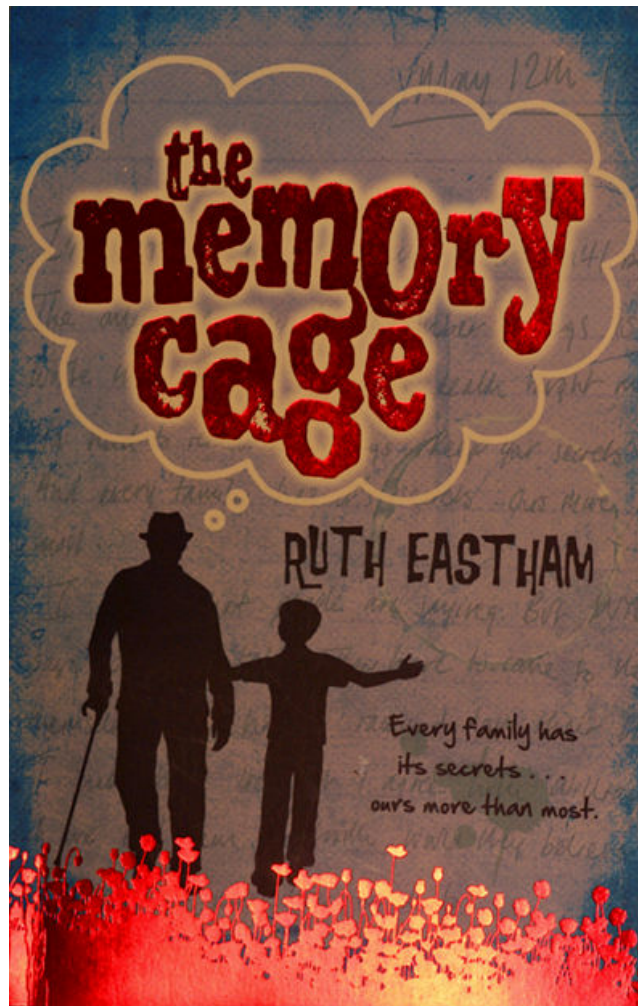


# The Memory Cage

by

Ruth Eastham



## Literacy Study Guide

# Literacy Guide for 'The Memory Cage' by Ruth Eastham

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## Forward

Hello. My name is Ruth Eastham and I'm delighted to introduce this study guide created by my good friend, Sarah Brennan. The two of us trained to be teachers in Cambridge together and when I was asked about resources for using *The Memory Cage* in schools, I knew just the person for the job! Sarah has many years of experience and ideas here are based on activities tried and tested in the classroom. The following *Literacy Study Guide* looks at the novel's language and structure, and you're also welcome to ask for the accompanying *Chapter-by-Chapter Reading Guide* and *History Study Guide*.

Huge thanks to Sarah for all her tremendous work!

If you'd like to get in touch with comments, or let us know how the lessons worked in your school, our e-mail address is:

[contact@ruttheastham.com](mailto:contact@ruttheastham.com)

All the best,



Hi, I'm Sarah and I've been teaching for the last 15 years in Havering and Essex. I was thrilled for Ruth when I learnt that she was going to have her book published, and truly delighted to be asked to write this guide.

Ever since I've known her, Ruth has loved to write. In *The Memory Cage* she couples her skills as a writer and her artist's eye (she's also a talented photographer) to create vivid descriptions and a sensitively handled, moving story about the relationship between a grandfather and grandson. Her characters are keen to 'cage' their memories for different reasons - until they do, they are unable move on with their lives.

I hope these guides are helpful as you enjoy Ruth's book with your class.



## Synopsis

Alex lives with his adoptive family, trying to cope with flashbacks from his past life in Bosnia. Grandad is the only person he identifies with and who understands his need to block out memories. Alex has taken on the role of caring for Grandad, whose onset of Alzheimer's disease leads him to do more and more dangerous things and behave in an increasingly paranoid way. Grandad makes Alex promise to keep him out of the care home that is under discussion by Mum and Dad. From then on, it is Alex's mission to honour his promise.

After a memory game at the village fete, Alex realises that when Grandad remembers, he is happy and when he is happy, he is less of a risk to himself and others and therefore less likely to be put in the care home. Alex, with help from his friend, Lia, set about encouraging Grandad to remember his past by creating a Scrapbook of photos. Initially this works, but as they go back in time the project unearths memories Grandad has tried to suppress and mysteries that Alex needs to solve about the past. A shadowy figure in one of Grandad's photos backs up his worries of being watched, a vandalised headstone in the local graveyard and a locked attic room all heighten the sense of mystery. At the same time Alex must battle against his antagonistic adopted brother, Leonard and flashbacks that are now becoming more frequent and vivid.

A climax is reached when Grandad is accused by two different people of murdering his brother, Tommie, during the war and then marrying his widow, Freda. Alex has a week before Grandad is taken to the care home to uncover the truth. Helped by Lia, he overcomes various obstacles and pieces together clues as to what really happened in Grandad's past. Just before they can share their findings, Grandad does something that jeopardises Alex's mission and the safety and future happiness of the family. Alex must overcome his fear of swimming and block out the memories of his drowned younger brother, Nicu, in order to save Sophie. After this thrilling rescue, Alex's standing in the family changes. Leonard accepts Alex as a family member and Mum and Dad acknowledge the care Alex has taken over Grandad and accept their responsibility to look after Grandad and behave as a family. More importantly, Grandad and Alex both realise that they cannot put off the inevitable (just as Canute cannot stop the oncoming tide). Grandad accepts that he must go into the care home and Alex accepts that he must face his past horrors. Memories and truths cannot be contained or caged, they will eventually surface and must be faced. Good or bad, they make us who we are.

## Plot structure

The story is spilt into 3 parts, The Promise (introduction to characters and the 'problem'), A Scrapbook of Memories (build-up, climax) and Grand Finales (thrilling rescue, denouement and reflection).

The 25 Chapters contain either action, revelation, reflection or confrontation (some contain several of these elements). When writing their stories, children can use this device. In order to create suspense or so that action paragraphs have more impact, lull the readers into a feeling of calm security, then introduce the element of surprise or obstacle that must be overcome. Before the next challenge the character must face, slow the pace with a paragraph where they reflect on the events or where something is revealed to them.

### Activities:

**See resource sheets for RS1 - chapter headings, RS2 - plot outline  
and blank writing frame, RS3.**

- Plot story on blank writing frame after reading book. Discuss in a group which parts of the story go in which part of the framework. Arrive at a consensus with the whole class.
- Write a story synopsis in under 500 words. Then try to reduce this down to 200 words.
- Use blank writing frame to structure own story.

## Setting

Settings within the story change from busy, people-filled settings (such as the fete, the breakfast table, library and the Saturday picnic) to those that provide a contrast and enable the characters to have more personal space for reflection and sanctuary and for revelation (the research room at the library, Grandad's Den, the graveyard etc.) Some settings reflect the personalities of their occupants (the Den and Dad's study).

### Activities:

**See resource sheet RS4 - settings**

What can we tell about each character from the description of their rooms?

Compare Grandad's and Reverend Posselthwaite's. How are they similar?

Compare Grandad's and Dad's. How are they different?

### **Creating atmosphere and mood**

**See resource sheet: RS5 and RS6 - atmosphere and mood**

RS 5 could be used by teacher modelling for whole class or for 'low achieving' group as an activity; RS6 is aimed at average/above average groups.

### Activities:

- What are their first impressions about the mood and atmosphere that the author is trying to create? (RS4 is ghostly and secretive, RS5 is menacing and confused)
- Ask children to find adjectives, powerful verbs, adverbs and similes/metaphors in the passage using a colour key.
- Discuss how these contribute to the atmosphere and mood.
- Ask pairs to decide on a 'success criteria' for writing atmosphere and mood for when they come to write a paragraph themselves,

e.g.

indicate time of day, year or weather conditions;

describe what you can see and hear using adjectives;

use powerful verbs/adverbs that show how character reacts to mood and atmosphere;

think of a comparison you can make using a simile or metaphor.

### **Atmospheres that reflect a character's feelings**

Often in 'The Memory Cage' the atmosphere reflects the character's mood.

#### Activities:

<b>See resource sheet RS7 - atmosphere reflecting character</b>
---

- Ask pairs to decide how the atmosphere reflects the character's mood
- Use the activities above to identify how writers create atmosphere.

## Characters

The characters in this story divide into those that are dead at the start and those that are alive. Characters all perform certain roles within the plot. Lia is wheelchair bound. She doesn't take a direct role in the action that takes place; instead she is Alex's 'helper', advising him when making decisions and goading him into action. The Reverend and Miss Kirby and their contrasting characters, Peter Webb and Aunt Mildred, all enable clues to be revealed from different perspectives and to move the plot onwards. Nicu and Tommie are a reminder that past memories cannot be ignored.

### Character descriptions

<b>See resource sheet RS8 - character list</b>
--

#### Activities:

- Make a list of the characters as you read the story.
- Keep a record of how the characters are described.
- Which characters are similar? How are they alike?
- Which characters form a contrast to others in this story?
- Why is Alex so determined to save Grandad? What does this tell us about his character?

### Character study

<b>See resource sheet RS9 - character study</b>
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Read through one or all of the studies drawn from the story.

#### Activities:

- (for low achieving group) How does the author show the difference between Grandad and Mr Barker?
- Look at the description of Mum. How does the author tell us about her appearance and personality? How do others treat her?



- Look at the descriptions of Peter Webb and/or Aunt Mildred. Are they likeable characters? Back up your answer with evidence from the extract.
- Look at how the author depicts the characters. Ask children to list adjectives and adverbs and similes used in the extract. How do they look, move, speak, how do they get on with others and how do they treat others?

### **Character names**

Many character names reflect the personalities of their owners, e.g.

Reverend Posselthwaite - a slightly preposterous and fussy name;

Mr Webb - spider's web or cage, at the centre of a mystery, waiting to pounce;

Aunt Mildred - mildew and dread, she is feared and loathed for spreading hateful gossip.

#### Activity:

- Think of names which reflect your character's personality or role in the story.

### **Relationships**

Relationships within the story mirror or run parallel to others. The relationship between brothers is explored with Alex and Leonard, Alex and Nicu, Tommie and Grandad, Henry and Peter Webb. Father /child relationships are mirrored with that of adopted Alex and Dad/Richard, and Grandad and his adopted son (Richard/Dad). These are contrasted with the more loving relationship between Lia and Mr Barker. Relationships also change by the end of the story - Dad and Grandad are reconciled and Leonard has a new-found respect and acceptance of Alex after he saves Sophie.

#### Activity:

- Write their names randomly on a piece of paper and draw lines between those that are connected in some way, writing on that line how they relate, connect or react to the other character. (Teacher could decide which characters to use.)
- Write a description of Alex as Lia sees him and as Leonard sees him.
- Chart how Alex and Leonard's relationship changes in the story.

## Writing own characters

### Activity:

- After studying the characters, ask pairs to decide on success criteria to use when writing characters of their own. Share with another pair and decide which points to keep. Come to a consensus as a class.

### Example success criteria:

Describe how your characters look, speak, move.

What do they say to other characters?

How do they treat other characters?

What do other characters think about them?

Do their names reflect their personality?

What is their role in the story?

## Writing Genre

Aside from story writing, there are other examples and purposes for writing within the story and within the book, such as:

- A diary (chapter 18);
- A letter (chapter 19).
- Headstones (chapter 5 and chapter 20);
- Writing on sand (pages 67 and 224);
- Photo captions and canister instructions/labels (pages 85, 141, 166-167);
- Inscriptions on war memorials/statues (pages 98, 102 'Our Finest Hour');
- Lists of the dead from the United Nations (page 227).

There is also a mention of an information leaflet (pages 25 and 29-30) There is a biography at the front, a non-narrative historical explanation and a list of websites at the back, as well as the book blurb on the back cover. The story, diary and letter are examples of first person narrative, whilst other text is written in the third person.

Page 1 and Grandma's diary on page 163 give us one reason why we write:

*I tell this story so it won't be lost. The only sure way to remember things is to write them down.*

### Activities aside from story writing:

- Find as many different types/purposes for writing in the book;
- Research and write your own Alzheimer's disease leaflet;
- Change the biography at the front into a piece of autobiographical writing;
- Write letters and diaries from the viewpoints of other characters within the story;
- Write an alternative blurb.

## Devices Used by the Author

### Similes and metaphors

**See resource sheet RS10 - similes and metaphors**

Use all or a selection of the examples.

#### Activities:

- How do the similes and metaphors help to reflect what is going on in the story?
- Can you spot a common theme in these examples? How does the theme connect to the rest of the story? (sea, warfare, cages, death, coffins)

### Personification

**See resource sheet RS11 - personification**

#### Activity:

- Identify what is being given a human quality and how this is done (use of verbs);
- Try to write a sentence of your own about the rain, wind and a river.

### Use of questions

**See resource sheet RS12 - use of questions**

#### Activity:

- Why does the author use questions? (to involve the reader, to make us anticipate the answer and want to discover truth)
- Decide on at least one question your characters can think about or ask in your story that is pivotal to your plot and will engage your reader's interest.

## Cliff hangers at the ends of chapters

See resource sheet RS13 for a selection of endings

### Activity:

- What are cliff hangers? Why does the author use these at the end of each chapter?
- Decide on your plan how you will end each part of your story (introduction, build up, climax, rescue, denouement) to get your reader involved and anticipating what will come next.

## Use of Speech

In the story, dialogue helps reveal more about the characters, how they feel about situations and other characters as well as helping to move the plot onwards through revealing truths or deciding on future actions.

See resource sheet RS14 - use of speech

### Activity:

- Read the extracts and decide what we learn about the plot, characters or relationships within the story;
- Highlight words used instead of 'said' to make a word bank for your own work;
- Write dialogue between Alex and Miss Kirby, where Alex describes the events of the Saturday picnic in chapter 24.

## Action paragraphs

See resource sheet RS15 - action paragraphs

### Activity:

- Read through the extracts and decide what makes them effective action paragraphs. Write out features to form a success criteria to use in your own writing.

Example success criteria:

- Opening words or phrases that lead to action, for example:  
*Suddenly/ But/ Before I could/ But that wasn't the end of it* (extract 1)
- Powerful verbs: *scrambling* (extract 2)
- Use of sounds: *I come up, spitting and coughing* (extract 3)
- 3 or 4 sentences of different actions to build up the pace, for example:  
extract 1: kicks wall, hits wall, hits wall again, making knuckles bleed.
- Some shorter sentences to speed up the action: *And again.* (extract 1)

**Suspense paragraphs**

**See resource sheets RS16 and RS17 - suspense paragraphs**

(could be used by teacher modelling for whole class or for 'low achieving' group)

Activity:

- Read through the extracts and decide what makes them effective suspense paragraphs. Write out features to form a success criteria to use in your own writing.

Example success criteria:

Short sentences for impact, could put these on separate lines, for example:

*Footsteps.*

*Getting closer.* (RS16)

Longer sentence for descriptions of surroundings and how character feels, for example:

*My mouth felt even drier than before. I felt my skin prickle.* (RS16)

*There were bars of moonlight across the landing as I crossed to the second flight of stairs.* (RS16)

Describe the cold or dark or silence, for example:

*The house was deathly quiet. There were bars of moonlight...* (RS16)

Use sounds to make reader jump, for example:

*the clattering sound of the handle turning, the door squealing open.* (RS17)

*One (floorboard) suddenly creaked horribly as I stood on it.* (RS16)

Have a few obstacles for the character to face, for example:

*I pressed the key into the lock.*

*It wouldn't turn. (RS16)*

Don't reveal too much; keep the reader guessing what will happen next.

For more ideas on teaching about action, suspense and other paragraph types within stories, see: '*The Story Maker's Chest*' - Pie Corbett (Philip and Tacey 2005).

For more ideas on using Success Criteria in the classroom, see books by Shirley Clarke, including '*Formative Assessment in Action*' (Hodder Murray ISBN 10 0340 907827).

### Links to plays

Throughout the story there are references to plays:

The scene setting at the start of each chapter (except for chapter 5 and chapter 25)

Page 202 - Leonard takes his 'disguise' off.

Page 217 - *I felt like I was watching the two of them in a play.*

Page 219 - *The relief (was) like the curtain coming down at the theatre.*

**See resource sheet RS18 - links to plays**

### Activities:

- Why do you think the author used references to being in a play?
- What does it reveal about how Alex feels about his life at the start of the story? (he is acting a part, not revealing his true identity or feelings about the past)

## Themes

### 1. Belonging and self-identity

At the start of the story, Alex identifies with Grandad as they are both 'outsiders'.

Alex has been adopted into the family and Grandad is Dad's step Dad. Both have made decisions and have had past experiences that set them apart from the others. Both have tried and failed to save brothers.

Leonard is unwilling to accept Alex into the family and is jealous of Alex's relationships with Grandad and Lia and threatens to cause trouble for Alex. The fact that Mum and Dad are keen to remove Grandad from the family make Alex wonder if he is next - a fear exacerbated by Leonard's taunts.

At the start of the story, the family are disjointed, all pursuing separate interests and appear to have little time for one another - Dad is always working, Victoria always on the phone. No one except Alex seems to be aware or to care about Grandad's advancing state of Alzheimer's disease. The underlining tensions between Grandad and Dad and Alex and Leonard are resolved by the end of the story, with Mum and Dad promising to be more of a family, acknowledging Alex's help in caring for Grandad when they hadn't, and reaffirming their love for Alex. Through his experiences and acceptance that memories make us part of who we are, Alex is ready to face his past and move on with his life.

#### Activities:

- Hot seat a character in the family and ask them how they feel about family life.

### 2. How people cope with grief/loss

Alex and Grandad both try to suppress their memories of loss. Both suffer from flashbacks to their past. Both get angry when asked to recall these memories.

As a result of Nicu's death, Alex avoids swimming. We learn on page 209, that he witnessed his father's murder. On page 1, he says his memories start when he was 7.

However, in getting Grandad to recall his past and seeing him struggle to do this because of Alzheimer's disease, Alex struggles to stop his own memories surfacing and begins to question if it is right to suppress them. Memories, good or bad make us who we are.

When Grandad lost Tommie and Grandma, he defaced his wife's grave, locked up her room and couldn't bring himself to develop the last photos of Tommie at Dunkirk and  
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became depressed, contemplating suicide. Miss Kirby tells us that it was only baby Richard (Dad) that saved him.

Aunt Mildred is heartbroken at losing her fiancé, Henry Webb. She is jealous of those who have survived and spreads malicious rumours about Grandad.

Peter Webb, idolized his brother, Henry and wears his medals. His own disabilities stopped him from going to war. He finds Grandad's refusal to fight and graphic war photos an insult to his dead brother's memory. He sets fire to Grandad's dark room, which resulted in the death of Freda - a secret that has been eating away at him and which he confesses to the Reverend and in a letter to Richard. He targets Grandad as a way of coping with his grief.

Miss Kirby wanted to set up an exhibition of Grandad's photos during the war, as she found that knowing what had happened helped her to come to terms with the loss of 'her Robert'. Locals and Government officials were against this idea as it would lower public morale if the public saw the truth about war. Grandad produces a book of photos about Dunkirk.

On seeing the war memorial statue 'Our finest hour', Alex queries its graphic depiction of death. Reverend Posselthwaite mentions that many locals were against the statue for the same reason.

At the picnic, Alex tells his family '*about grief and the terrible things it did to people.*' (page 216)

#### Activities:

- Look at and discuss how characters deal with grief.
- Chart Alex's journey from being caged by suppressing his grief, to facing his memories and moving forward.

### **3. Keeping promises/secrets**

Alex promises Grandad to keep him out of an old people's home. He had also promised to look after Nicu, just as Grandad had promised Tommie that he'd look after Freda:

*'He said, "Promise me, Will. Promise me you'll look after my Freda. Marry her. Look after her and the little one."* (page 183)

Tommie also wanted Grandad to:

*"Leave me here. Get yourself out. Show them what it's all really like, all this fighting, all this ruddy killing. You promise me, Will?"* (page 183)

However Grandad didn't keep these promises, Freda died in the fire and he couldn't face developing the pictures after what had happened. Despite his efforts, Alex's brother dies in the river. Aunt Mildred goes back on her promise to Dad when she talks about Tommie:

*"I promised your father I wouldn't say anything."* (page 115)

Although Alex had kept Grandad out of the care home, and had helped Grandad achieve his promise to Tommie in developing the Dunkirk photos, by the end of the story both have accepted that some promises cannot be kept:

*Grandad stared out to sea. "Freda pleaded with me to take the baby first," he said. "I couldn't manage them both... I promised I'd go back for her, but..."*

*He squeezed the shoulder of my coat in his fist.*

*"But some promises can't be kept, Alex. However much you want to keep them.*

*"Some promises just can't be kept."* (page 224-225)

Lia queries why the family refuses to discuss things:

*"Wow, do your family never discuss anything?"* (page 91)

Even when the truth starts to emerge in an argument between Dad and Grandad in chapter 16, the family clam up before anything is resolved:

*Everyone carrying on as normal.*

*As if nothing whatsoever had happened.* (page 158)

Alex decides to reveal the truth about Grandad:

*I'd decided that no family should have that many secrets from each other. Not big secrets like that. It wasn't right.* (page 211)

#### Activities:

- Get someone to act as Alex or Grandad and form a 'conscience alley' with the rest of the class. One side gives reasons for keeping secrets, the other why there shouldn't be secrets. The same could be done with promises as the issue.

#### 4. Feeling trapped or caged

There are references throughout the book to being trapped, caged or locked away.

Grandad's sighting of a photo in a newspaper article set the wheels in motion for Alex's adoption: *"I saw it in a newspaper. A boy, it was. A boy looking out through the bars at the end of a bed. Like he was in a cage or something."* (page 38)

Alex's memories of his previous life are kept 'locked away' in a box under his bed (page 16) just as Grandad does with his painful memories, by locking Freda's room up and avoiding facing the last images of Tommie by not developing the Dunkirk film canister.

On page 112 and 113, Alex talks about 'trapping memories.' For Grandad this would mean being able to recall memories at will so that he retains his self identity, defies the onset of Alzheimer's disease and stays out of the care home. For Alex, trapping memories enables him to suppress the horrors of his past so that he can fit in to his present life. However, this is at the expense of acknowledging who he is and where he came from:

*What had I been thinking anyway? Make a Scrapbook of Grandad's life? Trap all his memories in it? Did I honestly think that would stop him being taken away?*

*It was like trying to make a cage for your memories. A memory cage to stop them getting away. But memories don't want to be trapped. They slip between the bars. Like smoke, like water.*

*They get in, as well as out.*

*I knew that. Better than anyone.*

*But what were you if you didn't have memories? Memories were what made you who you are. If you lost your memories, you lost yourself.*

On page 194 we are told that Grandad *'was completely in his own world. Trapped in his own past.'* Memories also fail to remain caged for Alex, his flashbacks during the story build up a picture for the reader of his experiences in Bosnia.

Alex feels overwhelmed with the many secrets he uncovers in his quest to keep Grandad out of the home:

*But why did there have to be so many secrets? There were too many. They were like brambles, scratching and choking, taking over, making cages round me. I felt closed in, like being in a coffin.* (page 118)

By the end of the story, both Alex and Grandad have realised how futile and damaging with holding memories and secrets can be. In Chapter 24, page 222, Grandad says:

*"I thought it was better to keep my past boxed up, Alex. But I was wrong." He held my hand tighter. I felt my sores throb. "It suffocates you if you do that. In the end it eats you alive. I've learnt now it's better to face things. However hard it is. However much it hurts."*

**for more about Ruth Eastham, visit her website:  
[www.rutheastham.com](http://www.rutheastham.com)**

## RS1 - Chapter Headings

The Memory Cage by Ruth Eastham

Part 1 - The Promise	Part 2 - A Scrapbook of Memories	Part 3 - Grand Finales
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trying to put it out of my mind</li> <li>2. Grandad makes me promise</li> <li>3. The forbidden word</li> <li>4. Mind Games</li> <li>5. Lest I Forget</li> <li>6. White Feather</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Freda and Tommie</li> <li>8. Mr Webb</li> <li>9. Reverend Posselthwaite</li> <li>10. Messed Up</li> <li>11. The Grandfather Clock</li> <li>12. Photographic Memory</li> <li>13. Cocodriles and Transhlers</li> <li>14. The Conchie</li> <li>15. May 13<sup>th</sup> 1941</li> <li>16. War Crimes</li> <li>17. Playing with fire</li> <li>18. Grandma's Diary</li> <li>19. Some things best forgotten</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20. Red Carnations</li> <li>21. The Front Line</li> <li>22. Dunkirk</li> <li>23. Telling the truth</li> <li>24. Canute's Sandcastle</li> <li>25. Pandora's Box</li> </ol>

## RS2 - Plot Outline

Introduction Chapters 1-3	Build Up Chapters 4-7	Climax Chapters 8-21	Thrilling escape Chapters 22-23	Denouement Chapters 24-25
<p>We are shown family dynamics, the main characters and Lia the 'helper'. The main problem: Alex is trying to keep Grandad, (who has Alzheimer's Disease) the only family member who understands him, out of an old people's home. Other problems: Alex must cope with his horrific flashbacks. He has to live with Leonard's bullying.</p>	<p>Grandad becomes increasingly paranoid, believing he is being watched and rambling about 'murder.' Alex finds a photo with a shadowy figure that backs up what Grandad believes - but this goes missing. There is a locked room at the top of the house that Grandad doesn't talk about. Alex's flashbacks increase - revealing more to us about his past, in spite of his efforts to block them. Alex finds a vandalised grave from World War II. He decides to keep a scrapbook to help Grandad remember so that he doesn't go to a care home. There is a mystery surrounding a wedding photo of Freda and Tommie that Dad keeps in his study.</p>	<p>Grandad was a 'Conchie' during the War. Aunt Mildred and Mr Webb both accuse Grandad of murdering his brother, Tommie. Is this why Grandad is blocking his memories?</p> <p>Obstacles: The darkroom is vandalised. Dad bans the scrap book. Alex has one week to get to the truth and develop Dunkirk photos unaided, as his own flashbacks get worse.</p> <p>Revelations: The discovery of the diary in the sealed attic room, Miss Kirby and the newspaper article, Mr Webb's confession.</p> <p>Alex must share the truth, with Dad in particular, to clear Grandad's name so that this will prevent him being put into a home.</p>	<p>The rescue of Sophie from the boat mirrors the attempted rescue of Nicu and of Tommie from Dunkirk.</p>	<p>The truth heals Dad and Grandad's relationship as well as Alex and Leonard's relationship. The family promise to take responsibility for looking after Grandad. Grandad takes responsibility for himself - he decides to go to the care home. Alex feels supported enough by his adopted family to face his past and move on with his life.</p>

### RS3 - Blank writing frame

Introduction	Build Up	Climax/conflict/confrontation	Thrilling escape or decision made to resolve the issue	Denouement
Settings RS4. Character study RS9. Character relationships. The main problem to face.	Smaller obstacles to face. A 'helper' character to talk to and make decisions with. Use of questions RS12. Use of speech RS14.	Confront the issue or evil character. Atmosphere and mood RS5 and RS6. Similes and metaphors RS10. Suspense paragraph RS16 and RS17. Cliff hanger R13.	Action paragraph RS15.	Reflect on events: -what they've learnt -how they've changed (A link back to introduction)

## RS4 - Settings

### Grandad's Den, Chapter 6, page 59 - 60

Grandad's Messing About Room was bigger than the darkroom. In one corner there was a sofa, piled up with old pillows. Grandad used them for kneeling on when he was working on his train set.

Next to the sofa was a tall bookcase crammed with Grandad's biscuit tins of tea-cards. Packets of tea used to have cards in them and you collected sets of all sorts, birds, cars, flags, you name it. Grandad had thousands of the things.

There was a cardboard box where we kept our fossil collection, and leaning up against it in pride of place was our ammonite, a fossil the size of a dinner plate with a snail shell pattern.

In another corner, sitting on a round table with lion's paw feet, was an old gramophone with its big metal funnel. A pile of records was stacked under the table.

There was a small sink, a fridge, a kettle and a cupboard for supplies. There was a tea chest with three rickety chairs clustered round it. But the most totally amazing thing in there was the train set.



Reverend Posselthwaite's, study Chapter 9, page 103 & page 104-105

The room Reverend Posselthwaite took me to was more like a library than a study. Tall bookcases lined all the walls, with the top shelves close to the ceiling and well out of reach. There was a huge desk in the middle of the room, covered in a thick jumble of papers and books, and one very large, very annoyed-looking, white Persian cat.

"The rubbings are all up there," he said, after he'd finished explaining his complex system of organization according to surname and then Christian name. He pointed vaguely at the top shelves. I could see masses of cardboard tubes and rolls of paper jutting out from them.

"Freda Smith, wasn't it? Should be easy to find!"

...

He took a metal stepladder from behind the door and opened it out. The ladder wobbled as he climbed up. A couple of cardboard tubes thudded down, narrowly missing my head.

Dad's study, Chapter 5, page 50

I peeped through the crack. Dad was busy at his desk, sitting on his big leather chair with his back to me, head bent over piles of papers. I knew he hated being disturbed when he was working, so I stayed standing there a while longer, peering in and waiting for the right moment.

Along a shelf by his desk was the row of antique vases he collected. I saw a black and white photo propped up amongst them. I'd never noticed it before, but then I'd never really been inside Dad's study for years, not since I'd sent one of his precious vases flying and it had smashed to pieces. Since then, Dad's study had been pretty much out-of-bounds to everyone. It may as well have been the forbidden attic room.

## RS5 Atmosphere and Mood

Moonlight slanted through a triangular window at one side of the room. Strands of cobweb glistened from the ceiling and the wind whispered through a crack in the glass.

Memories from Grandad's album came back to me. Things he'd told me about Grandma, and I knew straightaway — this had been her room.

I slowly walked around, the floorboards shifting under my feet like the planks of a boat. Fingers of torchlight crept over her things and sent long, jagged shapes up the walls like teeth.

(Chapter 13, page 132-133)

## RS6 Atmosphere and Mood

The damp grass became knee-high in places. My jeans clung to me as I forced my way through. Nettles stung at my ankles and I stumbled where tree roots made the ground all lumpy. More gravestones, more inscriptions, but the marble was pitted now and dark lichens grew in clots around the faded letters and numbers. Still nothing.

I smacked down, bashing my hands. I'd tripped over a tiny headstone, sunk into the ground as if it were slowly disappearing into quicksand. A baby? I stepped over it with a shudder and hurried on.

I thought about the boy's grave I'd seen on the day of the church fête, the vandalized headstone with the broken angel. I would have struggled to find that bit of the graveyard again. The path forked, and then forked again into nothing more than a mud track. I doubled-back, tried another trail. More graves appeared from the shadows, none of them *Grandma's*. I lost my bearings and started to go round in circles.

I bent over to wriggle through a rhododendron bush. On the other side a piece of bramble lashed at my face. This was impossible! I was going to have to ask *Grandad* where *Grandma's* grave was after all, I told myself angrily. Whether he liked it or not. Tough! I headed in what I hoped was the right direction, and finally managed to find the main path back.

(From Chapter 8, page 93-94)

## RS7 Atmosphere reflecting character's feelings

The view spilt open in front of us. The slab of blue-grey sea, the white curve of the cliffs to either side. The special cove where we'd spent hours collecting our fossils. Dark clouds hovered over the water, covering the sun. The wind pulled at my hair and made my bare arms feel cold.

*They're putting him in a home. They're putting him in a home.*

(From Chapter 6, page 65)

Grandad looked up at the sky through the branches. A flock of birds swept across a patch of grey. Rain ran down his face. He drew in a breath, long and slow.

"The fighter planes kept coming," he said.

(From Chapter 20, page 181)

The clouds moved fast across the sky, making shadows skim the water like boats. Waves swirled and hissed on the rocks far below me. I thought about the hundreds of wrecks on the bottom of the Channel. The smoothly moving surface with all that mangled, rusting metal hidden underneath.

(From Chapter 24 page 221, as Alex thinks about his identity)

## RS8 Characters

### Living Characters:

Alex  
Grandad  
Dad, Richard  
Mum, Hilary  
Victoria  
Leonard  
Sophie

Ophelia Barker, 'Lia'  
Miss Kirby  
Reverend Posselthwaite  
Aunt Mildred  
Peter Webb

### Deceased Characters:

Tommie  
Freda  
Henry Webb  
Robert Kirby

Babo  
Mama  
Nicu

## RS9 Character study

### Mum

I looked at Mum, then back at Victoria. You could see where my sister got it from. Her looks too - blonde hair, blue eyes, like Mum and Sophie. Leonard's the spitting image of Dad, especially when he scowls.

( Page 11)

...the vicar's wife had this huge red stain all down the sleeve of her frilly white blouse and Mum looked totally embarrassed and was dabbing at her arm with disintegrating pub serviettes, all apologetic.

"Poor girl," muttered Grandad. "So bothered about what everyone else thinks of her." (page 41)

...Great Aunt Mildred (made) us work in the graveyard, cutting back rhododendron bushes. She'd kept pestering Mum about it yesterday, saying she'd promised the Vicar, and *how would it look if we didn't turn up?* until Mum agreed that we'd help. (page 120)

Grandad

I looked over at Grandad. He was laughing, probably at some joke Lia's Dad had told. You could hear Mr Barker's rumbling laugh from where we were standing. Grandad's shoulders were hunched and his whole body was shaking, and I remember thinking how frail he looked right then, next to big Mr Barker, like he might fall over any minute. Laugh himself to death. (page 25)

Peter Webb

An old man was hunched up raking litter from the flowerbeds, a bit of rag wrapped round his fist. Mr Webb, who looked after the church grounds. He shuffled around pulling up weeds and trimming things and wearing an anorak that was way too big for him. He had these medals pinned to his chest, even when he was mowing lawns, and he was always talking to himself. The kids in my school all said Peter Webb was mad.

He glared at me as I went past, as if I was the one to blame for all the Coke cans in his carnations. (page 49)



### Great-Aunt Mildred

...a large lady with a knobbly walking stick leaned over a table laid with glass jars and small silver spoons. From the sound of it, our Great-Aunt Mildred had nothing good to say about any of the entries. But then she never had anything good to say about anything or anybody, especially not Grandad.

Great-Aunt Mildred had helped look after Dad when he was young. Sometimes we didn't see her for weeks on end and other times we couldn't get rid of her; she'd prattle on, criticizing whoever she could in the village. *Nosy Old Bat*, was what Grandad called her. She wasn't even our real Aunt, just some kind of family friend. Except there was nothing friendly about Great-Aunt Mildred.

"I don't mince my words," she was saying to Reverend Posselthwaite. "But then one has to be cruel to be kind, one does. Cruel to be kind." (Page 31 and 32)

Great-Aunt Mildred came very close to me, and I could see her painted-on eyebrows and smell the sickly smell of her face cream. It was like the gone-off milk Grandad left out for Moggy.

Great-Aunt Mildred's eyes were bright. Her false teeth shone unnaturally white in the dimly lit hallway. (page 116)

## RS10 Similes and Metaphors

The smoke alarm wailed out like a chisel to the skull. (page 9)

An image appeared in the tray, surfacing from the red skin of liquid like a memory coming back. (page 18)

The paper quivered, dripping water on to the bench like spots of blood. (page 20)

His words, like bullets, stuck inside me. (page 29)

We seemed to be pushed along by the river of people, not able to control where we were going. (page 33)

Memories swirled inside my head, like sharks coming up from dark water. (page 34)

My brain felt like a drum, being bashed over and over. (page 42)

Spots of sunlight on me like hot patches of blood. (page 44)

It stood like an old tooth loose in its socket. (page 46)

"My mind's like the tide," he joked grimly. "It keeps coming and going, and I've no damn control over it."

...

"I'm afraid that the tide's out most of the time these days, Alex." (page 66)

The sea was like Grandad's Alzheimer's. Coming to wipe away everything that was written in someone's life. All the things they'd done. All the people they'd known. All the things they'd felt. Stealing away their memories. (page 67)

It came to me like a wasp sting. Worse. An axe in the head. A bullet. (page 67)

My past, waiting in the shadows like an enemy. Waiting to jump out on me. Ambush me. (page 82)

Overhead, branches wobbled in the wind, caging me in. (page 93)

It was like trying to make a cage for your memories. A memory cage to stop them getting away. But memories don't want to be trapped. They slip between the bars. Like smoke, like water. (page 112-113)

But why did there have to be so many secrets? There were too many. They were like brambles, scratching and choking, taking over, making cages round me. I felt closed in, like being in a coffin. (page 118)

I was like that Canute, holding his hands up to try and stop the tide coming in. (page 128)

I rolled myself into a ball. The smallest curled-up shape I could. A pebble. A bullet. Hard and cold. Totally still. Trying not to even breathe... (page 128)

The forbidden room was Grandma's room, all shut up. Left like a museum nobody was allowed to visit. (page 133)

I could make out the church spire, a witch's hat against the sky. (page 135)

Black and white photo after black and white photo. On and on until we'd done them all. Dozens of them there were, rectangular pieces of paper clipped with little pegs, like gravestones standing in a line. (page 190)

I thought about Grandad's burnt pillow I'd buried there. That dark scorch like an open sore. A war wound. (page 194)

(Of the box under Alex's bed) It has a lid that lifts off, like the lid of a coffin. (page 226)

## RS11 Personification

I stared down from the cliff and watched the tide lick at the grey sand.

Page 65

All around it seems the river is taunting me as it slides past. It hisses and whispers and mocks me. It calls me terrible names. It says Grandad is a fool. Brain-dead. Better off in a grave.

Page 200

The waves sighed as they spread over the sand. Somewhere overhead a lone seagull shrieked.

Page 217; symbolises Alex's relief after the family finally knew the truth about Grandad.

## RS12 Use of Questions

Why had *Grandad* reacted like that anyway? Who was the man in the picture and what had he done to make *Grandad* so angry, even after all these years?

Chapter 7, page 85

"What has your grandad actually forgotten, and..." She stopped to look me right in the face. "... What does he remember but he's deliberately trying to forget?"

Lia in Chapter 8, page 89

## **RS13 Cliff hangers**

**or statements at the end of each chapter to engage reader's interest**

### Chapter 1 - Trying To Put It Out Of My Mind

"Ruddy Moggy!" he said with a grin.

Moggy. Grandad's cat. Not a problem in itself.

Trouble is, Moggy died fifty years ago.

### Chapter 2 - Grandad Makes Me Promise

The safelight it was called. But nothing felt safe any more.

### Chapter 3 - The Forbidden Word

"Well done, Bosnia Boy," he said, walking away from me, rubbing the blood between his fingers. "Good one. Just what I need to show Dad what's really in that psycho head of yours."

### Chapter 4 - Mind Games

I plunged into the twisting tree branches, letting them snake around me and get right into my eyes so I couldn't see a thing.

### Chapter 5 - Lest I Forget

I almost tripped on the rug as I scrambled to get out. That's when I came face to face with Grandad, and his huge black eye.

### Chapter 6 - White Feather

I really thought I could change things. That I could still keep my promise. I had to believe it.

Had to.

And I had one week.

## RS14 Use of speech

"You two make a lovely couple," sneered a voice beside me.

Leonard's.

"You and Lia. Two freaks together."

I pulled Leonard round a screen of tarpaulin on a neighbouring stall and got right to the point. "You can't tell Dad about last night."

"Thought you'd come begging," said Leonard. "Grandad could have burnt the whole house down. The sooner he gets put away, the better."

... Leonard tapped me hard on the head with his palm. "Who knows what goes on in that warped mind of yours. You can't help yourself, can you, Bosnia Boy? You're always trying to get attention. You know Grandad'll get blamed if anyone finds out, so you're not bothered. You're always trying to break our family up."

Page 26 and 27; reveals character relationship

"You're the Smith boy." It was as if he was accusing me of something. "The adopted one."

... "You're William Smith's Grandson," he said, and from the way he said the name it was obvious Grandad wasn't his favourite person.

... "How about this then?" His lips curled into a sneer.

"A conchie he was. A ruddy, dirty conchie."

... "Betrayed his brother during the War, know about that, do you?" He was spitting as he said the words. "Went and got his brother Tommie killed, he did."

I could hardly take in what I was hearing. It was hard to believe that seeing one photo had brought all this on.

"That makes him a *murderer*, that does," Mr Webb ranted.

Page 94, 95 and 96; moves story on and reveals character relationships



"Some people can only make selfish decisions," said Dad.

Grandad got to his feet. A knife clattered to the floor.

"That's what you think I was, do you, Richard? Selfish!"

Dad banged a hand on the table. "We damn well should fight! If our way of life is threatened. If our families are threatened."

"Don't judge things you know nothing about."

Dad rose slightly from his seat. "I know something! I know that you came back but Tommie didn't."

Page 155; confrontation

"You've got to go back up there."

I stared at Lia.

"To your grandma's room." She wheeled herself across the room and picked up one of Sophie's jigsaw pieces. "Tonight. Read the rest of the diary."

I felt myself go tense.

"You can't go up there now, can you? And you can't bring it down here! Your Grandad might come in any minute. I think you need to wait until everyone's in bed again. Get the key out of the clock and go back. Surely you were planning to do that anyway?"

Yes I was, but the thought of being up there in the dark again, alone...

"I'd come with you," said Lia. She gave me a punch on the arm. "But I'm not too good with steps, am I?"

page 160-161; speech to move plot on

## RS15 Action paragraphs

### From Chapter 10, page 113

I kicked at the wall. Thumped it with my fists. It hurt, but I didn't care. I hit the wall again. And again. There was blood on my knuckles, but I hardly noticed. I hated them all. They were going to put Grandad in a home. They were getting rid of him like some old bit of junk for a charity shop. But that *wasn't* the end of it. Not by a long way.

### From Chapter 13, page 135

I flung the diary onto the writing desk, and I got out of there as fast as I could, fumbling to lock the door, scrambling down the stairs to put the key back in the clock, rushing back to my room and wrapping myself up in my ruined bed with the stone cold sheets wound tight.

### From Chapter 22, page 197

The water hits and straight away the cold knocks the air out of my lungs. I come up, spitting and coughing, snatching at the rope. I get a hold and grip it. It cuts right into the backs of my knuckles. My body is shaking. I want to vomit, but I force myself to go on. Hand-over-hand I haul myself along the rope.

## RS16 Suspense

*Chapter 13, page 131 to 132*

The house was deathly quiet. There were bars of moonlight across the landing as I crossed to the second flight of stairs. They were much narrower than the main stairs, and the wood steps were cold against my bare feet. One suddenly creaked horribly as I stood on it. I stopped, heart pounding, waiting to see if anyone had heard. Seconds ticked by. The house stayed quiet. I carried on. The stairs twisted as I climbed, my palms running up the smooth wood of the banister, and I finally found myself on the top landing, facing the forbidden door.

*Crocodiles... tarantulas, a voice inside my head mocked.*

My mouth felt even drier than before. I felt my skin prickle. My torch beam stretched and shrank as I stood there holding the key. Shadows scuttled under the door. I could hear the Grandfather clock ticking in the downstairs hall and echoing up the walls.

*Tock, tock... Tock, tock...*

I pressed the key into the lock.

It wouldn't turn.

I used more strength, but it still didn't budge.

I pushed my shoulder against the door and tried again. This time there was a dull click. I caught my breath. I pushed the door and it opened with a weak, long whine. I looked inside.

## RS17 Suspense

From Chapter 8, page 97

The church was empty. I was trapped in there. I ran up the dark aisle looking for a place to hide. Behind me was the clattering sound of the handle turning, the door squealing open. I dived between the benches and rolled myself under one, chest heaving against the cold stone floor. I made myself as small as I could and squeezed my eyes tight shut.

I heard the door swing wider, then close with a heavy thump.

Footsteps.

Getting closer.

## RS18 Links to plays

Page 202 - Leonard takes his 'disguise' off.

Page 217 - 'I felt like I was watching the two of them in a play'

Page 219 - 'The relief (was) like the curtain coming down at the theatre'

The scene setting at the start of each chapter (except for Chapter 5 and Chapter 25):

### Chapter 1 - Trying To Put It Out Of My Mind

*Breakfast table. Summer holidays, Church fête Saturday. Chaos.*

### Chapter 2 - Grandad Makes Me Promise

*The Den. 8:30am. A different kind of chaos.*

### Chapter 3 - The Forbidden Word

*The Church Lawns. 9:55am. Doing my nut.*

### Chapter 4 - Mind Games

*The Church Lawns. 10:25am. Using mind over matter.*

### Chapter 5 - Lest I Forget

*I remember tree branches overhead where we're hiding. Spots of sunlight on me like*

*hot patches of blood. I lie with my cheek to the ground, smelling wet earth. Smoke.*

*Then I am running again, falling, running, dragging Nicu along with me, his little hand*

*gripping mine... Their gunshots following us...*

### Chapter 6 - White Feather

*In the kitchen. 4:45pm. Playing Happy Families.*

**for more about Ruth Eastham, visit her website:  
[www.rutheastham.com](http://www.rutheastham.com)**

## Additional themes contained in *The Memory Cage*

### Conscientious Objectors

There were 60,000 conscientious objectors in World War II.

C.O.s or 'conscies' or 'conchies' were men and women who did not want to fight. They were pacifists (who were against warfare) or people who held political or religious beliefs (such as Quakers and Jehovah Witnesses). Some conscientious objectors were 'absolutists' who refused to do any work connected with the war effort. In World War I they were put in prison and treated harshly. Other conscientious objectors were 'alternativists' who were willing to do civilian work that wasn't under military control e.g. agriculture/forestry, hospital work, social service, education, coal mining, civil defence. Some were able to stay in their current posts if they worked in these areas, but had to work away from their homes like those in the army had to. Non-combatants' were called up to serve the war effort, but didn't train to use or carry weapons, instead working in the fields of medicine or communications.

People who refused to go to war had to apply for Conscientious Objector status and give their reasons before *non-military* (in contrast to World War I) Tribunals set up by the Government. These consisted of a lawyer as chairman (in most cases a county court judge), a trade union member and a female member if the applicant was a woman. The panel had the authority to grant full exemption from any kind of war work, to grant exemption from military service, or to dismiss the application.

The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, who had served on a tribunal in the First World War, said that those requesting exemption ought to be given fair treatment. However, most Conscientious Objectors and their families kept their views secret. Many people lost their jobs and their families were ridiculed by local people.

Information obtained from the following Internet sources:

[www.ppu.org.uk/learn/infodocs/cos/st\\_co\\_wwtwo.html](http://www.ppu.org.uk/learn/infodocs/cos/st_co_wwtwo.html) (*Peace Pledge Union*)

[www.historylearningsite.co.uk/conscientious\\_objectors.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/conscientious_objectors.htm)

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/spotlights/antiwar.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/spotlights/antiwar.htm)

[www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/2WWco.htm](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/2WWco.htm)

### The Little Ships of Dunkirk

IN 1940, more than 338,000 British and French soldiers were trapped on the beaches at Dunkirk by the advancing German army. British destroyers were unable to rescue them because of the shallow waters. On 27th May, all boats that could navigate shallow waters were collected with their owner's permission or were requisitioned by the government. The boats included pleasure boats, private yachts and launches. A few owners and fishermen manned their vessels, the rest were manned by experienced sailors and Naval Officers. After safety checks and refuelling, they set off from Ramsgate. Most ferried soldiers from the beaches to the destroyers, whilst others carried troops back to Ramsgate under the protection of the Royal Air Force.

Information obtained from the following Internet sources:

[www.adls.org.uk](http://www.adls.org.uk) (*The Association of Dunkirk Little Ships*)

[www.dlsrt.org.uk/Layout.htm](http://www.dlsrt.org.uk/Layout.htm) (*The Dunkirk Little Ships Restoration Trust*)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little\\_ships\\_of\\_Dunkirk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_ships_of_Dunkirk)

## Canute

Canute the Great was born around 994, the son of King Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark and the princess Gunhilda of Poland.

In the twelfth century, Henry of Huntingdon, in his *Chronicle of the History of England* wrote about the King. Canute is supposed to have placed his throne on the beach after courtiers had flattered him into thinking he was so powerful that he could even command the sea to turn back. He failed to stop the on coming tide and almost drowned.

There is another version according to 'Wards Book of Days' and 'Wiki Answers' where a wise King Canute carried out this stunt in order to teach his nobles that he valued their honesty rather than their flattery.

Information obtained from the following Internet sources:

[www.wardsbookofday.com/12november.htm](http://www.wardsbookofday.com/12november.htm)

[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\\_is\\_the\\_legend\\_of\\_Canute\\_the\\_king](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_the_legend_of_Canute_the_king)

<http://www.bosham.org/bosham-magazine/history/King-Canute.htm>

[http://www.englishmonarchs.co.uk/vikings\\_2.htm](http://www.englishmonarchs.co.uk/vikings_2.htm)

## Hamlet

*Hamlet* is one of Shakespeare's 'revenge' plays. In *The Memory Cage* some characters' grief turns into a sort of revenge for the loss of their loved ones. Peter Webb is heart broken by the loss of his brother and tries to destroy William's (Grandad's) darkroom (Chapter 19 - Some Things Best Forgotten). Aunt Maud's bitterness can also be traced to the loss of Henry Webb, her fiancé. There are some parallels to be drawn between Alex and Hamlet. Both have had their fathers murdered. Both think deeply about their situations before taking action. Hamlet has to counter threats to the stability of his kingdom rather than carry out personal revenge for the death of his father. There are threats to the stability of Alex's family life with Grandad being sent away and with family secrets and his own past memories emerging. He tackles these rather than Leonard's persistent bullying. Both Hamlet and Alex are unsure of the facts about a murder that has no witnesses (Hamlet's father and the 'murder' of Tommie).

In both stories, there is an Ophelia, although Lia in *The Memory Cage* thinks for herself and is often the catalyst for Alex's course of action. In Act I, Scene I of *Hamlet*, we are introduced to a 'ghost' that the guards and Horatio take to be that of the dead king. Similarly, Alex and Grandad's flashbacks/memories contain the 'ghosts' of Nicu, Babo, Tommie and Freda. *Hamlet* and *The Memory Cage* both make us consider that our lives are often built on uncertainties (see *Spark Notes*' Themes' listed below) and that there is often more to a situation than when we first consider it.

Information obtained from the following Internet/book sources:

*The Illustrated Stratford Shakespeare* ISBN 0 907486 15 0

<http://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/hamlet/>

[http://artsalive.ca/pdf/eth/activities/hamlet\\_guide.pdf](http://artsalive.ca/pdf/eth/activities/hamlet_guide.pdf)

<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/xHamlet.html>

[http://www.open2.net/hamlet/elizabethan\\_england.html](http://www.open2.net/hamlet/elizabethan_england.html) (article by Dr Hannah Lavery)



## **Pandora's Box**

In Ancient Greek Legend, Pandora was told not to open a box. Curiosity got the better of her and imagining treasures and riches, she opened the box, only to find it contained the opposite - all the evils of the world. At the very end, Hope fluttered out.

Information obtained from the following Internet/book sources:

*The Orchard Book of Greek Myths* By Geraldine McCaughrean ISBN 1-85213-373-2

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandora's\\_box](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandora's_box)

<http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/carolrb/greek/pandora.html>

At the end of *The Memory Cage* there are explanations and links to the following:

The Yugoslav Wars

Alzheimer's disease

Adoption

*S.Brennan 2010*

<p><b>for more about Ruth Eastham, visit her website: <a href="http://www.rutheastham.com">www.rutheastham.com</a></b></p>
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**Key Stage 2**  
**Literacy and cross curricular links**  
**for *The Memory Cage* by Ruth Eastham**

SEE ALSO SEPARATE '*CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER READING GUIDE*'  
 BY SARAH BRENNAN

**UK National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 2:**

**For an emotionally mature Year 4 class:**

Year 4 Narrative Unit 4: Stories that raise issues/dilemmas:  
 adoption, secrets and promises, family/sibling relationships,  
 young carers, Alzheimer's, Conscientious Objectors.

**Year 5:**

Year 5 Narrative Unit 1: Novels and stories by significant children's authors:  
 the author's craft.

Year 5 Narrative Unit 6: Dramatic conventions:  
 relationships at the breakfast table.

Year 5 Non-fiction Unit 2: Recount:  
 diaries, police/newspaper report of the fire, Grandad's  
 bravery at Dunkirk - radio programme, Alex's dramatic  
 rescue of Sophie - TV news coverage.

**Year 6:**

Year 6 Narrative Unit 3: Authors and texts:  
 Keeping a reading journal.  
 Use Ruth's website to find out more about her writing and  
 experiences that featured in 'The Memory Cage' -  
[www.rutheastham.com](http://www.rutheastham.com)

Year 6 Narrative Unit 4: Short stories with flashbacks:  
 Use sections of the story to demonstrate how author uses  
 flashbacks- Alex and Grandad's flashbacks.

Year 6 Non-fiction Unit 2: Journalistic writing:  
 Newspaper report of the fire, Grandad's bravery at Dunkirk:  
 radio programme, Alex's dramatic rescue of Sophie: TV news  
 coverage.

*The Memory Cage* could also be used for a year 6/7 transition unit.

## UK National Curriculum History at Key Stage 2:

SEE ALSO SEPARATE '*HISTORY STUDY GUIDE*'  
BY SARAH BRENNAN

### Chronological understanding

1. *Place events, people and changes into correct periods of time.*
2. *Use dates and vocabulary relating to the passing of time, including ancient, modern, BC, AD, century and decade.*

Create a book timeline/Grandad's timeline.

Create a family timeline/scrap book for own history, then parent's, then older relatives. Place in it main events e.g Bosnian War, moon landings, WW2.

### Historical interpretation

3. *Pupils should be taught to recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways, and to give reasons for this.*

Look at opposing views about conscription.

Look at jobs that were exempt from conscription.

Look at why people became Conscientious Objectors, the war work they did, how people and the media viewed and treated them, why they might have been treated in this way, how some have been commemorated since.

Compare press and veteran accounts of the Dunkirk evacuation and why some accounts differed.

### Historical enquiry

1. *How to find out about the events, people and changes studied from an appropriate range of sources of information, including ICT-based sources [for example, documents, printed sources, CD-ROMS, databases, pictures and photographs, music, artefacts, historic buildings and visits to museums, galleries and sites].*
2. *To ask and answer questions, and to select and record information relevant to the focus of the enquiry.*

Research Conscientious Objectors and Dunkirk using appropriate sites.

Create a Little Ships of Dunkirk database.

## Organisation and Communication

5. *Pupils should be taught to:*

1. *recall, select and organise historical information.*
2. *use dates and historical vocabulary to describe the periods studied.*
3. *communicate their knowledge and understanding of history in a variety of ways [for example, drawing, writing, by using ICT].*

### Personal and social and health education at Key Stage 2:

Find programme of study for PSHE using the following link:

<http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/index.aspx>

(Developing responsibility, preparing to become active citizens, developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people, relationships with the elderly, consider social and moral dilemmas, find information and advice, preparing for change.)

### SEAL - Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Key Stage 2

Guides and resources can be downloaded from:

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/banda/seal>

Yellow set - year 3 and 4

Green set - years 5 and 6

**Theme 2:** *Getting on and falling out-friendships, differences, other people's perspectives, conflict resolution.*

**Theme 6:** *Relationships - understanding grief and how different people express it, managing feelings of loss, hiding feelings then telling someone, challenging stereotypes.*

**Theme 5:** *Good to be me - managing overwhelming feelings (Alex and horrific flashbacks, feelings of guilt over what happened to Nicu and not being able to cry).*

S.Brennan 2010

**Also available for *The Memory Cage*:**

**Chapter-by-chapter Reading Guide**

**&**

**History Study Guide**

**for more about Ruth Eastham, visit her website:**

**[www.rutheastham.com](http://www.rutheastham.com)**