

MAYBE...

CHRIS HAUGHTON

TEACHERS' NOTES



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ABOUT THE BOOK:

Three little monkeys, and their big monkey, are sat high up on their branch in the forest canopy. "Ok, monkeys! I'm off," says the big monkey.

"Now remember. Whatever you do, do NOT go down to the mango tree. There are tigers down there." Mmm ... mangos! think the little monkeys.

They LOVE mangos. Hmm ... maybe ... maybe they could just look at the mangos? That'd be ok, right?

From the multi award-winning picture book maker of *A Bit Lost*, *Oh No, George!*, *Shh! We Have a Plan*, *Goodnight Everyone* and *Don't Worry, Little Crab* comes a comes a funny, suspenseful and keenly observed cautionary tale about pushing boundaries and indulging your more mischievous, cheeky side (when nobody is looking).



WALKER
BOOKS

These notes have been written by the teachers at the CLPE to provide schools with ideas to develop comprehension and cross-curricular activities around this text. They build on our work supporting teachers to use quality texts throughout the reading curriculum. They encourage a deep reading of and reflection on the text, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, rather than in just one sitting. We hope you find them useful.

Introducing the text:

- Share the front cover of the book with the children, and encourage them to focus on the illustration of the monkeys, before looking at the title. *What can you see? What kind of creatures are these? What do you know or think you know about them from looking at them?* Encourage the children to focus in on the facial expressions and body positions of the creatures. Invite the children to freeze frame themselves into a similar position. *What do you think they are doing?*
- Now reveal the title of the text, **Maybe...** What does this word mean? When do we usually say this word? What do you think the three dots after the word mean?
- Look back at the illustration of the monkeys. *What do you think each character might be thinking or saying?* Take the title word **Maybe...** and invite the children to continue this as a statement, question or exclamation sentence. Once you have explored a few of the children's ideas, you could write these down, enclosed in a thought or speech bubble, or invite the children to do this for themselves, to stick around a copy of the cover, to capture their initial thoughts.
- Open the book and spend some time looking at the endpapers. *What can you see on this page? Where do you think this is? Who do you think the eyes belong to? What makes you think this?* Allow time for the children to talk about their ideas and expectations for this book. *How do you think this setting and these characters fit in with the monkeys? What might happen in a story here involving these animals?* Use this activity to gauge children's sense of story and how much they can relate story structures and concepts, linked to known stories or real-life events. *Do they have ideas about what the characters might get up to? Where the story might take place? Who else might be involved?*
- Now look at the inside title page. Look carefully at the ways in which the position of the monkeys has changed since we first saw them. Explore the body position and facial expressions of the monkeys; *what do you notice about the monkey on the right? What do you notice about the placement of the front foot of the monkey in the middle? How might you describe these monkeys? What might their characters be like?* Think back to the ideas you had about the story after looking at the endpapers. *What do you think is happening here or might be about to happen? How does this relate to the ideas you already had about this story?*
- Turn to the publication page, where we see a much wider view of the setting. *What can you see here? Where are the monkeys? Who else do you think is with them?* Look carefully at the monkeys; *do they all look the same? What can you tell about the characters of the monkeys here? How might the monkey climbing up the tree be described, compared to the ones sitting down? Who do you think the larger monkey is? How might they fit into the story?* Turn your attention to the tree they are in. *How would you describe it? What do you think it might be like to be up there? Why do you think they are all up here like this? What are they doing? What might they be thinking or saying to each other?*
- Now, take time to explore the wider setting. *What can you see in the landscape? What do you think it is like to be in this place? What might you see or hear? How might it feel to be there? From seeing this wide perspective and remembering what we have seen so far, what are your predictions for this story? What do you think might happen?*



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You could, once again, scribe children's thoughts and ideas around a copy of this illustration, or, if they can note take independently, get them to do this themselves, in small groups or pairs, sharing and discussing their ideas together.

Getting into the story and exploring characters:

- Turn to the first double page spread of the book. Read the text aloud and take time to explore the illustration carefully. *Who do you think the larger monkey is now? Does this confirm any of your previous thoughts? Where do you think they might be going?*
- Re-read the text on the page. *Why do you think the author has chosen to present the word **NOT** in capital letters? How do you think this affects how we read this aloud?* Give children the opportunity to have a go at saying the words the larger monkey says, thinking about how they will emphasise this word. *Why do you think the larger monkey has given them these instructions? Do you think the small monkeys will follow the instructions? What makes you think this? Now think about whether you think they should follow the instructions.* Encourage the children to justify their responses by looking at the information that has been given in the text and illustrations so far, as well as drawing on their wider knowledge about animals in the wild.
- Encourage the children to close their eyes and visualise what they think might happen when the page is turned. *What do they think the monkeys will be doing? What text might appear on the page?* Turn the page and read the next spread aloud. How did it compare with the ideas you had? Were there any similar incidents or themes? Are you surprised by what you see? Why or why not?
- Re-read the text again, and look carefully at the illustration. *Which monkey do you think is on the left, instigating the idea of going down? Turn back to and reflect on the monkeys you see on the previous pages. Where do you think this monkey is in these spreads? What makes you think this? What can you tell about the character of this particular monkey? What do you think the other two monkeys are like in comparison?* Look at the way the word **is** is emphasised in the text. *How do you think this monkey is saying this? What do you think it is thinking when it says this?* You could allow time for the children to have a go at saying the sentence themselves, stepping into the role of the character.
- Turn the page and read the next spread. Look at the words that are emphasised here: **maybe** and **look**. *What do you think the two other monkeys are thinking or feeling when they say **maybe**? What do you think the other monkey is trying to achieve when it emphasises the word **look**?*
- Make copies of these two spreads and divide the children into groups of three. Get them to each take the role of one of the monkeys and act out the two spreads, mirroring the monkeys' facial expressions and body positions and thinking about how to show their characters in the way they say the words. Give the children a chance to practice and rehearse this in their groups and then perform the scenes to each other. *What did different groups do that was similar? What was done differently? What do you think about the characters of the three monkeys after seeing the performances? What did acting it, and seeing it acted, add to your understanding?*
- Come back together and re-read the story so far, up to **That'd be ok, right?** Take some time to consider this question together. *Do you think it would be ok to just look at the mangos? Why or why not?*
- You could extend this into the children taking part in a conscience alley, where the class form two lines opposite each other with a path in between. Choose three children to play the part of the three little monkeys and,



as they walk down the path, the other children they pass should tell them if they think it is ok to go and look at the mangos and why they do or don't think it's a good idea.

- When they have completed their walk, ask the children acting in the role of little monkeys to share the opinions that stick in their minds most predominantly and why this is. Then ask the three children to come together as a group and decide what they think they should do next. *Do they all share the same opinion?*

Developing knowledge of story shapes and patterns:

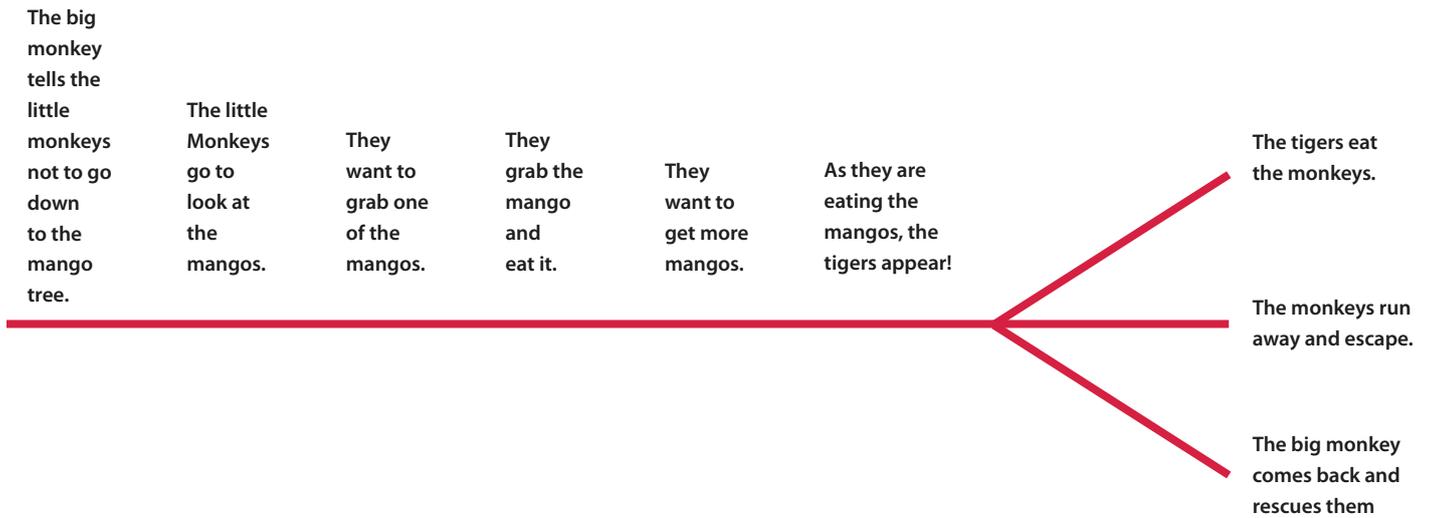
- Re-read the story so far, and on to the next spread, up to **Down, down, down to the trees below. And LOOK!**
- Encourage the children to look carefully at the illustration on the page. *What do they see when they look really closely?* You may want to provide them with magnifying glasses or a viewfinder - a square cut out of a piece of black card - so that they can move this across the image and isolate small details that they may miss when looking at the illustration as a whole. *Do they think it really is as safe as the monkeys thought it was? What do they think might happen next?*
- Turn to the next spread and read on until, **There's one within reach, just over there.** *What do you think that you can see in this illustration that they can't?* Turn the page, reading the next spread, up to the repeated phrase **That'd be ok, right?** *What would you say to the monkeys if you could speak to them and offer them advice at this point of the story?* The children could record their ideas in speech bubbles to stick around a copy of this illustration. Encourage them to extend their ideas using words like *because, in case, even though* or *so that*.
- Continue reading on to **I wish we had another one though...** encouraging the children to chime in with the repeated words and phrases, **Down, down, down** and **No tigers here! No tigers there! No tigers anywhere!** Think about the final line together, **I wish we had another one though...** *What might this suggest about the character of this monkey?* Talk together about words they would use to describe this character's actions at this point of the story, and how this might affect the other two monkeys. This could be the springboard for a wider discussions around consequences and actions, recognising the differences between wants and needs or personal safety.
- Read on to **And LOOK! ALL the mangos!** encouraging the children to chime in again with the repeated words and phrases. Take the time, once again, to look very carefully at the illustration. *What do you notice now? What does this tell you about the situation the monkeys could find themselves in?*
- Turn the page and read aloud the next spread. *What do you think it might be that the monkey can hear? What do you expect to see as you turn the page?* Once again, encourage the children to close their eyes and visualise what they think might happen when the page is turned. *What will you see in the illustration? What will the characters be thinking, saying or doing? How will you show how the characters are feeling? What might the text say? Where might the text be placed?*
- Revisit the spreads you have read so far, to look at the different choices Chris Haughton has made. *Will it be a double page spread or two single spreads? Will we see a close up perspective or be looking from further away? What colours, shapes and patterns will you see?* After investigating and discussing, the children could go off and draw their own ideas and write their own text, following the simple, bold style of Chris Haughton, or you could put the children's ideas together to create a shared page together as a group.



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- Turn the page and compare and contrast your ideas with the spread Chris Haughton produced. *Does his spread surprise you? What do you think about immediately? How does it make you feel? What makes you feel this way?* Look at the way that he has chosen to illustrate the tigers, the size, colours, and the sharp lines used for their patterning. Explore the facial expressions of the characters, including the way he has placed them on the page, with the tigers completely encircling the monkeys. *What does this make us feel about the tigers? How do we feel about the monkeys now? What do you think they are feeling and thinking at this moment?* You could ask the children to share their ideas in thought bubbles that could be stuck around a copy of the illustration.
- Look back over the story so far, re-read it from the beginning to this point. Map the main events that have taken place and discuss possible story pathways, showing the children's ideas for how the story might continue, e.g.



- When the children have explored all their ideas, encourage them to think about which pathway they think might be the most likely and why. Ask the children to vote for which idea they actually think will happen next.

Exploring action and authorial intent:

- Re-read the story so far, and on until **Quick, quick, quick, they're going to get us!** Look carefully at these three spreads. *How does Chris Haughton build a sense of action and danger in the text and illustrations?* When looking at the text, the children might explore and discuss: the choice to start each page with a verb, issuing a command as an exclamation, presented in capital letters with three exclamation marks – **RUN!!!**, **JUMP!!!** and **CLIMB!!!**; the repetition of **quick, quick, quick** or the build in tension from **they're right behind us**, to **they're catching up!**, to **they're going to get us!** When looking at the illustration, they might explore and discuss: the size of the tigers and the space they take up on the page; the facial expressions and body positions of the characters; the way that movement is conveyed; the separation of one of the monkeys on the second spread in this series or the choice to turn the illustration from landscape to portrait in the last spread, meaning the reader has to physically turn the book to read it.



- Open up a discussion with the children about the authorial intent behind these choices. *What does each spread make us think about? How does each spread make us feel? What makes us feel this way?*
- Look at how the pace of the story changes at this point. *How would you describe the pace of the story up to this point? What is the pace like through these spreads?* Discuss the pace compared to other stories the children know. *Why is it important to vary the pace in a story? What would happen if everything was fast paced or slow paced? How does the variation in pace affect you as a reader?* You could also track the emotional journey of the story from your own perspective as a reader or from the monkeys' perspective, looking at where the high and low points of the story are, mapped against the emotions felt at different parts of the story. *Why is it important to take the reader on an emotional journey? What would happen if a book's emotional journey was flat?*
- Re-read the last spread again, where the monkeys make it back to the tree with the lions snapping at their heels. *How do you think the story might end? Do you think the monkeys will regret the decisions they made and feel sorry that they didn't listen to the big monkey?*
- Now read to the end of the book. *What do you think about the end of the story? Are you surprised by the monkeys' actions? Do you think they will ever learn from their mistakes? Do you think the story ending would be as funny if they did?*

Revisiting the story as a whole:

- Come back to the book again and re-read the entire story as a whole. Allow the children to begin to explore their responses to it through booktalk with the help of what Aidan Chambers calls 'the four basic questions'. These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion:
 - *Tell me ... was there anything you liked about this story?*
 - *Was there anything that you particularly disliked?*
 - *Was there anything that puzzled you?*
 - *Were there any patterns ... any connections that you noticed? Did it remind you of anything else you've read, experienced or seen?*
- The openness of these questions unlike the more interrogative 'Why?' question encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of the 'wrong' answer.
- Asking these questions will lead children inevitably into a fuller discussion than using more general questions. You may, for example, ask the children if they had favourite parts of the story, and why this was.
- Extend the children's thinking through a more evaluative question, such as:
 - *Why do you think Chris Haughton chose to write this book?*
 - *What do you think the moral of the story was? What lessons might it teach a young reader?*
 - *Who do you think would like this book? Why?*



- You could also compare the front and endpapers and look at what these tell us about the story.
- Leave multiple copies of the book in the book corner for the children to revisit and re-read in independent reading time, by themselves or socially in a group.

After reading, you could also:

- Provide an opportunity to write the next adventure for the monkeys. *What will happen when they see the bananas?* Think about how to follow the story shapes, repetitive language and how to convey emotion and action and how to vary the pace and emotional journey in the way Chris Haughton did in this story.
- Find out more about monkeys, tigers and other wild animals that might live in this habitat. *Could you include any of these in your new adventure?* The children may also want to explore the food chains in this habitat or find out specific information about the animals to present to an audience in different ways.
- Continue to explore the illustration style of Chris Haughton, including how he uses collage, colour and pattern. You can find out more about this and see examples of his process at: <https://blog.chrishaughton.com/the-making-of-maybe/>
- Find out more about Chris Haughton, his work and his illustration techniques by watching his videos on CLPE's Power of Pictures website: <https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/haughton-chris>
- Give an opportunity for the children to share or write personal narratives about a time where they haven't followed instructions and the consequences of their actions as a result of this.

Other suggested titles by Chris Haughton or to further support the exploration of themes arising from the book:

- **A Bit Lost by Chris Haughton** (Walker)
- **Oh No, George! by Chris Haughton** (Walker)
- **Shh! We Have a Plan by Chris Haughton** (Walker)
- **Goodnight Everyone by Chris Haughton** (Walker)
- **Don't Worry Little Crab by Chris Haughton** (Walker)
- **Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! by Mo Willems** (Walker)
- **That Fruit is Mine! by Anuska Allepuz** (Walker)
- **Alphonse, That is Not Ok to Do! by Daisy Hirst** (Walker)
- **Alphonse, There's Mud on the Ceiling! by Daisy Hirst** (Walker)
- **Knuffle Bunny by Mo Willems** (Walker)
- **There Are Cats in this Book by Viviane Schwarz** (Walker)
- **Alfie Gets in First by Shirley Hughes** (Red Fox)
- **No David by David Shannon** (Scholastic)
- **Banana! by Ed Vere** (Puffin)



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