

When Arthur, Ren and Cecily investigate a mysterious explosion, they find themselves trapped in the year 2473.

Lost in the Wonderscape, an epic in-reality adventure game, they must call on the help of some unlikely historical heroes to play their way home before time runs out.

"A whirlwind of fun and mystery across space and time."

Thomas Taylor
author of *Malaxander*

www.milk.co.uk

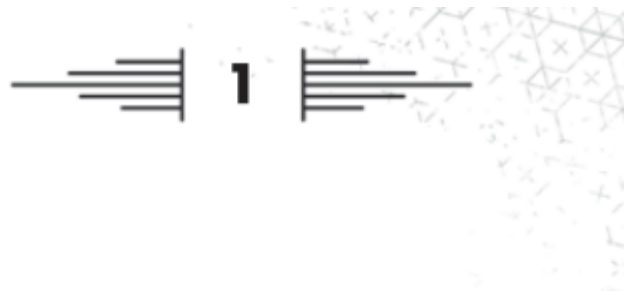
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Illustrations by Paddy Donnelly

1. Predict what genre this book is. How do you know?
2. Which person from history would you call upon to be your hero and help you?
3. What do you think might happen if they can't get out before time runs out?
4. Would you like to play this game? Why?
5. Are there any links between the storyline of this book and any other book or film you know of?



It was early morning and Arthur was already running late for school when the gnomes exploded.

Racing past his neighbours' houses, he'd just cornered a road on Peacepoint Estate when he came to the old cottage at Number Twenty-Seven. Without warning, there was a loud *bang!* and a barrage of brightly coloured missiles came whizzing out of the front garden in all directions.

"What the—?!" Shielding himself with his school blazer, Arthur ducked behind Twenty-Seven's garden fence and peeked through a gap to try to see what was going on.

And there it was. For some bizarre reason, the owner's large collection of grinning, ruddy-cheeked garden gnomes – whether sitting on toadstools, pushing wheelbarrows or fishing from ponds – was spontaneously exploding, one by one. Arthur could only guess they were part of some malfunctioning pest-deterrent system, but before he had a chance to investigate, pressure built inside his ears and with an almighty ground-trembling *BOOM!*,

all the windows in the building shattered, and the front door shot off its hinges and spun across the lawn.

There wasn't time to run. A shock wave with the force of a swinging punch bag walloped Arthur in the chest, knocking all the air from his lungs. He flew backwards and tumbled into the street, wincing as the contents of his rucksack jabbed him in the ribs. "Oomph! Ow!"

He landed on his side with his cheek pressed against a cold metal drain cover and the taste of blood filling his mouth. "Erg..." Pain shot through his jaw. Slowly, he moved his hand up and gave it a rub. At least his limbs were all working.

Despite a worrying ringing in his ears, he got to his feet. Most of his neighbours' driveways were empty so he assumed they'd gone to work. He wiped his grazed hands clean on the bottom of his shirt and took a closer look at Number Twenty-Seven. The cottage had the same red-brick walls and mossy roof tiles as all the others on the estate, but was separated by an overgrown hedge on one side and a dingy alleyway on the other.

Strange. The building showed no signs of fire damage or smoke. Arthur tried to remember if he'd covered the topic of shock waves in his physics lessons last term. Science was his favourite subject at school, so he normally paid attention.

"Hello?" called a well-spoken voice, making Arthur jump. "Did you see that?"

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| <p>Checklist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Summarise textWrite 3 questionsWrite 3 things you liked and whyHighlight unfamiliar words and use a dictionary to define them |
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Session 3

A tall girl with braided turquoise hair stood waving at Arthur from the alleyway at the side of the house. Her school uniform was accessorized with a cross-body leather handbag and lace-trimmed socks that poked above the edges of her brogues. Arthur recognized her instantly, although he didn't know what she was doing there. Cecily Madaki didn't live on Peacepoint Estate; none of the popular kids did.

"Are you all right?" she asked, striding towards him. "What just happened?"

"Err..." Arthur shuffled his feet against the pavement; he'd never spoken to Cecily before and talking to new people always made him feel nervous. He watched as she turned the corner of the fence, her pleated grey skirt swishing around her knees. All he really knew about her was that her parents were celebrity hairdressers, which was probably why she changed her hairstyle all the time – last week she'd had a candyfloss pink Afro Mohawk.

"I asked, are you all right?" she repeated, coming to a stop next to him. "You fell over."

"You saw that?"

"No, but it says *sanitary* backwards on the side of your face, in the same writing as it does down there." She signalled to the drain cover at the edge of the road.

Great. He hastily rubbed his cheek.

"You don't look hurt," she decided, surveying his uniform. "Are you sure you're OK?"

Arthur straightened his shoulders to make his second-hand blazer appear better fitted. He was average height for his age but scrawnier than most of the boys in his class, which didn't help when he had to wear clothes that were already too big. Just once he wished he could start the school year with a new uniform like everyone else, and not feel so self-conscious. "I'm fine." He glanced back at the house. "I'm not sure what happened. Some sort of explosion?"

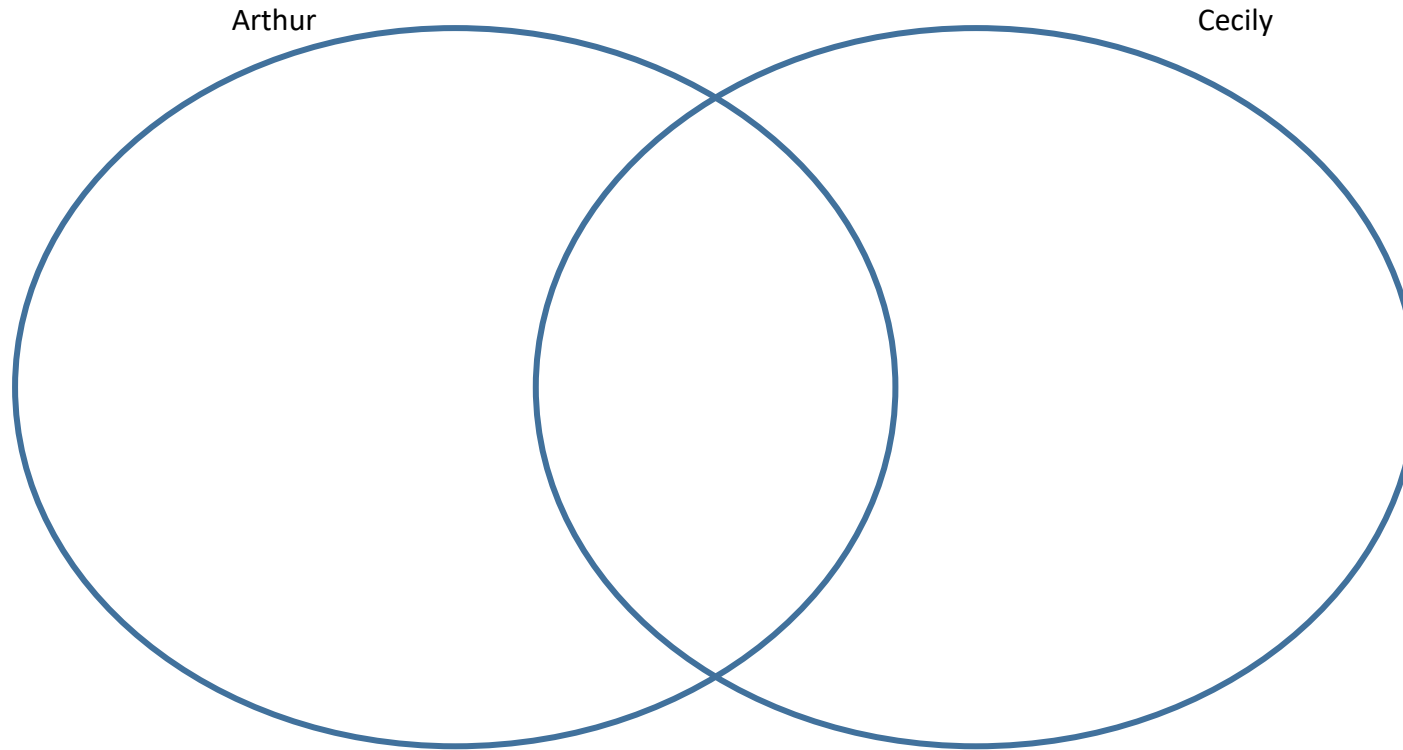
"That much is *obvious*," commented a third voice.

A petite girl in oil-splattered school trousers and combat boots emerged from behind a couple of wheelie bins. Her long jet-black hair was worn in a high ponytail, with a chunky fringe covering one half of her face. "Number Twenty-Seven is abandoned," she told them bluntly, brushing dirt off her knees. "The blast was probably triggered by a burst water pipe."

"Abandoned?" Arthur had seen the girl sitting alone at the back of his geography class a few times, but didn't know who she was. "Where did you hear that?"

"Nowhere. My garden backs onto Number Twenty-Seven's." She walked over to the gate and surveyed the gnome remains. Her wide hazel eyes were outlined with kohl, giving her an intense gaze. "There are never any lights on inside and the garden looks like a jungle. It's been like that ever since we moved in last summer, but I don't know how long the place was empty before that."

Session 3



1. Using the Venn diagram, explain the similarities and differences between Arthur and Cecily. Is there anything that is the same?
2. *'Just once he wished he could start the school year with a new uniform like everyone else, and not feel so self-conscious.'*
What does this tell you about Arthur?
3. *'Arthur shuffled his feet against the pavement.'*
What does this tell you about how Arthur is feeling?
4. What impression do you get about the other girl? Use examples from the text to explain your answer.

Session 4

police.” She withdrew a phone with a manga-decorated case and tapped at the screen. As she lifted it to her ear, a sad howl drifted over from somewhere inside Number Twenty-Seven.

Arthur tensed. It sounded like the cry of a dog. “Have you seen any animals near the house?” he asked Ren.

“There was a little white dog running around the garden this morning,” she admitted, her brows drawing together. “I assumed it was another neighbour’s pet. Do you think it’s been hurt in the blast?”

Cecily lowered her phone. “The operator’s putting me...” Her voice tailed off as she heard the howling. “There’s something trapped inside! Quick, we have to help it.” Without hesitation, she opened the garden gate and began navigating a path through the gnome debris towards the house.

“Wait!” Arthur hurried after her. “You can’t go inside; it’s too dangerous. What if another explosion goes off?”

“That’s why we need to be quick.”

“Yes, but—” Arthur’s neck stiffened as the dog wailed again, more feebly. The sound tugged on his heart; he couldn’t ignore it. He glanced back at Ren, her arms crossed. “Are you coming?”

Muttering irritably under her breath, she marched after them.

As they made their way over the grass, Cecily talked loudly into her phone. Her voice was so full of confidence she reminded Arthur of their head teacher. “Yes, we’re fine...

No, OK... We’re not sure about that... Right, thank you.” She put her phone away. “The police have our location. They’re en route.”

Arthur wondered if she’d been advised to stay a safe distance from the building. Probably. He looked around to see if any of his neighbours had ventured outside, and spotted an elderly man talking with a heavily pregnant woman in a dressing gown. Both were pointing at Number Twenty-Seven, but neither came any closer.

“So how far is your house from here?” Cecily questioned, hurdling the remains of the front door.

Copying her steps, Arthur tried not to focus on any decapitated gnome bodies. “Just at the end of the next road. The estate isn’t that big.” He shot her a sidelong glance, wondering again what she was doing there. “I haven’t seen you around Peacepoint before. I thought you lived on the other side of town.”

She sighed. “I do, but my aunt lives here. I have to stay with her when my parents go away on business.” She hurried the last few paces to the house and stepped through the hole where the front door had been. Arthur and Ren followed.

Number Twenty-Seven’s hallway looked like it had last been decorated in the 1970s. Patterned orange-and-yellow paper lined the walls and a cobwebbed bamboo ceiling fan rattled overhead. The air smelled musty and stale, as if the windows hadn’t been opened for decades.

Session 4

1. *'Arthur's neck stiffened as the dog wailed again, more feebly. The sound tugged on his heart.'*
What does this mean? How do you think Arthur felt?
2. Why did Cecily remind Arthur of their Headteacher?
3. What suggests Number Twenty-Seven has been deserted?
4. Find and copy a word that means remains or wreckage.
5. Find a word that means pressing.
6. Find a word that means wandered.