

SHARED READING

Extract 1

- Display an enlarged copy of Extract 1 and read aloud as everyone follows. Before reading, ask the children to look for clues that suggest who the voice is in the extract.
- Ask: *Who is the voice in the extract?* (Michael, Laura's nephew, had stayed in the house with his aunt.) Point out that Michael is also the author's name; ask: *Could it be a true story? Describe the narrator's tone.* (pensive, unrushed, reflective, sad but positive) *Why is he feeling this way?* (His great-aunt has died.) *What does he mean by, 'I was eight years old again'?* (He is thinking back to that time in his life.) *What activities did he enjoy there as a young boy?* (the sea, boats, shrimping, oyster catching, Great-aunt Laura's stories) *Why do you think Uncle Will was irritated?* (Encourage children to suggest possible reasons.)
- Reflect on the things in this introduction that hint at what is to follow in the story. Ask: *Who do you think the main character/s of the story will be? Why?* (Discuss why it is probably Laura Perryman and not Michael or Uncle Will.) *Who or what do you think 'Zanzibar' is?* (Encourage discussion.) *What does the picture on the cover of Laura's diary suggest?* (an event, a shipwreck, her love for ships and the sea)
- Re-read the final line. Ask: *What is the effect of this short line?* (It is like a cliff-hanger. It makes the reader want to read on.) *What does the text suggest is about to happen next?* (reading the letter)

Extract 2

- Provide copies of Extract 2 for the children to read in pairs. Let them take turns reading the extract to each other. Before they begin, ask them to think about how they will read it. Let them skim the text first and mark up any significant punctuation and phrases or expressions that give clues to how it might sound.
- Focus their attention on the first sentence. Ask: *Who is the speaker?* (Laura) *What do you notice about the punctuation?* (The commas break up the sentence into three significant statements and slow down the pace.) *How would you describe the tone?* (ominous, foreboding, scary, intimidating) Ask them to use a thesaurus to find synonyms for the words 'gathering', 'huge' and 'anger'.
- Let them outline each paragraph with a pencil or marker. Ask: *What do you notice about the paragraphs?* (short and intense) Ask: *How would you summarise the main idea of each paragraph?* (Encourage discussion.)
- Consider Laura's statement 'I am so afraid'. Ask: *What do you notice about this sentence?* (It is very short and makes an emotional impact on the reader.) *What is Laura afraid of?* (Discuss ideas from the text.) *According to Laura, what would help her feel better?* (being with her brother, Billy)
- Read aloud the last paragraph. Ask: *What techniques are used to evoke emotion and what can the reader sense from this?* (The paragraph consists of three similar questions, revealing a sense of desperation and longing in the speaker.)