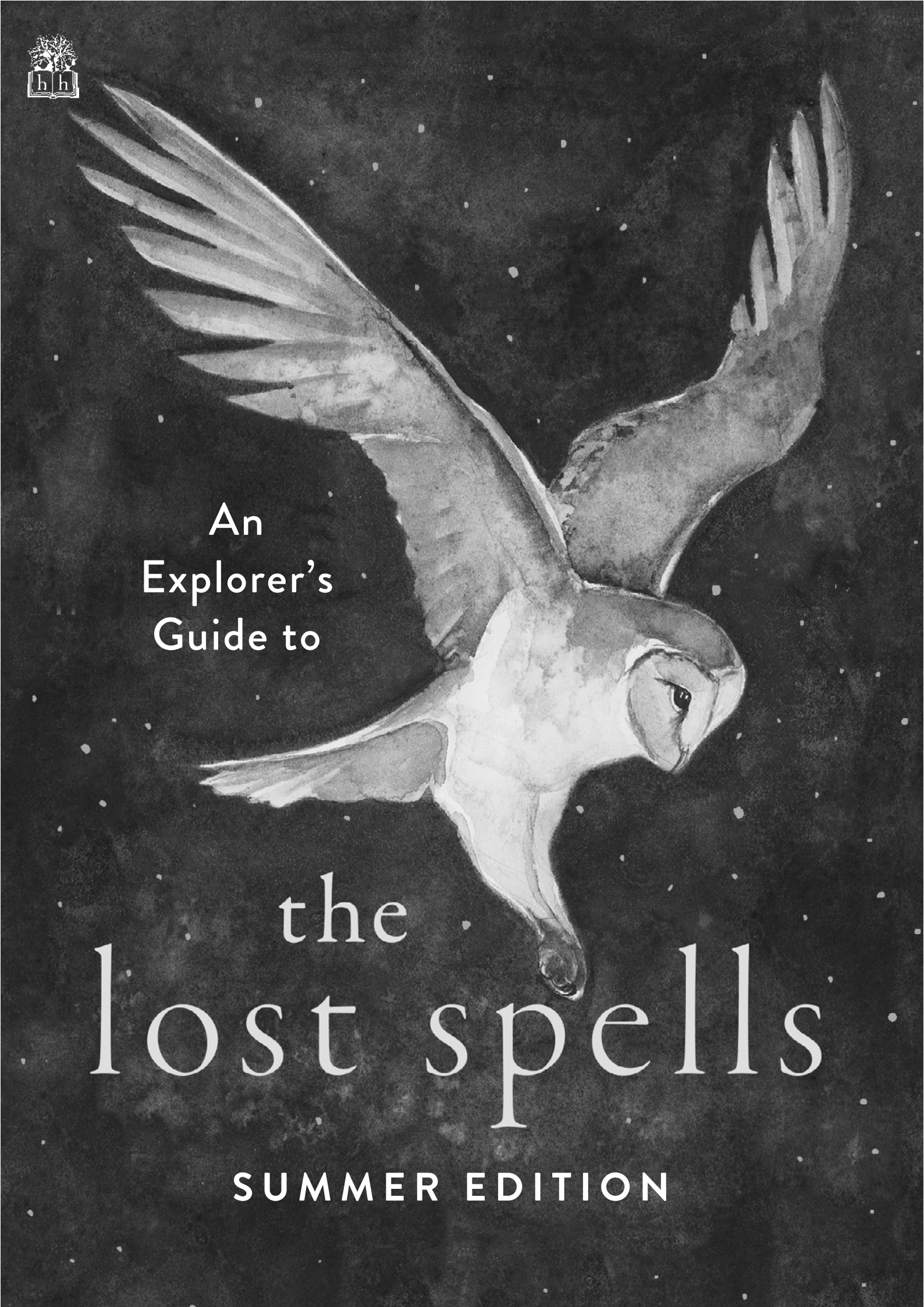

An
Explorer's
Guide to
the
lost spells
SUMMER EDITION

Contents

DAISY **5**

GORSE **8**

SWIFTS **11**

EGRET **17**

WOODPECKER **20**

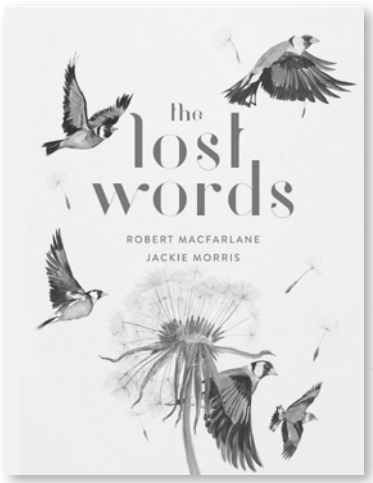
About the book

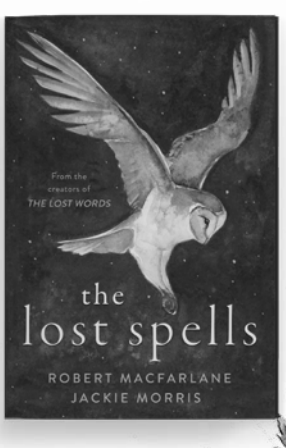
Dazzlingly beautiful and wonderfully inventive, discover the magical new book from the creators of bestselling, critically acclaimed literary phenomenon *The Lost Words* . . .

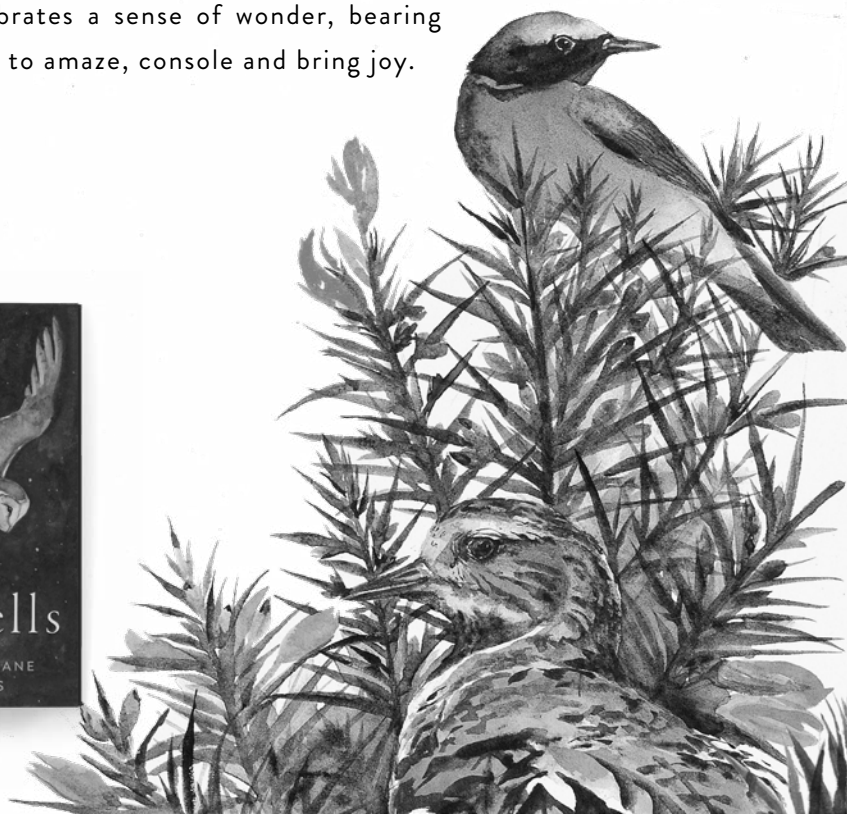
Kindred in spirit to *The Lost Words* but fresh in its form, *The Lost Spells* is a pocket-sized treasure that introduces a beautiful new set of natural spell-poems and artwork by beloved creative duo Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris.

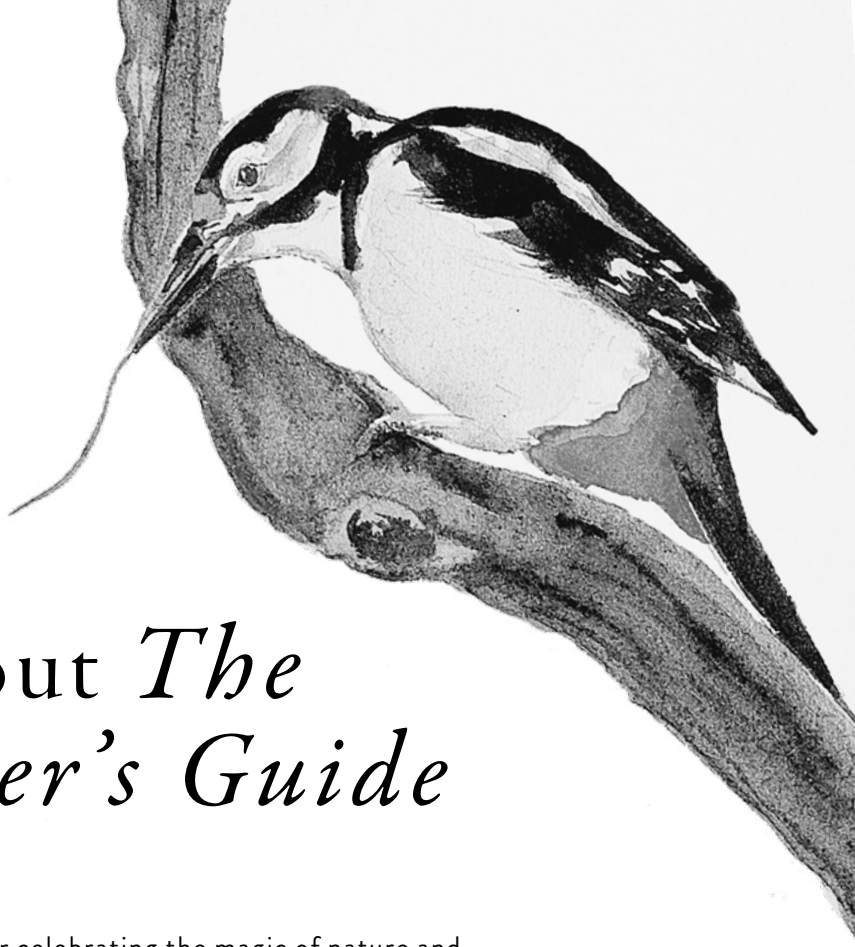
As in *The Lost Words*, these 'spells' take their subjects from relatively commonplace, and yet underappreciated, animals, birds, trees and flowers – from Barn Owl to Red Fox, Grey Seal to Silver Birch, Jay to Jackdaw. But they break out of the triptych format of *The Lost Words*, finding new shapes, new spaces and new voices with which to conjure.

Written to be read aloud, painted in brushstrokes that call to the forest, field, riverbank and also to the heart, *The Lost Spells* summons back what is often lost from sight and care, and inspires protection and action on behalf of the natural world. Above all, it celebrates a sense of wonder, bearing witness to nature's power to amaze, console and bring joy.









About *The Explorer's Guide*

This *Guide* is for celebrating the magic of nature and the magic of language. It is for teachers, librarians and children who want to experience the sights and sounds of summer. It is for anyone with an interest in the natural world who wants to explore *The Lost Spells*.

This *Guide* is for use in classrooms, at home or in an outdoor space of your choosing. The various activities and challenges included can be dipped in and out of or used consecutively as a cross-curricular scheme of work.

There are limitless opportunities for learning across all subjects – from researching, writing and storytelling, to science and conservation projects. New resources will be added with each new season, and we hope you enjoy them.

Thank you
The Hamish Hamilton Team

The Lost Spell's Explorer's Guide
has been written by Eva John.

Daisy 1

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Before reading this spell, create a thought shower, together using words and phrases, memories, feelings and associations evoked by this illustration.

Why do you think Jackie Morris decided to work on this scale?

Why do you think she decided to focus on this part of the plant?

Why do you think she chose this particular background?



CREATIVE CHALLENGE

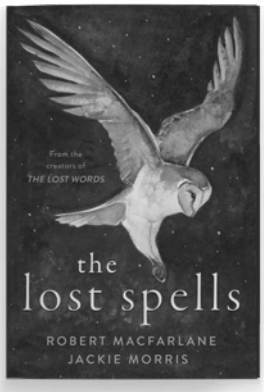
Create a collage of a huge daisy. Think about which materials will best suggest the daisy's qualities.

Daisy 2

WONDER WORDS

Why do you think the daisy is called 'the day's eye'?

Why do you think the word 'yawning' is used in the last stanza?



daisy

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Why do you think Robert Macfarlane uses the phrase 'ten-a-penny chain-maker'?

Why do daisies turn skyward?

What metaphors does Robert Macfarlane use for the flower?

What other jewels of the meadow and hedgerow might you find?

Look at the words to a hymn written in the 1930s, 'Daisies are Our Silver'. Find images of the flowers referred to. How do the metaphors used compare with Robert Macfarlane's?

What do you notice about the beginning and end of the spell? Why is this effective?

Can you find another pattern, linking each verse to the next? Why do you think Robert Macfarlane chose to do this?

Find a constellation of daisies growing in the grass and observe them at different times of the day and in different types of weather. What do you notice?

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK, INSTRUCT

Create a set of instructions for making a daisy chain. In Victorian times, it was believed that wearing a daisy chain would protect children from abduction by fairies.

Think about how many daisies you would need for:

- a bracelet
- a coronet
- a necklace
- a ring

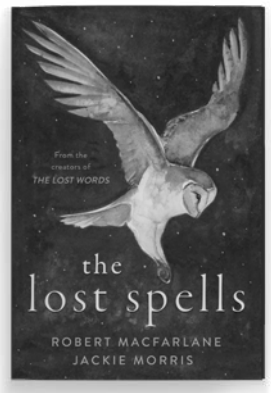
You might decide to use images, drawn or photographed, to accompany the text.

WRITING CHALLENGE

Choose a flower, or several flowers, then look closely at them and conduct some research, jotting down ideas as they occur to you.

Compose a spell using metaphors to convey particular qualities of your chosen flower(s).

Illustrate your work.



Daisy 3

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Using a microscope or magnifier, look very closely at a daisy and create detailed sketches of each part: flower, stalk and leaves. Annotate with any observations you make.

WRITING CHALLENGE

Choose one of the following to inspire a story, thinking of the characters you might include. Plan a story map to organize your thoughts. Focus on the structure of the tale, hooking the reader with your first line and having a strong conclusion.

a) The title *How the Daisy Got Her Name*. This could be in the form of an illustrated pocketbook or perhaps a large-scale display.

b) The daisy's scientific name, *Bellis perennis*:

- *Bellis* could come from one of three sources:
- the Latin word *bellus*, meaning 'pretty'
- the Roman myth of Belides, a nymph who turned herself into a daisy to avoid the attentions of Vertumnus, the god of the seasons and gardens
- the Latin word *bellum*, meaning 'war'. The juice of daisies was squeezed on to the bandages of wounded Roman soldiers to prevent infection. Surgeons took large quantities of fresh daisy plants into battle.
- *perennis* means 'perpetual' or 'unfailing' in Latin

c) Daisy idioms:

- *Oops-a-daisy!*
- *As bright as a daisy.*
- *Pushing up the daisies.*

This last one shows rather dark humour!

Further Reading

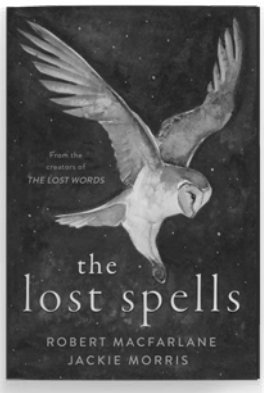
POETRY

'The Daisy' by John Clare
https://www.poetrynook.com/poem/daisy-13

'Daisies' by Frank Dempster Sherman
https://discoverpoetry.com/poems/frank-dempster-sherman/daisies/

'The daisy follows soft the sun'
by Emily Dickinson
https://www.poetry-archive.com/d/the_daisy_follows_soft_the_sun.html





Gorse 1

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Looking at this illustration, what do you think the next spell might be about?
Use *The Lost Spells* glossary to find out which birds are featured in this illustration.



Gorse 2

WONDER WORDS

What do these words mean?

- pikes
- hackles
- space is braced
- cussed
- hard to parse

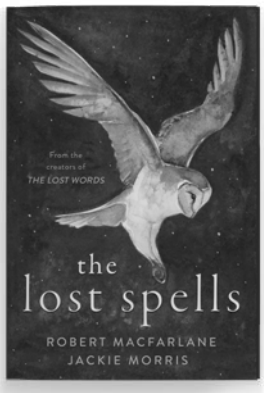
SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Why do you think Robert Macfarlane chose to place the word 'Gorse' at the beginning of the second line rather than at the end of the first?

What do you notice about the choice of words in the first two stanzas?

What word in the third stanza suggests a change of direction in the spell?

What are the qualities of gorse when you consider it from the point of view of a redstart, a rabbit, a wheatear and a plover?



What is remarkable about gorse?

What other plants can you think of that speak sharply: 'Keep Out! Stay Back! Get Off My Land!'

How is the writer suggesting you discover the secrets of gorse?

What tone is established at the outset and how does this compare with the final lines?

Do you think the final lines hold true for everyone?

WRITING CHALLENGE

Rate the alternatives stated in the first stanza in terms of difficulty, starting with the hardest first.

• Setting out across:

- a field of spears
- a lake of pikes
- a sky of hawks
- a hundred winters

Getting dealt a thousand scratches by a million splinters

Choose one of these and write a brief description of someone trying to overcome the challenge, focusing on the small details and the senses.

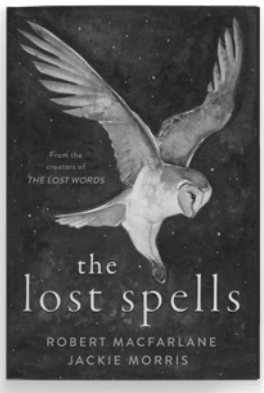
Create your own list of nearly impossible challenges.

Gorse 3

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

What creatures can you see in this illustration?





What sort of food chain could you draw?

How does the illustration on page 9 connect with the words of the spell?

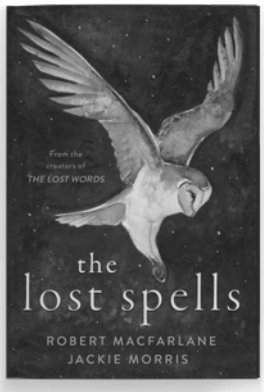
RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Find out about the historical uses of gorse.
https://www.bbcwildlife.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/trees-and-shrubs/common-gorse

Further Reading

POETRY

'Gorse' by Anna Wigley



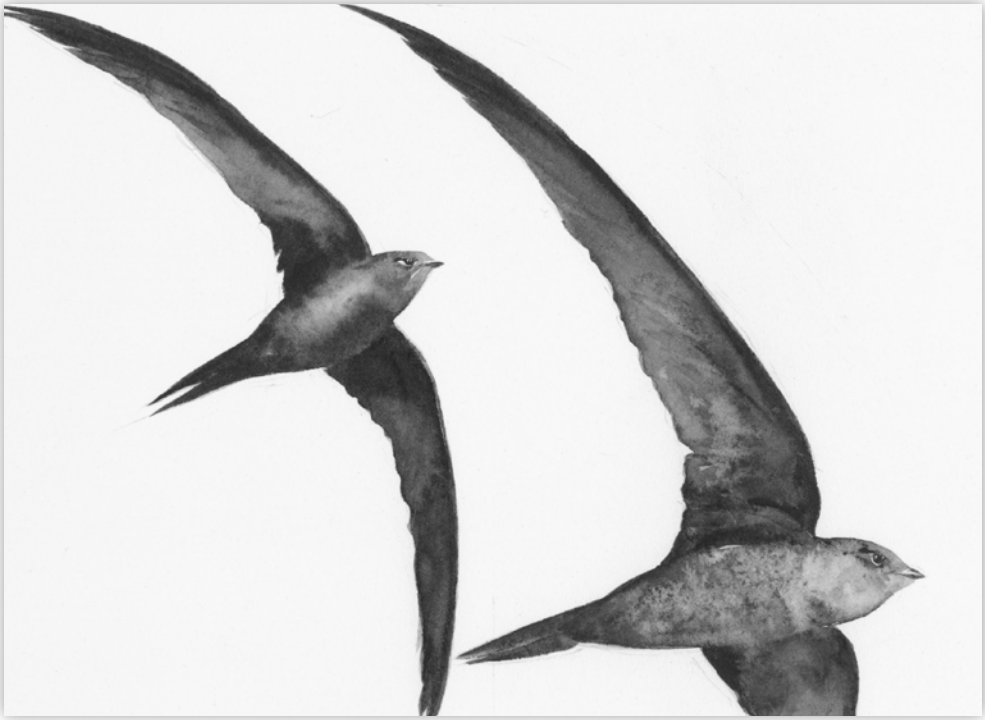


Swifts 1

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Swifts have been described as ‘the swallow with no feet’. Why do you think this is?

Look closely at the illustration. How would you describe the shape of the birds’ wings and tail?



CREATIVE CHALLENGE

Create your own swift silhouettes, trying to get the scale of the wings and the body correct.

Swifts 2

WONDER WORD

What does ‘afterburners’ mean?

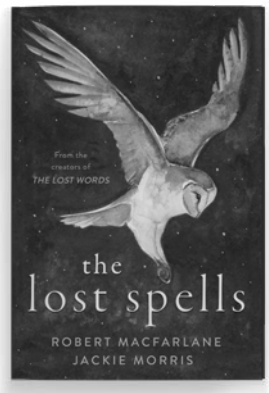
SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

What do the opening words suggest about swifts?

How is this echoed in the illustration?

What is the effect of the metaphors used in this first stanza?

How do you think Robert Macfarlane feels about swifts?



Swifts 3

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK, WRITE

Collect the hyphenated words. Try cutting them up and rearranging them in new pairs.

Have fun creating a spell using these and any other hyphenated words you can concoct.

Swifts 4

RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Find out about swifts' migration, tracing their journey on a map, listing the countries, seas, deserts and mountains crossed.

How far and how fast do they fly?

WRITING CHALLENGE

Choose a creature you find particularly amazing and collect fascinating facts about it. Write down the thoughts that cross your mind as you visualize this creature.

Borrowing the line from Robert Macfarlane, begin a poem with 'Imagine, now, imagine!' Read it through, edit and revise, until the words sound and taste just right.

Swifts 5

WONDER WORDS

Why is the word 'screaming' used?

What is meant by 'a storm-cell's shifting edge'?

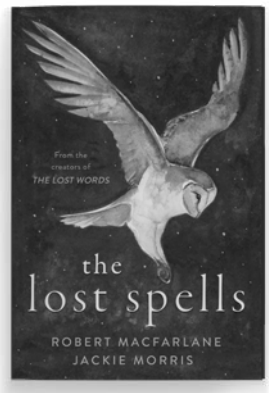
Why do you think Robert Macfarlane links 'a storm-cell's shifting edge' and 'a cloud's slow-motion' together?

CREATIVE CHALLENGE

Imagine yourself as this heart-strong bird as it flies across the ocean into the storm. How does it feel?

Collect a word hoard and form these into a description.

Compose a piece of music and sound effects for your swift's movements and journey through the elements.



SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Study this illustration and other images of clouds. Think about creating your own image and decide which materials and techniques you could use to best effect.



Swifts 6

WONDER WORDS

What does ‘unriven’ mean?

What is meant by ‘a gift’ in this context?

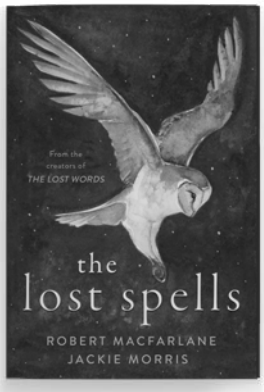
CREATIVE CHALLENGE

Study the illustration.

Either:

Create a matchbox scene, with a skyline and a mechanism which scrolls the sky behind to show the arrival and departure of the swifts. It is a very fiddly task!

This film by the American author Paul Fleischman may give you some ideas.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aT8JBnVOOhA



Or:

Create a roofscape and evening sky with swifts appearing.



Swifts 7

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

How does the spell turn full circle?

What effect does the repetition of the word ‘back’ create?

How do you feel about swifts?

Swifts 8

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

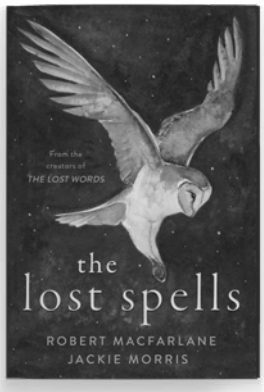
Find out about the current conservation status of the swift.

Would you notice if swifts didn’t return?

Would it matter?

If we could bring a species back from extinction, should we?

How can we help people to care for things with which they are not familiar?



WRITING CHALLENGE

Create a spell to spread understanding:

Spin, world, spin and
send _____ back.
Without them _____

_____

Spin, world, spin and
send _____ back
and back and back
to us again!

Swifts 9

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK, CREATE

Look carefully at this illustration. What do you notice?

There is a choice of collective nouns for swifts: 'a box', 'a flock', 'a scream' or 'a swoop'. Which do you prefer and why?

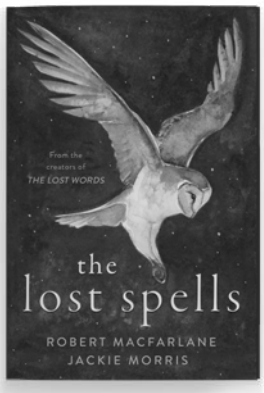
In a lifetime, swifts might cover the distance to the moon and back seven times!

Jot down any observations as you watch this video.
https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2016/10/swift-bird-10-month-migration/

Come up with your own class design of swifts, reproducing images to create a poster of a large group flying.

With careful calligraphy, each write a word that you would associate with swifts on your design. This could be done in electronic format.





RESEARCH CHALLENGE

You might like to take part in some citizen science research.
https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/conservation/conservation-and-sustainability/safeguarding-species/swiftmapper/

Further Reading

PICTURE BOOK

Perfect by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Cathy Fisher

POETRY

'Swifts' by Ted Hughes

'Swifts' by R. S. Thomas

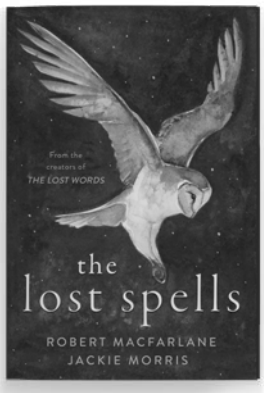
'Swifts' by Anne Stevenson
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/49866/swifts-56d22c67c55eb

'The Swifts' by Ruth Pitter
https://allpoetry.com/The-Swifts

'The Swifts' by Edward Thomas

'Swifts at Nightfall' by Anna Wigley





egret

Egret 1

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

What sort of setting is suggested by the background?

Compare this illustration with the first in the 'Curlew' series. What similarities and differences are there?

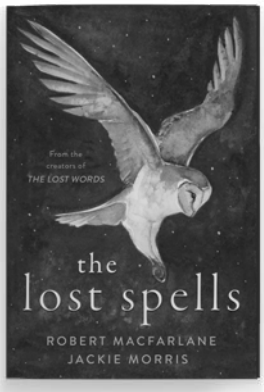
Find out about the differences between the great egret and the little egret.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn6YN5Mb7mU



WRITING CHALLENGE

Look carefully at the bird in the illustration and write a brief description, paying attention to the details. You might want to use metaphors and similes.

Egret 2



WONDER WORDS

Find all the rhyming words. What do you notice about their position in the lines?

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

How do you think Robert Macfarlane feels about the egret?

What quality does he emphasize?

What other comparisons could you make to convey this quality?

WRITING CHALLENGE

Choose a creature with a quality you particularly admire and carry out some research. Imagine it in its natural habitat and jot down ideas, words, metaphors and similes that occur to you. Building on the format used here, create a piece that:

1. Questions another person about this creature.
2. Makes an exclamation!
3. States three facts about the creature.

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

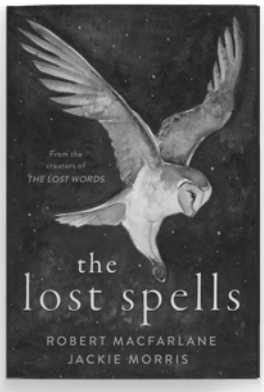
If you have a copy of *Spell Songs*, compare the 'Egret' poem there with this one and note any changes that Robert Macfarlane has made. Why do you think he did this?

Egret 3

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK, WRITE

Capture the mood of this illustration in a haiku – a three-line poem of seventeen syllables (five syllables, seven syllables and five syllables) that is intended to be read in one breath.





egret

RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Fine Feathers Make Fine Birds

The nineteenth century has been called 'the age of extermination'. The egret was hunted to the point of extinction. Find out why.
https://tessaboase.com/books/mrs-pankhursts-purple-feather/murderous-millinery/

https://fashioningfeathers.info/murderous-millinery/

Conditions in the millinery trade, which employed women and children, were very poor.

https://fashioningfeathers.info/fashioning-feathers/

A poem from the *Sorrowful Rhymes of Working Children* (1911) underlines the exploitation of children employed doing fiddly finishing work in the feather industry:

How doth the manufacturer
Improve the ostrich tail?
By willowing the scraggy ends
Until they're fit for sale.
How cheerfully he sits and smiles
Throughout the livelong day,
while little children knot the tiny flues
And make the plumes that pay.

Find out how this led to the founding of the RSPB in Great Britain and the Audubon Society in the USA.

https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/our-history/

https://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/birds-of-a-feather-the-female-founders-of-the-rspb/

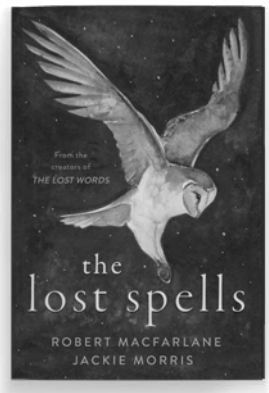
SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Do you think fashion is important?

What are the positive and negative aspects of fashion?

Think about the ethics of fashion and how they impact on our modern world.

https://www.fashionrevolution.org/about/get-involved/educator/education/resources/



CREATIVE CHALLENGE

Collaborate to create a display showcasing current issues around sustainability and ethical behaviour in the modern fashion industry.

Woodpecker 1

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

What are the setting and the time of day in this illustration?

What would you say are the distinctive features of the three creatures in the illustration?

SHORT-BURST WRITING CHALLENGE

Imagine what each animal is focused upon and create thought bubbles for them.

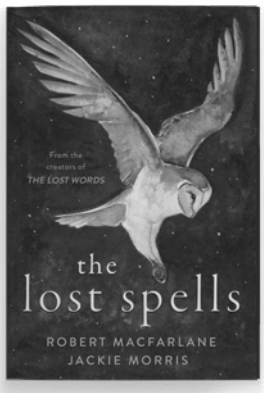


Woodpecker 2

WONDER WORDS

What do these words mean?

- weevils
- shirk
- modus operandi
- staccato
- castanet
- tuxedo
- castigation
- aberration
- expedites
- enervation
- procrastination
- oscillation



SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Who is speaking in the first stanza? How would you describe his tone?

How do the pace and rhythm of the two speakers differ? What is the overall effect?

Pick out the different types of punctuation used. Why do you think Robert Macfarlane uses semicolons rather than full stops in the second stanza?

Using coloured pencils, find the secret strings for:

- alliteration
- rhyme
- assonance
- consonance

RESEARCH CHALLENGE

How can you tell the difference between beech, hazel and ash?

Which particular bugs are associated with the different trees?

Woodpecker 3

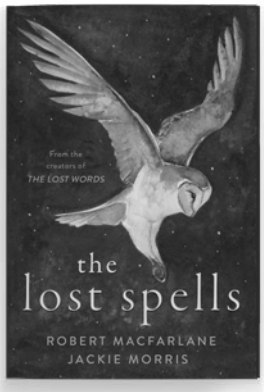
SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

How has the badger's tone changed in this stanza? What tactic is he using in his attempt to stop the woodpecker drumming?

RESEARCH AND CREATIVE CHALLENGE

Design different types of 'insect-candy' to appeal to a woodpecker. Find out about the different insects they like and think up alliterative brand names and a slogan for promoting them.

Woodpecker 4



SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Which comment is particularly wry or sardonic in this stanza?

What image does the woodpecker create of himself when he responds to the badger?

Why does he refer to his drumming as 'Morse-code'?

Find out the rhythm for the letters of your first name in Morse code and practise drumming them. Are you able to recognize each other's names?

Can you think of something that somebody else does that irritates you? Now try to put yourself in their place and provide an explanation for their behaviour.

Woodpecker 5

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Why is the comment 'you're boring me to death!' amusing?

What is the effect of using all the '-tion' words?

List as many words as possible ending in '-tion'. You might find this website useful: http://www.neilramsden.co.uk/spelling/searcher/

Choose several and make sure you know what they mean, then try to concoct some complex sentences incorporating these words.

WRITING CHALLENGE

Either:

In pairs, write a dialogue that conveys two different character types through their choice of vocabulary and the rhythm of their utterances.

Or:

Think of a creature you might find irritating, such as a mosquito, a spider or a slug, then invent kennings – two-word compounds of the sort employed by the badger – to describe them. Create a list poem with these, using the most obscure ideas first before progressing to the more straightforward ones. See who can guess which creature you have chosen.

Woodpecker 6

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Why is the manner in which the badger responds to the woodpecker amusing?

SCIENCE CHALLENGE

Find out about woodpecker drumming, why they do it and how their body has been adapted to cope with the repetitive impact.

The following short videos and audio clips have interesting information.

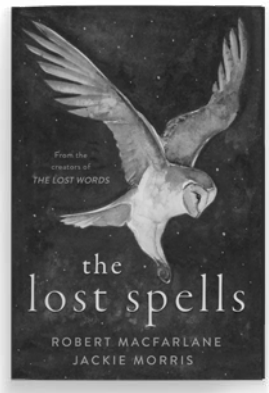
http://www.bbc.co.uk/earth/story/20150128-how-and-why-woodpeckers-drum#:~:text=Drumming%20is%20most%20intense%20between,bird%20made%20the%20sounds%20vocally

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RMvdqOypV0

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51mWP7HVb9c

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0v-CukKW5Y

https://www.british-birdsongs.uk/great-spotted-woodpecker/?type1552



Try to imitate the rapid rhythm the woodpecker makes on a range of different materials. Is it easier to do this with your hand or using drumsticks?

Which surface produces the most effective sound? Why do you think this is?

Woodpecker 7

SEEK, FIND, SPEAK

Look carefully at all the illustrations in the 'Woodpecker' series. What can you tell about the badger from his body language? Why do you think the final illustration shows only the woodpecker?

DESIGN CHALLENGE

Create an oscillating woodpecker toy. How do you think it works?

These websites provide three levels of challenge – easy, moderate and hard:

https://sciencetoymaker.org/the-oscillating-woodpecker/how-to-make-the-oscillating-woodpecker/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9ngdi8AI0E

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bcz_FVHbHtY



