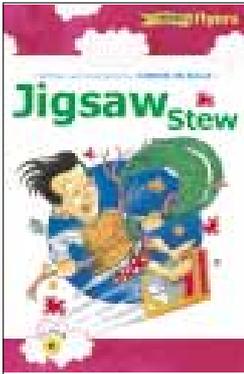


JIGSAW STEW

by Conor McHale

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For over a month, a terrible snowstorm has kept Jack MacAnoolie and his family trapped in their small cottage. They have run out of food and the resourceful Mrs MacAnoolie has been forced to boil all the family's boots – these taste fine with a little salt, even if they are a little chewy. Everything and anything is cooked in the big pot and eventually she uses up all the furniture: all the bicycles, the books and even the doorknobs. One day she makes a stew out of an old jigsaw and the result is very surprising. The entire family, with the exception of Jack, catches Jigsawia. They all turn into jigsaws and fall to pieces. Jack trudges through the deep snow, across frozen lakes, braving the icy wind in an effort to rescue his family. Doctor Mulgrew recognises the problem and knows the cure, but Jack has spilled the box and the pieces have become jumbled together. Carefully they separate the members of his family, then assemble and inflate each one. Gradually, Mr and Mrs MacAnoolie reappear, as does Molly and Rover the cat. But Rover is without his tail ... so where did that jigsaw piece end up?

LANGUAGE – ENGLISH

- ◆ Vocabulary extension: e.g. resourceful, ingredients, chewable, delicious.
- ◆ Vocabulary of wind: blew, shook, whistled, rattled, gust, icy, chilled to the bone. Suggest other adjectives to replace the word 'icy'.
- ◆ Language of rapid movement: whoosh, shot like a cannonball, jumped aside, rocketed past, leapt, thundering past, blinding speed, crash.
- ◆ Colourful writing: The wind 'whistled under the armpits of snowmen' (p.7); 'the icy wind chewed on his nose. It pinched at his ears' (p.31). Write other colourful phrases and sentences to describe the effects of wind on a person's face.
- ◆ Discussion: 'Jack's sister Molly was passing the time by calling him names' (p.8). How might you pass the time if you were trapped by the weather and forced to spend a month indoors? What games do you and your family/friends play to pass the time? Would these games differ if you had no computer and/or television?
- ◆ Discussion: Molly and Jack called one another names. Read what they said on pp. 8, 10, 12, 19, 59, 60. Do you think Molly and Jack meant these remarks to be hurtful, or were they just playing a game? Might these comments ever be considered hurtful or unkind? In what circumstances? Can things sometimes be said by close friends or family members which might not be said by acquaintances?
- ◆ Discussion: Molly was the first to be affected by the 'rare illness'. Why do you think she was the first to change into a jigsaw and fall apart?
- ◆ Discussion: 'Strange noises' came from behind the doctor's door (p.46). List some strange noises you have heard and say what caused them. Have you ever heard strange noises and not been able to identify them? Read the words which describe the sounds on p.47. Can you invent other onomatopoeic words to describe strange sounds?
- ◆ Discussion: Rover, the cat, had to get used to life without a tail (p.62). If you were putting your teacher/friend/parent or guardian back together, which piece might you choose to leave out and why?

- ◆ Creative: Mrs MacAnoolie boiled boots (with a little salt) and furniture, 'bicycles, books, candlesticks and doorknobs' (p.10) to keep the family alive. List other ingredients she might have used. Look around the classroom: think of at least 10 objects which would complement each other when cooked in a stew.
- ◆ Creative: The man who lost his nose had to use a carrot instead (pp. 42–44). Think of other vegetables and commonly used household objects to replace every facial feature.
- ◆ Creative: Snow Posters. As Jack sat in the surgery, he read *Snow Weekly* (p.46). Look at the posters on the wall behind him, and suggest alternative slogans. Or suggest slogans that might promote 'rain' as a beneficial health remedy.
- ◆ Creative: Molly said she couldn't think of anything 'more daft' than 'a cat without a tail' (pp. 63–64). Try to think of things that are even dafter and list these.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- ◆ Movement: Jack underwent a risky and dangerous journey in order to rescue his family. Mime that journey, trudging through the thick snow, teeth chattering. Show how Jack took his trousers off, broke a branch off the tree and tied them on, etc.
- ◆ Movement: Jack and the doctor put a lot of effort into inflating Molly (pp. 55–59). Mime this sequence in pairs: one child pumps the air and the other gradually comes to life.

VISUAL ARTS

- ◆ Paint and colour: Jigsaw Person. Draw the composite picture, similar to that on p.49, of a few people you know after a helping of Jigsaw Stew. What would the resulting person look like? You might use a mixture of men, women and children to make your composite picture more interesting.

- ◆ Construction: Zigzag Person. Cut coloured construction paper into a large triangle. Cut out a face from pale construction paper and add facial details. Fold two arms and two legs in accordion folds and attach them to the body. Add hands, shoes and a hat. Decorate the body triangle with cut paper or crayons or a mixture of both.
- ◆ Construction: Winter Forest. See *Busy Fingers 4*, p.15.
- ◆ Construction: Composite Animal. Discuss different animals and what parts really define that animal, e.g. a squirrel's brush or a donkey's big ears. Draw a rough oblong body shape and add features from many animals to make your own special design. Add extras, such as glasses or scarves or hats, to the animals and name them.
- ◆ Construction: Wind Sock. Cover the entire surface of a sheet of paper with a watercolour wash and sprinkle with salt for texture. When dry, turn it over and glue on layers of thin tissue paper strips, c.6in longer than the sheet of paper. Turn back over and use a thin marker to outline and highlight shapes created by the watercolours or paper strips. Glue paper into a cylinder and punch three holes in top to hang.

