



Christmas is cancelled!

...or is it?

KS2
ACTIVITY PACK



Christmas is cancelled!

...or is it?

Dear elf friends,

Welcome to our Key Stage 2 activity pack.

Inside you will find a series of activities dotted in between the full story of Mikka the Elf's Christmas adventure.

Some activities will test your powers of prediction and comprehension, while others will help you explore the structure, rhythm and rhyme of the story. All exercises give you the chance to get creative just like Mikka!

We wish you the very best of luck with this pack. And, for a chance to win a signed copy of the book, please send your story from Activity 14 to us at hello@friendlygiants.com before midnight on 23rd December 2020.

This activity pack belongs to:

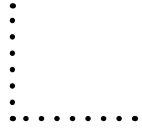
.....
(A SMALL ELF WITH A GIANT HEART)

Activity ideas prior to reading the book.

These activities challenge your powers of prediction.



Activity 1: Genre word bingo!



Spend a moment observing the book cover on this page.

- Now, grab a sheet of blank paper. Write down as many nouns you can think of that may relate to the topic of the story.
- Which five nouns from your list do you think are most likely to appear in the story? Add them to the grid on this page.
- As you read through the story, keep a tally of which nouns from your top five appear:
- You get **two points** for any noun from your list that appears in the book.
- Playing with others? Award yourself **five points** for every noun on your list that no-one else has in their top five. (As long as the noun appears in the book!)

Noun	Tally	Score



N.B. This activity is to activate your prior learning and encourage you to think about the text and genre conventions you are already aware of. Good luck!

Activity 2:

Judging a book by its cover

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Based on the book cover alone:

- Why might Christmas be cancelled?
- Why do you think the authors and illustrator have created the front cover (and the position of the words) in the way that they have?
- What does the ellipsis (...) suggest to you?
- What do you think is going to happen in the story?
- Now, have a go at writing the back cover blurb for the book based on your predictions!

Back cover blurb:

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N.B. This activity is designed to encourage you to draw links between what you have read and seen before and what you're observing on the front cover. It also encourages you to consider the intent behind word placement and the ellipsis.

Activity ideas while reading the book.

These activities will help you understand and build on your powers of poetry.

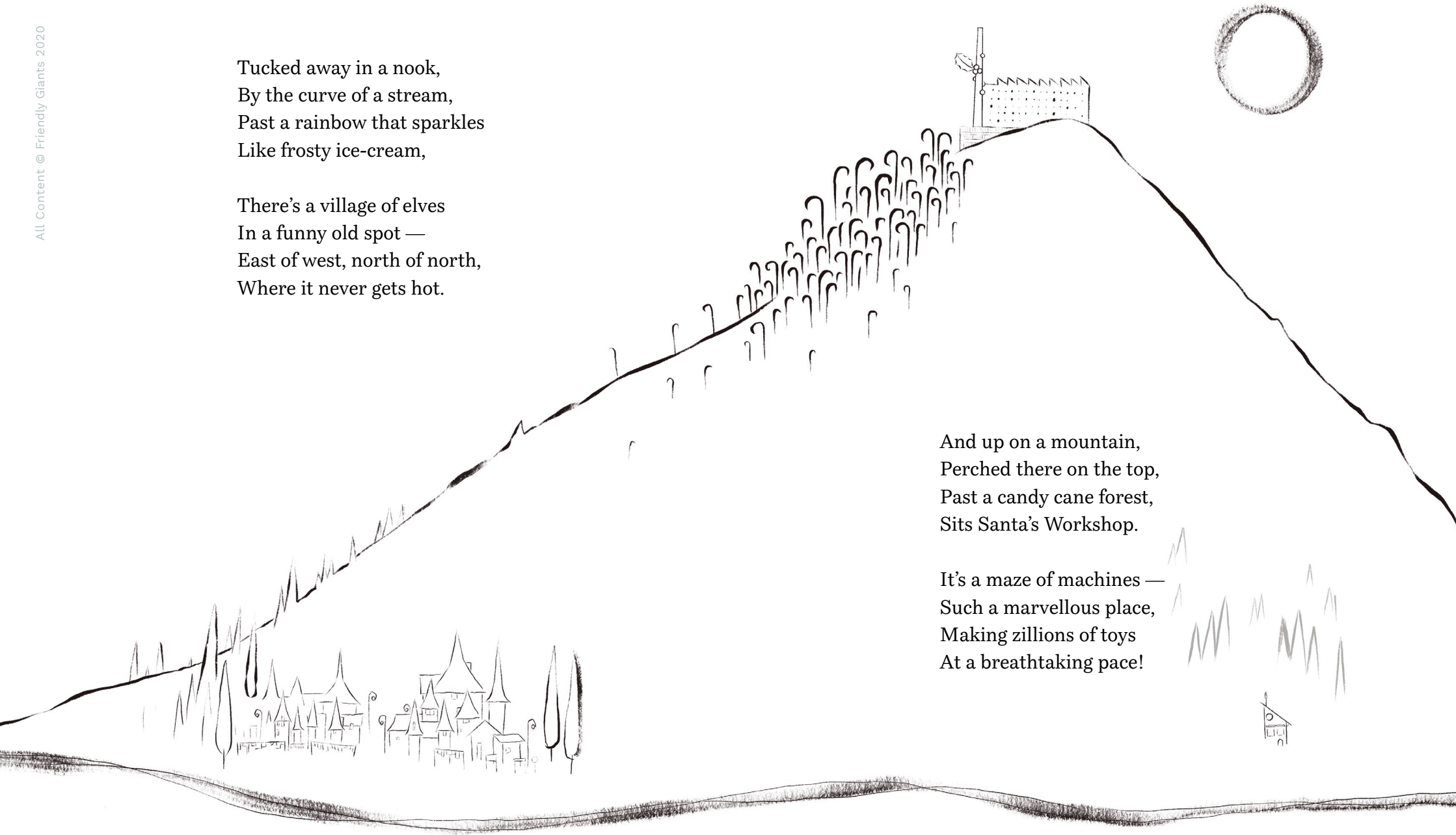


Tucked away in a nook,
By the curve of a stream,
Past a rainbow that sparkles
Like frosty ice-cream,

There's a village of elves
In a funny old spot —
East of west, north of north,
Where it never gets hot.

And up on a mountain,
Perched there on the top,
Past a candy cane forest,
Sits Santa's Workshop.

It's a maze of machines —
Such a marvellous place,
Making zillions of toys
At a breathtaking pace!

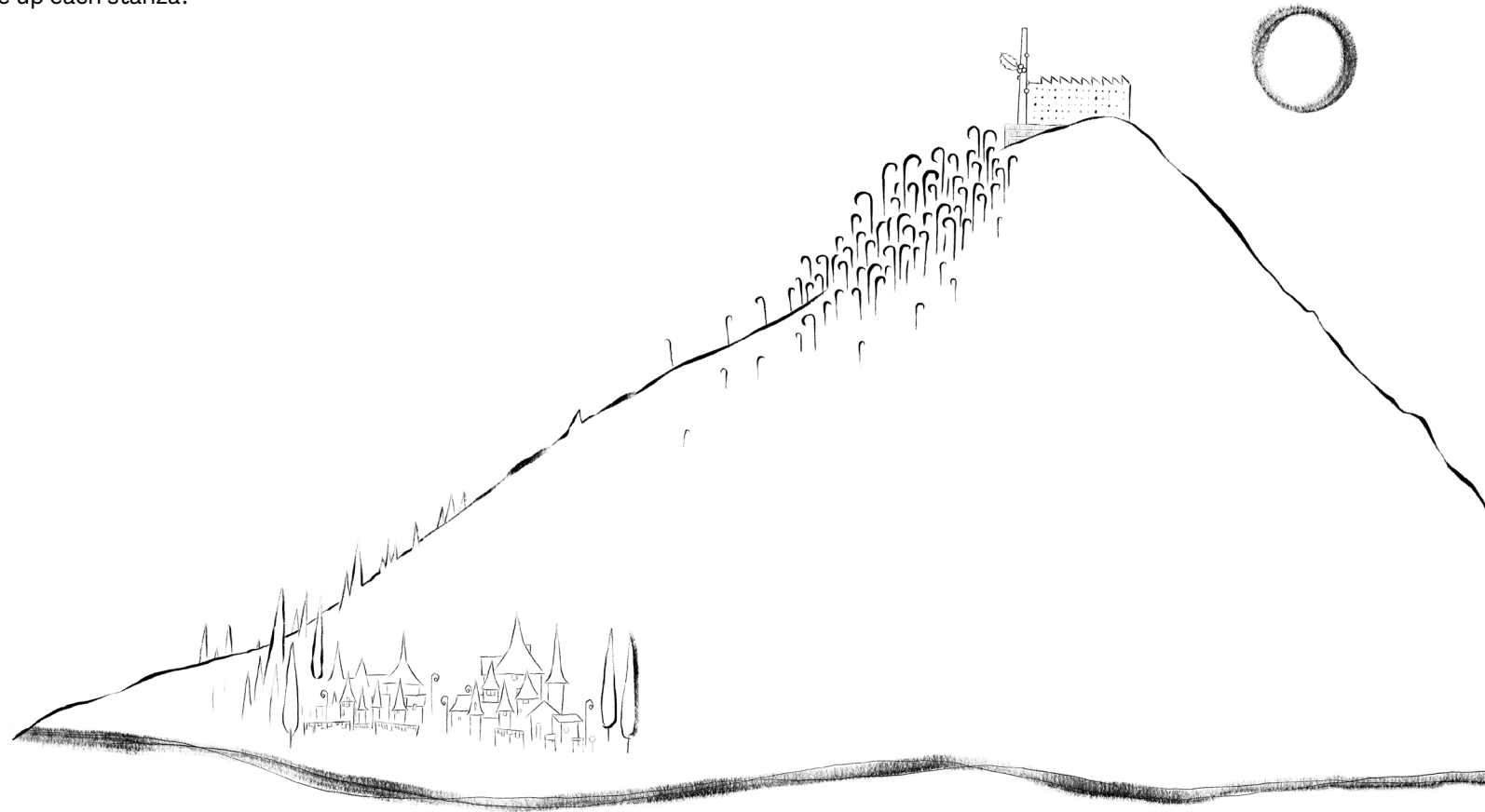


Activity 3:

Rhythm & rhyme discussion

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- What do you notice about the rhythm and rhyme of the story straight away?
- What type of rhyme scheme have the authors embraced?
- How many lines make up each stanza?

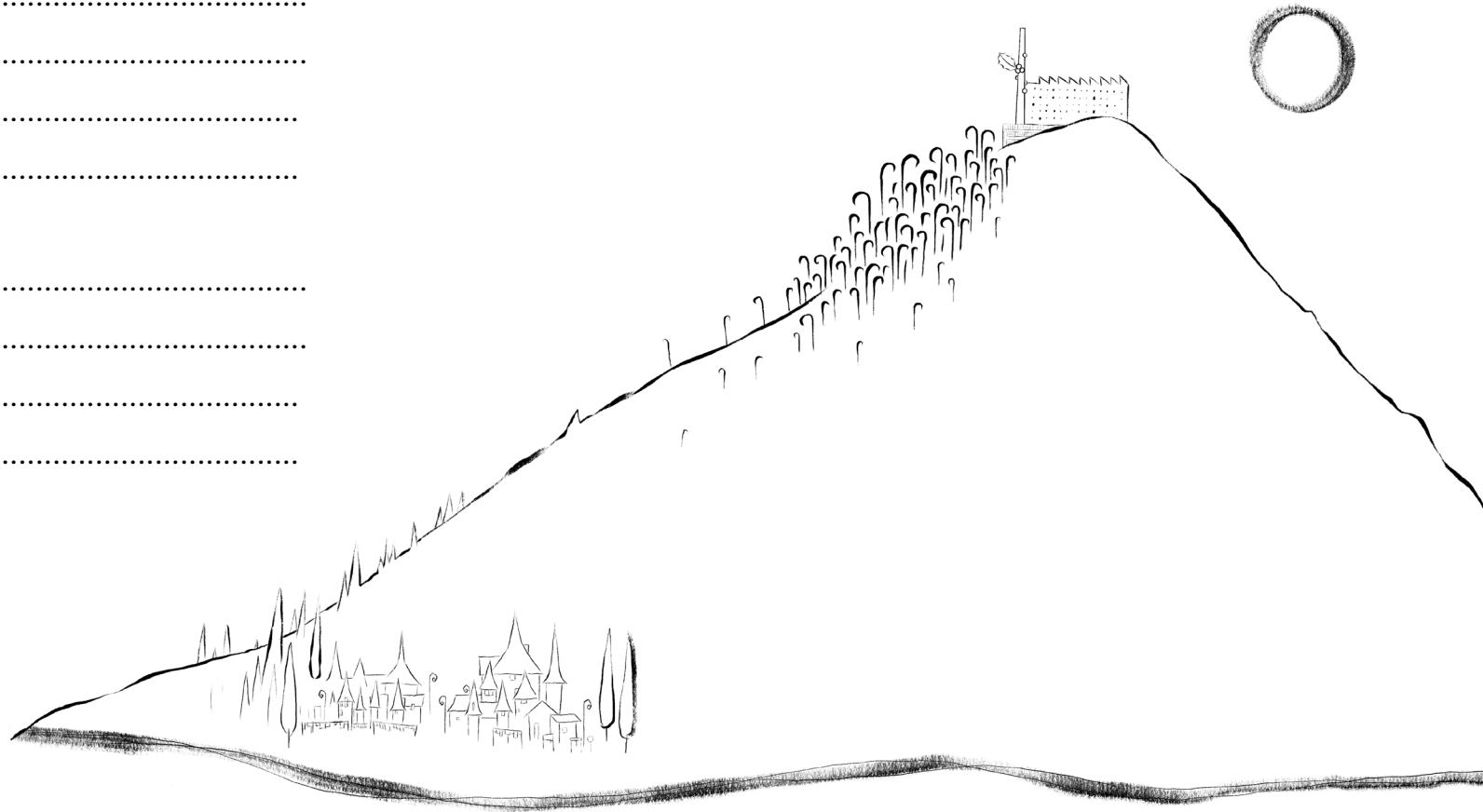


Activity 4: **Piecing the story back together**

- • Without going back a page, can you reassemble the opening poem in the right order?

In a funny old spot —
Tucked away in a nook,
Where it never gets hot.
Like frosty ice-cream,
There's a village of elves
By the curve of a stream,
East of west, north of north,
Past a rainbow that sparkles

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Activity 5:

The missing words round!

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- In the next two spreads, we meet Mikka for the first time. See if you can fill in the missing words from the story *before* you read the full text on the next two pages:

Meet Mikka, the world's smallest elf — she can't wait
For tomorrow to come, for tomorrow is

For tomorrow's the day sends out his list
And it's packed full of every good wish that was

Then off to the
The whole village
(Where *big* elves push,
And *small* ones tie bows).

And Mikka was hugely excited to say,
'I can't wait to begin my first bow-tying !'

Next morning, as everyone
..... on their muffins,
There came from the sky
A great circus of

They flew from the workshop with lists in their
To the village — to cheers, whoops and hollers and shrieks!

Yet the joy was short-lived. How I wish it were
Instead of a Every elf got a letter ...



Missing word hints: (some are correct, some are not):

gift list day written birds puffins Postman wished Santa shrieks
munched beaks buttons chomped workshop great goes better
panda carrot awful slurped toughen sweater twist hooray

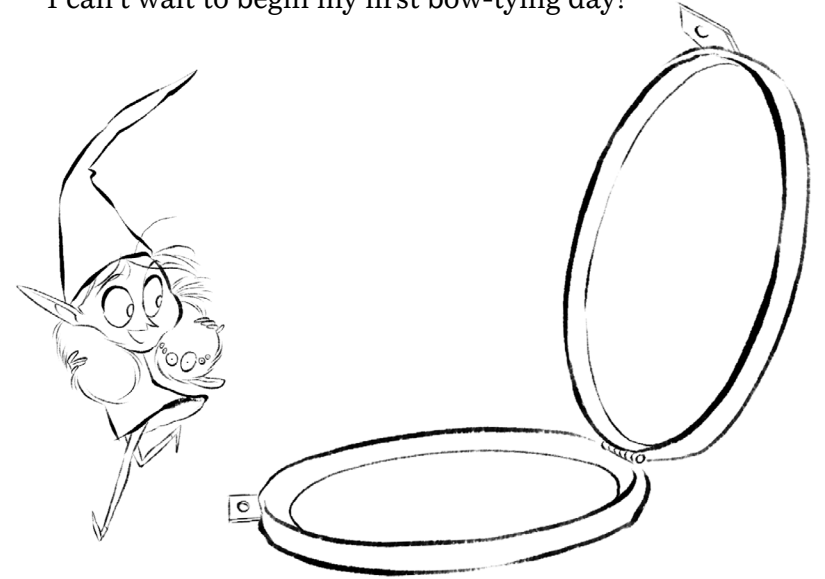


Meet Mikka, the world's smallest elf — she can't wait
For tomorrow to come, for tomorrow is great!

For tomorrow's the day Santa sends out his list
And it's packed full of every good wish that was wished.

Then off to the workshop
The whole village goes
(Where *big* elves push buttons,
And *small* ones tie bows).

And Mikka was hugely excited to say,
'I can't wait to begin my first bow-tying day!'



! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

See if you can draw Mikka and Cat's reflection
in the mirror.

They flew from the workshop with lists in their beaks
To the village — to cheers, whoops and hollers and shrieks!

Yet the joy was short-lived.
How I wish it were better.
Instead of a list,
Every elf got a letter ...

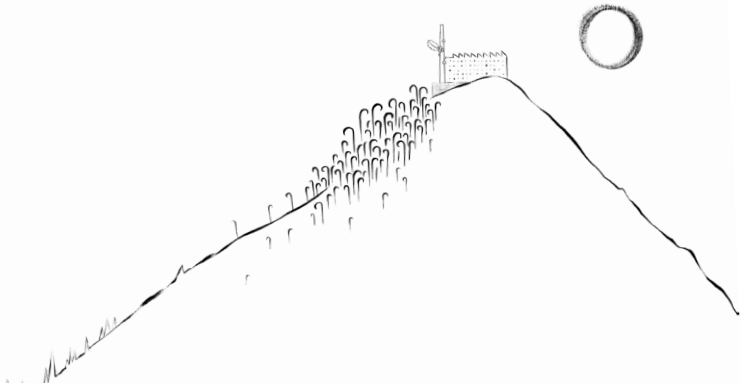


Next morning, as everyone
Munched on their muffins,
There came from the sky
A great circus of puffins.

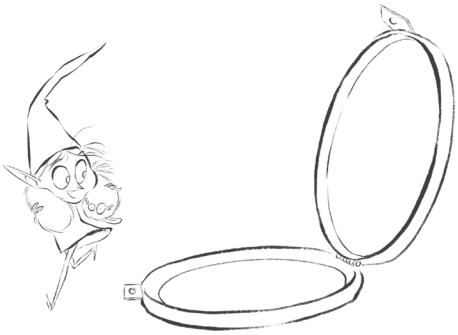


! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

Add in Mikka's family, enjoying their breakfast.

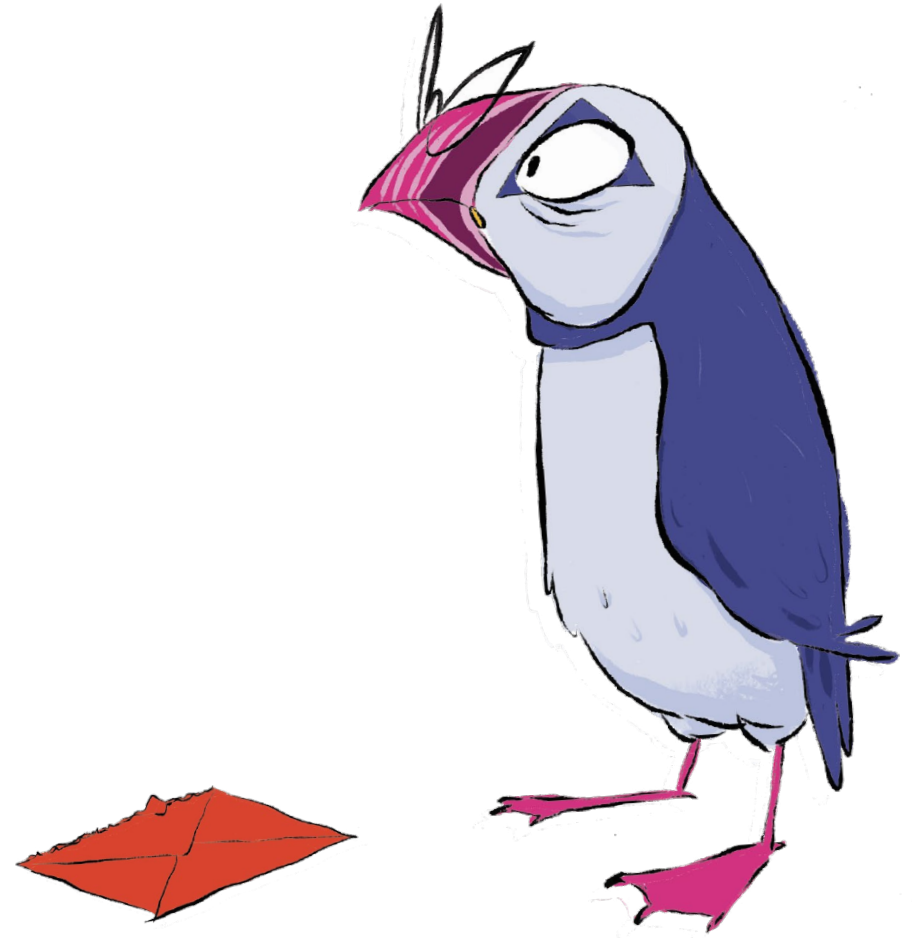


How did you do?

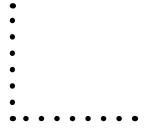


Activity ideas while reading the book.

These activities will help you get into the mindset of the characters and context of the story.



Activity 6: No ho ho!



- Why do you believe Puff is looking at the letter in the way she is?
- What do you think her backstory may be and why?





What a shake! What a shock!
An unthinkable twist
For a village of elves, who'd expected a list.

Well they flopped and they flapped
And fell into despair —
'If we can't leave our houses,
Then who'll cut my hair?!

'We'll run out of toilet roll, syrup and bread,
Gooey goose eggs and doughnuts
And cheesy cheese spread!
So they scurried at once to the shops like raccoons,
To stock up on staples like hot pickled prunes.
Exhausted, they crawled to their homes to lie down
As a miserable gloom settled over the town.



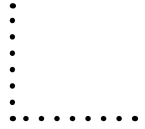
! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

On the left, see if you can draw the rest of the elves reacting to the news.

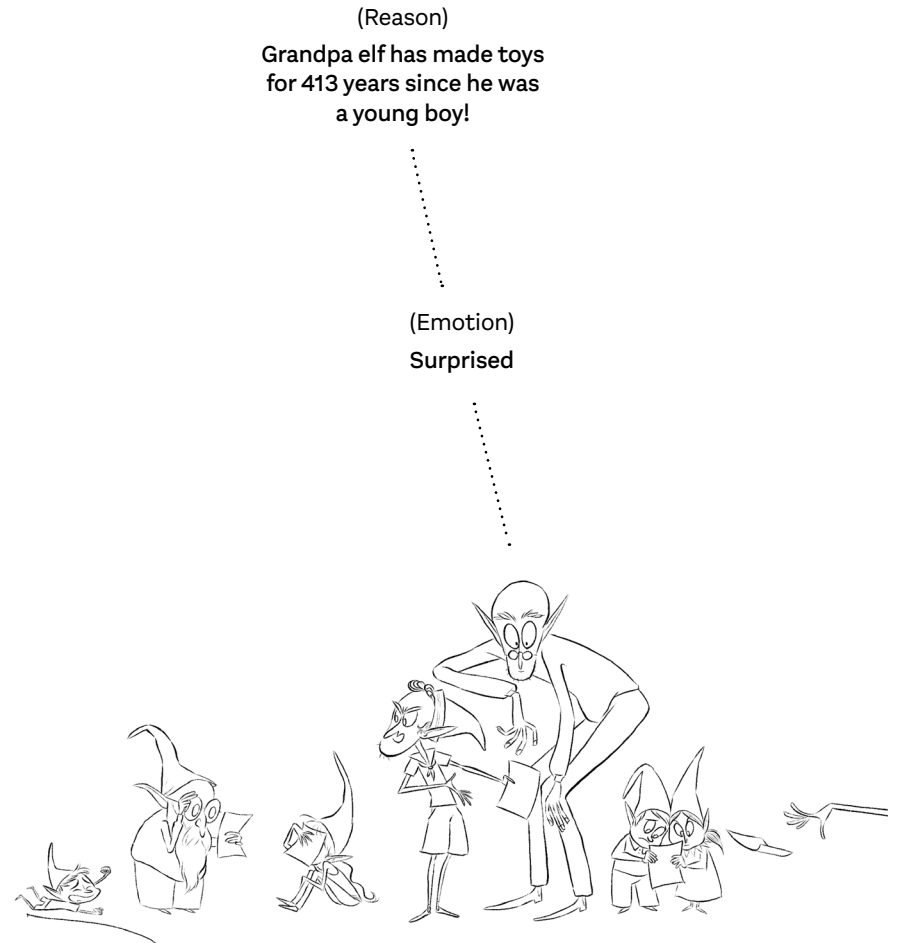


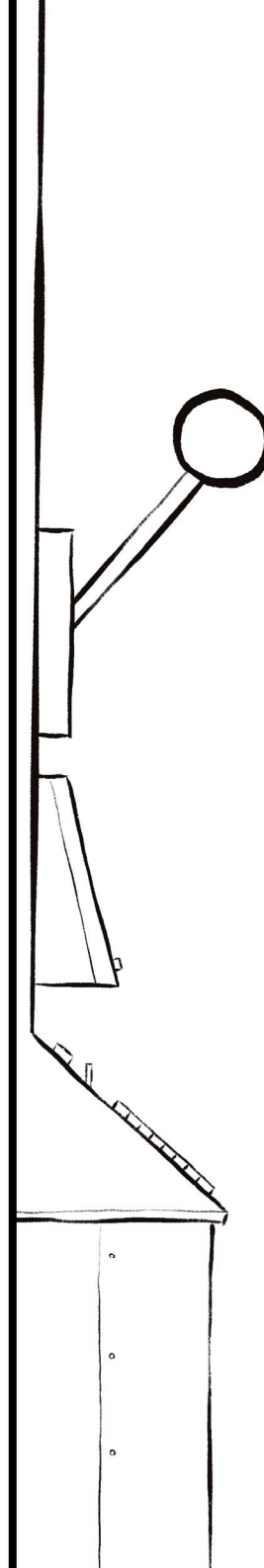
Activity 7:

Understanding emotions



- Using a spider diagram, list all the emotions you believe the different elves may be feeling.
- Then, add in why you think they may be feeling this way.





With no handles to crank
And no buttons to press,
Very soon all the elves
Suffered badly with stress.

For you see, they'd forgot
How to make toys by hand
Since they switched to machines
To keep up with demand.

With the workshop closed down,
that was it for the year —

No surprises,

No laughter

And no Christmas cheer.

! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

What do you think Santa's toy machine looks like?

Activity 8:

Reading Mikka's thoughts

.....

In her room, Mikka gazed at a peachy-puff cloud.
 'I can surely do *something*', she pondered aloud.

- What do you think Mikka is going to do next?

If I were Mikka, I would ...

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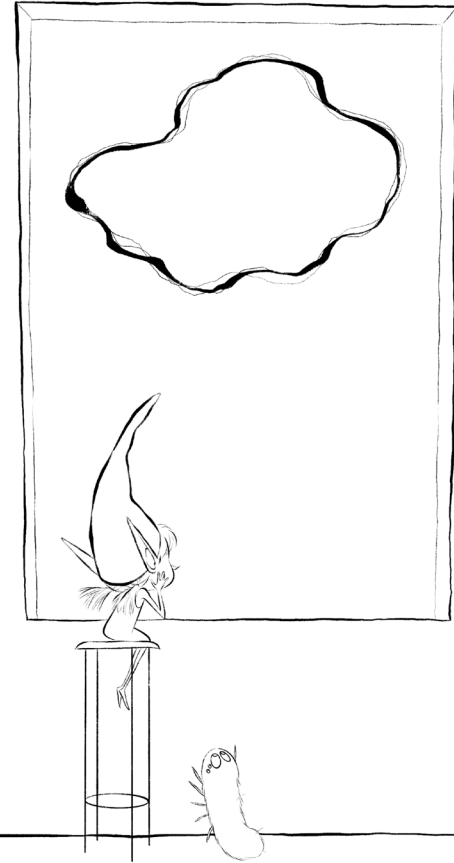
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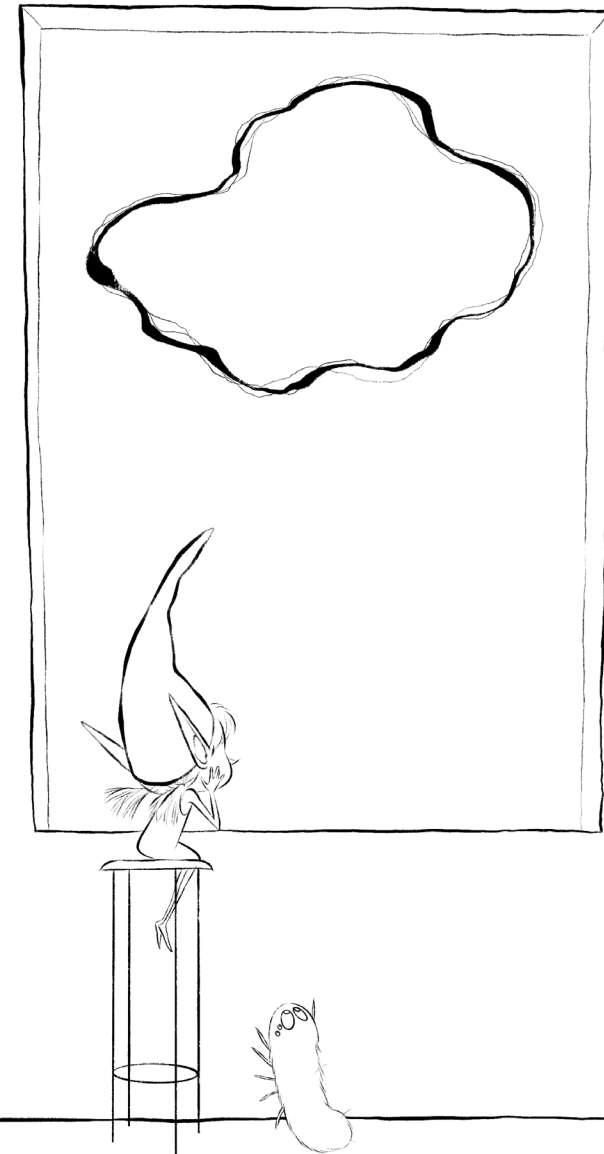
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In her room, Mikka gazed at a peachy-puff cloud.
'I can surely do *something*,' she pondered aloud.

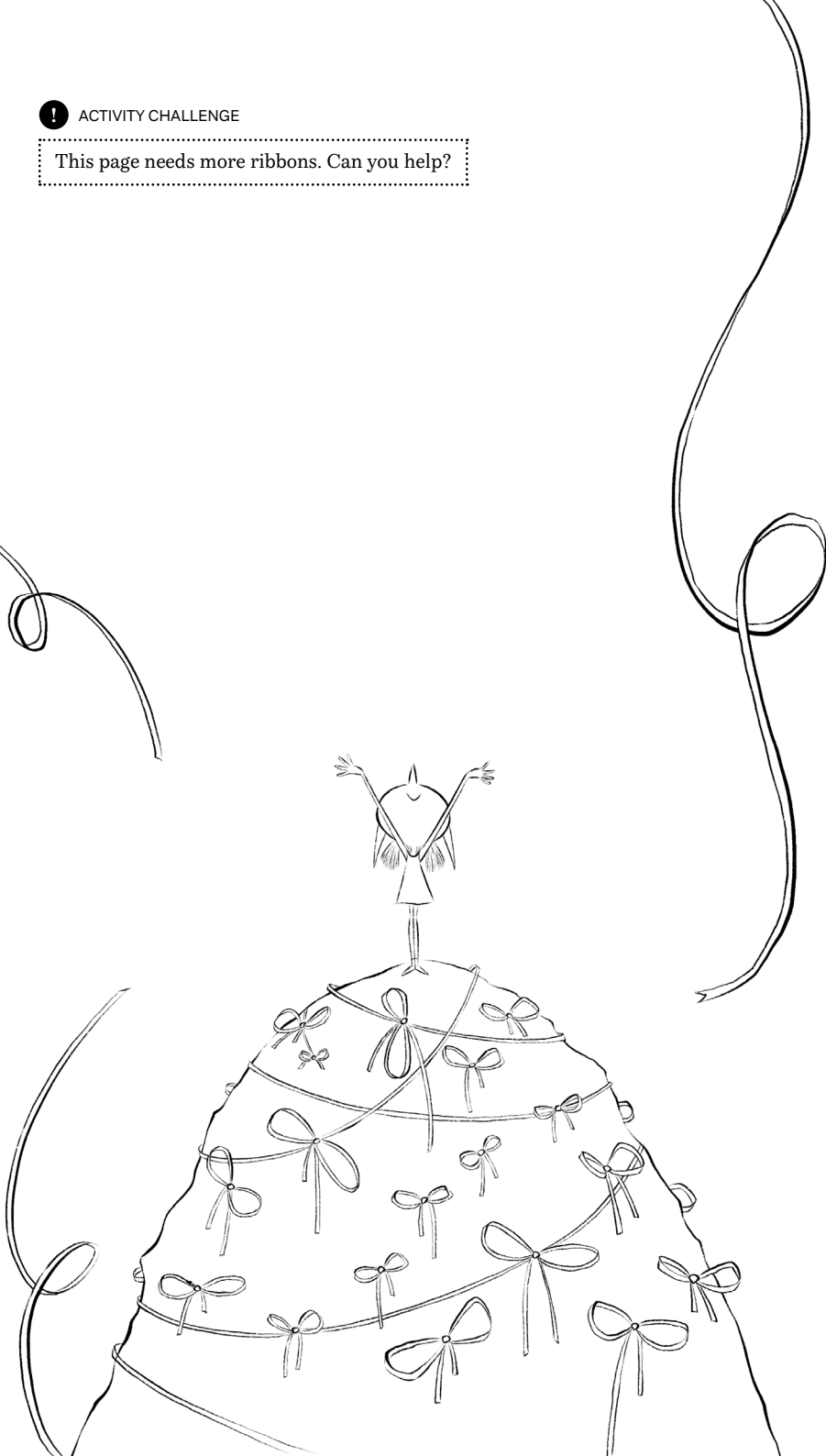
'As a small elf I know
How to tie and to twist ...

I could start making bows
For each kid on the list!'



! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

This page needs more ribbons. Can you help?



Mikka leapt to her feet — it was time to get going
And soon a great flurry of ribbon was flowing!

She tied bows with lace
And she tied bows with string.
She tied bows that could dance
And tied bows that could sing.

Mikka twisted and tangled and knotted and curled
'Til she'd tied every bow she could tie in the world.

Now these bows need a gift, Mikka thought as she sat,
'And I wonder,' she said, 'what to do about that?'

She tiptoed downstairs, when —

SHA-BLAM!

An idea!

‘I know!

I’ll make toys with the things that are here!’

‘All these forks and these spoons

And these old blue balloons.

A few boxes, this broom

And these hot pickled prunes.’

Mikka gathered these things in the glum evening
gloom,

Then she stayed up all night, making gifts in her room:

Little doo-dahs and trinkets,

Some frills, knicks and knacks.

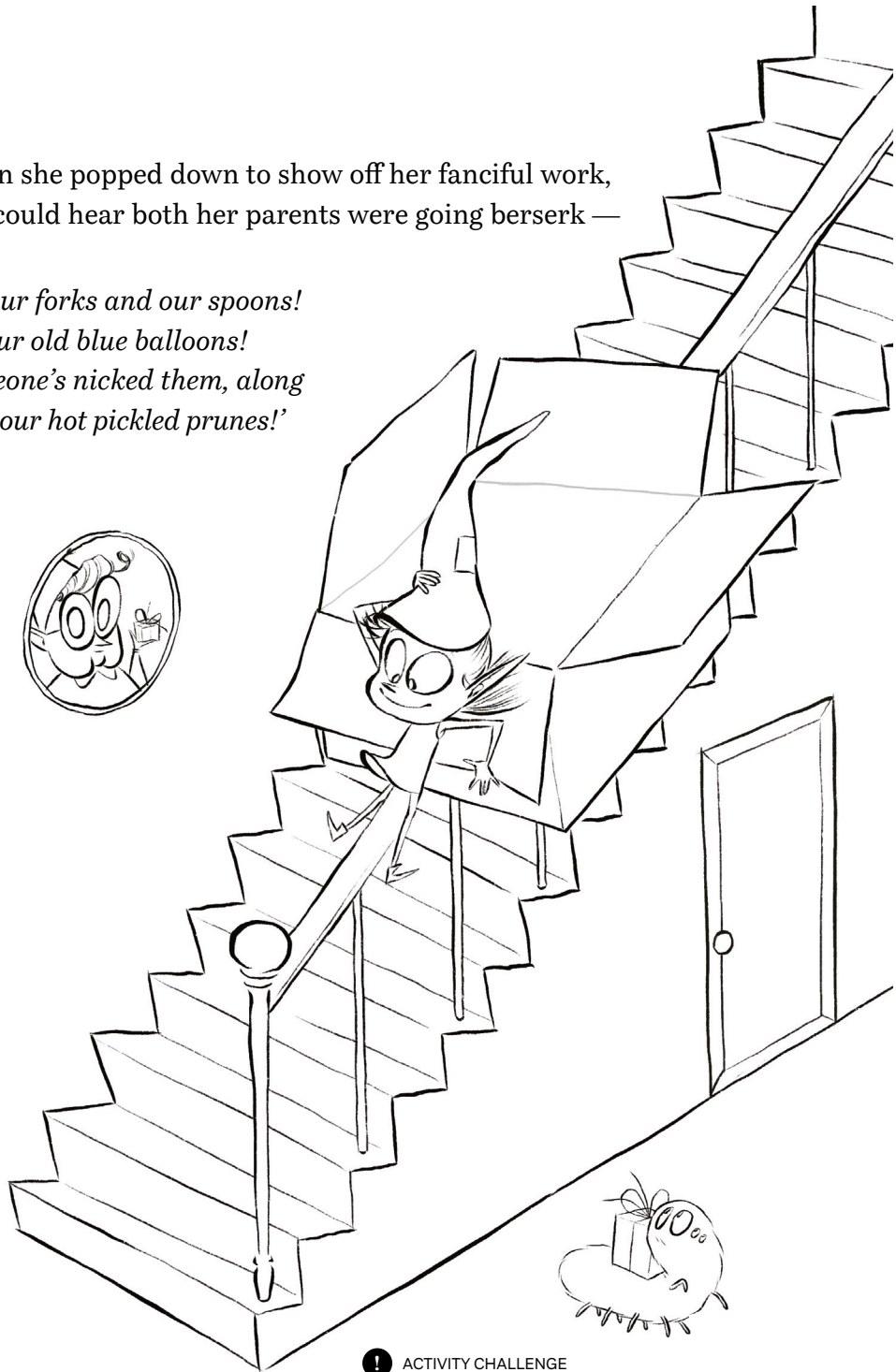
A few what-nots and what-sits

And widgets from wax.



When she popped down to show off her fanciful work,
She could hear both her parents were going berserk —

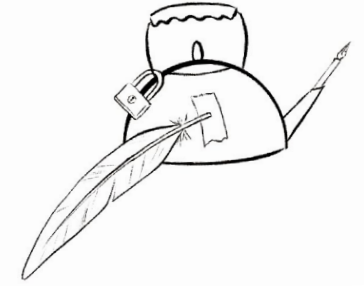
*'All our forks and our spoons!
All our old blue balloons!
Someone's nicked them, along
with our hot pickled prunes!'*



! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

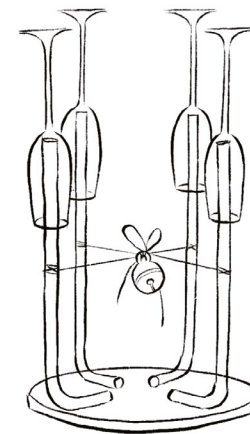
Can you fill Mikka's box with presents?

Mikka piped up, quite proudly,
'No stuff has been thieved.'
(Expecting her folks
Would be rather relieved.)



'See, I made all those things into toys — here they are!'
Papa coughed, 'Making toys? *With your hands?* How bizarre!'

Well her Ma flipped her lid. 'These old rubbishy gubbins?
Your head's fallen off! Swapped your noggin for nubbins!'



'This Christmas is cancelled —
Now *please* beg my pardon —
But hand back our stuff
AND GO PLAY IN THE GARDEN!'

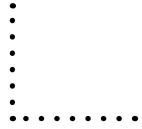
Activity ideas while reading the book.

This section gives you a chance to get creative like Mikka!



Activity 9:

The (gift) apprentice



- Make your own weird and wonderful toy from things around the house or classroom.
- Give your present a name and write down the instructions for how you play with it.



My toy is called:

This is how you play with it:

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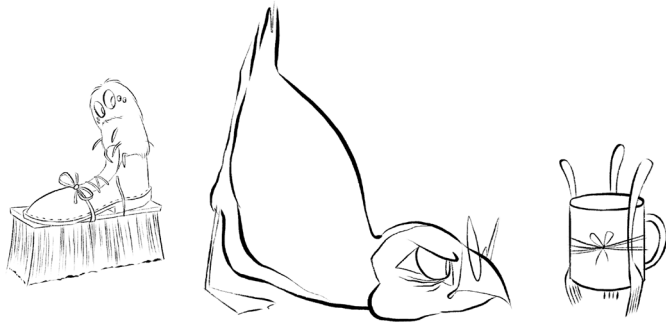
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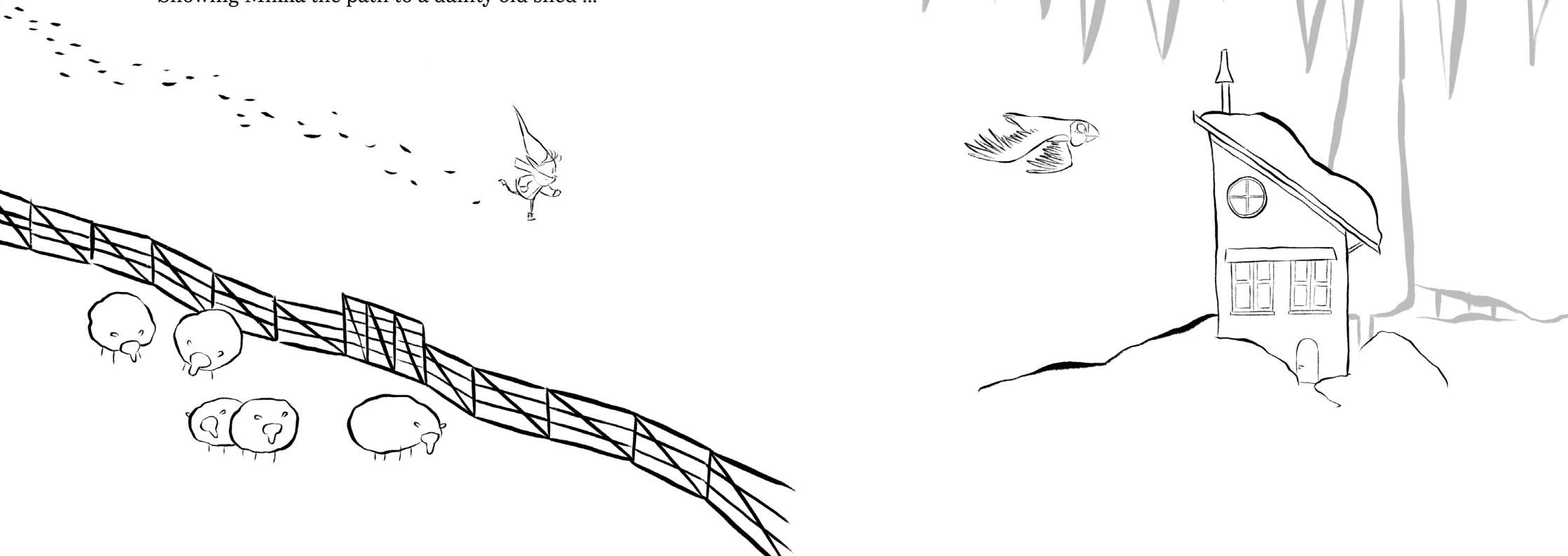
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Mikka slinked out the back with a sulk and a sigh,
When a feathery flapping of wings caught her eye.

It was Puff! The old puffin, who'd shot off ahead,
Showing Mikka the path to a dainty old shed ...



Mikka turned the key twice and creaked open the door
As the wind whipped through cobwebs and dust on the floor.

It smells of old boots.

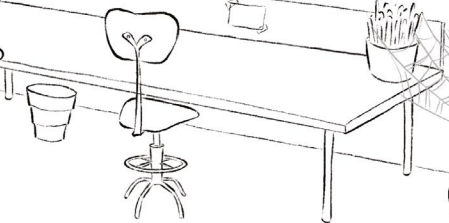
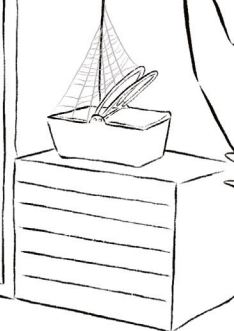
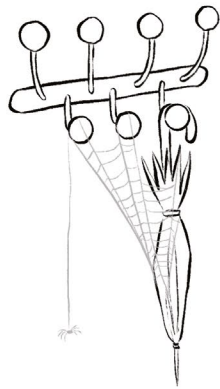
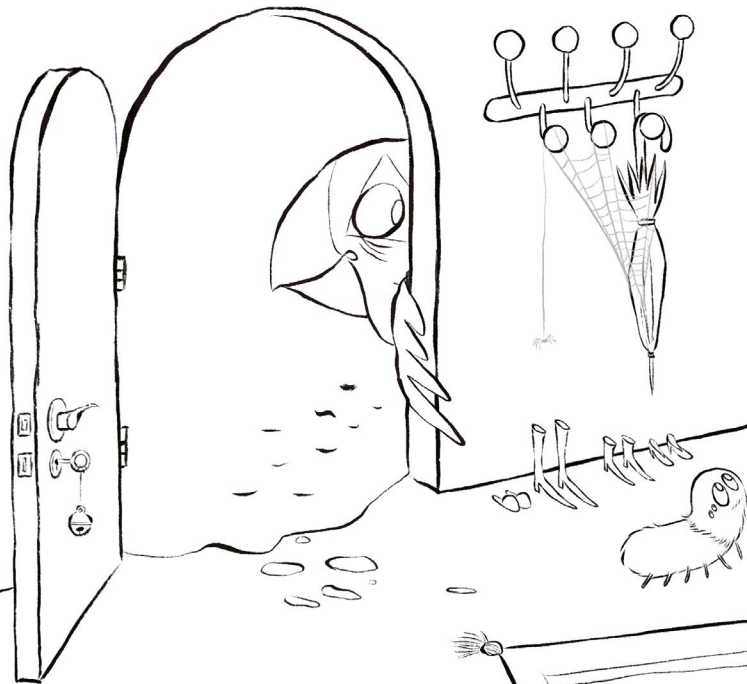
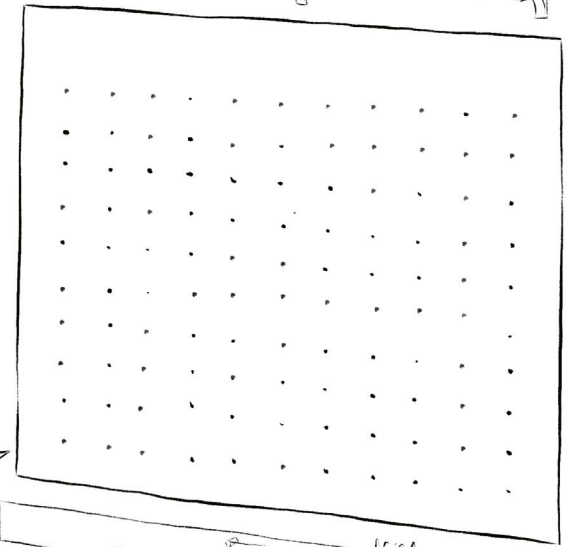
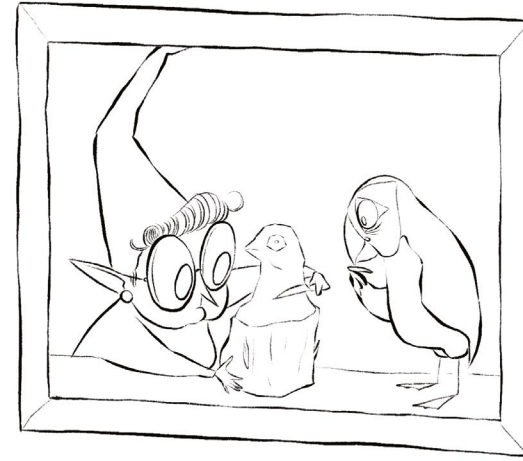
And of three-day-old bread ...

And of warm custard trifle!

She mused in her head.

In a portrait, a small elf like Mikka was sat
Crafting toys with her hands (and she wore Mikka's hat).

'All these tools,' she exclaimed, 'once belonged to my Gran!'
In a flash, Mikka's brain had come up with a plan.



! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

Gran's tools are missing from the wall!
Can you add them in?

Activity 10:

**Setting the scene:
Feeding the senses**



- Imagine you are in Mikka’s little shoes and have just stepped into the shed. Write down all the things you can hear, smell, see, taste or touch.

Senses:

Sight		Smell	
Taste	Hearing	Touch	

‘Mikka turned the key twice and creaked open the door
As the wind whipped through cobwebs and dust on the floor.’

Using rhyming couplets, finish the description
of what it feels like to step inside the shed:

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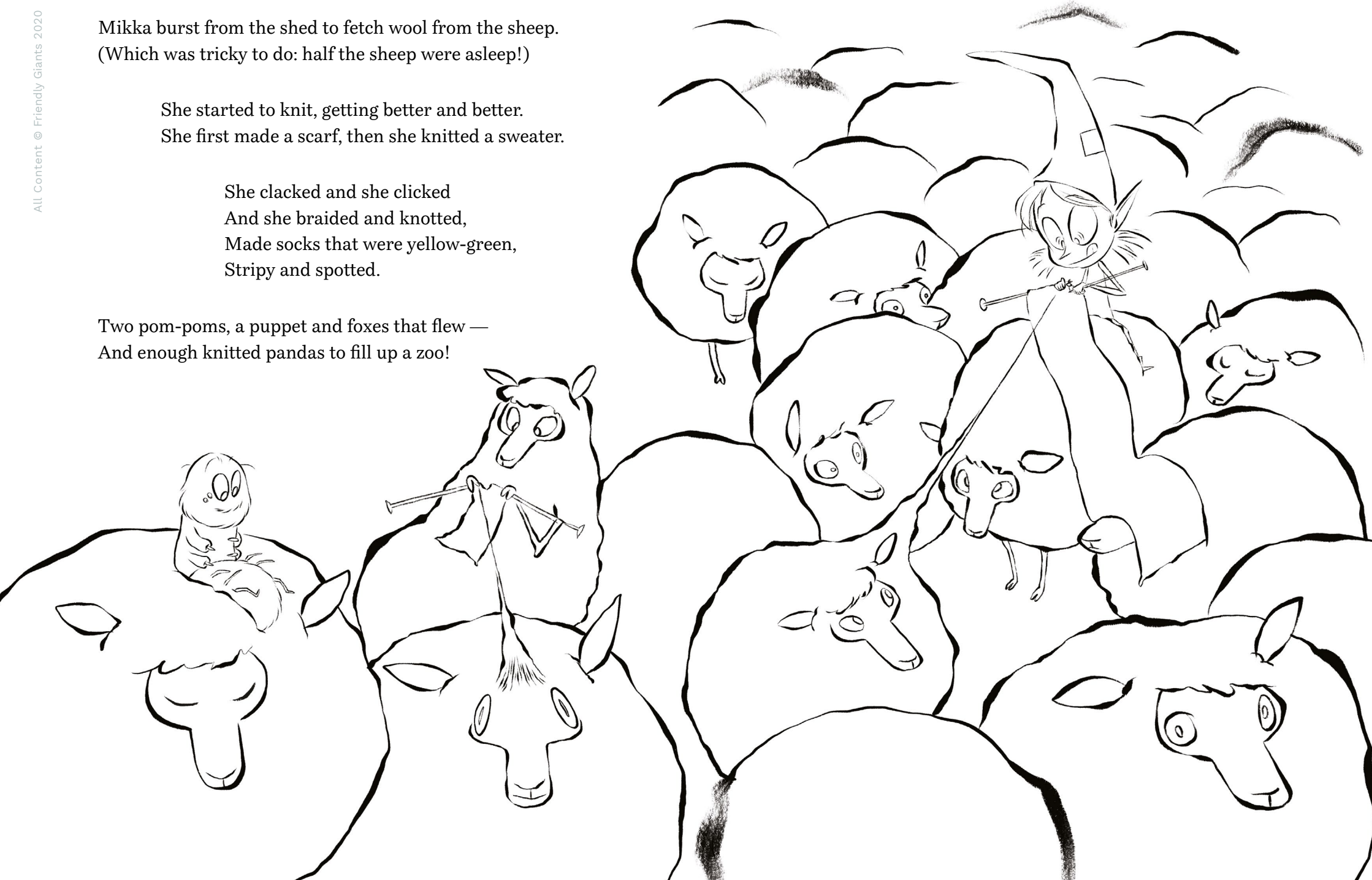
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Mikka burst from the shed to fetch wool from the sheep.
(Which was tricky to do: half the sheep were asleep!)

She started to knit, getting better and better.
She first made a scarf, then she knitted a sweater.

She clacked and she clicked
And she braided and knotted,
Made socks that were yellow-green,
Stripy and spotted.

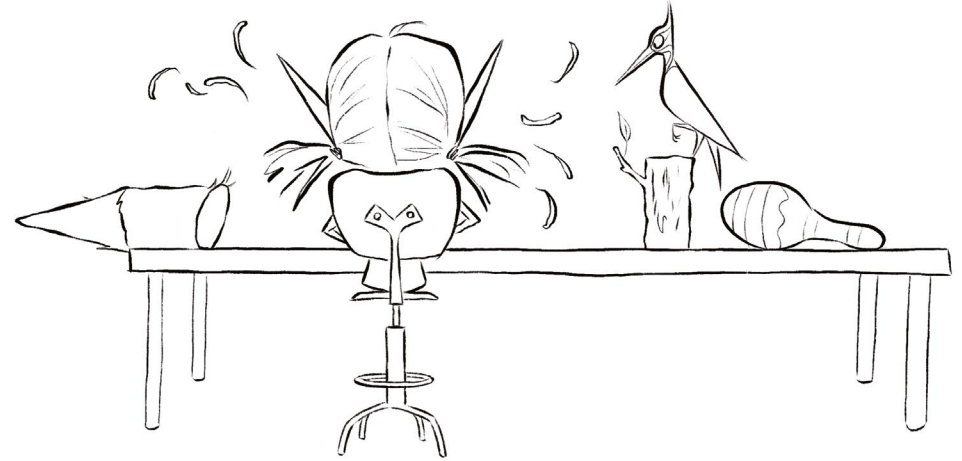
Two pom-poms, a puppet and foxes that flew —
And enough knitted pandas to fill up a zoo!



'Hey beavers, hey woodpeckers!
Quick, come here now!
Let's get wood from these trees —
Every twig, branch and bough!'

'We shall chisel and carve,
Then with hammer and nails
We'll make glockenspiels, skittles
And sailboats with sails!'

'Some blocks, a few buses,
A gold tambourine
And a huge mini train set
That's fit for the Queen!'



! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

Can you draw the other wooden toys Mikka has made?



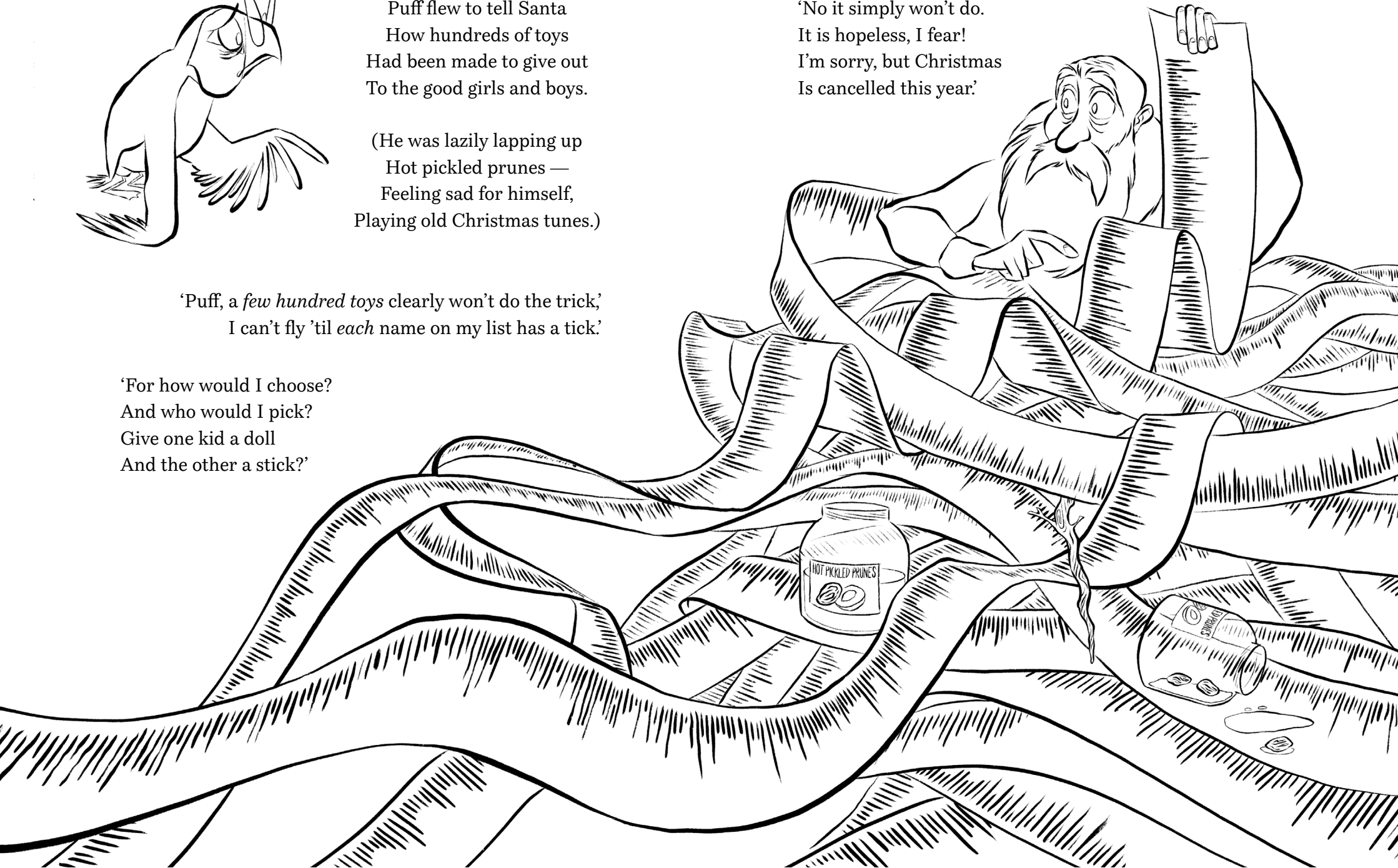
Puff flew to tell Santa
How hundreds of toys
Had been made to give out
To the good girls and boys.

(He was lazily lapping up
Hot pickled prunes —
Feeling sad for himself,
Playing old Christmas tunes.)

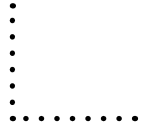
‘Puff, a *few hundred toys* clearly won’t do the trick,
I can’t fly ’til *each* name on my list has a tick.’

‘For how would I choose?
And who would I pick?
Give one kid a doll
And the other a stick?’

‘No it simply won’t do.
It is hopeless, I fear!
I’m sorry, but Christmas
Is cancelled this year.’



Activity 11: Sad Santa



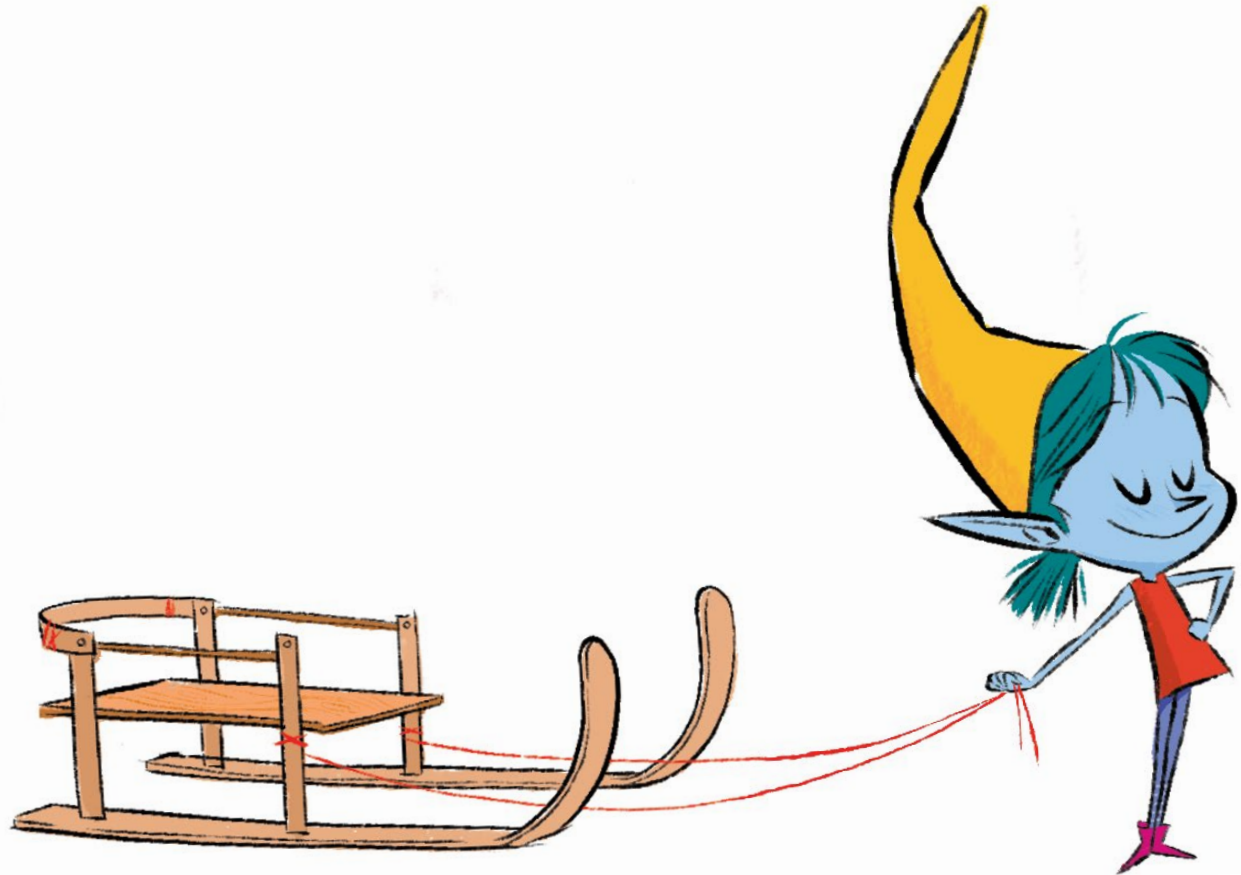
- Why is Santa not more appreciative of Mikka's efforts?
- Why can't he choose which children to give Mikka's handmade gifts to?
- There are four spreads left until the story concludes. What do you believe is going to happen next?

Spread	What will happen	What we'll see
1		
2		
3		
4		



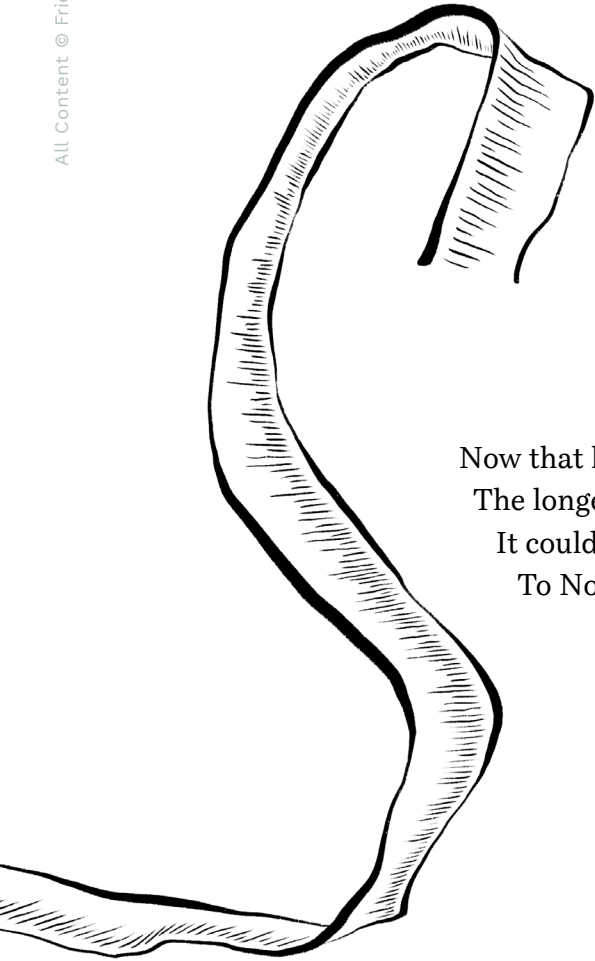
Activity ideas while reading the book.

This section gives you the chance to explore the conclusion, review the full story and invent the sequel!



! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

Santa's snaking list needs a middle.
Can you connect the two ends?

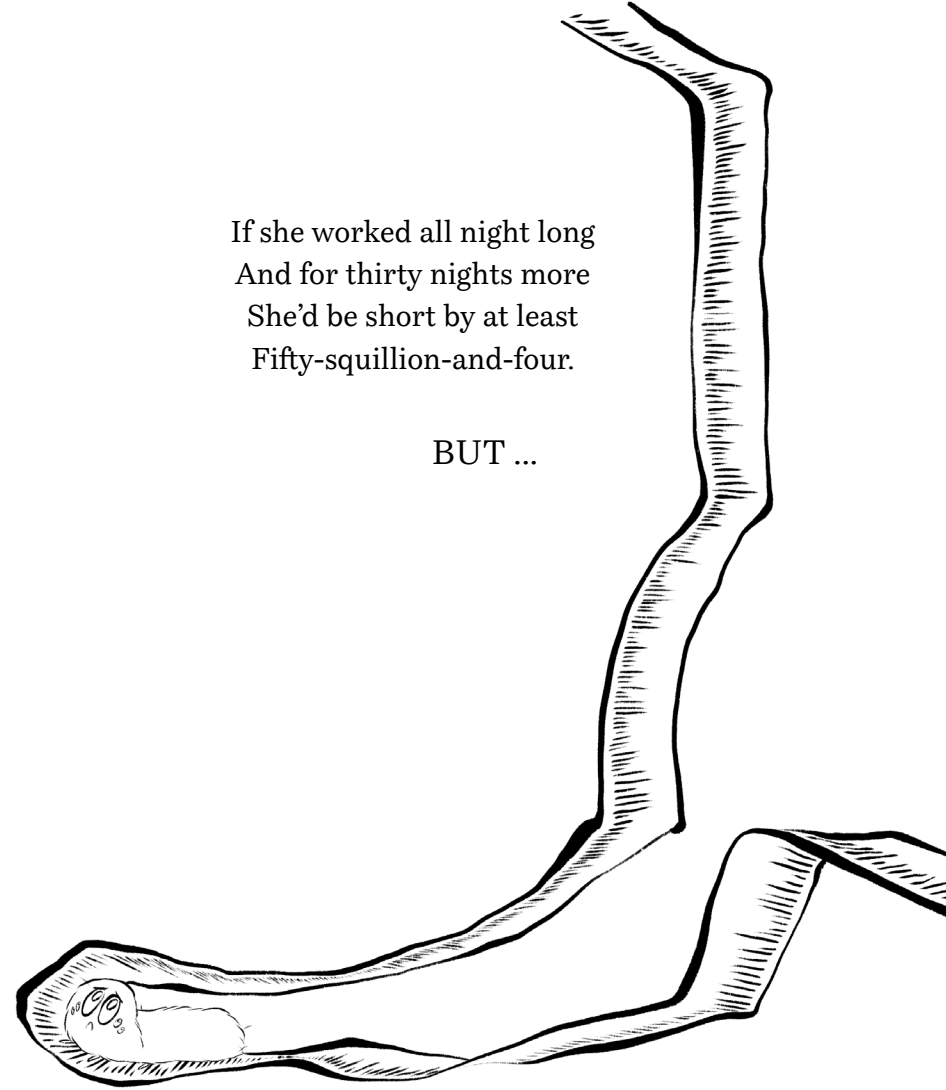


Now that list was humungous.
The longest I've seen.
It could stretch from South Sydney
To North Aberdeen!



If she worked all night long
And for thirty nights more
She'd be short by at least
Fifty-squillion-and-four.

BUT ...



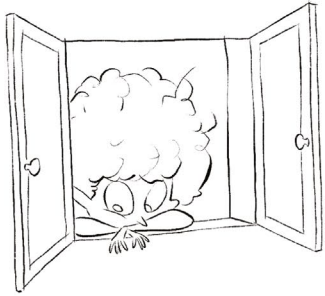
Activity 12:

If you were a small elf too!

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- Imagine you have been watching Mikka. What do you think and feel about what she has been trying to do?
- What should — or could — you do?

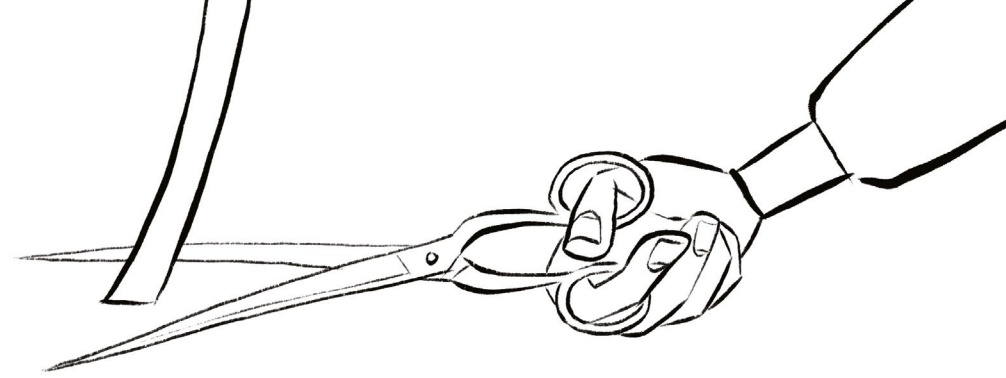
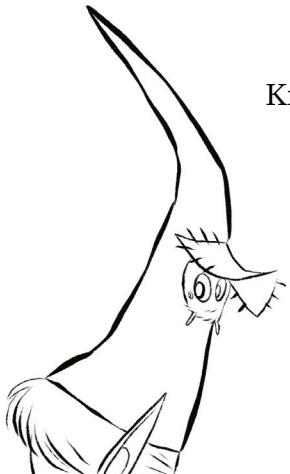




Every elf who was small
Heard the news that went round
Of an elf who'd made toys
With the things that she found.



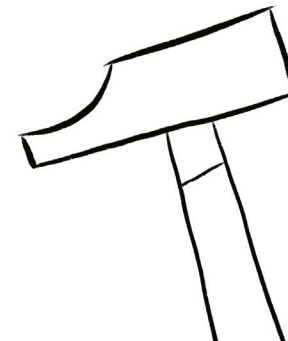
Knitting jumpers and pandas
And yellow-green socks,
Carving skittles and glockenspiels,
Buses and blocks.



Now they watched every start,
Every stop, every sigh —
And they thought to themselves,
'Well why not? *Why don't I?*'

...

So they dashed to their sheds,
Where they carved and they knitted.
They worked through the night,
(Not a single elf quitted!)
Until they had finished the world's longest list,
Making presents for every good wish that was wished.



Santa's jaw hit the floor when he witnessed the scene,
'How on earth did you do this *without a machine?*'

Mikka grinned, 'I just practised
Until I got better.
I knitted a scarf,
Then I knitted a sweater.'

'I beaved with the beavers
And pecked with the 'peckers.
Made skittles and buses
(They're all double deckers).'

'I finished the list with the other small elves.
Every toy that you see here — we made them ourselves!'

Well Santa, he nearly
Leapt out of his suit.
He sprang in the air
With a holler and hoot.

'Well done little elves,
You have saved Christmas Day!
Come on Rudolph,' he cried,
'Load these up on the sleigh!'



! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

Draw Mikka's giant sacks of presents.
Are there any in there that you have on *your* list?

Santa took to the skies with his sleigh overflowing,
The moon shining bright, Rudolph's red nose a-glowing.

He whizzed round the world,
Soaring speedy and swift
To be sure *every* kid
On that list got their gift.

For Mikka had done it!
Saved Christmas for all —

It's astounding, the things
You can do when you're small.

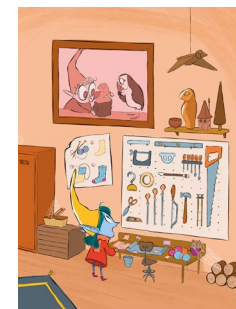
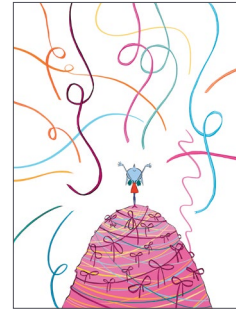
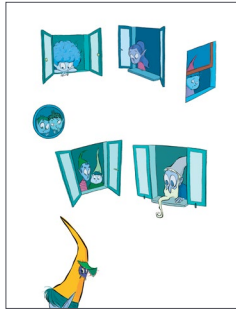
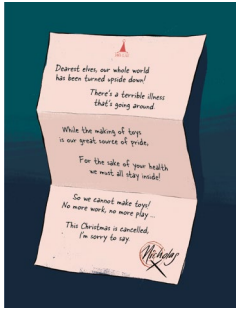


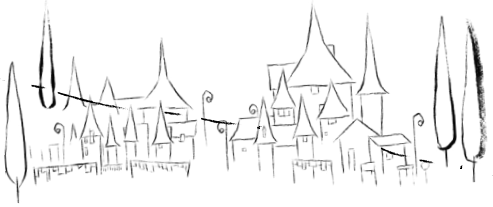
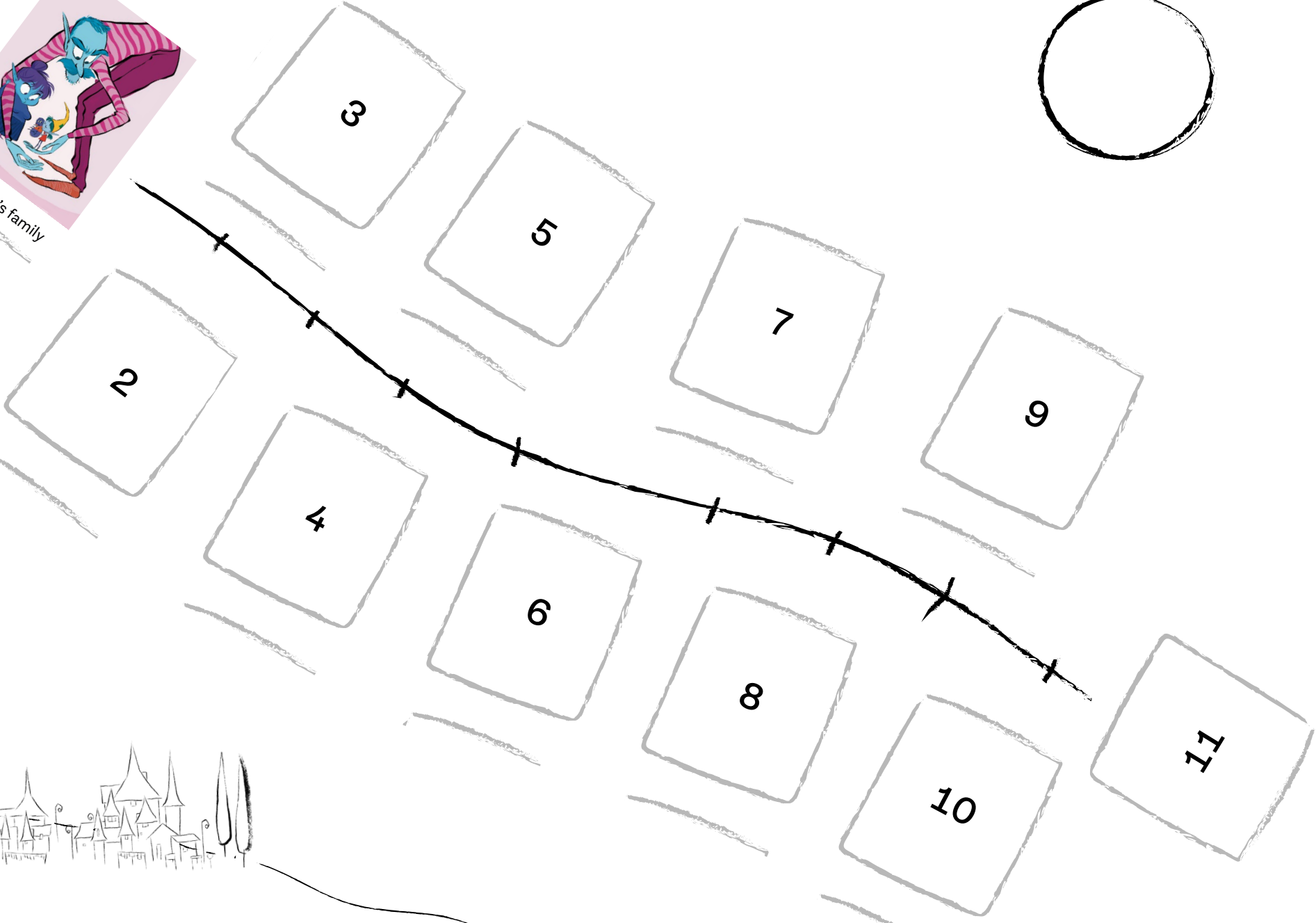
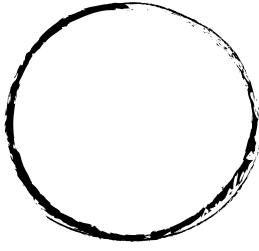
! ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

Santa's sleigh is missing.
Can you add it to the night sky?

Activity 13: Plot Mikka's journey

- • Cut out the images below.
Can you reorganise them and plot out Mikka's journey through the story by sticking them on the timeline on the next page?



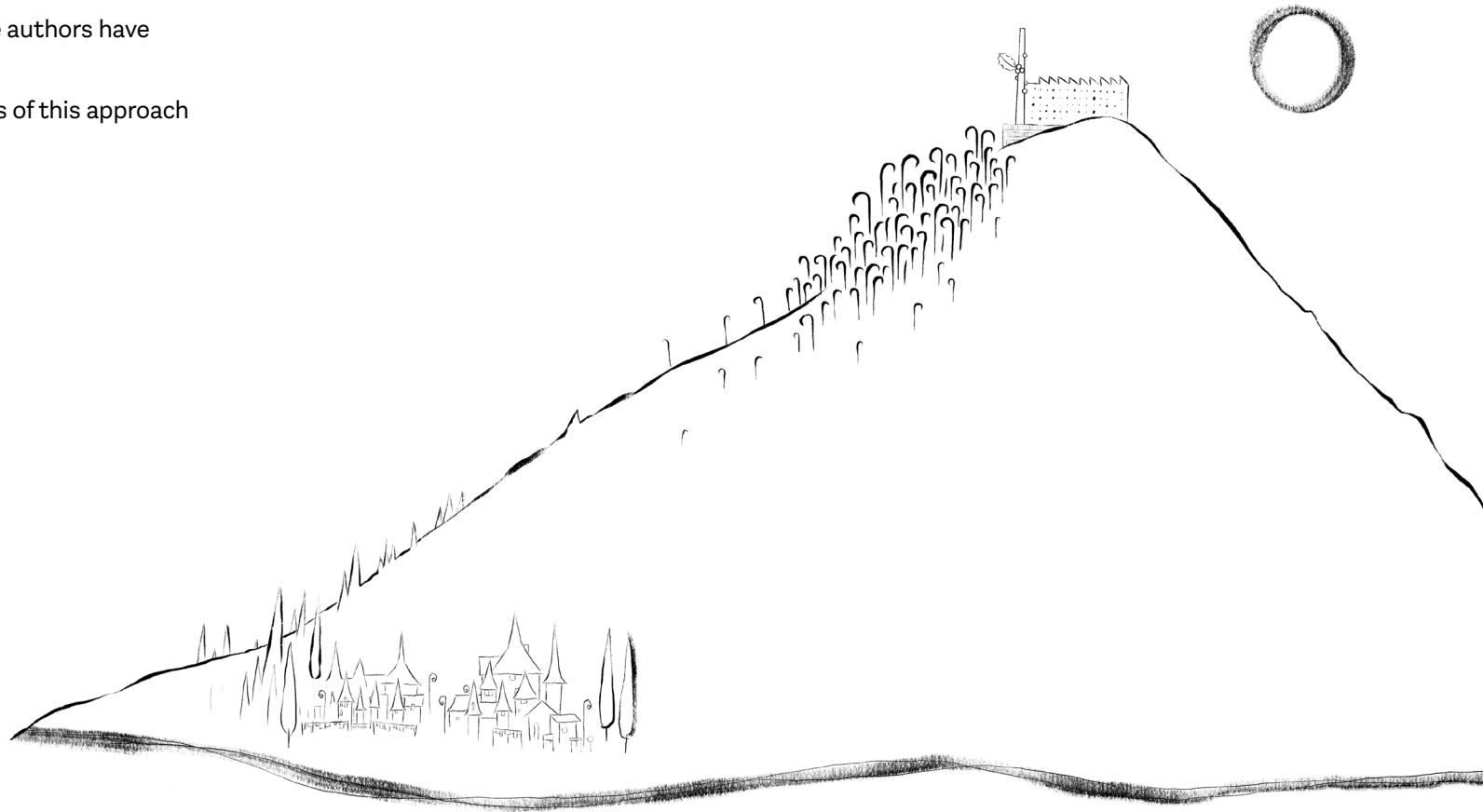


Activity 13:

Plotting the journey (continued)

.....

- Having plotted the story, what do you notice about it compared to the typical story mountain?
- How many problems does Mikka face in her journey through the story?
- Why do you think the authors have done this?
- What are the benefits of this approach to storytelling?



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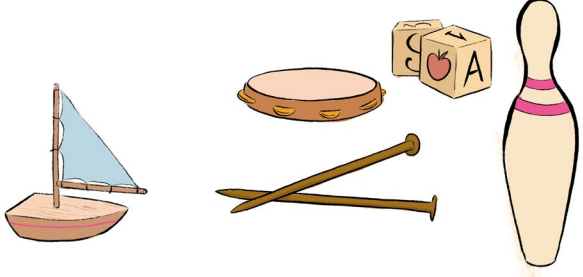
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Congratulations!

**You have now completed
the activity pack, proving you
are a star elf just like Mikka.**

**If you would like to enjoy the complete
version of this book, visit:**

www.friendlygiants.com/christmasiscancelled

You can also find the book at Hive,
Waterstones, Foyles, Amazon and
all good bookshops.

A massive thank you to the wonderful
teachers at Castle Primary School,
Andy Loneragan and Genevieve Lodge,
for the inspired ideas that helped shape
this activity pack.



Christmas is Cancelled! ... or is it?
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