



**SOUTHBANK  
CENTRE**

# Imagine a Story



**A Writing Project for Schools**

with Sharna Jackson and Dapo Adeola

2019/2020



## Help write the new novel London/Londoff

Author Sharna Jackson has written a story about two unlikely friends, August and Arcade, who find themselves in a thrilling adventure. They have to outsmart and stop an alien overlord named Colin from turning off all the culture and creativity of their home city of London.

However, when Sharna was writing the story, she kept getting interrupted by a weird alien transmission, and large parts of the story got deleted!

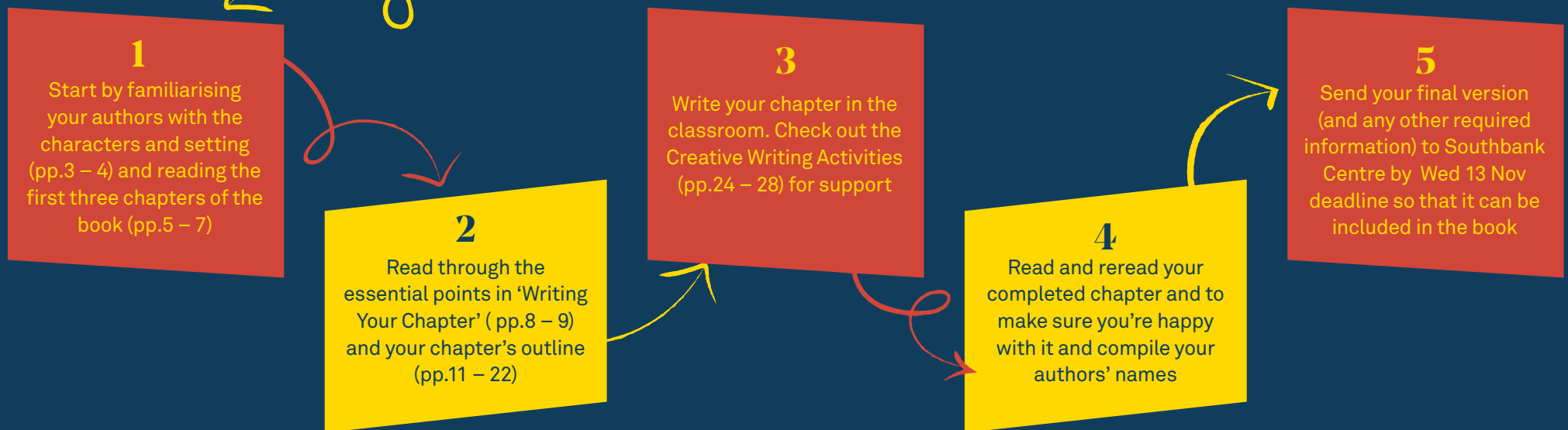
Sharna needs your help to fill in the deleted parts of the story and help August and Arcade to save London turning from Lond-ON into Lond-OFF.

Luckily, the transmissions didn't delete everything – Sharna managed to save the first few chapters, along with the first and last lines and some key plot points for the rest of the book. She also managed to salvage some helpful activities to draw out your most creative ideas when you're writing. The rest is up to you!

When you've written your chapter, send it to Sharna via her friends at Southbank Centre to complete the story. Sharna will use your ideas to finish the book, and afterwards, your ideas will be brought to life by illustrator Dapo Adeola.

Your completed book will then be published, and you'll be a real-life author!

### How to participate



## Setting

*London/Londoff* is set in London – sort of. It's a fictional version of London: still a vibrant and creative city full of artists and rich with culture, but aliens are able to reach it! So it's not quite like the London we'd encounter every day: there's always something odd going on.

## Characters

**August** is a daring and adventurous ten-year-old girl who lives with her parents in South London. She's artistic and loves to paint, though she's interested in just about anything that lets her make art. She's brave and always willing to try new things, and goes head-first into peril without a second thought. She's in the same class as Arcade at school –they're not best friends or particularly tight, but they're thrust together when they realise that they are the only people who recognise that Something Is Going On....



**Arcade** is skillful and sarcastic, a bit quieter than August, but thoughtful and quick to figure things out or look things up with his phone. He's ten years old, too, and gets his name because his Mum loves games, but he's not too fussed about them. Arcade wants to be a writer and is always writing stories on his phone, even as he zooms around the city on his bike. He's always hungry, which slows down the action a bit. For some reason, Arcade's broken phone is tuned in to the intergalactic transmissions that kick-start our story.

## Characters

**Colin** is prince on his home planet, Veria. He's 11 years old in Verian years, but has been observing Earth for 40,000 Earth-years and thinks the creativity and culture in London is amusing. He wants to take it all home to show his parents, the King and Queen of Veria, as he thinks it would amuse them, too. He doesn't realise the destruction he would cause and is flippant about just taking what he wants. Whenever he's messing about with the creativity or culture on Earth, different types of bright, mysterious shining lights appear. He's an avid live-streamer and his vlogs come through on Arcade's phone once it's broken.



**Sadie** is Arcade's black cat who thinks she's a slick, 'cool cat' but is actually quite clumsy. She's always wrapped or folded around Arcade in some way – around his neck, in his backpack, on the handlebars of his bike. Just before each transmission comes through on Arcade's phone, she gets a bit wacky and starts acting really strange.



### Author Tip

When you write your chapter, think about each character's special skills and personality. How do they use their unique skills in your chapter?

# London/Londoff

## 1

August waved her hand across James' face.

'Hello? Bro?' she said, her bangles jangling.

'You in there or what?'

James stared straight ahead.

'Earth to James!' August clicked her fingers close to his eyes.

He blinked slowly. He nodded.

'Yes,' he replied quietly.

'Ah, so you are in there! Tired, yeah? Worked late last night, I bet?' she said, reaching for the box of cereal on the kitchen table. August poured herself enough cornflakes for three children and began to fill the bowl with milk. She looked over at James.

'What're you working on anyway? That same song? Not sick of it yet? I would be, honestly. You need to keep it moving, don't you think? New music is the best music.'

James stared out the window.

'Yes,' he replied quietly.

August looked at her brother through narrowed eyes. The milk reached the top of her bowl. It splashed on the table, and quickly soaked into the sleeve of James' light blue shirt.

His arm remained still. James sat motionless.

'Flip!' August shouted, pushing his arm away from the creeping liquid.

A dark blue stain grew around his elbow.



August closed one eye, and winced.

She waited for James to shout at her.

She waited for him to say he's going to snap her paintbrushes in a minute.

She waited for him to say something. Anything.

But nothing.

'Yes,' he whispered.

August ate her breakfast in silence.

Double checking she had packed her sketchbook, pencils and Clam Card, August wrapped her scarf around her neck and put on her gloves.

'Bye, James', she shouted back into the doorway, ' – and get some sleep!' She shook her head and shut the door.

August took the smallest of steps along the icy path. When she reached the gate, she gripped the post with both hands and shivered. She laughed to herself. 'Fancy being called August in winter...' She looked down the street, sighed and opened the gate.

The centre of the pavement had been gritted, and people shuffled to work and school in two packed lines. August craned her neck around the slow-moving queue and tutted.

'This is going to take forever!' she muttered. She stepped off the path and cautiously stepped onto the ice.

Shortcuts rule! was her last thought, before she found herself lying in the middle of the road with a bike racing towards her.

## 2

Arcade was doing That Thing his Mum always told him not to do – especially on an icy day like today.

He was writing, again.

On his phone, again.

While he cycled, again.

That Thing.

Today, Sadie was wrapped around his neck. Her sleek black tail tickled his upper lip as he tapped away. Arcade paid full attention to his story, but none to the road.

It wasn't until Sadie stuck her tail straight up his nose, and screeched into his left ear that he noticed the girl lying on her back on the side of the road. Right in front of him.

It wasn't until he had swerved around her, and dropped his phone on its front – smashing the screen – that he recognised the girl as August. He pumped the brakes on his bike. She screamed and sat up.

People on the street looked over briefly at the commotion, but continued walking in their straight lines. August stood up, and brushed herself down.

'Great, August, just great.' Arcade said, pushing his bike. 'Lying in the middle of the road is so you. A safe and sensible thing to do.'

'I wasn't just lying there, fool,' August spat in return. 'I slipped, then you tried to flatten me, because you weren't paying attention – "working on a story", I suppose. Don't blame me for this – blame that cat of yours.'



August handed Arcade his phone. Or what was left of it. Sadie climbed up his leg and into the pocket of his parka.

'Just perfect,' he said, snatching it from her hand. He poked at it, and the screen filled with light.

He breathed a sigh of relief. His story was still there.

'I'm sorry, OK?' he said, looking at his phone. 'I'm distracted. Having a strange morning.'

August narrowed her eyes. 'What do you mean, strange morning?'

'My mum. She wasn't, well, right. She felt... off'

'Off?'

'Yeah, like she wasn't there. But was.'

'That's *properly* weird,' said August.

'It is?'

'Yeah – it is! I had the exact same thing with my brother this morning,' August replied. 'And he would only say one word.'

'Was it "Yes"?' Arcade asked, in a low, flat voice.

'Yes!' said August loudly, gripping his arm. 'Exactly like that. Wouldn't look at me either – wasn't looking at anything, really.'

'Just gazing off?'

'Yep – I thought he was tired, but now – with what you're saying – maybe not so much...'

'Maybe not...Maybe –' Arcade said.

'What do you think it is?' August broke in. 'A virus? A zombie apocalypse?'

'Those things aren't real,' said Arcade. 'It's cold – maybe everyone just needs to turn the heating up and...OWW, Sadie!'

### 3



Sadie was suddenly around Arcade's shoulders – back arched, teeth bared, nails in his neck. She snarled and stared at his left hand.

August and Arcade followed her gaze to Arcade's phone. It rattled in his hand, and emitted a shimmering beam of light.

'It's beautiful,' whispered August.

'It's broken,' said Arcade flatly. 'And Sadie clearly hates it.' He went to tuck the phone in his coat pocket.

'Wait, what are you doing? This is amazing. Let's look – for the story, at least!'

Sadie jumped to the floor and hissed at the handset.

August peered at the screen. 'Wow – that's a great looking mask isn't it? So realistic!'

The person in the mask spoke.

*So again, guys, recap – I'm speaking to you LIVE in English today. Make sure your translators are tuned in. Fun fact – it's a language from a planet called Earth. That's in the Virgo Supercluster. Yeah, none of you have heard of it right? Ha! I'm also streaming there for fun!*

'Oh, OK – that's not a mask, is it?' whispered August.

'Shusshh!' Arcade hissed back.

*Hi Earthlings! Not like they're ever going to see this – that dump is like a million million light years away.*

'Dump?' shouted August. 'How dare he!'

'Please be quiet!' Arcade pleaded.

*Yeah – I doubt any of you useless humans are receiving this, but HA! If you are – this is episode #350 of Colin Takes It All. And today, Colinettes, I'm taking a place called Lond-don.*

'That's not how you pronounce, London, mate!' laughed August. 'It's Lundun, not Lond-on!'

'Seriously, you need to shut up!' Arcade snapped. August was silent.

*I'm taking its creativity – which is actually quite decent. I know! I'm surprised myself! My parents are going to love it. It's going to make the BEST present for their anniversary.*

August and Arcade stared at each other.

*From my observations, London's pretty creative – and seems cool. Galleries, museums, art centres everywhere – there's one I particularly like, one right on the south side of the river. It's got everything – dance, music, poetry – not just paintings! Anyway, yes, lots of people making things. They don't need it all.*

*So, while it's cold there – for those weak humans, anyway – I'm making it mine. I'm taking it – place by place, person by person. I'm turning it and them, well, off. I'm giving myself until midnight.*

*Lond-on? Welcome to Lond-off! Colin out.*

The transmission ended. Or so they thought.

*Oh – and smash that like button, and don't forget to subscribe! Colin gone!*

'Oh my god, we've hacked into Intergalactic YouTube!' shrieked August.

'Wait, wait. It could be a fake – it could just be someone playing with us...'

'Playing? My brother? Your mum? The light from your phone? Turning people "off"? Sadie's freakout?'

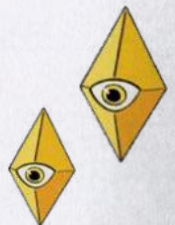
'Hmmm.'

'Arcade – this Colin guy? This being? It's ending us. Tonight.'

'Hmmm.'

'What did I say about a zombie apocalypse? I was so right! Well, nearly, anyway.'

'Well if you're right, August... We need to get to school and warn the others.'



## Writing Your Chapter



### Each completed story section should:

Begin and end  
with the sentences  
provided

Hit on all the  
outlined points  
and make the story  
your own (use your  
creativity and  
imagination!)

Be between  
400–500 words

Neatly  
wrap up any  
elements you've  
introduced that  
might affect story  
continuity outside  
your chapter

### Writing as a group

You can write your chapter in your school with as many authors as you'd like. If a large group of authors is working on the story, you may wish to divide up the bullet points in your chapter for smaller groups to focus on, or have groups or individuals work on different aspects of your chapter (some focused on dialogue, some on descriptions, some on actions, etc). If you have multiple versions of the chapter, you can share in a 'class reading' to see which sections and ideas you want to bring together for your final chapter. Any approach that works for your classroom is welcome - it's up to you.

### Author Tip

Remember, no idea is wasted! Any idea that doesn't end up directly in *London/Londoff* can be used to write a spin-off adventure or even a whole new story!

Save your ideas somewhere easy to find so you can find and build upon them later.



## Writing Your Chapter

Each chapter is unique, but there are a few themes that you might see emerging – your chapter may include:

- A transmission from the alien overlord Colin
- A challenge for Arcade and August to save a bit of culture or creativity
- An encounter with an artist who hasn't been turned 'off' yet
- A chance to reveal some new aspect of Arcade and August's friendship.

### Not sure where to start?

Head to the 'Creative Writing Activities in Your Classroom' section on p.24 for some inspiration.

Sharna managed to save the first three chapters of the book from getting deleted – start your journey by reading through these.



What creative ideas are growing in your classroom? Share your experience and how you're getting on by tweeting @SouthbankCentre and @sharnajackson with the hashtag #ImagineAStory.



**The Mysteriously Deleted Chapters**



## 4: Chickbeth

**Opening sentence:** ‘Miss! Miss!’ August shouted breathlessly.

### In this chapter:

- August and Arcade try to tell their class teacher, Miss Marie, about their morning, but she doesn’t believe them – and neither do the rest of the class
- One student seems to have been turned off
- Arcade finds a clever (and quiet) way to bring him back to life while Miss Marie isn’t looking
- Sadie creates a diversion and they sneak out
- They see Southbank Centre and it doesn’t look right – at all. It reminds the duo of the lights coming from the phone
- August and Arcade get on a train to Rodsworth – the borough next to Chickbeth
- The train conductor is not happy about Arcade’s bike being on the train – it’s still rush hour

**Closing sentence:** ‘Yeah well, I need it,’ said Arcade, gripping his handlebars.

## 5: Rodsworth

**Opening sentence:** ‘If only that conductor knew how much danger he was in, he wouldn’t care about the bike!’ August snorted.

### In this chapter:

- On the train to Rodsworth, Arcade spots something strange by Five Oaks
- August and Arcade ride together on Arcade’s bike – August is scared of riding it
- At Five Oaks, August and Arcade meet a group of dancers, who are able to talk but unable to move. Their performance is outside tonight – this is their dress rehearsal
- August and Arcade think of a way to get them moving again – they are successful and say goodbye
- The gang get back on the train – Sadie just makes it – and they head to Hugemond Upon Thames

**Closing sentence:** Arcade looked at the map. Three stops.

## 6: Hugemond Upon Thames

**Opening sentence:** ‘Arcade, I have a question.’

### In this chapter:

- Sitting on the train to Hugemond Upon Thames, August asks Arcade about his name and he shares something he’s not told anyone before
- Sadie starts acting strangely
- There is a livestream from Colin. He’s vague about ‘a trick with a group of dancers not going to plan’ but he’s got loads more where that came from.
- Colin hints that his next stunt is going to be in Queenston Upon Thames – one extra stop on the train
- August and Arcade work out that this is the next location and stay on the train

**Closing sentence:** ‘We’re staying on to Queenston Upon Thames.’

### Author Tip

This London is a bit ‘off,’ but can you recognise any of the place names?



## 7: Queenston Upon Thames

**Opening sentence:** As they stepped off the train, Arcade looked up.

### In this chapter:

- The gang get off the train at Queenston Upon Thames and spot strange lights coming from a museum
- On their way, they bump into a person who reminds them of Arcade's Mum and August's brother James
- At the museum, a number of objects from the collection are floating in the air – but no one else seems to notice
- August and Arcade think of ways to get the objects back into their cases
- They manage to save one, but the rest of the objects disappear
- August is disappointed, and she cries

**Closing sentence:** 'I'm a failure, Arcade,' said August, between sobs.



## 8: Hurton

**Opening sentence:** 'You're not a failure, August. You're human – he's not.'

### In this chapter:

- The duo are standing outside a museum
- Arcade tells August that they can't always win and they have to keep trying
- August gets on Arcade's bike for a second time – she still hates riding on the back – and they ride through Hurton
- The gang begin to feel hungry
- On their hunt for food they meet an artist who gives them a hint which they think might be useful to defeat Colin
- Sadie starts acting strangely again. They stop in a park
- There is a livestream from Colin. He's vague but happy about 'winning' and he's got loads more where that came from

**Closing sentence:** Arcade's stomach rumbled.



### Author Tip

Think about each character's special skills and attitude. How do you show these in your chapter?

## 9: Mutton

**Opening sentence:** 'Was that your stomach, Arcade? I'm starving too!'

### In this chapter:

- The duo are in a park
- August and Arcade are hungry and they have to find food – right now!
- Sadie tries to help – with hilarious consequences
- The gang finally find a cafe in Mutton and get something to eat that they both like
- Happy and refreshed, August wants to thank the chef...
- But when she tries, she sees something that shocks her in the kitchen
- They leave the cafe in a hurry while Arcade calms her down
- August and Arcade race for the tram

**Closing sentence:** 'Look, look – there's the tram!'



## 10: Boydon

**Opening sentence:** 'You know, this is the first time I've been on one of these!'

### In this chapter:

- August and Arcade ride the tram through Boydon – it's Arcade's first time
- On the tram, they see a strange light coming from the end of the carriage
- On investigation, they meet a group of MCs who have lost their words – their manager is freaking out
- August and Arcade step up to help them find their rhymes
- Arcade impresses August with his writing skills
- The MCs get their talent back and their manager is delighted

**Closing sentence:** 'Arcade, you're really such a good writer, you know!'

## 11: Cromley

**Opening sentence:** 'Thanks, I try,' said Arcade with a shrug. He looked out of the window. 'This stop's Cromley – let's go.'

### In this chapter:

- The duo get off a tram
- As soon as the doors open, Sadie runs off
- The duo spend some time searching for her
- While they look for Sadie they meet an artist who gives August and Arcade a hint on her location
- They find Sadie outside an electrical goods store with a number of other cats
- Looking at the televisions in the window, the duo notice Colin appearing on a number of popular programmes across lots of channels
- Arcade grabs Sadie, and the duo cycle away

**Closing sentence:** 'That Colin is just too much,' said August, as she jumped on the back of Arcade's bike.

## 12: Kewisham

**Opening sentence:** 'Wait, what's that? Is it happening again?'

### In this chapter:

- The duo are on their bike with Sadie
- The duo see strange lights coming from a seemingly abandoned building in Kewisham
- The building is an old Victorian baths, due to be turned into an arts centre
- Colin tries to take the whole building and...
- He succeeds. It's gone!
- The building has disappeared – but no else seems to notice
- The pair walk, stunned, in the direction of the river
- August and Arcade are utterly shocked

**Closing sentence:** 'First an object and now a whole building? He's getting stronger!'

What does this disappearance look, sound, feel and smell like? How do August and Arcade show their reactions?



## 13: Redwich

**Opening sentence:** ‘I love being by the river – do you, August?’

### In this chapter:

- Arcade and August walk along the riverfront in Redwich
- They sit for a moment by a famous landmark
- Sadie starts acting strangely... again
- There is a livestream from Colin. He’s cryptic but happy about ‘taking a building’ and he’s got loads more where that came from.
- Colin mentions that (some) humans are stronger than he thought
- The duo make their way to the train station
- Arcade and August are surprised

**Closing sentence:** ‘Do you – do you think he knows about us, Arcade?’



### Author Tip

Remember: this version on London doesn’t have to follow all the rules – use your most imaginative and unlikely ideas to create an exciting story.

## 14: Hexley

**Opening sentence:** ‘We have to keep it together, August, and keep going. We can only do what we can.’

### In this chapter:

- The duo are at the station and get on a train
- August feels down. She feels their task is impossible! How can two children – and their cat – save people, arts, buildings – London?
- Arcade tries to cheer her up and it works, somewhat
- The group see strange lights coming from a gallery and get off the train in Hexley
- The gallery is running a painting class, but none of the painters are able to paint. They are paralysed
- This is August’s moment – she gets out her sketchbook and pencils to help and cleverly unfreezes the painters
- She succeeds – Arcade is proud and shows it
- August feels more confident and leads the way out of the gallery to the riverfront

**Closing sentence:** ‘I did good, didn’t I, Arcade?’ August smiled.

## 15: Wavering

**Opening sentence:** ‘Do you really think this woman is going to let us go on her boat?’

### In this chapter:

- The duo have reached the riverfront with no safe, quick way of getting across
- They persuade a woman with a boat to let them cross, with Sadie and the bike
- This is Arcade’s first time on a boat
- Once off the boat, they are in Wavering, and they walk through a beautiful park
- Sadie runs around
- August and Arcade talk about what they would like to be when they are older – for a moment, they forget that London is in danger
- They talk about where they could live and why
- In the distance they see strange lights coming from a gallery
- August and Arcade know what that means!
- They run to the entrance of a museum

**Closing sentence:** ‘There! In the museum. Go!’



## 16: Meowing and Dagenbeef

**Opening sentence:** August and Arcade covered their ears.

### In this chapter:

- August and Arcade are in the entrance of a museum in Meowing and Dagenbeef
- The museum is full of large human objects – and they're moving. They're alive! They're making lots of noise
- Using other objects in the museum, the duo try to find smart ways to keep the objects in the building
- They fail. The objects float away and disappear
- August and Arcade think they know what Colin is up to...

**Closing sentence:** 'He's building an army!'



## 17: Bluebridge

**Opening sentence:** 'How are we going to stop him, Arcade? How?'

### In this chapter:

- August and Arcade are standing outside a museum. Before they've had a chance to talk about what happened inside, Sadie starts acting strangely... again
- There is a new livestream from Colin. He's cryptic about having won some battles and lost some battles
- Colin feels confident that he's going to turn London off tonight
- For the first time, Colin references August and Arcade directly in his livestream
- Colin is flippant – and says that they're making this more enjoyable for him
- The stakes have been raised – if they try and save anyone and they lose, he will turn off and take the entire borough
- They have until midnight!
- August walks through Bluebridge and Arcade pushes his bike next to her. Sadie follows them
- August and Arcade are enraged!

**Closing sentence:** 'This is just a joke to Colin, but this is our home. He won't win – he can't!'

## 18: Oldbeef

**Opening sentence:** 'It's three fifteen now: we've got time, August. We can do this. We have no choice.'

### In this chapter:

- August is walking and Arcade pushes his bike next to her. Sadie follows them
- Arcade assures August that they can beat Colin by midnight – they just have to be hyper-aware of any strange happenings
- The group see strange lights coming from Oldbeef and walk to track them down – August doesn't feel like getting on Arcade's bike this time
- August and Arcade meet a group of circus performers who have lost the ability to clown around and do their acrobatics
- August, Arcade and Sadie – especially Sadie – help them find their funny and acrobatic feats
- The circus performers are delighted
- August regains some confidence

**Closing sentence:** 'Stop clowning around!'



## 19: Waltbeef Woods

**Opening sentence:** 'I think I actually quite like being on this bike now,' said August with a smile.

### In this chapter:

- Feeling positive, August gets back on Arcade's bike. This time, Sadie rides around her neck, and not Arcade's
- The group cycle through an industrial estate in Waltbeef Woods
- Sadie leads them to bright lights coming from underneath the door
- On investigation, they find a warehouse full of incredible neon art
- Inside they meet a very interesting artist who tells them great things about the work
- Sadie starts acting strangely
- The duo show the artist Arcade's phone, which is emitting lights, and the artist has a very strong response
- August and Arcade leave on Arcade's bike but both are concerned and confused

**Closing sentence:** 'It was almost like they'd seen this before,' said Arcade, looking down at his smashed phone.

## 20: Sharingey

**Opening sentence:** 'We'll keep thinking on it – but we also need to keep moving.'

### In this chapter:

- August gets back on Arcade's bike and ride through Sharingey. It's starting to get dark
- Sadie causes mischief and there is an accident
- August's knee is bleeding and she cries. She says she's over this mission and is hungry
- They find something to eat in the bottom of Arcade's bag
- The food they eat reminds Arcade of a personal, special memory connected to his writing, which he tells August
- August feels warmth for Arcade and suggests they should be better friends in school
- In the distance they see lights, and they look at each other. Time to go!

**Closing sentence:** 'Wow, those lights look so much brighter at dusk,' said August. 'Yes, they do – get on the bike,' said Arcade.

### Author Tip

Remember, no idea should be lost! Save any ideas that don't end up in your chapter to use in your next writing adventure.

## 21: Endpitch

**Opening sentence:** 'I really don't want to get on the bike though, my knee still hurts,' August whimpered.

### In this chapter:

- The duo get back on the bike
- The lights are dazzling. August is wowed, and says something artistic about the colours
- August and Arcade are drawn to a school in Endpitch
- There is an after-school club, where children are rehearsing for an end-of-term play. At least, that was the plan
- The children are motionless and stand still on the stage and their teacher plays one note on the piano
- August and Arcade do their best to wake the kids up. They try at least three things...
- ...but it doesn't work
- The school disappears with all the people in it
- August and Arcade run outside and most of Endpitch has disappeared

**Closing sentence:** 'He's done it, Colin's really done it. Endpitch has gone!'





## 22: Garnet

**Opening sentence** 'There's nothing left, Arcade,' August screamed. 'There's nothing left!'

### In this chapter:

- August is hysterical and Arcade is shocked. Colin has made Endpitch disappear – it's now a wasteland
- Sadie shrieks and guides them to lights in Garnet and they jump on the bike
- In Garnet, they go past a cinema
- It's making a terrible noise
- They investigate the source of the noise and try to fix it...
- ...but it doesn't work
- The cinema disappears with all the people in it
- August and Arcade run outside – most of Garnet has disappeared

**Closing sentence:** 'Garnet's gone.'



## 23: Sharrow

**Opening sentence:** Beautiful light burst from Arcade's phone as he pushed his bike towards Harrow.

### In this chapter:

- The gang are standing in Garnet – but it's a wasteland. It's disappeared
- Sadie immediately starts acting strangely... again
- A livestream from Colin comes through Arcade's phone
- He's playing it cool but is clearly excited
- He explains that he's just had two major wins in London – he's completely turned off two boroughs
- He explains that he's shown his parents, and plays a video he recorded of them earlier
- His mum is too busy to look
- His dad, however, is very concerned and shocked that he would do this
- Colin addresses August and Arcade directly (but doesn't mention their names) and mocks them for not doing a better job

**Closing sentence:** Colin laughed down the camera.

## 24: Peakingdon

**Opening sentence:** 'We need a win here, Arcade – and a big one at that.'

### In this chapter:

- August and Arcade are cycling on Arcade's bike and talking
- Arcade is peddling fast so he isn't hearing clearly what August is saying
- Sadie is sitting on the handlebars
- The duo spot colourful beams of light and cycle towards them
- They reach a theatre in Peakingdon and find an opera singer – and her audience – has turned off
- August, Arcade and Sadie think of three creative ideas to bring her voice back...
- ...it works!
- August, Arcade and the audience are ecstatic – they did it!
- They leave the theatre triumphantly and get back on the bike

**Closing sentence:** 'We did it! We're back in the game!'

## 25: Hounsquick

**Opening sentence** ‘Here we go again – look, Arcade. The lights.’

### In this chapter:

- The duo are back on their bike when they spot the lights coming from a building
- It’s dark now, so the lights are very bright
- The lights lead them to a retirement home in Hounsquick where a group of story quilt makers are silently holding their needles in the air
- August and Arcade think of at least three creative ways to get the makers making again
- They are successful!
- They look closely at the quilt and notice a very interesting story being told in the pattern
- August and Arcade leave, but are slightly creeped out by the experience

**Closing sentence:** ‘I mean, that quilt looked great – definitely – but that story. That story was strange.’



## 26: Peeling

**Opening sentence:** ‘Two successes in a row, though, August. That’s good.’

### In this chapter:

- August and Arcade have been walking, but they decide to take the 65 bus through Peeling, using their Clam Cards
- The bus driver is not happy about the bike, but August talks him into taking it on board
- Sadie looks out of the window the entire way until...
- ...Colin begins a livestream
- Colin is playing it cool – he’s talking vaguely about two recent loses in London, but he’s clearly bothered about something
- In the background, Colin’s dad is talking loudly to Colin’s mum about Colin’s selfish behaviour – and destroying lives – but Colin’s mum is too busy to listen
- Colin ends the livestream sharply, in a huff
- August and Arcade exchange looks
- They spot coloured lights in the distance and ring the bell to get off the 65 bus

**Closing sentence:** ‘I think there might be trouble on Colin’s home planet, you know.’

## 27: Meant

**Opening sentence:** ‘So Colin turns humans ‘off’ – and he has the power to turn objects ‘on.’

### In this chapter:

- The duo have just got off the 65 bus in Meant. Arcade and August arrive outside a tube station with a statue outside
- The duo wonder how strong Colin’s abilities are, but they’ve spoken too soon!
- A huge statue is moving from its base. If it comes off it could cause major damage – not that the people milling around would notice
- The statue can talk! It gives the duo a message from Colin
- August and Arcade are confused
- With the help of Sadie, they come up with a very creative way to get the statue back in its place
- The gang jump back on Arcade’s bike towards the next light. On the way, they discuss the meaning of the message from the statue

### Closing sentence:

‘I know, but what do you think that *means*?’



Really bring the statue to life!  
Give it a name and a personality.  
Think about why it exists and what that means for the way it behaves.



## 28: Arcade needs a charger

**Opening sentence:** *Bloop Bloop* 'Oh NO!' Arcade shouted. 'My phone's about to die!'

### In this chapter:

- August and Arcade are on Arcade's bike
- The livestreams from Colin are taking a toll on Arcade's phone – it's about to die
- Without his phone, the duo will have no idea what Colin is up to
- August, Arcade and Sadie get on the bike, and pedal quickly to find power
- The duo try two different places and meet two artists on the way: both are strange, but for different reasons
- In the third place they go, they have to do two clever things to get to the power – it's been guarded by someone who doesn't trust children
- It's really close – Arcade's battery is on 1%!
- In the nick of time, they get the power!

**Closing sentence:** The phone shone brightly, and the charging icon appeared. Arcade breathed a loud sigh of relief. 'That was a close one!'

## 29: Screwsmith and Fulbeef

**Opening sentence:** As they rode into the night, towards the light, Sadie started screeching...

### In this chapter:

- August and Arcade are on their bike racing across Screwsmith and Fulbeef
- Arcade's phone starts vibrating and they stop the bike by the side of a busy road
- It's not a livestream this time, it's a call from Colin directly to August and Arcade
- But wait! It's not an *intentional* call from Colin – it's a mistake. An alien butt-dial!
- Listening closely, they overhear a conversation between Colin and his dad
- Through the conversation they hear that: Colin is a 'naughty boy'; Colin has a few more tricks planned, with something big at the end – but is very vague on the details – he doesn't want his dad to know; Colin's dad wants him to call this whole thing off NOW, or he will take away his internet or worse
- Colin realises the duo are listening. He is mad with everyone, and ends the call in a huff

**Closing sentence:** 'And don't think I won't! Just wait and see,' Colin shouted, before ending the call.

## 30: Bonnington and Delsea

**Opening sentence:** 'Colin sounded super pleased,' said Arcade with slight smile.

### In this chapter:

- August and Arcade are standing by a busy road
- Arcade tries to talk about Colin's bad mood, but before they can get into it...
- ...they see bright lights in the distance
- The duo race to their destination in Bonnington and Delsea
- A fashion show is about to take place but...
- ...the designers, models and make-up artists are all 'off' – no one is moving
- August and Arcade devise a very creative way to breathe life into the show
- It works!
- Sadie takes a star turn on the catwalk
- The duo walk onto the street and see flashing lights coming from Eastminster

**Closing sentence:** 'August, look – more lights! Is that Eastminster?'



## 31: The separation

### Opening sentence:

Arcade bent down to tie his shoelaces. As he stood up, he groaned with the effort. He looked around. August was gone.

### In this chapter:

- The duo are walking along the street
- August and Arcade are separated!
- The chapter starts from Arcade's perspective:
- While he's walking, he thinks about his mum that morning. He wonders what will happen to his house, and to Sadie
- We switch to August's perspective
- While she's looking for Arcade she thinks about what her brother might be doing now
- By chance the duo spot each other in a very random way
- They discuss how they were separated – what happened? Was Colin involved?
- The duo walk away towards the flashing lights they saw before they were separated, Arcade pushing his bike
- Sadie is being carried in a creative way
- They are very glad to be reunited!

**Closing sentence:** 'Me too,' said Arcade. He smiled widely.

## 32: Eastminster

### Opening sentence:

'Eastminster is the definition of busy – I can barely move.'

### In this chapter:

- The duo follow the lights to Eastminster. Arcade is pushing his bike, while August walks along
- Sadie is being carried in a creative way
- It's incredibly busy and bustling, but August and Arcade notice some 'off' people among the crowd
- The lights have taken them to a huge theatre where a musical is taking place
- The huge cast have frozen mid-scene
- Some of the audience are reacting, some are... not
- August and Arcade try a number of creative ideas to bring the cast back
- But it doesn't work
- The theatre, and Eastminster, disappear spectacularly
- The duo walk away, Arcade pushing his bike
- There's no time to be sad – the lights are shining in Hamden

**Closing sentence:** 'There's no time to mourn, August,' Arcade's voice echoed around the void. 'The lights.'

## 33: Hamden

### Opening sentence:

'I've never been here at night: I like it,' said August.

### In this chapter:

- The duo are walking, Arcade pushing his bike
- Sadie is being carried in a creative way
- The duo follow the lights to a corner of a large closed market in Hamden, where they discover a tattoo shop
- The tattoo artists aren't turned off – but they are only creating one kind of tattoo on their 'off' customers...
- ...and it looks very familiar
- August and Arcade think of ways to find the artists new sources of inspiration – August is particularly resourceful here
- It works! The tattoo artists are saved – their customers' creativity returns!
- They stand outside the tattoo shop
- The duo are happy and August wants to celebrate

### Closing sentence:

'No way, August – my mum would kill me.'



## 34: Rislington

**Opening sentence:** Sadie's ear-splitting screech could only mean one thing.

### In this chapter:

- The duo are standing outside a tattoo shop. Inside everyone is happy
- Sadie starts screaming, but very, very dramatically this time
- It's a video call from Colin direct to August and Arcade
- Colin knows they overheard something he said but he won't say what; August and Arcade pretend they have no idea what he is talking about. Colin tells them that midnight is approaching, so they don't have much time; since they want to fight, he will give them a fight. He tells them they know the place: it's the arts centre on the south side of the river
- August and Arcade comfort Sadie, who is distressed
- As the duo walk through Rislington and talk about what they see, they think of ideas to beat Colin
- Arcade tries to phone home, and so does August
- The duo see the lights coming from Rackney

**Closing sentence:** Closing sentence: 'August, put the phone down – look over there, the lights are coming from Rackney.'

## 35: Sadie goes missing

**Opening sentence:** 'Sadie's screams are worrying me,' said Arcade.

### In this chapter:

- The duo are walking, Arcade pushing his bike
- Sadie is reacting badly to a transmission from Colin, and the duo are concerned about her
- Arcade thinks Sadie is walking next to August... but August thinks Arcade has Sadie in her harness
- Sadie is nowhere to be found, and it's dark
- The duo search the area. They look in some interesting and creative places, but there is no sign of her
- There is a livestream from Colin – and Sadie is in the video too!
- Colin asks if Sadie is what they are looking for, and offers three clues to find her
- August and Arcade are puzzled but they think laterally and are able to find her
- Sadie returns, worse for wear, but OK
- The gang stop outside an office window
- Arcade is delighted!

**Closing sentence:** 'I will never let you out of my sight again, SaySay,' said Arcade. 'SaySay? You call her SaySay?' laughed August.

## 36: Rackney

**Opening sentence:** 'Look – in there!'

### In this chapter:

- The duo are looking through the window of an office of a game studio in Rackney
- The game designers are stuck in a loop. The game's story is going nowhere and some members of the team are turning off
- Both August and Arcade are creative, but Arcade really shines here with his love of words and he also uses his mum's knowledge of games
- Sadie tries to help
- The duo are successful and are really pleased with themselves
- Looking far into the distance, across the river, they can see very bright lights coming from what they think is Chickbeth
- Before they walk away, August praises Arcade for his skills

**Closing sentence:** 'And that's why you should never *play* by the rules,' said Arcade with a smile.



## 37: Column Beeflets

**Opening sentence:** 'I know now is not the time to be hungry, Arcade, but I'm starving. Truly.'

### In this chapter:

- The duo are walking, Arcade pushing his bike. Sadie is being carried in a creative way
- August and Arcade are hungry. They haven't eaten since they were in Mutton this afternoon
- As they walk through Column Beeflets, they can see lights from Chickbeth shining brightly in the sky
- The duo look into a restaurant and see that the chefs and the customers have been turned off
- They decide this is their chance to have a pre-midnight snack
- August, Arcade and Sadie eat, feel refreshed and are raring to go!
- As 'payment', the duo turn the restaurant back on and get the chefs cooking using their creative skills. They are successful
- As they leave, riding the bike, they hear awful, loud noises. Music is being played terribly – and terribly loud – in Litty, the next borough along.

**Closing sentence:** The noise was deafening.

## 38: Litty

**Opening sentence:** 'WHAT IS THAT?' Arcade shouted over the ear-splitting noise.

### In this chapter:

- The group were riding their bike, but drop it by the side of the road in Litty
- The group follow the deafening noise to a huge rehearsal room
- An orchestra is playing – but they are playing their music backwards
- It sounds truly terrible and Sadie hates it
- The duo do their very best to creatively find a way to get the notes in the right order
- It doesn't work
- The orchestra disappear dramatically
- The duo are shocked
- They leave the rehearsal room and from across the river they can see lights beaming from Southbank Centre
- They wheel their bike towards it. Sadie is being carried in a funny way

**Closing sentence:** 'He meant Southbank Centre, I should have known!'

## 39: Southawke

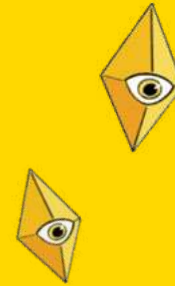
**Opening sentence:** August and Arcade began climbing the steps.

### In this chapter:

- It's 11.45pm and August and Arcade are on the north side of the river
- They are crossing the bridge for what they know is going to be a big battle, but they don't know what's going to happen
- They reluctantly, nervously wheel the bike across the bridge towards Southawke, and Sadie stays close to Arcade
- August and Arcade talk about what they would miss if they lose this battle
- Sadie starts acting crazy again
- There is a short live stream from Colin who tells his Intergalactic YouTube followers that the battle is about to begin
- The transmission ends suddenly

**Closing sentence:** 'This is it, Arcade,' said August, reaching for his hand.





**To be continued...**

## Creative Writing Activities in Your Classroom

Not sure where to start? Here are some ideas to get the creative juices flowing from author Sharna Jackson. The activities below can be done individually, in small groups, or as a whole class to build a foundation of ideas to draw upon for the final version of the chapter you submit. Teachers are encouraged to develop their own activities related to the Imagine a Story project to support other learning objectives.



Don't forget to share your experience and how you're getting on by tweeting @SouthbankCentre and @sharnajackson with the hashtag #ImagineAStory.





## Activity: Writing Realistic Dialogue

While August and Arcade make a great duo, they are also separate characters, with separate perspectives. They have individual thoughts, feelings and lives beyond what happens in our story.

We show this in *London/Londoff* through the way they talk to each other.

Think about what you already know about August and Arcade from their descriptions and the opening chapters. What are our characters like? How do they talk? How are they similar? How are they different?

### All about August and Arcade

On the next page you'll find some words and phrases that August and Arcade might use, but they don't sound quite 'like them' yet. What do you think they would say instead? How would the other character react? Come up with a collection of words that sound more like they came from our characters. Use these new words and phrases in your chapter!



## All about August and Arcade: Writing Realistic Dialogue

	<b>August</b>	<b>Arcade</b>
Yes	You know it!	Sure, why not?
No		
Oh no!		
Look at that!		
Why?		
That's odd		
I need to eat		
I'm tired		
I don't like Colin		
I know what to do		
I'm worried		
This is terrible		
We can do it!		
I can't believe that just happened!		
The phone is broken		
How do we get there?		
What other phrases would August and Arcade say? Add your own and work them into your chapter!		



Bring your new words and phrases to life by role playing a scene from your chapter as August and Arcade.



## Activity: Colin's Cryptic Calls

Live-streaming is not just popular on Earth - it's an intergalactic technology! It's also Colin's favourite way to communicate. When he live-streams, he's careful not to give too much away to his viewers, but to share enough to keep them liking and subscribing to his videos. How do we make Colin's transmissions sound engaging to an intergalactic audience, but not give away too much?

As Colin, write a short script to tell your viewers about what's happening in *London/Londoff* in your chapter and what you've got planned.



### Think about:

- **how an alien might talk:** what kinds of 'Earth' words might Colin get wrong? What kinds of words might he use on his home planet?
- **how to keep viewers interested but still guessing:** how can Colin hint at his plan without giving too much away? What words or phrases does he use to tease his audience about his plan?
- **Youtuber language:** what does Colin call his viewers? What other things do vloggers say in their videos? How would Colin end his video?
- **reactions to the transmissions:** how would August and Arcade piece together information from Colin's hints? What would they be wondering about? If an alien on another planet was listening, what would they wonder about?

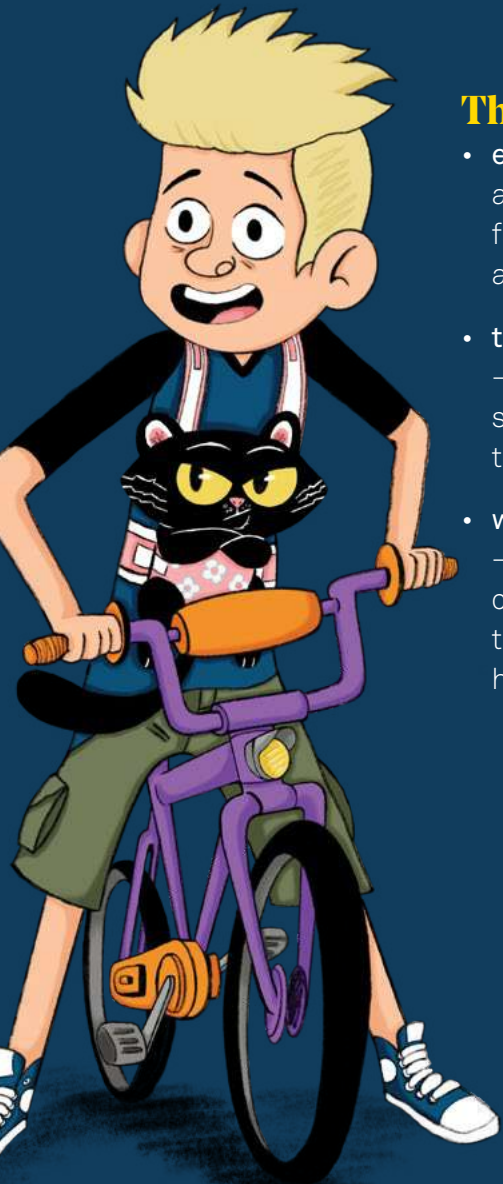


Perform the transmission in your classroom. Ask your classmates to pretend to be August and Arcade, or another intergalactic YouTuber, and 'comment' on your video.



## Activity: Creating Action

August, Arcade and Sadie must be very creative and think of clever and interesting ways to stop Colin from turning London off. He can't win! So how do they stop him?



### Think about:

- everyone's special skills – August is great at painting and she's brave, Arcade is a fantastic writer and thinks one step ahead, and Sadie... well, Sadie is quick and nimble
- the artists and creatives they are saving – they have special skills too! How can their skills be combined with those of our heroes to help them get through the fight?
- what tools or items they could use – what can they find around them that could help them? What do our heroes have that they could use? What might the artists have nearby?

## Dull to delightful!

Your scenes need to be full of verbs (action words) to describe the thrilling adventure our characters are having! Here's a list of pretty boring verbs – can you replace them with more exciting ones? Try to come up with at least two delightful verbs for each dull one. Use these 'delightful' verbs when you're writing your chapter.

Dull	Delightful	Dull	Delightful
said		made	
liked		ate	
walked		thought	
looked		found	
hurt		went	
ran		got	



What other words could use some delight-ening up?  
Add your own words and have a go.

