



THE BOOKSHOP GIRL

SYLVIA BISHOP

ILLUSTRATED BY
ASHLEY KING

About this resources

Arranged by chapter, this pack contains:

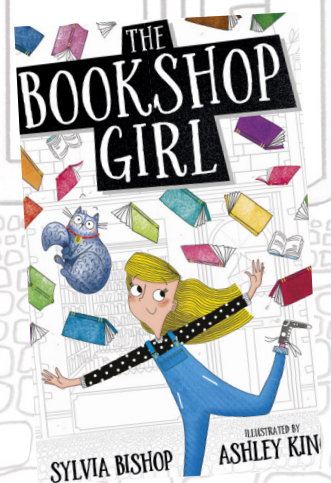
Discussion questions

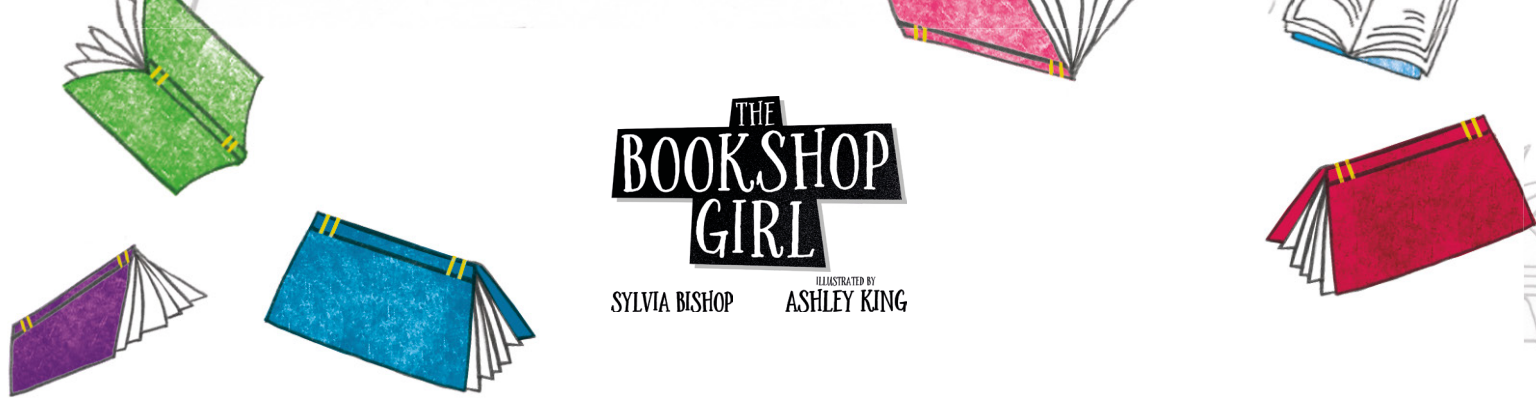
For book clubs.

Comprehension questions

Suitable for guided reading sessions
or for written work.

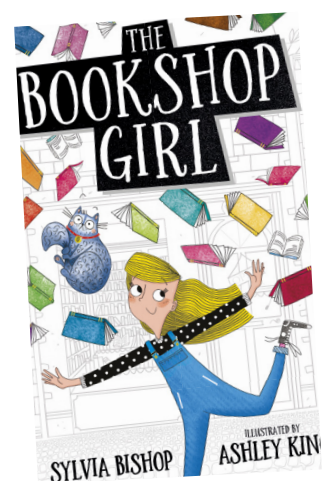
Writing exercises





Whole book questions

1. The author says that Property's real family are the Joneses, and there is nothing more to be said.
What do you think she means?
What makes someone family?
2. Would you rather live in the White Hart, or Montgomery's Emporium?
3. What rooms would you put in the Emporium?
4. At one point, Property suggests that being inside the book-themed rooms might be like reading the books.
Do you agree?
5. At the end, we are told that shutting a book is like 'shutting a door that is barely there at all'.
What do you think of this idea?
6. Property likes to go back to her favourite characters.
Do you like to re-read? Why?





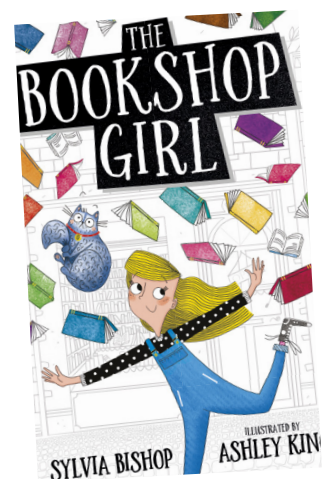
Chapter 1: An object of wonder

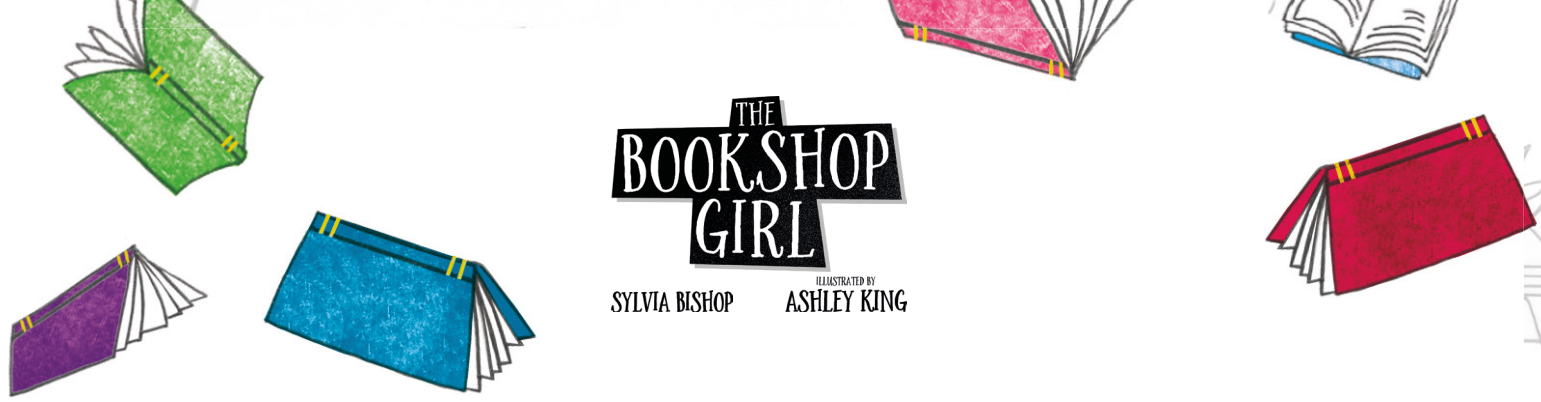
Discussion questions

- Even though the Emporium is exciting, Property has mixed feelings about going. Would you want to move from your house to go somewhere fancy and exciting? Why/why not?
- Property can't read and hasn't told her family. What problems might this cause her?
- Michael and Property seem to be clever in different ways. What are they both good at? In your life, do you find people are clever in different ways?

Comprehension questions

1. Think about who is narrating the story. Is the book written from a first-person narrative perspective, second-person narrative perspective, or third-person narrative perspective?
2. What does the word 'emporium' mean?
3. Describe, in your own words, how Property feels about telling her family that she cannot read.
4. What business was the White Hart before the Joneses turned it into a bookshop?
5. The writer describes the White Hart as comfortable and homey but run-down. Find an example of the writer using interesting language to describe the setting.
6. What does the word 'hammock' mean?
7. At the end of Chapter 1, the Joneses leave the White Hart for the Montgomery Book Emporium. What do you think will happen to them next? Why do you think that?
8. Summarise Chapter 1: An Object of Wonder in a few sentences





Chapter 1: An object of wonder

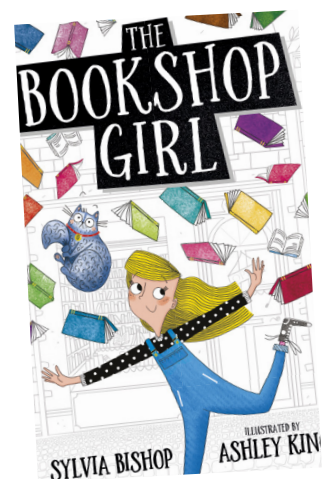
Writing exercise

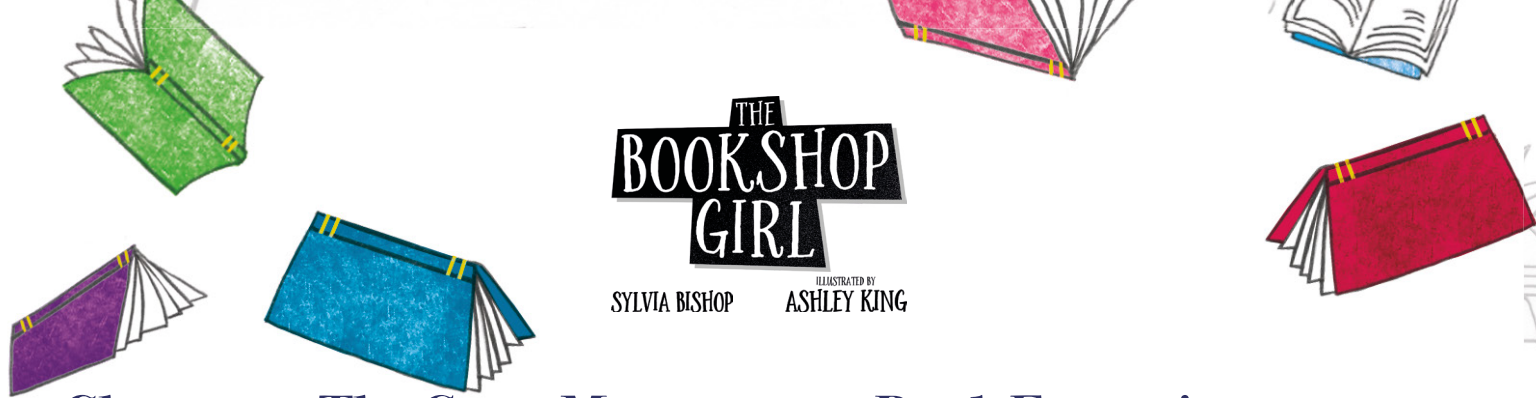
Tips for planning

- Look at Chapter 1 of *The Bookshop Girl* again, and find and write down useful information that tells us how Netty might be feeling.
- Use your imagination to think about these questions, and add your ideas to your plan:
 - > What worries might Netty have about life in the White Hart?
 - > What does Netty like about life in the White Hart? How would she feel about leaving?

Tips for writing

- Remember, a diary is written in the first person





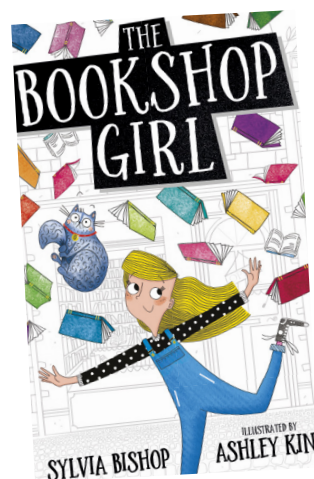
Chapter 2: The Great Montgomery Book Emporium

Discussion questions

- We only see a few of the rooms in the Emporium here.
What other rooms could there be? What would they look like?
- Property thinks that being inside a book's room might 'a little like being able to read the book'. Do you think she's right?

Comprehension questions

1. There is a group of people waiting for the Joneses when they arrive outside the Montgomery Book Emporium. Who are the people in the crowd?
2. In your own words, describe the Joneses' first impression of the Montgomery Book Emporium?
3. In this chapter, the Joneses meet Mr Montgomery.
What does the writer's description of him suggest about what kind of character he is?
4. What kind of animal is Gunther Armageddon the Third?
5. How do you think the Joneses feel about Gunther?
Find an example of language that suggests how they feel.
6. When Mr Montgomery begins his tour of the book emporium, he lists some of the different kinds of books stocked there. Can you name three of the different kinds of book he lists?
7. The movement of the bookshop rooms makes a 'tremendous din'.
What does the word 'tremendous' mean in this context?
8. What does the word 'din' mean?
9. Mr Montgomery and the Joneses explore some of the rooms in the bookshop. Describe three of the rooms they visit in your own words.





Chapter 2: The Great Montgomery Book Emporium

Comprehension questions (cont.)

10. At the end of the chapter, the Joneses spend their first night in the Montgomery Book Emporium. What do you think will happen to them next? Why do you think that?

Writing exercise

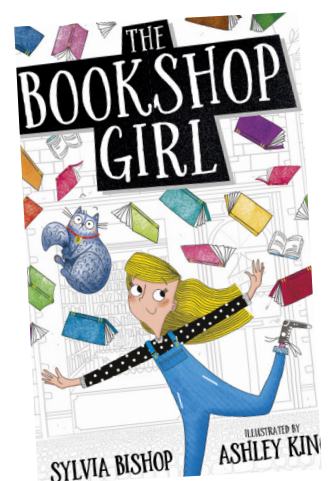
In this chapter, the Joneses see some of the rooms in the Book Emporium, which are all designed to look like the books they house. Imagine a new room in the Book Emporium, and write a description of it.

Tips for planning

- First, decide what kind of books will be in your room.
- The room will reflect the theme of the books, so list some key ideas for what should be in the room.
- Look again at the paragraph beginning 'Property expected more dark wood and lamplight, but the room inside was well lit'; and compare this to the paragraph beginning 'The Room of Dictionaries has gone.' Ask yourself: how does the atmosphere in these rooms feel different? Think about which words and images give this effect.
- Now think about how you would like your room to feel – cosy? Scary? Mysterious? Brainstorm some words and images that could give it this feeling

Tips for writing

- Your description can be longer than those in the book, which means you might need to organise it into paragraphs.
- Each paragraph should discuss a new idea about the room. It might help to group the ideas in your plan before you start.





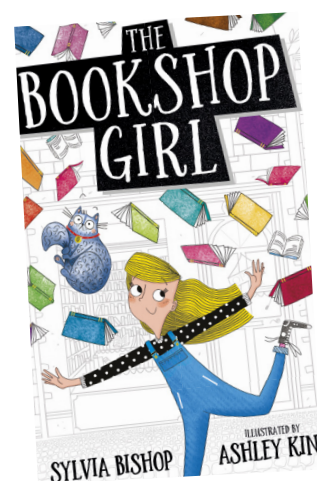
Chapter 3: Eliot Pink

Discussion questions

- Montgomery has left the Joneses to deal with Eliot Pink. How do you feel about him now?
- The trouble was caused by Montgomery spilling some lemonade, which was an accident. How does it feel when things go wrong by accident? Has this happened to you?
- Would you want a cat like the Gunther?

Comprehension questions

1. How does Property feel when she first wakes up?
2. What job does Michael do at the Emporium?
3. The writer describes a 'confusion of movement and sound' in the bookshop on the first morning the Joneses' own it. What does the word 'confusion' mean in this context?
4. In Chapter 3, the writer introduces Eliot Pink. Look at this description, and then back to the description of Mr Montgomery in Chapter 2.
Find 3 key differences between the descriptions of the two characters
5. Explain what the differences you have identified suggest about Mr Montgomery and Eliot Pink. What kind of character is Mr Montgomery, and how is he different from Eliot Pink based on these descriptions?
6. The writer describes Eliot Pink's voice as 'deep and... like it had been put through a cheese grater'. What do you think this means?
How would you describe Eliot Pink's voice in your own words?
7. Summarise what Eliot Pink tells the Joneses.
8. Who is the author of the expensive book that Eliot Pink is looking for?





Chapter 3: Eliot Pink

Comprehension questions (cont.)

9. The mood shifts after Eliot Pink arrives. How does the mood of the chapter change from the beginning to the end? Identify two sentences that particularly show this change in mood.
10. What do you think will happen to Property and her family next?

Writing exercise

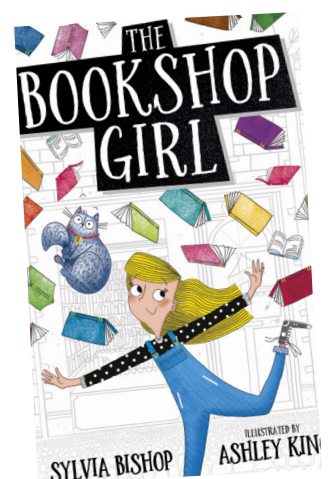
- In this chapter a villain arrives: Eliot Pink. Invent your own villain, and imagine that he arrives instead of Eliot. Write a description of his arrival in the bookshop.

Tips for planning

- Look again at the passage beginning ‘All morning the shop floor was filled with the chattering of customers...’ and ending with ‘...he wasn’t very interested in Spanish geography.’
Pick out the phrases the author has used to describe Eliot Pink.
Are they all about what he looks like? If not, what else is described?
- Brainstorm some descriptions of your villain, thinking about all the different ways Eliot Pink is described.

Tips for writing

- Sometimes it is easiest to show what somebody is like if they talk to other characters. You might want your villain to talk to somebody in you writing.





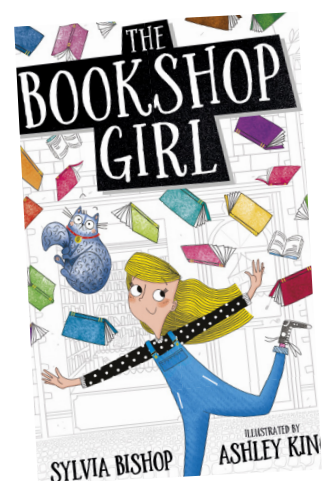
Chapter 4: Property pays attention

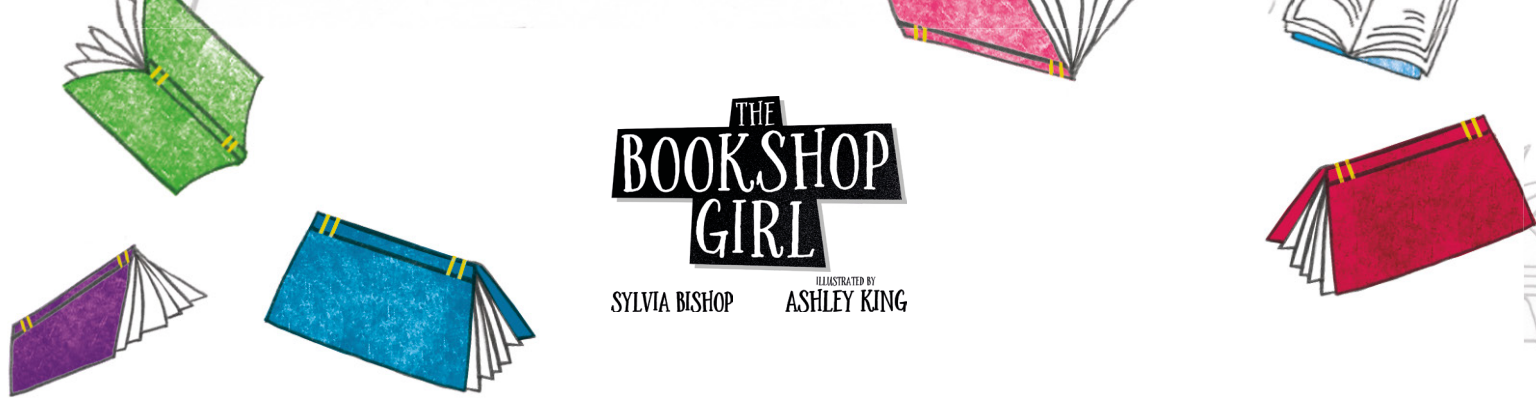
Discussion questions

- Eliot has realised that Property can't read. How do you think this makes her feel?
- Eliot says the Joneses aren't her real family. Property disagrees. What do you think makes someone your 'real' family?

Comprehension questions

1. Where do the Wollups and Eliot Pink sleep?
2. When Eliot Pink questions Property, the writer says that she 'gabbled' in response. What does the word 'gabbled' mean in this context?
3. Eliot Pink describes Property as 'illiterate'. What does the word 'illiterate' mean?
4. What kind of sweet falls out of Eliot Pink's pocket?
5. The kind of sweet in Eliot Pink's pocket is written in italics. Why do you think the writer has chosen to italicise this sentence?
6. This chapter contains a lot of questions. What effect does the repeated use of questions have?
7. Property discovers that the ruined Shakespeare play is a fake. Summarise in a sentence the clues that Property uses to figure this out.
8. Read the last paragraph of this chapter. How does this paragraph make the reader feel? How does the paragraph suggest this?
9. What do you think will happen to Property in the next chapter?





Chapter 4: Property pays attention

Writing exercise

In this chapter, Property finds that Eliot Pink has written a fake ‘Shakespeare play’. To do this, he would have to look very carefully at the way real Shakespeare plays were written, and write something new in the same style.

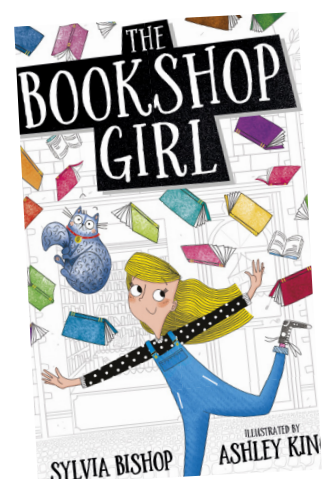
Choose a book you enjoy, and look at the first page or two. Then imagine that you, like Eliot, are trying to trick someone into believing you have found a new piece of writing by the same author. Write a story opening of your own in their style.

- This will take some planning! Look at the author you are copying, and ask yourself:
- What kind of book do they write? E.g. a mystery novel, a science book, a fantasy story
- What do the first four paragraphs of their book do?
For example, do they spend four paragraphs just describing the setting?
Do they go straight into speech? Do they begin with action?
- What is their writing style like? Have they written in first or third person?
What tense have they written in? Do they use lots of adjectives and imagery, or only a little? Do they make jokes?

Brainstorm everything you can think of to help you trick people successfully!

Now write your fake. You don’t need to know what would happen in the whole book: you are just copying the themes and style of an opening page.

See if you could be a master trickster – can your friends tell which is real and which is fake when you read them out loud?





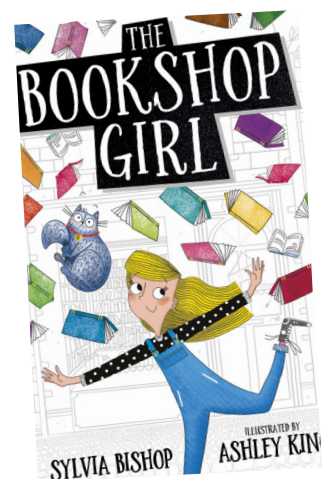
Chapter 5: In the stacks

Discussion questions

- Would you have tried to climb the stacks, or waited to be found? Why?
- What kind of person do you think Property is, based on everything we've seen so far?

Comprehension questions

1. What was Property thinking when she woke up?
2. What room has Eliot Pink locked Property in?
3. Why does Property say "bad plan" to Gunther when she sees the emergency door?
4. When Property opens the emergency door, she sees a 'dank stone wall'.
What does the word 'dank' mean in this context?
5. Which section was the most interesting/exciting part of this chapter?
How did the writer make the section you chose interesting/exciting for the reader?
6. The writer describes the stacks as 'cold and silent, hanging like bones in a skeleton'.
What impression of the setting do you get from this description?
7. How does Property feel just before she climbs down the rope?
Find three examples of language that shows you that she feels this way.
8. Almost all of this chapter is spent describing Property climbing through the stacks. Explain what effect spending so much time on this event has on the text and the reader.
9. Summarise Property's journey through the stacks. What steps does she take to get from the Room of Old Books to the shop floor?
10. The chapter ends 'surely she wasn't too late?'.
Do you think Property is too late to save her family? Why??





Chapter 5: In the stacks

Writing exercise

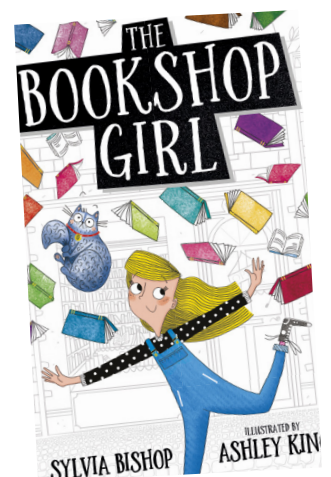
This chapter is one long ‘action scene’, describing Property climbing to safety in the Stacks. Write an action scene of your own, describing somebody trying to find their way out of a long dark cave which they are lost inside.

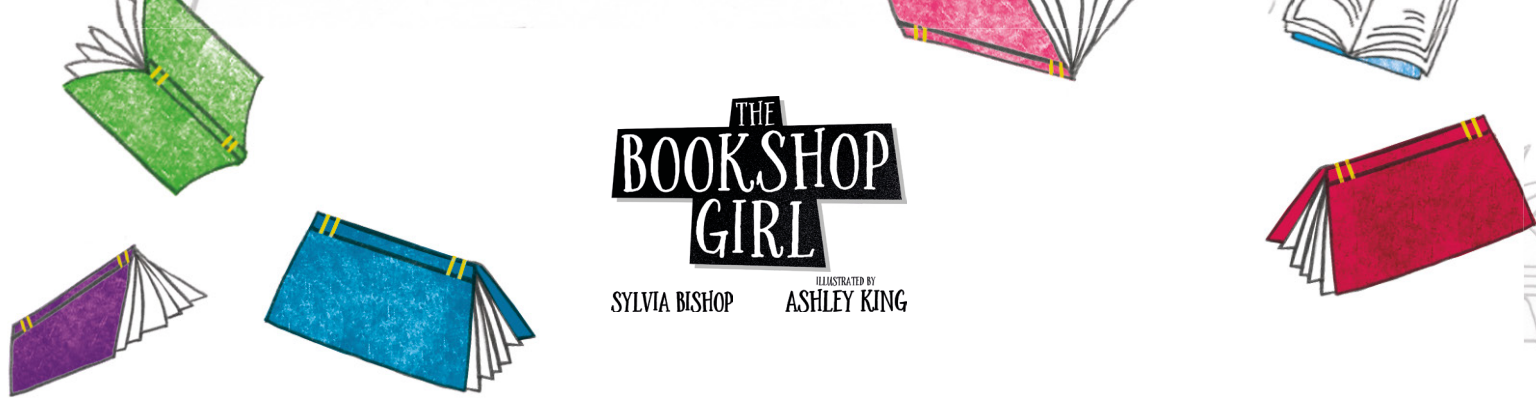
Tips for planning

- Re-read the passage from ‘The stacks were cold and cavernous...’ to ‘she went flying in after it, letting it bang shut behind her’. Notice how each paragraph describes a single main action. If it helps you, you could list the main action in each paragraph, like this: sign off in this case, as this is a formal letter.
 - > Property falls down the rope > She pauses, eyes shut > She climbs down slowly
 - ...and so on.
- List the main actions in your character’s journey out of the cave. You can invent things they might find in a dark cave, which could scare them or slow them down. For example:
 - > Hears a spooky noise and pauses > Cautiously creeps forward > Trips over a rock
 - ...and so on.

Tips for planning

- You will need to organise your writing into paragraphs. A good way of doing this is to use one paragraph for each of the action steps in your plan.
- Paragraphs can vary in length. Some might be very long, and some might only be a couple of sentences.





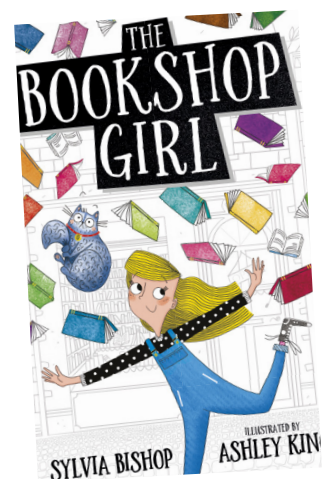
Chapter 6: Outside

Discussion questions

- What do you think of Montgomery now?
- Netty tells Michael to look after Property, 'As if Property hadn't just spent the night proving she was more than capable of looking after herself'. What do you think of this? Who looks?

Comprehension questions

1. Find a group of words that show how the bookshop feels when Property manages to return from the stacks
2. Was Property too late to stop Netty from signing the papers?
3. Look at the passage from the beginning of the chapter to the point at which the Joneses are left on the street outside the book shop. How does Netty's mood change throughout this passage? How can you tell?
4. After they are thrown out, the author suggests that 'Netty was pretending to be all right, but her voice was a little too bright'. What do you think this means?
5. Summarise what happens after the Joneses are thrown out of the Montgomery Book Emporium, in your own words.
6. The author says that Michael lets 'out a bellow of rage' when Property tells him what happened in the stacks. What does the word 'bellow' mean in this context?
7. What does Property dream about when she's asleep at the bus stop?
8. The writer describes 'a man in plum-coloured velvet'. Based on this description, who do you think the man is? Why?





Chapter 6: Outside

Comprehension questions (Cont.)

1. How does Michael feel when he speaks to this man?
Identify two words or phrases that show you he feels this way.
2. What kind of place do you think Café Splendide is?
Identify three words and phrases that create this impression.
3. 11. Mr Montgomery calls himself 'a terrible sham of a human being'.
What does the word 'sham' mean in this context?
4. 12. Michael explains to Property that the Shakespeare manuscript was a 'forgery'.
What does 'forgery' mean?

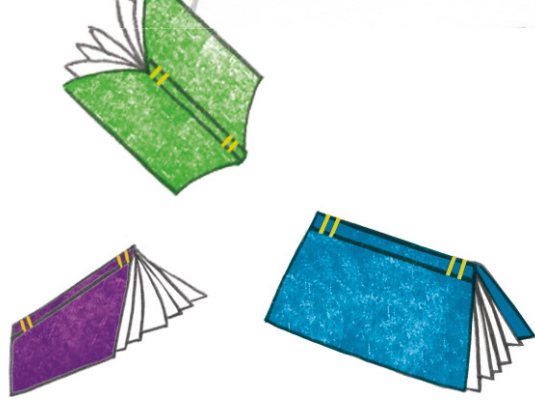
Writing exercise

In this chapter, Montgomery returns to explain himself and apologise.
Imagine that instead of coming to speak to the Joneses, he decided to write them a letter.

Tips for planning

- Re-read the passage from 'I owe you an apology, my dear Joneses...' to '... saying 'goodbye' didn't mean I couldn't come back'. Note down any information about why Montgomery lied to the Joneses, and how he feels about it now.
- Now use your imagination to brainstorm some ideas of your own about what Montgomery might be thinking and feeling.





THE BOOKSHOP GIRL

SYLVIA BISHOP ILLUSTRATED BY ASHLEY KING



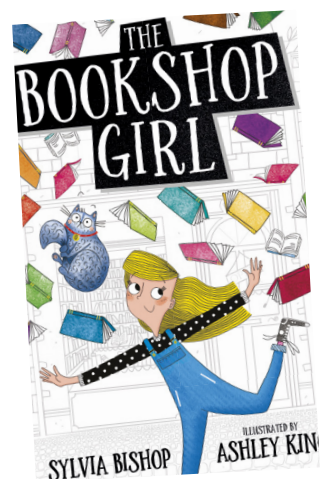
Chapter 6: Outside

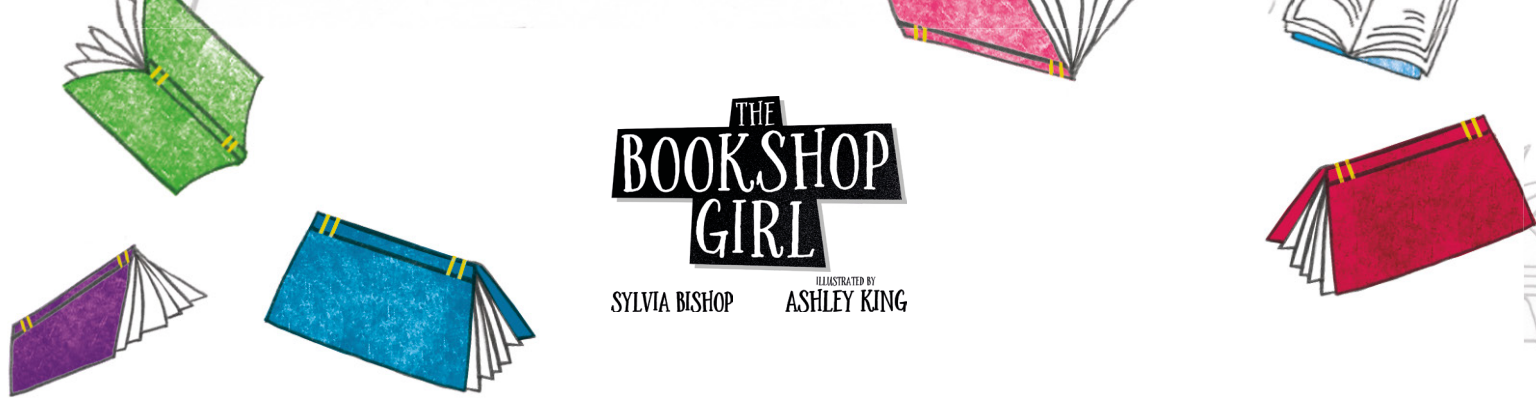
Writing exercise (cont.)

Tips for writing

Remember to think about how a letter is laid out:

- The sender's address, and the date, should go at the top right hand corner
- Open with a greeting: 'Dear name,'
- Write in the first person
- Choose an appropriate way to end the letter, such as 'Yours sincerely'





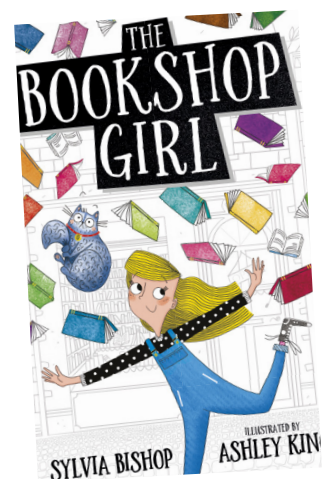
Chapter 7: Pink and Gimble

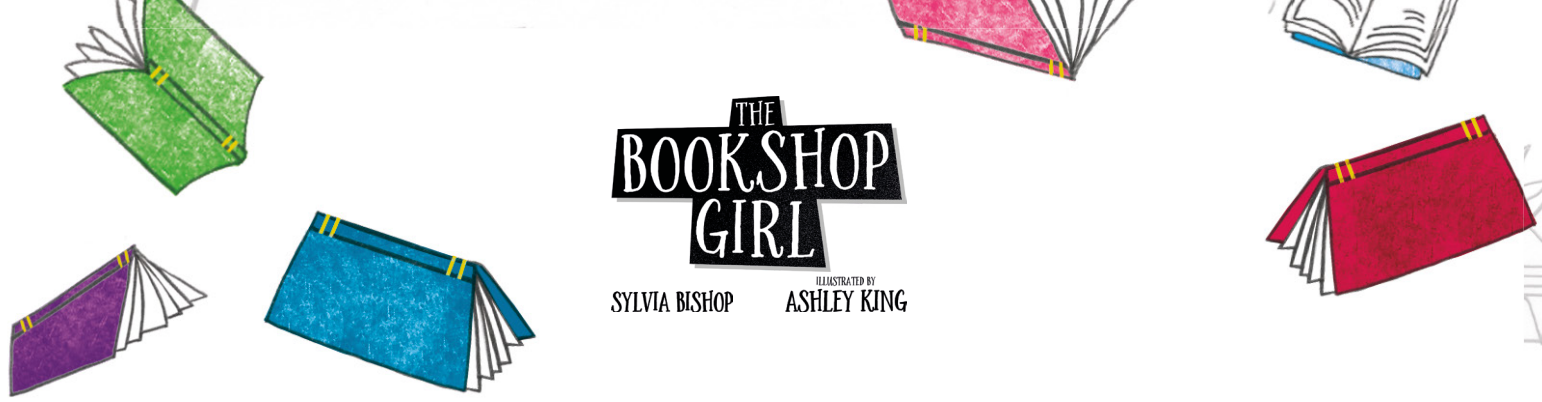
Discussion questions

- Eliot and Property have the same secret, and the same skills.
What makes them different from each other?
- Do you think Property is about to tell Michael the truth?
Do you think she should? How do you think he would react?

Comprehension questions

1. Who are Pink and Gimble?
2. The author describes Pink and Gimble's office in this chapter.
What impression do you get of this setting?
Find examples of language used to describe the office that gives you this impression.
3. Pink and Gimble return unexpectedly and Property and Michael are forced to hide.
What effect does this have on the reader?
4. Mr Gimble is described in this chapter for the first time.
What does his description suggest about him?
5. Mr Pink tells Mr Gimble that he is 'not rash'.
What does the word 'rash' mean in this context?
6. Mr Pink tells Gimble that Property is 'exceptionally observant'.
What do the words 'exceptionally' and 'observant' mean?
7. What three things does Mr Gimble suggest Property has that make her so observant?
8. Summarise Mr Pink and Mr Gimble's conversation in your own words.





Chapter 7: Pink and Gimble

Comprehension questions (cont.)

1. Which section of this chapter was the most interesting/exciting part, in your opinion?
What made it so interesting/exciting?
2. What do you think will happen next? Why?

Writing exercise

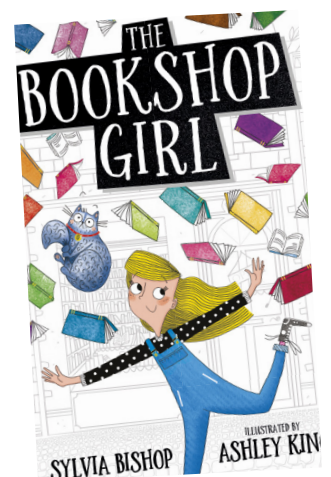
In this chapter, Property and Michael overhear Pink and Gimble discussing the fact that Property can't read. Write a paragraph about this moment in the first person from Michael's point of view.

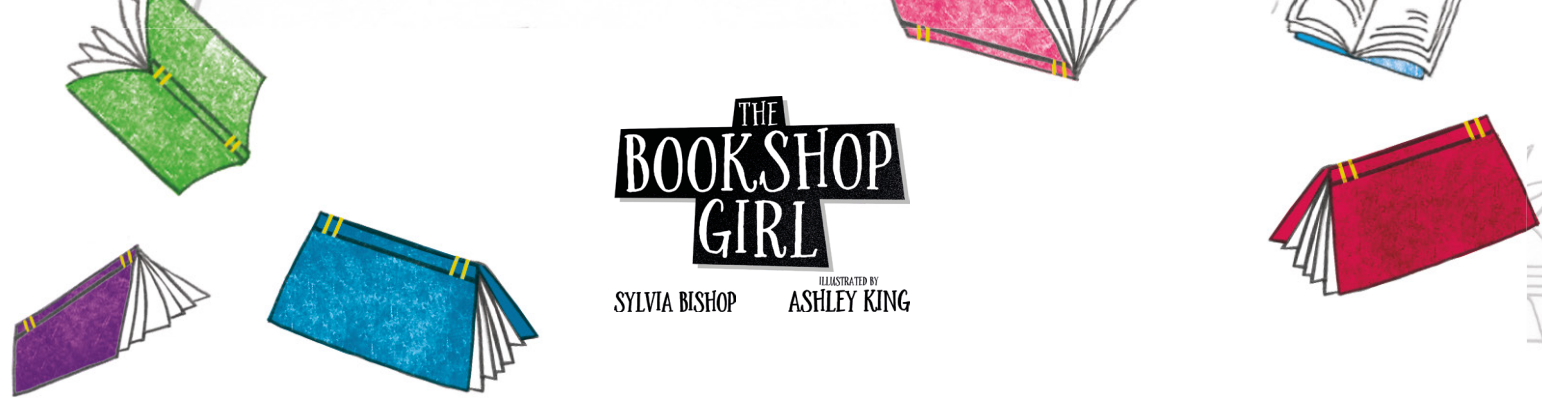
Tips for planning

- Re-read the passage that begins “‘Very well, very well,’ ...’ and ends ‘Eliot couldn’t read either’.
- Brainstorm some ideas about what this is like for Michael:
 - > What can he see, feel, hear and smell in the cramped cupboard?
 - > What emotions might he have about the news that Property can’t read

Tips for writing

You are trying to help the reader to really sympathise with Michael. Look at the ideas in your plan. Which most vividly bring to life the way he feels?





Chapter 8: The Joneses Interfere

Discussion questions

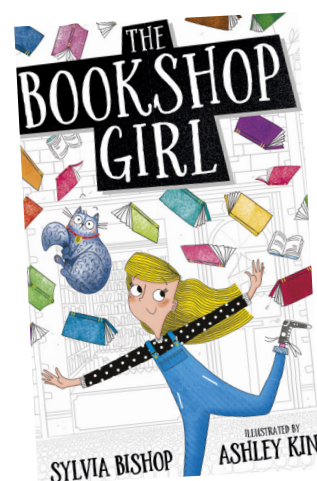
Property wants to tell Michael how she has felt about her secret all these years, but she struggles to find the words. Do you ever feel like this? What can we do about it?

She feels that ‘there were stories in the cracks of the spine and the smell of the pages and the way the jacket feels under your fingers’. Have you ever felt this way about a book?

Property is struck by the idea that being in Eliot’s brain would be like being in his office: ‘nothing comfortable or interesting or beautiful’. What does this mean to you?

Comprehension questions

1. At the beginning of this chapter, the author contrasts what Property says with what she thinks. What affect does this have on the reader?
2. Michael assures Property that it is his and Netty’s fault, not hers, that she cannot read. How does this make Property feel? Identify the words and/or phrases that suggest she feels this way.
3. Who are the ‘two shadows’ that appear ‘through the frosted glass’ on the door?
4. These two people enter the office. How do Michael and Property feel about them arriving? How can you tell they feel this way?
5. As Michael explains what happened, he ‘tactfully’ avoids mentioning Property’s secret. What does the word ‘tactfully’ mean?
6. What does Property find inside the cabinet?
7. Summarise Property’s plan to defeat Pink and Gimble in your own words.
8. Name three of the colours of ink that Property finds in Pink and Gimble’s office.





Chapter 8: The Joneses Interfere

Comprehension questions (cont.)

9. At the end of the chapter, Montgomery and the Joneses wait to find out if their plan worked. Do you think it worked? Why?

Writing exercise

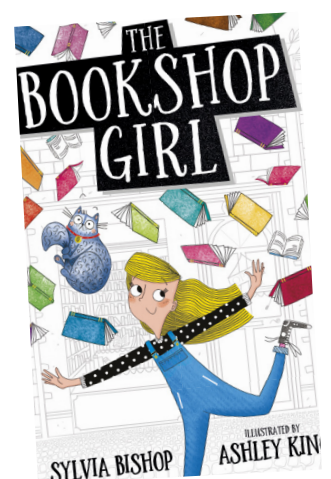
In this chapter, the Joneses make changes to Eliot Pink's forgeries. They have to make sure that Eliot won't notice the changes, but that anybody who can read will notice straight away. Write step-by-step instructions for getting this right.

Tips for planning

- Re-read the passage that begins “Look, Eliot’s the only one here tomorrow...” and ends ‘Eliot would be sure to spot any mistakes’. As you read, note down anything you need to include in your instructions.
- Use your imagination to think of any other instructions that might be important.
- Read over your list. What order should these instructions should be written in, so that your reader can follow them?

Tips for writing

The aim of instructions is to be as clear as possible. You can use devices to help the reader follow such as numbers or bullet points, and headings if necessary.





Chapter 8: The Joneses Interfere

Writing exercise

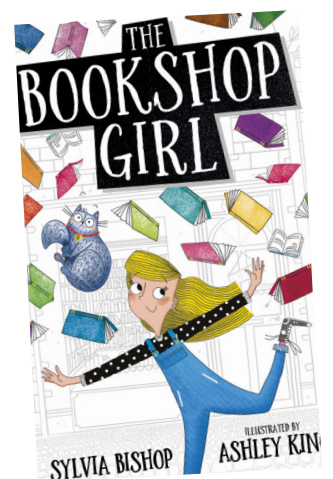
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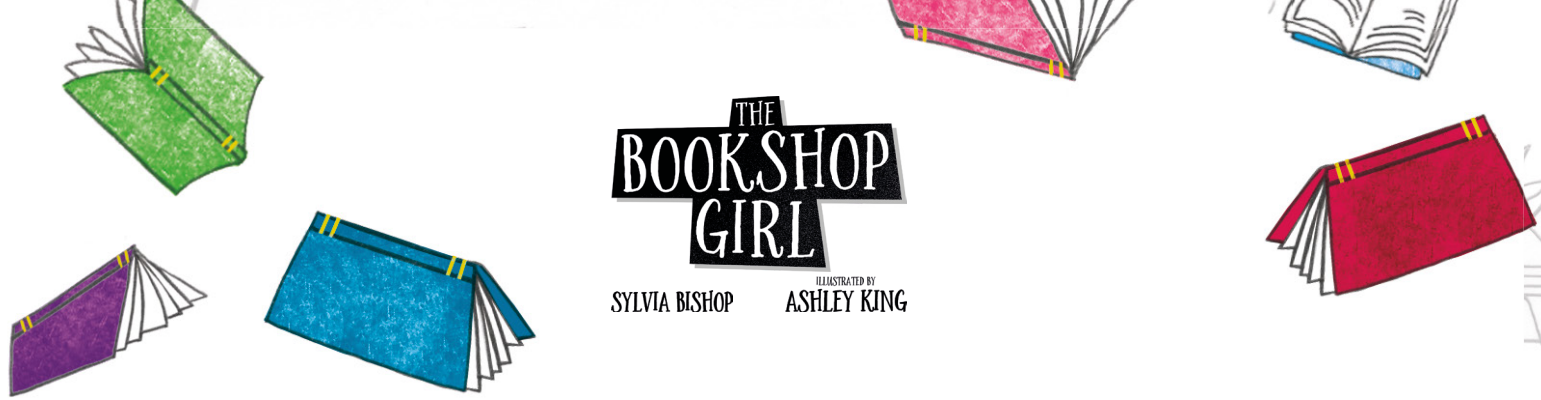
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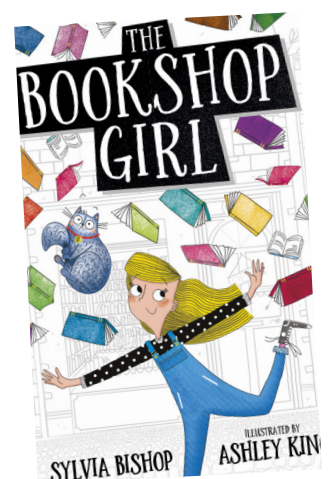
Chapter 9: A very important mob

Discussion questions

- Which are your favourites of the Jones' forgeries? Do these make you laugh? Why do you think that is?
- Michael tells the police officer 'We've got everything we could possibly need', and Property agrees. What do you think are the most important things for Property? What would be on your list of Most Important Things?

Comprehension questions

1. What does the word 'mob' mean?
2. Where do the Joneses sleep after they leave Pink and Gimble's office?
3. The Joneses and Mr Montgomery have to wait to find out whether their plan will work. How does Property feel about waiting? How do you know she feels this way?
4. Read paragraph four of this chapter, the paragraph that begins 'The next morning, the wait was over.' What affect does the dialogue have in this paragraph?
5. The author describes a 'swarm' of people outside of Pink and Gimble's office. What does the word swarm mean in this context?
6. Montgomery and the Joneses 'elbowed their way towards the front to see what was going on'. Summarise in your own words what they see and what is going on.
7. The author has some of the members of the 'mob' list what is wrong with their books. Find three examples of errors found in the books.
8. The list of errors is made up of combinations of important, famous, formal books and silly, incompatible details. What affect does this contrast between silly and serious have on the reader?





Chapter 9: A very important mob

Discussion questions

9. At the end of the chapter, the Joneses get their bookshop back. What do you think will happen to them next?

Writing exercise

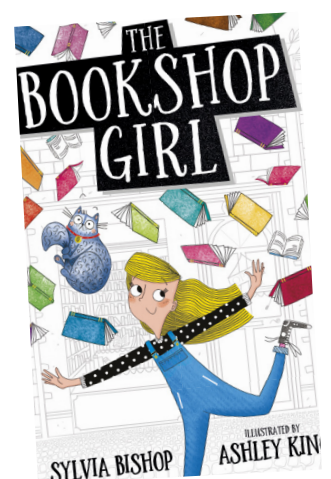
At the end of this chapter, the policeman writes a list of complaints made about fake books. Can you imagine some more? Write a list of your own.

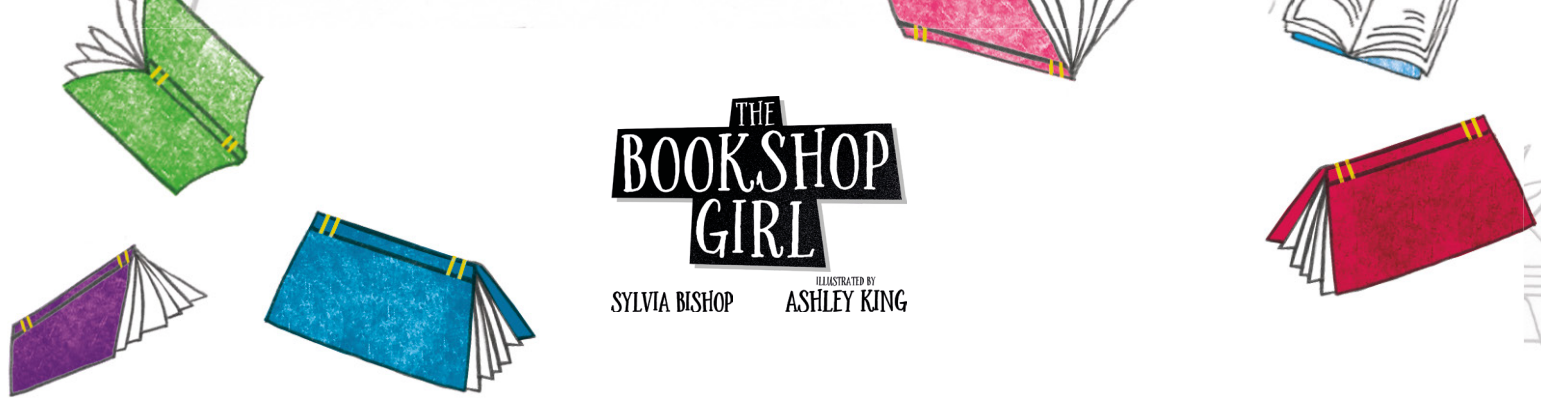
Tips for planning

- Re-read the examples at the end of the chapter.
Why was it obvious to people that these books were fake?
Are any of them funny – if so, why?

Tips for writing

- This is the silliest part of the book, and there is no right way to do it! Have fun.





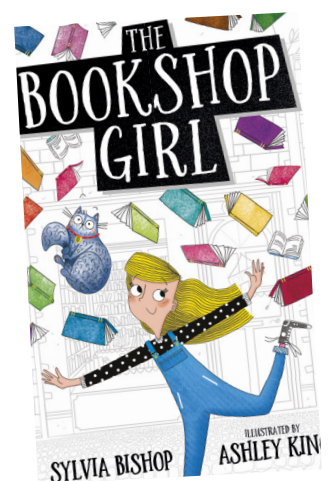
Chapter 10: The Great Jones Book Emporium (and 'Before We Finish')

Discussion questions

- Property likes knowing that she can go back to her favourite characters. Do you like to re-read books? Why/why not?
- The sound of shutting a book is described as like 'shutting a door that is barely there at all'. What does this idea mean to you?

Comprehension questions

1. Who is at the book emporium when Montgomery and the Joneses return?
2. How do the Joneses feel to have the book emporium back?
What parts of the text tell you they feel this way?
3. What does Property suggest they do with the White Hart?
4. The final chapter is mostly dialogue, and all of the main characters have something to say. Why do you think the author has chosen to structure the final chapter in this way?
What effect does it have?
5. Mr Montgomery pours everyone a 'celebratory' glass of lemonade. What does the word 'celebratory' mean?
6. The writer suggests, but does not explicitly say, that Gunther will be staying with Property and the Joneses. What words and/or phrases suggest that Gunther will be staying?
7. Michael is hinting at something towards the end of the chapter. What is he hinting at? How can you tell?
8. Summarise this chapter in a few sentences.





Chapter 10: The Great Jones Book Emporium (and ‘Before We Finish’)

Discussion questions

9. Now that you have read Property’s story, what do you think will happen to her and her family next? Why do you think that?
10. What was your favourite part of this book? And why?

Writing exercise

In this chapter, they agree that Montgomery will re-open the White Hart as a library. Imagine that this has now happened. Write an article for the local paper telling people about the new library.

Tips for planning

- Think about what the White Hart was like before, and what people might already know about Mr Montgomery (if it helps, you can look at chapter 1 for ideas)
- Newspaper articles should answer the 5 Ws: What, when, where, who and why?
Note down what you will say for each of these five points

Tips for writing

- Remember the key features of a newspaper article:
 - > It will need a short, punchy headline
 - > It should be in the third person
 - > It should be in the past tense
 - > It should answer the 5 Ws (see ‘tips for planning’)
- You might want to include quotes from people you have interviewed, and a picture with a caption

