

RED PAPER KITE

TEACHER'S
Notes

Miss Eliza
Flowerdew

can nearly touch
the ceiling



MISS ELIZA FLOWERDEW CAN NEARLY TOUCH THE CEILING

Synopsis

Lucy's mum is taller than her.
Her grandad is even taller.
So Lucy longs to take a peek at the very elderly
Miss Eliza Flowerdew – at her age, she might even
be able to touch the ceiling! But is Lucy brave enough
to find out the truth?

This is a magical story that explores how we can make incorrect assumptions about people, particularly the elderly. Along with Lucy, children will discover the rich experiences that make up a long life, the importance of memories and how the most unlikely friendships can be formed.

About the author: Brenda Gurr

Brenda is the author of books and educational material for children of all ages. Her titles include the chapter books *Trusty Trekkers* and *Lizard Tongue*, and the illustrated information book *Monster Sharks: Megalodon and other prehistoric predators of the deep*. Her first chapter book series has recently been contracted by New Frontier Publishing. *Miss Eliza Flowerdew can nearly touch the ceiling* is her first picture book.

About the illustrator: H el ene Magisson

H el ene Magisson started her artistic career as a painting restorer in Paris, where she was also trained in the art of medieval illumination. She has lived in countries all over the world, including Africa and India. H el ene has illustrated several books, including *Slowly! Slowly!* by T.M. Clark, a CBCA 2018 Notable Picture Book of the Year.

Author Brenda Gurr
Illustrator H el ene Magisson

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44pp, HB,
250mm x 250mm x 10mm

RRP AU\$26.99

AGES 5 and up

Author's inspiration

'My younger son inspired this book. When he was three years old, he asked me, 'Mum, when you turn 100, will you be able to touch the ceiling?'. He had somehow formed the idea that people never stop growing as they age, which I absolutely loved! I thought it had the makings of a wonderful story about imagination and appreciating others.'

Illustrator's inspiration

'When I first read the manuscript from Brenda Gurr, Lucy came very naturally under my pencil. I could feel her lovely personality: clever, lively and very curious about everything. She had to be sweet, with her nose always pointed up, as she is still a small girl who is very intrigued by the height of adults.'

Miss Eliza's lovely name, Flowerdew, inspired me a lot. I had to play a bit with such a poetic name. Also, by reading Brenda's manuscript, it sounded like she had had an adventurous life. I had in mind someone like Alexandra David-Néel, for she was a very adventurous and admirable woman. Brenda was inspired by Nancy Wake, a heroine of the Second World War, who had a fantastic, strong character. So I guess Miss Eliza is a mix of all these things: adventurous, strong and engaged. I just had to add a touch of quirkiness to make Miss Eliza appealing for a young audience.

I imagined many flowerpots and leaves all through the book with hues of greens and blues. So Lucy's dress had to be emphasised like a sweet little raspberry through the spreads. Also, I wanted Lucy to have a specific silhouette, with this very special hairstyle which makes her look like a little onion.

For this book, I wanted to surprise the reader and play with the height of my two main characters. We all imagine that Eliza will be very tall, as her house is stretched out and everything inside is huge. But the reality is totally different.'

Educational topics

This book will encourage conversation about curiosity, how we treat the elderly and making assumptions about others. It also provides an opportunity for students to compare and contrast the characters of Lucy and Eliza.

Discussion topics

Before reading the book

- Look at the cover. Which character do you think is Eliza Flowerdew?
- Why do you think Eliza Flowerdew might be nearly able to touch the ceiling?
- How do you think the younger character is feeling?
- What kind of story do you think this will be? For example, funny? Serious? Mysterious?

After reading the book

- Why did Lucy think that Eliza Flowerdew might be able to touch the ceiling?
- If you were Lucy, would you have gone to Miss Eliza's house? Why or why not?
- How do you think Eliza felt when she found Lucy in her house?
- Name some of the things Eliza had done in her life. Why might these events have been important to her? Which are your favourites?
- Do you think Eliza and Lucy will become friends? Why or why not?

Additional activities

The arts

Visual literacy

- The illustrations in this book are full of tiny details. Choose one spread in the book and write a list of the tiny things you see. Why do you think the illustrator might have included each one?
- Write a description of the style of the illustrations in the book.
- Which main colours have been used in the illustrations?
- Look closely at the illustrations of Eliza and Lucy. What has the illustrator done to show their personalities?
- How has the illustrator given the idea that Eliza Flowerdew might be very tall before Lucy meets her?

Art

- Draw pictures that show three adventures you think could have happened in the life of Eliza Flowerdew.
- Complete the colour-me-in pages.

Language

Writing

- The description of the events in Eliza's life make a story within the main story. Write your own 'story within a story' using two different characters.
- Imagine that Eliza Flowerdew really is very tall. Draft a new middle and ending for the story using this idea.
- Write a diary entry for Eliza that explains how she feels about Lucy spying on her and then how she feels after she has met her.
- Write a book review! [Worksheet 5].

Oral language

- Interview an elderly person in your family or community. Ask them to tell you about three amazing things that have happened to them in their lives. Report back to the class [Worksheet 2].
- Find a photograph that shows you doing something you think you will remember when you are older. Tell the class about it.

Society and environment

- Find out how the elderly are treated in your community – what care and social facilities are available? Make a list. Add any facilities you think are needed.
- Read or listen to an interview with someone who is in their 90s or beyond! What are their secrets to a long life?

Further information

- Japan has by far the world's highest concentration of elderly people.
- People who have more active social lives tend to live longer than those who spend much of their time alone.
- Approximately 85% of people who live to age 100 and beyond are women.

Further reading

Max meets a monster by Tracey Hawkins and Chantal Stewart

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox and Julie Vivas

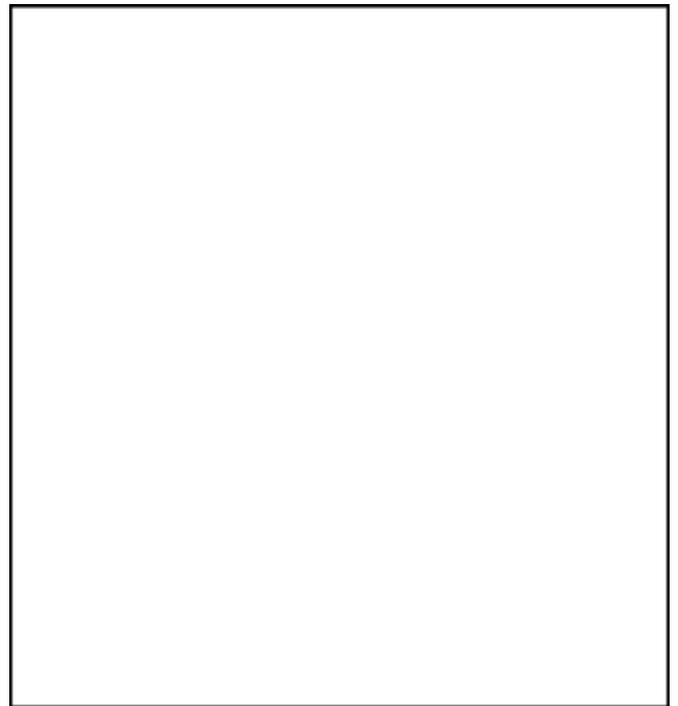
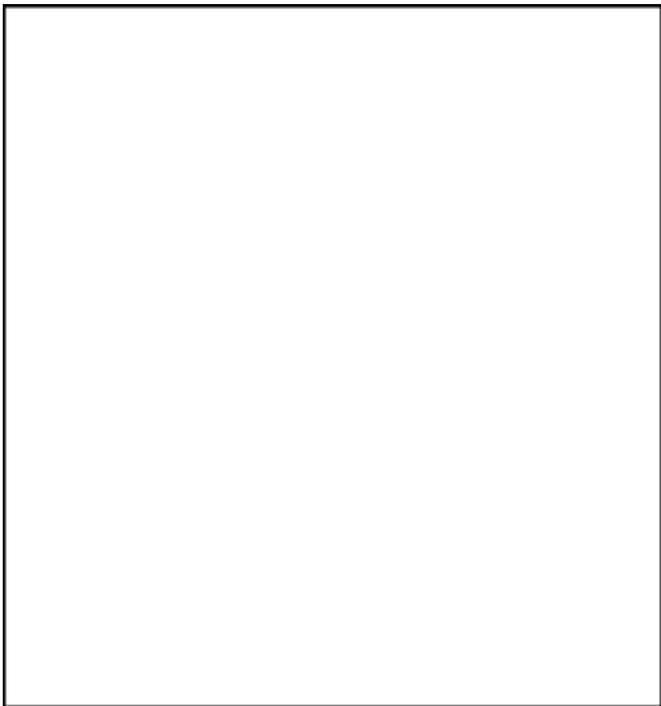
Mr George Baker by Amy Hest and Jon J Muth

Harry and Walter by Kathy Stinson and Qin Leng

Worksheet 1

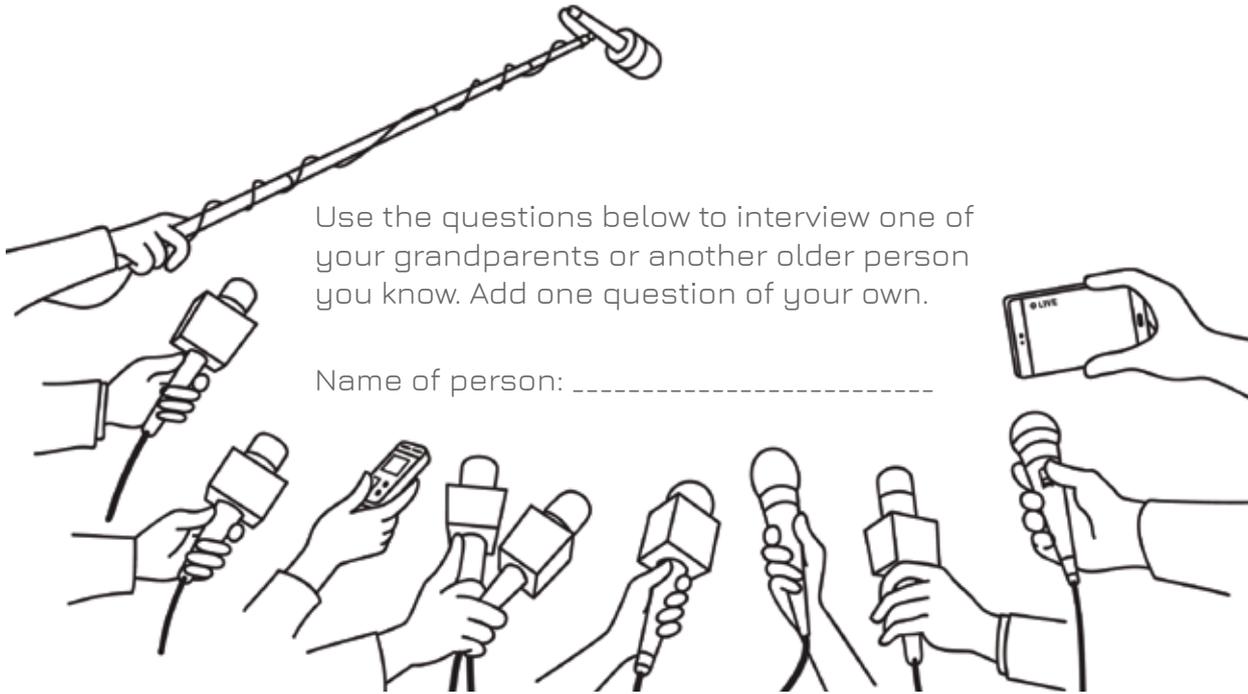
Discuss the questions below with your class. You can use books or the internet to help you write the answers.

1. Imagine Eliza Flowerdew's 100th birthday is this year. What year would it have been when she was your age?
2. What kinds of clothes did children wear in _____?
(Copy the year you wrote in question 1.)
3. What kinds of things did children like to do in _____?
(Copy the year you wrote in question 1.)
4. Use your answers to draw Eliza as a child doing something she might have liked. Next to it, draw yourself doing something you like to do.



How are the two pictures different? How are they the same?

Worksheet 2



Use the questions below to interview one of your grandparents or another older person you know. Add one question of your own.

Name of person:

- When and where were you born?
- How many brothers and sisters did you have?
- Did you have any pets?
- Where did you live when you were my age?
- Where did you go to school? What was school like?

- What was one of your favourite things to do as a child?

- What is your favourite childhood memory?

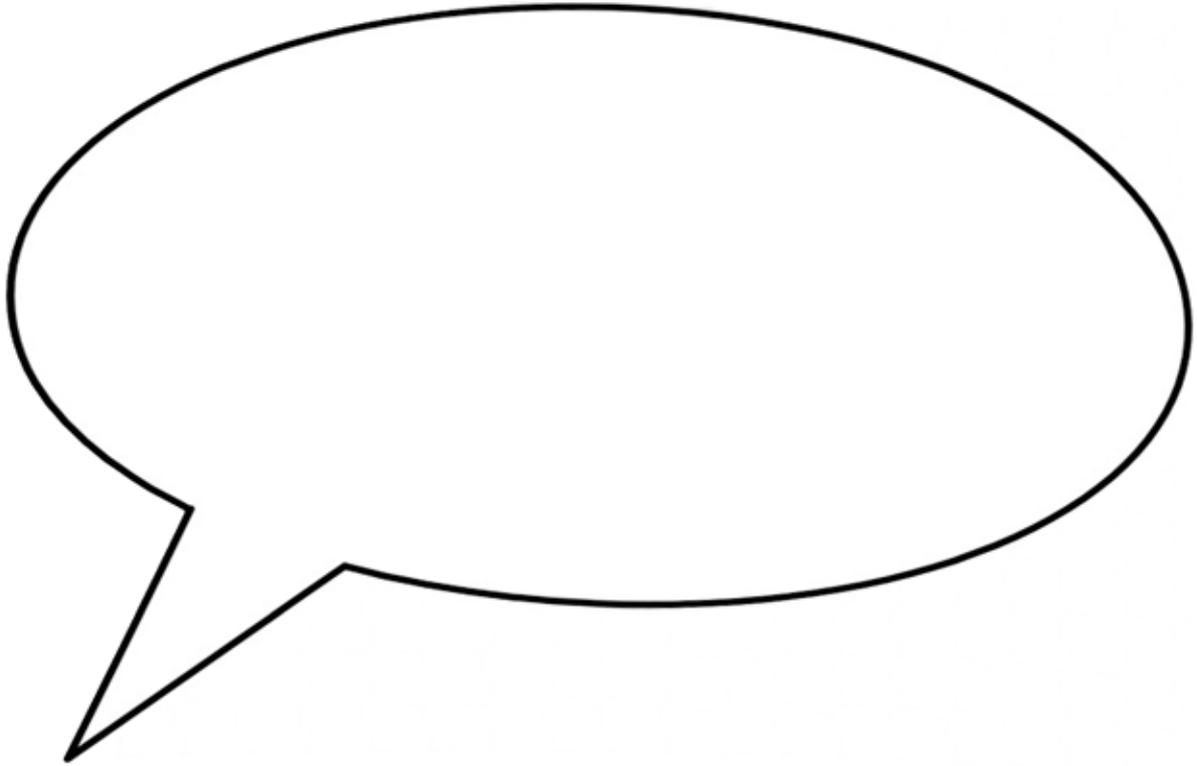
- What are you most proud of?

- What is the most important thing you have learned?

- My question:

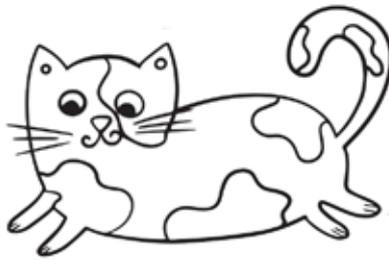
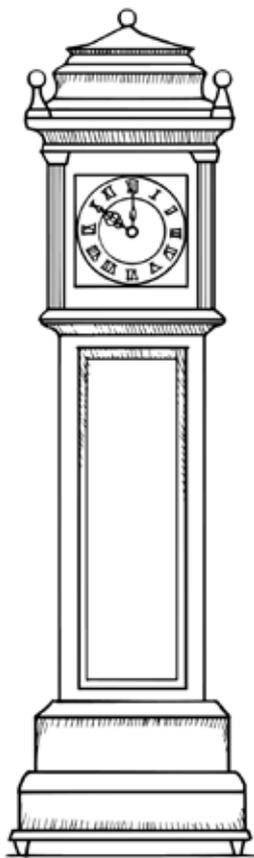
Worksheet 3

Draw a picture of yourself at age 99. In the speech balloon, write about some of the best things that have happened to you in your life so far.

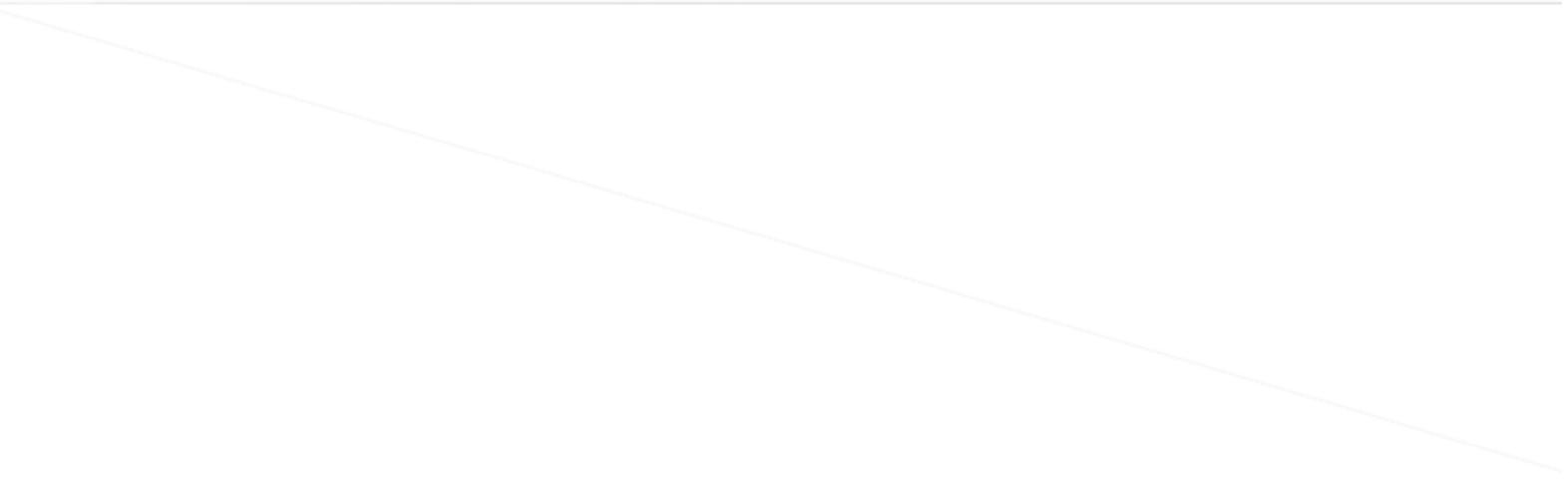


Worksheet 4

1. Colour in the pictures and cut them out.
2. Put them in order from shortest to tallest.
3. Glue them in place [Next Page].

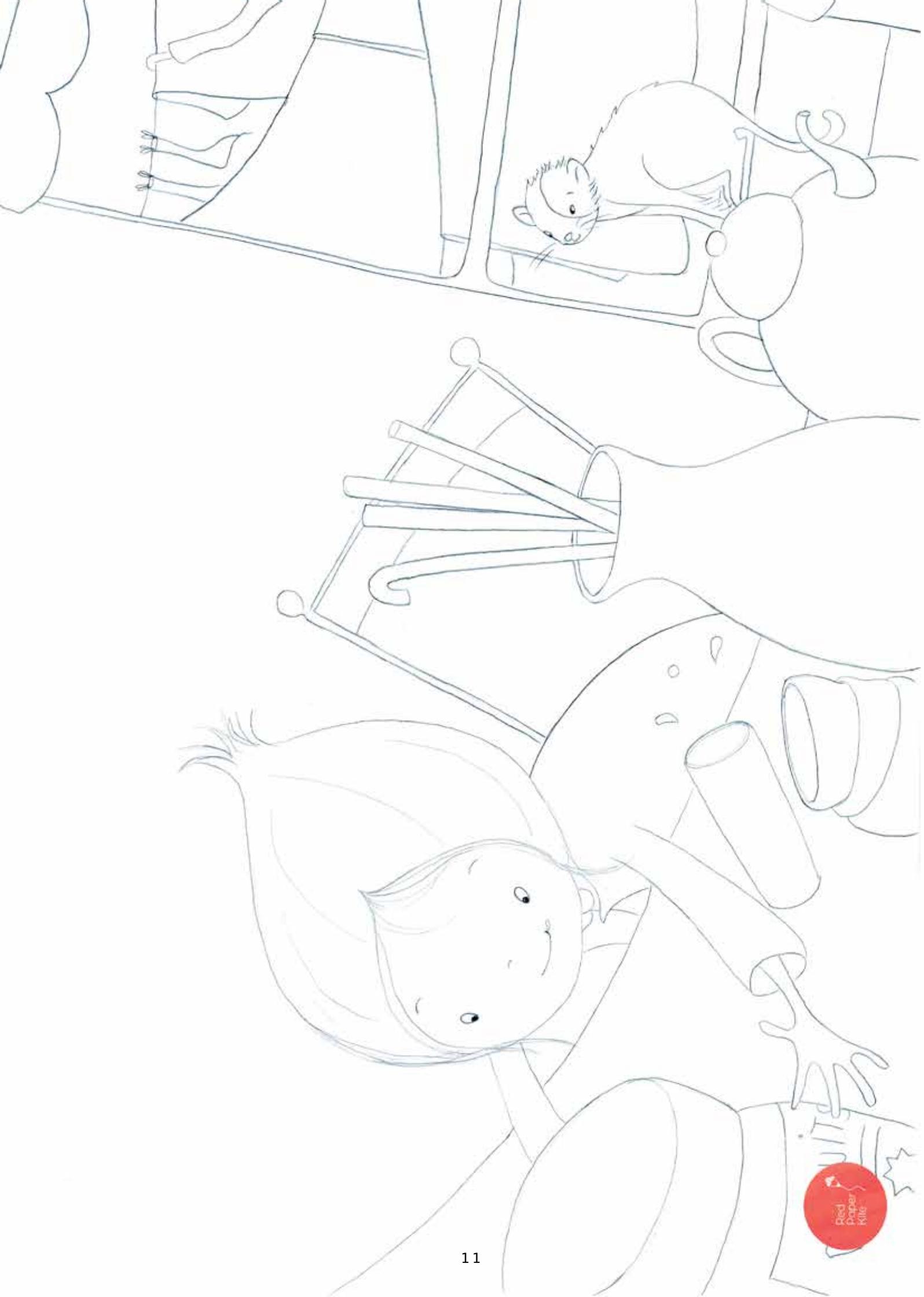


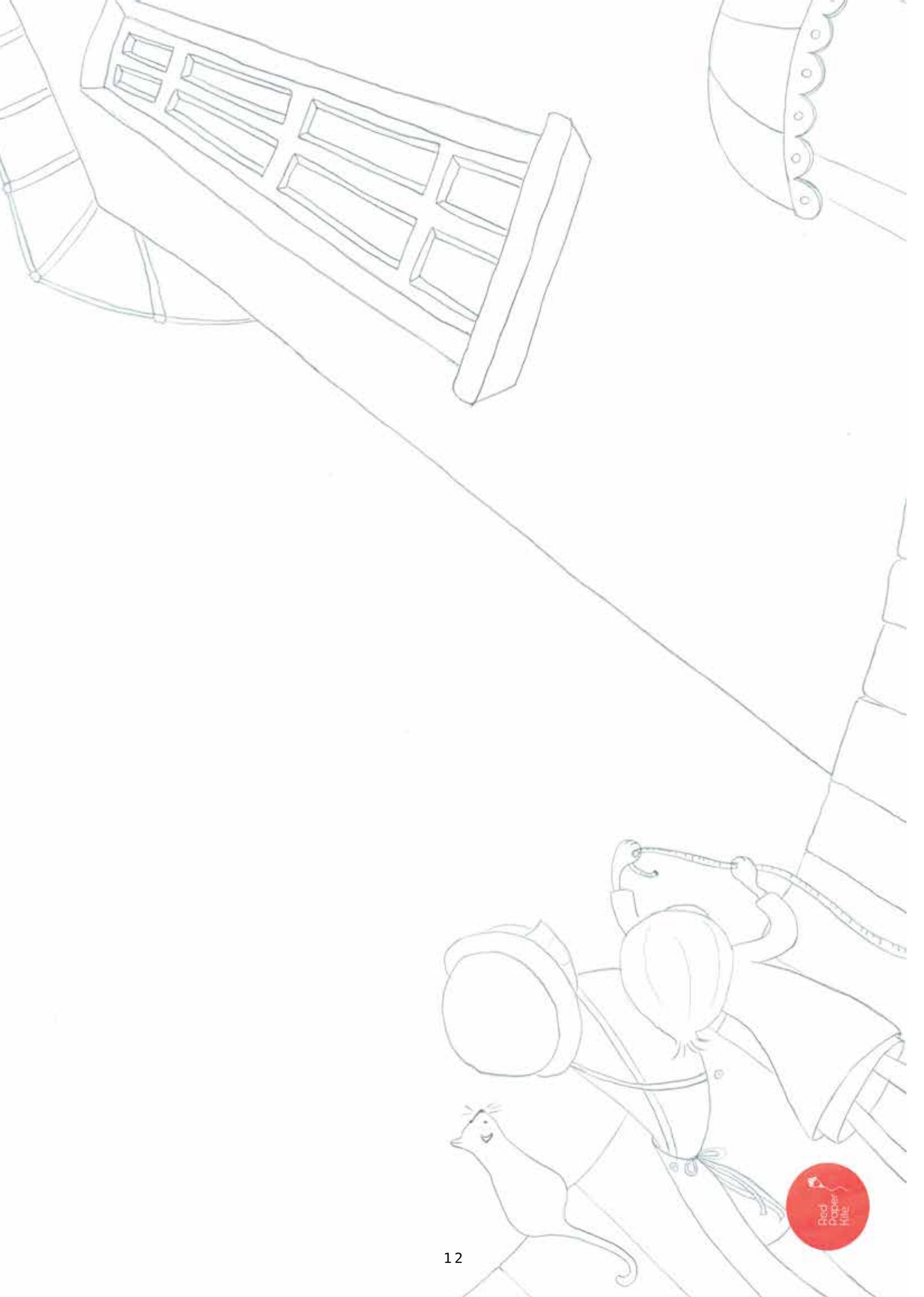
TALLEST

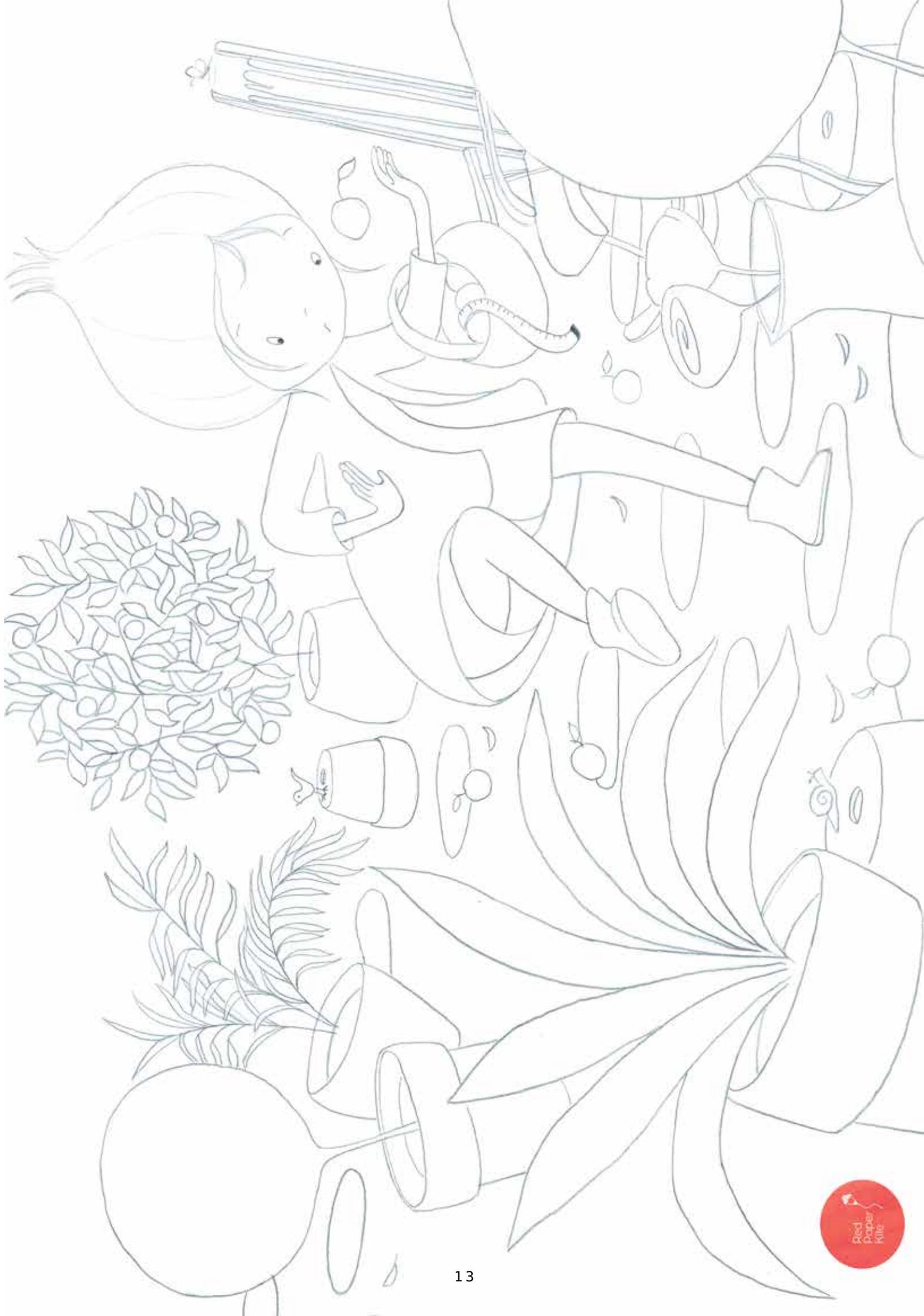


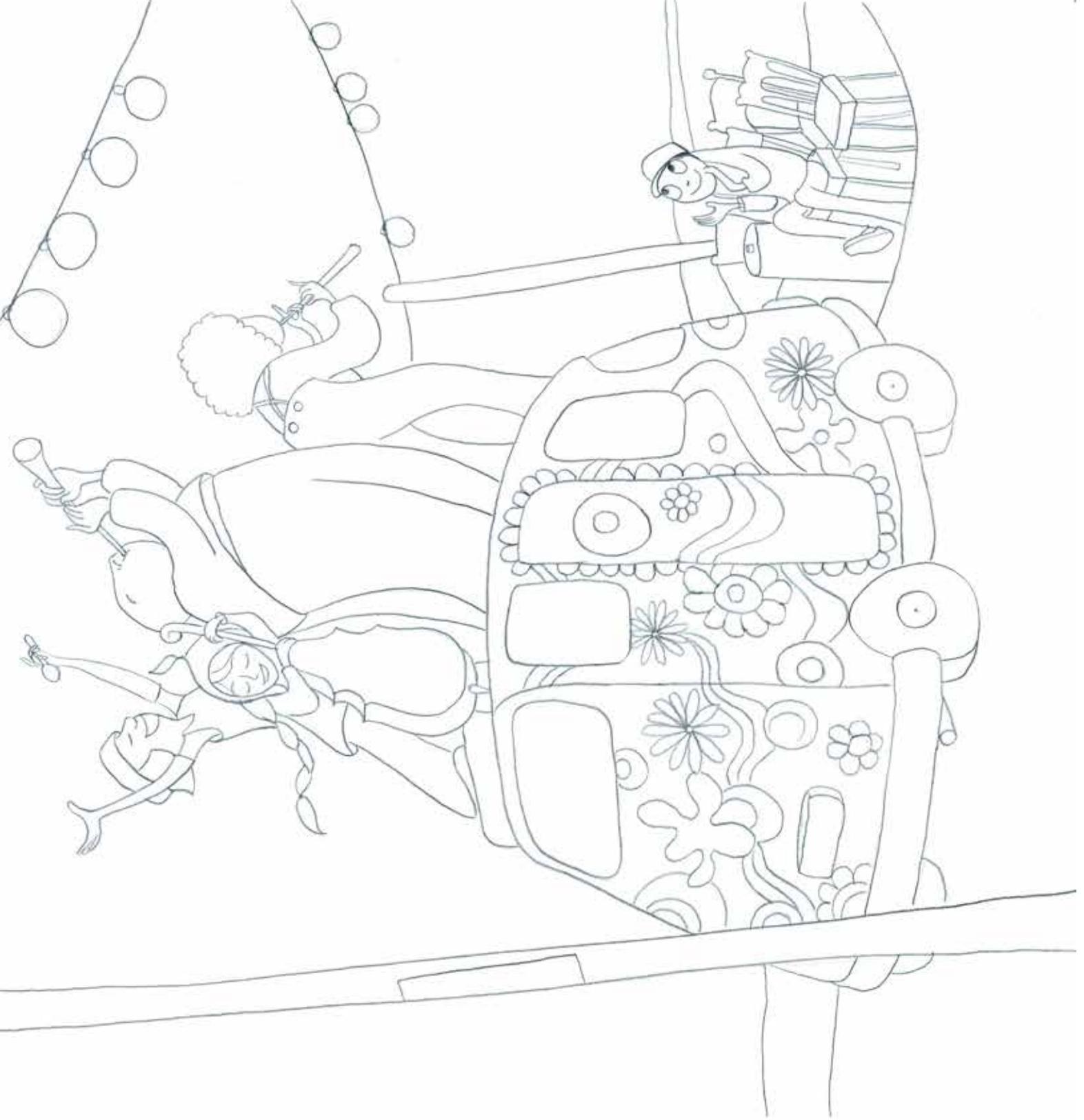
SHORTEST











BOOK REVIEW



Title

The main character is

The story is set

What happens in the story?

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Did you like the story?
Give it a score.

