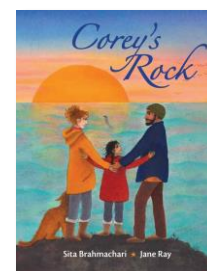
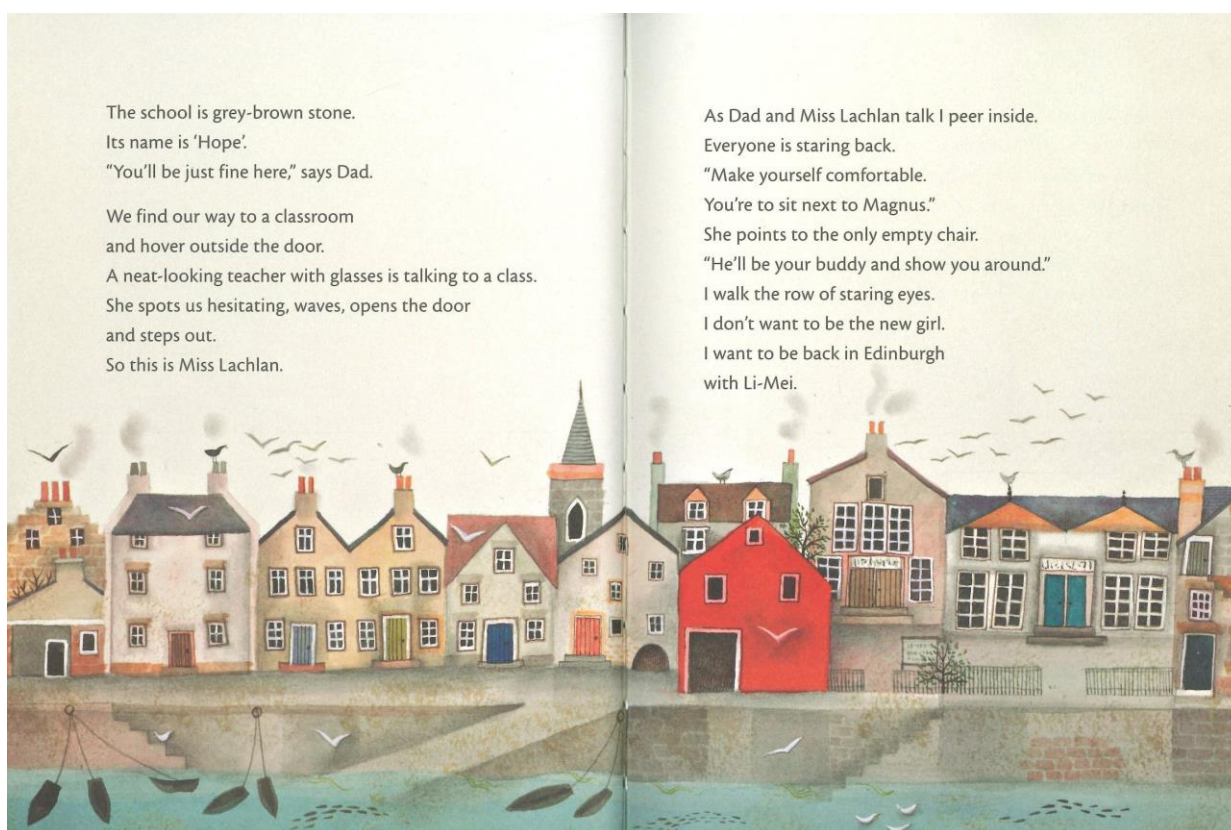


Take 5: Ideas for Independent/Home Learning

Corey's Rock by Sita Brahmachari and Jane Ray (Otter-Barry)



1. Explore it



The school is grey-brown stone.
Its name is 'Hope'.
"You'll be just fine here," says Dad.

We find our way to a classroom
and hover outside the door.
A neat-looking teacher with glasses is talking to a class.
She spots us hesitating, waves, opens the door
and steps out.
So this is Miss Lachlan.

As Dad and Miss Lachlan talk I peer inside.
Everyone is staring back.
"Make yourself comfortable.
You're to sit next to Magnus."
She points to the only empty chair.
"He'll be your buddy and show you around."
I walk the row of staring eyes.
I don't want to be the new girl.
I want to be back in Edinburgh
with Li-Mei.

Read the extract from the book below, thinking about what is happening and the characters you meet:

- *How does it make you feel; what you like or dislike about it? Does it remind you of anything you know in stories or real life? How? Do you have any questions?*
- *What do you think is happening here? Who are the central characters? Can you summarise what you've read in a couple of sentences?*
- *Think about the narrator and her thoughts, about Dad and Miss Lachlan and their conversation. What do you think you know about them? What can you tell?*
- *What do you think might have happened before this point? What makes you think this?*

2. Illustrate it

We see the classroom through the narrator's eyes; let's take a closer look. Take a pen or pencil and a bit of scrap paper. You can use the back of an old envelope or cereal packet; whatever is to hand. Use your imagination to capture the what she sees as she stands in the doorway of her new classroom then walks to

her seat next to Magnus. *How is the classroom laid out, what do the desk and chairs look like, is there any other furniture? What is on the walls? Can you see anything through the windows? What are the expressions on the faces of her new classmates, and of Miss Lachlan and Dad as she leaves them in the doorway? Maybe you can take inspiration from the illustration or from your own classroom: what might someone see who was joining your class, where might they sit, what do you think they would notice as they went their new place?*

Share your drawing with family or friends. What do you and they like about your drawings? Do you agree?

3. Talk about it

- Consider your personal connections to what you have read. *Have you ever changed class or school, or joined a club or organisation and been the new girl or boy? How does this reflect your own experience?*
- Re-read the extract and think about how it is written and looking at the language more carefully. *Are any parts particularly vivid or memorable? Which words and phrases interest you and why? What do they make you feel or think about the characters, the mood or the setting? What is the difference between 'I peer' and 'Everyone is staring', for example? How would it be different if it were 'everyone stares back'? What is the impact of 'staring' being repeated later? What does this tell us of her experience of what is happening and the mood being created?*
- Look at the layout of the text on the page. *What do you notice?* Try reading the text aloud to see how the line breaks affects the rhythm of each sentence separately and as a whole. *What is the impact on the way you read and understand what is happening? What insights does it give us?*

4. Imagine it

Imagine you are Magnus, and that the new girl is coming to sit next to you. *How do you see the scene she has described? Maybe you were staring like your classmates, maybe you are pleased that Miss Lachlan has chosen you to be the new girl's buddy, or maybe you wish she had chosen someone else.*

Describe what you see from your seat, considering the new girl and her dad standing in the doorway being welcomed, how Miss Lachlan greets them then talks further with the dad while the new girl peers inside. *What details do you notice that give you clues about her, and how she might be feeling, how she is dressed and what she looks like, her facial expressions and body language?* Feel free to make up from your own imagination details of anything or anyone you may be able to see; it's your classroom!

5. Create it

- Taking inspiration from the 'Imagine It' activity, compose a piece of writing called 'The new girl' or 'The new boy'. This could be a poem or a piece of narrative, or maybe what you saw from your desk inspires you to a different type of writing altogether; maybe the start of a longer piece of writing, a story or a recollection or you might want to write in role as the new pupil.
- Share your writing with someone else and see what they think of what you have described, and whether they can suggest any improvements. You may even want to add an illustration to accompany your writing. Will you show the view of the classroom, or depict the pupil, or maybe a different scene altogether, leaving more to the imagination, like Jane Ray's illustration of the school on the harbourfront?