

**Readers'/Teachers' Notes**

***The Key to Finding Jack***

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Firstly, look at the book cover and title.

*Discuss:* What do you think the book is going to be about? Which genre is it?

**Writing Style and Structure**

**Opening**

Read the first paragraph.

*Discuss:* Can you answer the riddle? Why do you think the author has chosen to start the book with a riddle?

Now read the rest of the first chapter.

*Discuss:* Did you come to the same conclusion about Jack's treasure chest riddle?

**Cliff-hangers**

Look at the ending of chapters 1 (Page 7), 2 (Page 18), and 3 (Page 28).

*Discuss:* Jozefkowicz has ended her chapters with 'cliffhanging' sentences. What does 'cliff-hanger' mean? Why might she have done this? Can you think of any other books or television programmes that end on cliff-hangers?

**Structuring a Story**

'Lady Abigail Jackson hated Christmas shopping.' (Page 14)

Throughout the novel, Jozefkowicz shows the reader the story that Flick is writing in her English class. This device is called a 'story within a story', which is a well-known trope in literature.

*Discuss:* Why does Jozefkowicz include a story within a story, rather than just telling the reader that Flick is writing a story? Why is the story revealed slowly in small extracts? Look at the places in the book in which it appears. Does the fiction of the inner story lead to a truth in the outer story? How? Does it have parallel themes?

Jozefkowicz uses memories and flashbacks to go back in time. So, although the main plot is linear, there are moments of the past:

‘I still remembered the moment we’d met on the first day of term last year.’ (Page 13)

‘I could vividly remember his first detention.’ (Page 24)

*Activity:* Can you find other examples of this in the text?

*Discuss:* Why does the author use memory and flashback? What effect does it have on the reader? Look at how Jozefkowicz leads into these flashbacks and memories:

‘In a burst of memory so powerful that he could have been standing right next to me, I saw him as he returned from the trip.’ (Page 140)

‘As the snow continued to fall, I squinted. Through the flurry of white, I could make out two figures spinning round and round.’ (Page 201)

The memories are sparked by different things, the one on page 140 by a photograph, and the one on page 201 by the weather.

*Discuss:* What other things can prompt a memory?

*Activity:* Is there a particular piece of music or smell that prompts your own memory? Write a descriptive piece using the prompt and the memory.

There are many ways a story can be told and developed – a story within a story, a linear timeline, a full circle time line, parallel stories, increasing stories, and decreasing stories.

*Research and Discuss:* What do all these terms mean?

*Activity:* Find examples of the different ways of telling a story. One such example would be an increasing story – *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*. (The story builds with each new creature she swallows.) Make a spider graph of the different types of storytelling and see if you can show your example text under each.

*Activity:* You can practise different ways of telling a story. Try writing a simple story, line by line. Now cut up the story into sentences. See if you can alter the timeline of the way you tell the story by shifting the sentences around. Does it help or hinder the reader? Does it make the story more interesting?

### **Language:**

Jozefkowicz uses simile for descriptions in the book.

‘The spotted rug that always flipped upwards like a curl of hair.’ (Page 22)

‘The bare branches swayed in the breeze like skinny dancers.’ (Page 81)

‘The sandy path sparkling and crunching like sugar under my wheels.’ (Page 108)

*Activity:* Write your own similes. Look around the classroom and try to describe objects using similes. Now look at how Jozefkowicz uses metaphor:

‘I knew that it was the end of how things used to be... The thought of it made me so sad that I put it away in a locked chest in my mind and refused to open it again for a very long time.’ (Page 30)

*Discuss:* What is a metaphor?

*Activity:* Create five sentences using metaphor.

### **Routine/Consistencies**

'That night I could already hear the familiar engine roar. I knew without checking the clock that it was the 10.15pm flight to New York. Right on cue, the flashing dot appeared in the black square of Jack's skylight.' (Page 1-2)

This constant in Flick's routine shows up time and again throughout the novel:

'So much had changed in the last twenty-four hours that I half expected the 10.15pm to New York to no longer appear in the skylight, but there it was – bang on schedule.' (Page 31)

Turn to Page 31 and read the rest of the passage.

*Discuss:* Why has Jozefkowicz chosen to mention the aeroplane? Why does she keep coming back to it? Are there any familiar constants in your life? Are these good or bad? Why?

The other constant throughout the novel is Flick's drummer:

'Then a thumping began in my head, like a tiny drummer beating a fierce, sad rhythm.' (Page 23).

*Discuss and Activity:* There are incidences throughout the novel in which Flick feels 'the drummer'. Can you find them? What effect does this have on the reader's understanding of Flick's emotions? Why does the author use this same imagery throughout?

### **Characters**

The first chapter is very revealing about the two main characters, Flick and Jack.

*Activity:* Divide your page into two columns and write down everything you discover about the two characters in this first chapter.

*Discuss:* Are Flick and Jack likeable?

#### **Jack:**

Jack is lost for most of the book but appears as a main character.

*Discuss:* How does the author achieve this? How does the author build Jack's character in the book?

Jack has a medical condition called haemophilia.

*Discuss:* What is this? Why do you think Jozefkowicz has chosen to give him this condition? Why does she show him playing tricks and taking risks?

"He swept his long fringe out of his eyes, something he did when he was nervous." (Page 25)

*Discuss:* How can mannerisms bring a character to life?

*Activity:* Write a character description including mannerisms and body language. What can you say about a person just from the way they move? Use inspiration from people you know to help you. Do they have mannerisms you can incorporate or copy?

Now read Chapter 3 and think about Jack's relationship with his parents.

*Discuss:* Do you think this is represented authentically? Why?

*Activity:* Create a 'Lost' poster for Jack? What attributes would you put on it for people to recognise him? What other details do you need on a 'missing persons poster'?

*Discuss:* Do you think if Flick was creating the poster she would list different things to her parents?

### **Jack's Good Deeds**

When Flick finds out more about Jack she discovers that he helps people by carrying out small acts of kindness:

'He spent the rest of the day unloading stuff with me. It was more than sixty boxes....it was his way of saying "welcome to the hood."' (Page 56)

*Activity:* Look for the other instances of Jack doing 'good deeds' in the book. Start with page 59. There is a helpful list for you on page 97 too.

*Discuss:* Jack might be what some people call 'a good Samaritan.' What does this phrase mean? Where does it come from?

*Activity:* Can you be a 'good Samaritan' for a week? Keep a diary of your good deeds. How many people can you help? It may be in small ways, such as holding a door open for a teacher, or giving up a seat on the bus for an elderly person. It could be larger deeds, such as volunteering your time with small children or the elderly. How does it make you feel? Perhaps you could continue for longer than a week.

### **Flick:**

'I liked to imagine all the people sitting in the plane waiting to reach their destination. I even made up stories about them.' (Page 2)

'It was the kind of house that I imagined Lady Abigail and Margot living in. I could see them eating in the dining room with Henry, the servants busy at work in the kitchen, making bread for the following morning's breakfast.' (Page 68)

Flick makes up stories throughout the novel, for schoolwork, but also in her head about people she meets.

*Discuss:* How important is using your imagination? What does making up stories about strangers tell you about Flick? Other than storytelling, what else can you use your imagination for?

*Activity:* Make up short narratives about strangers you see on the bus, or on your way to school. How imaginative can you be?

'I decided that rather than making our diagram spider-shaped, I would draw a tree. Jack and the key would form its roots, and different branches would grow out of the trunk, each representing a different S.F.' (Page 42)

Flick uses whiteboard paper on the wall of Jack's room to examine her clues. She draws a tree and each clue is another branch. Her tree identifies possibilities of 'S.F.', but actually gives a picture of Jack's true identity. It also tells the reader about Flick, in the way that she goes about a task.

*Activity:* Draw a tree about yourself. The branches could be family members, hobbies, skills, bits of your personality, safe places.

## **Setting**

### **Local area**

Flick's local environment is very important to her in solving the identity of 'S.F.'. She starts at her local high street:

'From the outside, Suttys looked like an ordinary grocery shop.' (Page 49)

*Discuss:* How important is someone's local area? Does knowledge and familiarity of a local area promote community feeling? Think about your own local area. Do you recognise the same shopkeepers, doctors, hairdressers, police officers?

*Activity:* Draw a map of your local high street. Flick has an estate agent, a bakery, a grocery shop, a cafe, a card shop etc. What do you have? Has it changed recently? Are there empty units? How many services are there compared with retail outlets? Can you find something that you hadn't noticed ordinarily, such as a distinctive feature of a building? Is there a green space?

'I loved the roof of the estate. I'd decided that I loved it the very first time that Jack had brought me here. There were possibilities on the roof that existed nowhere else. Possibilities for brain space and clearer thoughts, or more precisely a thought, that ran in circles through my head.' (Page 151)  
Flick goes to the Fairwick Estate to think, a place in which she feels safe, and which also brings back memories of Jack.

*Discuss:* Do you have a safe space in your local environment? It might be a library, a park, or perhaps your own bedroom.

*Activity:* Write a descriptive passage about it. Think about how it provokes a certain kind of emotion. Why does it make you feel safe?

## **Peru**

Jack is taking his gap year in Peru.

*Activity:* Identify Peru on a world map. Which continent is it in? Label a map of the continent to identify Peru and surrounding countries.

*Discuss:* Have any of your classmates visited Peru? What do you think Peru might be like? Research in books and online to get a picture of the landscape of Peru and the lifestyle of Peruvians.

*Discuss:* Are there any physical features that are the same as where you live?

*Activity:* Jozefkowicz names different places in Peru, including Arequipa, and the Salinas National Park, Llave, and Cortegana. Are all of the places mentioned real?

*Activity:* Create a PowerPoint presentation about Peru. Think about the climate, transport, religion, culture, food and drink. You may wish to start with the national tourist board website, like Flick does.

*Activity:* Imagine you are a travel agent and planning Jack's trip to Peru. Which interesting places should he visit? What activities should he do, or what foods should he try? Compose an itinerary of his time there, or a suggested list of things to do. Remember to look up the following key Peruvian features: Machu Picchu, Nazca Lines, Lake Titicaca, llamas, jungle wildlife.

*Planning Challenge:* Which airports would Jack fly in and out of? What time of year is best?

Does he need to take any precautions before he goes?

*Activity:* Imagine you are Jack sending a postcard home from your trip to Peru (before the earthquake). What would you write?

## **Inca Gold**

Jack becomes fascinated by tales of the Inca Gold.

'He'd read somewhere about these amazing treasure chests that were stolen from a Peruvian cathedral. Apparently, the jewellery in them had been mined by the ancient civilisation of the Incas...' (Page 130)

*Research:* Who were the Inca people? Why were the Inca people so renowned for their art and design work, and their jewellery?

*Activity:* Create a leaflet about the Inca. Now see if you can make an Inca piece of artwork (you'll want to use geometric shapes and patterns of symmetry).

## Mapping

' "Is there a way that you could find out where all of the schools are in this area?"

Simon frowned.

"I'll see if there's anything on this map that allows me to do that." (Page 164)

Jack's friend Simon has started searching for Jack by studying a map of the area where the earthquake hit. He also manages to pull up different landmarks and signs on the map.

*Activity:* Look at a map of your local area. Which features does it show? Which symbols and signs represent the different buildings and infrastructure? Are there standard symbols or do you need to create your own? Think about religious buildings, train stations, petrol stations, hospitals. This is the human geography of the area. Now pull up some of the physical (natural) geography of the area. Are there rivers, lakes, mountains?

*Activity:* Map a route in your area. Pinpoint two places and see if you can direct your classmate how to get from point a to point b.

## Tourism

'I concentrated instead on researching Rolling Earth, the charity that Jack volunteered with in India.' (Page 146)

'Why not stay in one of our breath-taking treetop hostel rooms nestled among the Chila mountains, in return for your voluntary work.' (Page 212-213)

*Discuss:* How might tourism affect everyday life in Peru? Try and think of the reasons why people go to visit somewhere – natural resources, entertainment, cultural education?

*Activity:* Divide your page into two and think of reasons why tourism is good for a country, but also if it has a negative impact. E.g. Promotes jobs, educates, creates wealth. Or produces overcrowding, waste etc.

*Discuss:* Why would countries promote volunteering or charitable work from overseas students? Read the advert for Oro Homes again on page 212-213.

## Themes

### Photos

'I don't put my photos on Instagram or anything, I only have hard copies that are mine to keep. It makes them more special. I like taking photos of people, capturing what makes them unique. With Jack, it was the way he laughed – he almost completed closed his eyes.' (Page 74)

'There was a big photograph of Grandma and Grandpa when they were young, probably before Mum was born. They were standing in a valley, with green mountains towering above them...' (Page 99)

*Discuss:* Today, people tend to store photos digitally on phones or online. But in the past, like Flick's grandma, and sometimes today, like Manfy, people had hard copies, and stored photos in an album.

*Activity:* Is there a photo album in your family? Have a close look at some of the pictures. What can they tell you about family members you don't know? Can they tell you anything extra about people you do know? Look at where the photo was taken, the expression of the people, the body language, the objects, clothes and accessories. How much information can you glean about a person from a photograph? Are there several photos of the person? Do they pose in the same way with different people, in different settings?

*Activity:* Take a photograph of yourself. Print it out and create a display – using annotations to point to different aspects of the photo – what does your pose present to the world? What about where you took the photo, facial expression? Did you use filters? Why? What image do you want people to see?

*Discuss:* Is Manfy right? Are photos that are kept private more special? Do you post photos on a social media platform? Why?

## **Mysteries /Riddles**

In Flick's English class, they are tasked with writing their own detective story.

*Activity:* Write your own detective story. What do you need to include? Think about vocabulary for mysteries – alibi, motive, witnesses. Not all mysteries involve a crime. Remember to include 'dramatic tension and the slow revealing of clues' (Page 9-10).

The book is crafted around riddles (which are mini mysteries):

'I had no idea who S.F. was, but I had to make it my mission to find out.' (Page 28)

In fact, the title of the book is a pun riddle, as the word 'key' works in two ways.

*Discuss:* Can you explain what these are?

A riddle is a statement or question that holds a puzzle that needs to be solved. Riddles can be found throughout history – one of the most famous is Sophocles' Riddle of the Sphinx from the play *Oedipus Rex*.

*Research:* What is this riddle? Can you solve it?

There are different types of riddles. One is an enigma: this is the use of allegorical or metaphorical devices, and they involve critical thinking. For example, I have a tail and a body but I'm not an animal. What am I? A coin.

The other type of riddle is a conundrum, a riddle that relies on wordplay or puns. *The Key to Finding Jack* relies on a play on the word 'key' in the title. Another example is: Which building has the most storeys? A library.

Have a look at these common riddles.

What's full of holes but still holds water? A sponge

What goes up and down but never moves? Stairs

What gets wet as it dries? A towel

*Activity:* Write your own riddle. The trick is to start with the answer. Choose something to write about, e.g. An object or an animal. Once you know the answer, you can think up clues that would lead someone to that answer. You may wish to try sentences that describe your answer. What it looks like, sounds like, where it's found etc. Try out your riddle on your classmates. Does it work? The function of a riddle is to entertain, but also to challenge. It may allow other questions to arise, because there are multiple possibilities in the answer. Have a think about the riddle of where Jack could be, and all the different answers that Flick comes up with.

*Discuss:* Why do you think riddles work in books? Is a novel always a riddle?

*Activity:* Create a treasure hunt. Hide an item, and then work out clues for how a person would find it. You could also throw in some 'red herrings', clues that may throw them off the scent slightly. Can your classmates solve your treasure hunt?

## **Objects:**

Jack leaves a key as a clue for Flick, and it's an important object in the book. A key can be mysterious or open a door to a new adventure.

*Discuss:* Can you think of any other stories that use the motif of a key?

'I didn't believe in magic, and yet there was something in Grandma's story that made me wonder. Maybe there was the wildest possibility that I too could harness the power of the key and use it to bring Jack home.' (Page 104)

*Discuss:* Which other objects feature in the book as important symbols? Why do you think authors use objects in their texts to signify things to the reader? Do you have an object that's particularly important to you? E.g. A piece of jewellery, a teddy bear, a book or diary. Who gave it to you? Does it have any connection to the past, to your family?

*Activity:* Draw and annotate your special object. What does it say about you as a person?

## **Natural Disaster**

'"One of the worst natural disasters in living history.'" (Page 7)

Flick's brother, Jack, is caught up in an earthquake in Peru.

*Discuss:* Have any of your classmates ever been caught up in a natural disaster somewhere in the world? Bushfires, Floods, Volcanoes, Tornadoes?

'An earthquake is a shaking of the surface of the earth, resulting in the sudden release of energy in its upper layers.' (Page 36)

*Activity:* Make a poster about earthquakes. What makes an earthquake happen? What are the stages of an earthquake? What are after-shocks?

Now look up real-life examples. Choose one in particular and write a non-chronological report about it.

You may also wish to make a model of an earthquake. Use this guide to help you

<https://www.3dgeography.co.uk/earthquake-models>

'We were awoken next morning by Dad, speaking on the phone to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.' (Page 32)

*Discuss:* What is the Foreign and Commonwealth Office? How does the government help its citizens when they face difficulties overseas?

*Activity:* Create a pamphlet with instructions on what to do in an emergency. What should people have in their bags in case of emergency – water, food, blanket etc? What about contact numbers of family members? With your knowledge of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, think about members of authority to list at the back.

You may also like to have a go at packing a bag for an emergency situation using this game:

<https://www.ready.gov/kids/games/data/bak-english/index.html>

*Activity:* Imagine you are a member of Rescue Services. Make a flow-chart of the steps you have to take in the aftermath of an earthquake. Think about search and rescue, the infrastructure of an area after a natural disaster, access to facilities such as clean water, food and medicine.

‘A few hours later I was woken up by the room shaking. My bed was literally sliding across the floor.’  
(Page 226)

Read Jack’s account of what happened to him during the earthquake.

*Activity:* Write a diary entry for Jack the day *after* the earthquake. Remember that Jack might write things in his diary that he wouldn’t admit to others.

*Activity:* Imagine your own reaction in a natural disaster. Role play a phone conversation with a loved one back home to explain you are safe.

### **Different sides to people/unknown familiars**

‘Because it turns out that even the people you think you know well can be a very cryptic puzzle.’  
(Page 234-5)

‘I thought about all the different versions of Jack... They were versions that we didn’t see at home.’  
(Page 97)

*Activity:* Make a list of different facets of your personality. Think about where and when you change behaviour. For example, you might wear a school uniform to school, but something very different at the weekends. Do you talk differently to your friends as to your family? When do you feel most ‘yourself’? You may wish to show this graphically with a brainstorm web.

Look at the representation of Duncan in the novel:

‘As always, everything about him looked immaculate. His shoes were clean, his trousers barely had a crease, and his shirt was tucked in... Duncan certainly acted as though he had his own part to play in his family’s fame.’ (Page 10-11)

Continue reading the portrayal of Duncan on these two pages.

Now look at other instances where Duncan appears in the novel:

‘I turned around and saw Duncan standing outside the bakery next door. Without his immaculate school uniform, he looked younger and friendlier...’ (Page 52)

Read the rest of this page.

‘But I began to understand where all of his snooty behaviour came from...’ (Page 189)

*Discuss:* How does Flick’s opinion of Duncan change over the course of the novel. When does she start showing empathy for him, instead of judging just by his outward appearance? What does she think of Duncan by the end of the story?

Now look at the portrayal of Samantha, Manfy, in the book.

‘She was wearing a pencil skirt and suit jacket... then I looked closer and saw the dark hair and pale skin. I’d barely recognised Manfy without her leather jacket.’ (Page 66)

‘“I remember that day. I thought you were a customer. You seemed so – you know...”

“Confident? Chilled?”

“Yeah.”” (Page 72)

*Discuss:* How often do you judge somebody based on their clothes?

*Activity:* Manfy wears a different outfit for her job. Can you list other occupations in which people have to wear special clothes in order to do their job?

Flick's Grandmother, Sylvie:

Flick also forms a judgement about her grandmother from early impressions:

'She had always been super-strict, even with her appearance: she had flawless makeup, poker straight hair, and her immaculately plucked eyebrows disappeared into her fringe when she was cross. Then you knew you were in Deep Trouble.' (Page 77)

*Discuss:* Read Chapter Seven and see how Flick's opinion of her grandmother changes. Why do you think the story about Mr Percy has an impact on Flick? Have you ever made a wrong judgement about somebody? How did you come to revise your opinion?

*Activity:* Think about what you initially look at when you meet a new person. Make a list – is it their clothes, their eye colour, their hairstyle, the way they stand or move? Now make a list of what you think makes a good impression when you meet someone for the first time. Are the lists similar?

'Take Grandma, for example – there's so much about her that we don't know, because we've never bothered to ask.' (Page 142-3)

*Activity:* Pick a close family member or friend. Draw up some interview questions to discover things about them that you never knew. Try not to invade their privacy, but be interested. Perhaps there is something in their childhood or past they are proud of? A skill they have (such as playing the guitar) that no one knows about? A place they have visited and loved? What questions will you ask to elicit a new truth?

### **Predicting Behaviour**

'It was a case of knowing him well enough to predict his behaviour.' (Page 137)

One of the major themes of the book is Flick finding out enough about Jack that she can predict his behaviour to find out where he is. We often make predictions in real life and at school.

*Discuss:* What is a prediction? What is the difference between a prediction and a hypothesis? Do you make predictions while you are reading a story? How do you make predictions? What about in science or computing? Think about the different ways that companies might make predictions. Does a supermarket predict what you might buy? Does an app predict what you might want to look at or download? Does your phone predict your conversation (text messaging)? How do they do that?

*Activity:* Develop some real-world predictions. What evidence have you based your prediction on? For example, you might predict that it is going to rain soon as dark clouds have gathered overhead. You might predict what's for dinner based on what's in the fridge. You might predict what's for school lunch based on what you ate at the same time last week? You need to base your predictions on things that have already happened *and* things you already know.

**N'oubliez pas de vivre** – Don't forget to live.

'"It's *exactly* the kind of thing people forget," Grandma disagreed. "They are often so engrossed with their jobs and the tiny things that they do day to day, that they lose sight of what's really important."' (Page 106)

*Discuss:* What does the phrase mean to you? If you were to really 'live', what would you do? For Jack it's also about the pursuit of his dreams – what he wants to do when he graduates.

*Discuss:* What do you want to do when you're older?

**Further Reading:**

*The Mystery of the Colour Thief* by Ewa Jozefkowicz

*The Key to Flambards* by Linda Newbery

*Not My Fault* by Cath Howe

*High Rise Mystery* by Sharna Jackson

*The Snow Angel* by Lauren St John

*No Fixed Address* by Susin Nielsen

*The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Dowd

*Can you crack the code: a fascinating history of ciphers and cryptography* by Ella Schwartz, illus Lily Williams

*Earthshattering Events: The Science behind Natural Disasters* by Sophie Williams

*The Inca Empire: True Civilisations* by Sandra Newman

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<http://www.minervareads.com>