whenever you need comfort or support. Today, we are going to use it as the feeling of the forest. All the trees in the forest will be like compassionate friends and will have that feeling.



TEACHER RESOURCES

As we begin to end this exercise, notice your breathing again. Where do you feel it? Can you feel it in your chest, or in your throat, or in your nose?

Start to notice the room around you again. What can you hear in the room? What can you smell? Finally give your toes a wiggle, give your fingers a wiggle, have a wiggle in your seat.

This script is written by Dr. Sarah Wassall, and is influenced by the exercises freely available from The Compassionate Mind Foundation.

THE OTHER UNICORN ONLINE GRIMM TALES

SUMMARIES OF THE OTHER FIVE STORIES

CINDERELLA

When her father remarries after his wife's death, Cinderella is forced to work in the kitchen by her new mother and sisters. In this version by Philip Pullman, it isn't a fairy godmother who helps Cinderella, but the birds that gather in a hazel tree she has planted at her mother's grave. When the Prince invites all the young women to the ball, it is the birds who create a beautiful ball gown and slippers for Cinderella so that she too can go to the ball.

At the ball, no one recognises Cinderella, where she dances all night with the Prince and then slips away and runs home before her stepsisters return. The Prince tries to chase after her, but she disappears into the night.

Twice more the birds create a beautiful gown for Cinderella; the first looks like moonlight, the second like sunlight, and with slippers that shine like gold.

On the evening of the last ball, Cinderella once more tries to slip away early, but this time she slips and leaves one of her golden slippers behind.

The Prince, determined to find the owner of the golden slipper, travels throughout the land where all the young women try on the slipper. When he arrives at Cinderella's house, both of her stepsisters try to force their feet into the shoe. When they aren't able to get the slipper on, their mother suggests they cut off their toes to make the shoe fit. With the first sister, the Prince is forced to accept that the sister is the rightful owner of the slipper and take her as his bride. But as he's riding away the birds call out to him from the hazel tree and point out the blood in the shoe.

The same thing happens with the second sister, and once again the birds alert the Prince to blood in the shoe.

Finally, the Prince insists there must be one more daughter in the household, and Cinderella is brought forward. The slipper fits, and the Prince has found his bride.

In trying to select a tale, I read a lot of them to my children, and I was struck by how gripped they were by the stories. The stories are dense and lean at the same time, and when it came to 'Cinderella' I was surprised by there being no fairy godmother, and the extent to which the story is about a girl who is grieving for the loss of her mother. I was interested in the ways in which she turns to nature, and the role that the birds play in the story. I was also interested in it as a story of spiritual strength, and in the ways in which Cinderella's kindness and goodness ultimately overpower those who place too much value on monetary wealth and physical attributes. Bijan Shebani (director of 'Cinderella')

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

A poor miller finds himself in the presence of the King, and can't resist trying to impress him, and he tells the King that his daughter can spin straw into gold.

The King orders the daughter to his palace and puts her in a room full of straw with a spinning wheel and demands the girl turn all the straw into gold overnight. And if she fails, he says, she will be put to death.

Left alone the poor girl is distraught, and starts to cry, when the door opens and a little man comes in and asks what she will give him if he does it for her. She offers her necklace and the little man sits down and spins the straw into gold.

When the King sees what she has done he is delighted, but he wants more, so he takes her to a bigger room and once again leaves her overnight to spin the straw into gold. Once again the little man arrives and this time she gives him her ring in exchange for him spinning the straw into gold. On the third night the King leaves her in a larger room, but this time he says if she spins the straw into gold he will make her his wife – he couldn't possibly find a wife with more riches than the miller's daughter.

This time when the little man arrives, the girl has nothing more to offer him. So he makes a deal – she must promise that when she becomes queen she will give him her first child. She agrees – what else can she do? And so the little man once again weaves the straw into gold.

So the miller's daughter marries the king, and a year later, when she brings a child into the world, the little man appears and demands the baby.

The queen cries and begs and the little man feels sorry for her. He says she has three days to find out what his name is, and if she can't, on the third day, he will take the child as she promised.

The queen sends a messenger out throughout the kingdom to find all the names there are. On the first evening when the little man returns, she tries all the names she can think of, but it's no good.

On the second day the messenger goes out again, but once again, the queen fails to name the little man.

On the third day the messenger goes out gathering names, and as he rides through the thickest part of the forest he spots a little man dancing, and singing:

*One more day and then they'll see
The royal child belongs to me
Water, earth, and air, and flame -
Rumpelstiltskin is my name*

When Rumpelstiltskin arrives at the palace on the third evening, the queen is finally able to name him, and he is so angry that he takes one of his legs and tears himself in two.

When I read the tales, I initially thought I would choose a lesser-known story, as there are so many weird and wonderful characters, but I kept finding myself coming back to 'Rumpelstiltskin'. I was grabbed by the story of greed in there; everyone wants more, and they lie and manipulate to get it. Even the poor miller's daughter doesn't keep her promise to Rumpelstiltskin, and I began to see his story through a very different lens; ultimately he's the only character who has integrity. I'm fascinated by the magic of transformation, and the straw to gold imagery felt really rich in theatrical terms. I was also really struck by the use of threes in the narrative; it's a feature in lots of fairytales but in this it drives every moment and is a joy to play with in storytelling. Rachel Bagshaw (director of 'Rumpelstiltskin')

THE BOY WHO LEFT HOME TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE SHIVERS

This is the story about a young man whose brother is quick-witted and able to deal with everything, except for one thing: if it's dark or a bit creepy, he'd say he didn't like it as it gave him the shivers. The younger brother understands nothing, and in particular doesn't know what the shivers are.

When his father wants him to leave home and earn a living, the boy agrees, and says he wants to go out and learn how to get the shivers.

At first, he gets a job ringing the church bell with the sexton at the church. In the middle of the night, the sexton dresses up as a ghost and tries to give the boy the shivers. But when the boy sees the ghostly, white figure, he isn't afraid – instead he knocks the sexton down the stairs of the belfry.

The boy continues his adventures in the world, telling people he's trying to find out about the shivers. He's not frightened by seven men hanging on the gallows; instead, he cuts them down and sits them around his fire, and gets angry when they don't talk to him. He's challenged to guard a haunted castle, and doesn't get the shivers when attacked by two huge black cats and black dogs with red eyes. Or when the bones of dead men fall down the chimney, or when an old man in the bowels of the castle tries to overpower him - instead, he finds gold in the depths of the castle, and ends up marrying a princess.

Nothing he encounters gives him the shivers. It is only when he gets on the princess's nerves talking about the shivers that she decides to give them to him herself. She gets her maid to go down to the brook and get a bucket of cold water and minnows (tiny fish), and while he is asleep, they pull back the covers and throw the bucket of minnows over him. At last, he has the shivers.

I chose this story because I loved its mad energy. We had to cut it down for timing, but I was surprised by how much actually happens in only a few pages. It's surreal, scary, and also really funny. I liked how the story has a real sense of humour. The boy is a great character, both because of his fearlessness but also his naivety. I knew it would be a good challenge for an actor and think a lot of kids watching the story will find it relatable - how we have to find ourselves as we grow up. Tristan Fynn-Aiduenu (director of 'The Boy Who Left Home To Find Out About The Shivers')

THE BRAVE LITTLE TAILOR

This is the story of a tailor who kills seven flies who are eating his jam, with one blow – he is so proud that he sets off into the town wearing a sash he made for himself, bearing the words ‘Seven with one blow’.

Wearing his sash, he encounters a giant, who is impressed by the words on the sash and challenges the tailor to a series of tests, but the little tailor manages to outwit him. He goes back to the giant's cave where there are two other giants. The giants try to kill him while he's sleeping, but he's too clever for them, and hides himself in the corner of the cave where they can't see him.

The next day, he creeps out of the cave and finds himself in a kingdom where the people are impressed by his sash, and believe he must be a great soldier. The King makes him field marshal, in charge of the army, but the soldiers are worried that he will be too fierce, as they're scared of him. So the King decides to set him a challenge that he thinks he will fail: to kill the giants that have been terrorising their kingdom. If he succeeds, the King promises his daughter's hand in marriage.

The brave little tailor accepts the challenge and sets off on his own into the forest where he sees the giants sleeping. He climbs up a tree and drops stones, first on one giant, and then the other. The giants wake up and blame each other. They get into a terrible argument, pulling great trees up by the roots to hit each other with, and both die.

When he returns to the King to claim the princess' hand in marriage, the King is still reluctant to give her up. He sets the brave little tailor two more tasks; to capture a fearsome rhinoceros, and a wild boar which is eating all the orchards and farms.

Of course, the brave little tailor manages to capture them both, so the King has to fulfill his promise.

One night the princess hears her husband talking in his sleep about cutting and sewing, and she realises that he is nothing but a simple tailor. She tells her father, the King, and together they plot to get his servants to tie the tailor up while he is asleep and put him on a ship to China. But one of the servants, who is loyal to the brave little soldier, overhears this and tells him of the plan.

That night, the brave little soldier pretends to be asleep and calls out ‘*I've slaughtered seven with one blow, killed two giants, tamed a rhinoceros, captured a wild boar, and I'm supposed to be afraid of a few quivering servants outside the bedroom.*’ The servants run off terrified, and the brave little tailor remains king for the rest of his days.

I didn't know this story before, but I immediately found it really entertaining and witty. I enjoyed the Tailor's confidence and intellect- he uses his brain as opposed to his physical strength to outwit everyone that he encounters. He's mischievous and devious yet loveable; and the surrealism of the different adventures he goes on made this story feel epic. So often in these stories the lead character is 'rewarded' with marrying a princess (often against her will) so I also found it interesting that we get to experience a Princess' unhappiness about being offered as a reward. I hope children and their families will be tickled by this story as much as I was. Ola Ince (director of 'The Brave Little Tailor')

THE DEVIL WITH THE THREE GOLDEN HAIRS

A poor couple have a child born with a caul (the amniotic membrane over the face), a sign of good luck, and it is prophesied the child will marry the King's daughter.

The King who is travelling in disguise, happens to be in the village, and, hearing about the prophecy – he doesn't want this poor child to marry his daughter – he persuades the couple that, as a rich man, he can look after the child, and pays them to part with the baby.

But when he leaves, he puts the baby in a box and throws it into the river. The baby floats down river, where the box gets caught in a weir, and a miller and his wife raise the child as their own.

Many years later, the King is travelling again and visits the miller and his wife. He hears that the boy in their household, now fourteen, isn't their son, but was found in a box in the river. Realising it is the same boy he tried to get rid of all those years ago, he asks the boy to take a message to the queen in the palace – the message tells the queen to kill the boy bearing the message immediately.

On his way to the palace, the boy gets lost in the forest and knocks at the door of a cottage. An old woman lets him stay, but warns that a band of robbers live there and will kill him if they find him. But the boy says he is not afraid, and is so tired he needs to sleep.

The robbers return, see the sleeping boy and hear that he is taking a message to the queen. They open the letter and read it; taking pity on the boy, they rewrite the message, commanding the queen to marry her daughter to the boy, which she does when he arrives at the palace.

When the King returns home to find his daughter married, he is angry and tells the boy that if he is to remain married to his daughter he must first go to the devil and pluck three golden hairs out of his head, and bring them back to him.

The boy agrees to the challenge and sets off. He comes to a town where the people are sad because their fountain, which used to pour wine, no longer does. The boy says he will find out why this is so and will tell them why on his way back.

He comes to another town where a tree that used to bear golden apples no longer does. The boy says he will find out why, and tell them what to do about it on his return.

Then he comes to a river, where the ferryman who takes him across the river wants to know why he must forever ferry people across the river. The boy says he will tell him why on his return.

Finally, he arrives at the mouth of hell, and inside he meets the devil's grandmother. He tells her that he must get three golden hairs from the devil's head, and that he also wants to solve the mystery of the townspeople's fountain and tree, and the ferryman's mystery. The grandmother takes pity on him, but says if the devil catches him he will eat him. So she turns him into an ant and hides him in the folds of her skirt.

The devil comes home, where he can smell the boy, but can't find him. Eventually, he has his supper, and then falls asleep in his grandmother's lap.

When he is asleep, she plucks a golden hair out of his head; he wakes, angry, and she tells him she was dreaming about a town with a fountain that no longer pours wine. The devil tells her if only the

stupid townspeople would find the toad under the stone and kill it, then it would pour wine again. Then he goes back to sleep.

Once again she plucks a hair – this time, when he wakes up, she tells him she is dreaming about the tree that used to bear golden apples. He says that all they need to do is kill the mouse gnawing at the roots, and it will again.

The last time he is woken by her pulling out a hair, she mentions the ferryman and how he doesn't know how he can leave the boat. The devil says all he has to do is hand the oar to a passenger, and then he can leave.

The next morning, the old woman turns the ant back into the boy, and he sets off with the three golden hairs.

On his return, the journey the boy tells the ferryman, the townspeople with the tree, and those with the fountain what they must do to get what they want. In return, they give him donkeys laden with gold.

When he returns to the palace, the King is impressed with all the gold, and asks the boy where he got it from. He tells him that when he had crossed the river with the ferryman, the shore on the other side was made of gold rather than sand.

The greedy King sets off to find the gold. When he comes to the ferry, he steps onboard and the ferryman asks '*Could you just hold this oar for me?*', hands it to the King, and then runs off free. And the King is now trapped, and has to row the ferry forever more.

'I'd never come across this particular story, but was struck by its unpredictability, and how it didn't quite seem to follow a conventional fairy tale structure. It takes unexpected twists and turns, with characters who do things we might not have expected (the 'good' miller couple who nevertheless give their boy away to the King, the 'bad' robbers who suddenly take pity on him, and of course the Devil's grandmother who occupies a brilliantly morally ambiguous position in the story). From a live storytelling point of view, it also opened up the chance for an actor to have a lot of fun creating the different personalities we meet along the way.' **Polly Findlay** (director of '**The Devil With The Three Golden Hairs**')

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