

# Like A Charm

ELLE McNICOLL

KS2 NOTES FOR TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

## CHAPTER BY CHAPTER RESOURCES

For use in the classroom or at home.

Includes for each Chapter:

- Comprehension and Inference Questions
- Writing Tasks
- Suggestions for Extra Activities



## ABOUT THE BOOK

Like A Charm is the story of Ramya, who feels as though she doesn't fit in. This becomes even more apparent when it turns out she can see magical creatures around Edinburgh which it seems no one else can. With the glamour of the city revealing an underworld she never knew existed, can Ramya take her Grandfather's advice to 'beware the Sirens' and save her friends and family from a danger they didn't know existed? It's a tale of an adventure of self-discovery, with magic and mystery tucked into every page!

CHAPTER	COMPREHENSION AND INFERENCE	WRITING TASKS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why do you think the story starts seven years ago?</li><li>• How does Ramya feel at the party?</li><li>• Why is Ramya suspicious of the woman (Portia) at the party?</li><li>• Who is most protective of Ramya? How do we know?</li><li>• How does the ending of the chapter leave us feeling?</li><li>• If you were Grandpa, would you have left? Explain why.</li></ul>	<p>Write an account of the party from Portia's point of view.</p> <p>Write a diary entry from Grandpa written the day after the party.</p>	<p>DRAMA = Create a freeze frame of the scene where Portia demands Ramya plays the piano. Focus on facial expressions – what is each character feeling during this moment?</p> <p>MUSIC = Learn to play a simple piano piece using keyboards.</p>

<p>2.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What evidence can you find that Ramya does not want to go to school?</li> <li>• How does Mr Ishmael want to help Ramya?</li> <li>• How does London compare to Edinburgh?</li> <li>• What does the word 'ominous' imply about Ramya's trip to the office?</li> <li>• What can we understand about Ramya's relationship with her cousin?</li> <li>• Do you think the adults show sympathy to Ramya during the chapter?</li> </ul>	<p>Create a persuasive letter from Ramya to Mr Ishmael, asking him not to attend her workshop anymore.</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHY = Locate and research the capital cities within the UK, followed by other major cities. Then, complete a comparison of two of these cities.</p> <p>PSHE = Focus on grief and how to manage it. What is it? What are the different ways that we cope with grief?</p>
<p>3.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did Ramya's family not want her to attend the funeral?</li> <li>• What made her determined to attend anyway?</li> <li>• Who do you predict the strange man might be?</li> <li>• Do you believe Ramya will be safe when visiting the shop?</li> <li>• What is your first impression of Ren?</li> <li>• Does Ramya feel differently about her Grandmothers? How do we know?</li> <li>• If you were in her position, would you follow The Stranger's instructions?</li> </ul>	<p>Write a conversation between Ramya and the Stranger. What do you predict he is going to reveal? What do you think his personality would develop into?</p>	<p>ART = Design the card The Stranger gave to Ramya.</p> <p>D&amp;T = Cook banana bread, just like Ramya's Grandmother!</p>

<p>4.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the word 'Avizandum' mean to you?</li> <li>• Why does Ramya not believe that the dog has come to life straight away?</li> <li>• The Stranger calls Ramya 'brave'. Do you agree she is brave? Why do you think this is?</li> <li>• How do we know Ramya was surprised with the book?</li> <li>• What do you predict she will find inside?</li> <li>• How does the final line leave us wondering and add suspense?</li> </ul>	<p>Write a page of the book – what do you predict would be inside?</p>	<p>DRAMA = Research the Edinburgh Fringe Festival - what are types of shows are put on? Create a scene from a comedy or drama with a small group.</p> <p>ART = Create a charcoal sketch of Greyfriars Bobby in Edinburgh.</p> <p>GEOGRAPHY = Create a travel brochure encouraging people to visit the city of Edinburgh.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research the different meanings of the word 'glamour'.</li> <li>• What does the word 'magic' mean to you?</li> <li>• What incident is The Stranger referring to? How has this affected Ramya's interactions with other people?</li> <li>• Why did Marley not reveal himself straight away?</li> <li>• Does Ramya feel as though she's part of the family?</li> <li>• Aunt Leanna is very welcoming to Ramya. Why do you think this is?</li> <li>• Is Ramya pleased with her 'talent'?</li> </ul>	<p>Research fantasy creatures that appear in books or films and then create a Fact File about your favourite!</p>	<p>LITERACY = Read a story written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, then create your own story based on his famous detective: Sherlock Holmes.</p> <p>ART = Use calligraphy and typography to create your own name in beautiful writing, just like Ramya would see in the book.</p>

6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The chapter is called 'Vampire in the Library'. Predict what you think will happen in the next pages!</li> <li>• Why does Ramya fall asleep looking at her doll's house? How does it reflect her feelings?</li> <li>• What differences do you notice between Ramya and Marley so far?</li> <li>• Is the vampire what you expect?</li> <li>• Why do you think a vampire would choose to be an assistant librarian?</li> <li>• Do you think Ramya could have approached the vampire in a different way?</li> </ul>	Create a set of instructions for Ramya and Marley to follow when trying to find out information from the vampire in the library. What should they do to be successful?	<p>HISTORY = Look into the history of myths and legends and the magical creatures that feature in them. How have these myths, legends and creatures been viewed through the ages?</p> <p>PSHE = Create your perfect doll's house room that would make you happy and feel safe. What would you put inside? Why?</p>
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are we made to think about Aunt Opal?</li> <li>• Why has Aunt Opal come to speak to Ramya?</li> <li>• Why does Aunt Opal believe Ramya should be scared?</li> <li>• Ramya wants to be included. How has her new life allowed this to happen?</li> <li>• What emotions have we seen Ramya experience so far? Why do you think there is such a range?</li> <li>• What is meant by the warning: 'beware the Sirens'?</li> </ul>	Write a character description of Aunt Opal. What is she like as a person? What does she look like?	<p>PSHE = Create a colour chart putting the name of a feeling or emotion next to different colours. Give reasons for your choices. Can you map characters' feelings throughout the story to your colour chart?</p> <p>PSHE = Consider the differences between people – why is it important to celebrate them? How can we do this?</p>

8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does Ramya instantly dislike Baroness Guntram?</li> <li>• What is her role within the school?</li> <li>• What is 'dyspraxia'?</li> <li>• How does Ramya feel about libraries?</li> <li>• Why are Sirens important in the story?</li> <li>• How will research help Ramya and Marley in their adventure?</li> </ul>	<p>Research idioms and phrases such as 'all greek to me'. Where did they get their meaning? How do we use them? Create a poem using the ones you have researched.</p>	<p>LITERACY = Visit the school library or local library. Explore the books and find ones that you will enjoy. Can you explain why you made your choices?</p> <p>ART = After researching images of Sirens, create a piece using chalks or oil pastels.</p>
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does Marley support Ramya even though he can't see through the Glamour?</li> <li>• The Stranger keeps appearing through the story – why do you think this is?</li> <li>• Do you think The Stranger makes a threat on page 109? 'Just be careful where you go trip-trapping, little goats. Would hate for someone to gobble you both up.'</li> <li>• What information is Ramya looking to find in the pub?</li> <li>• Why did Ramya's Grandfather start collecting information? What did he hope to achieve?</li> <li>• How can Ramya use all her senses to help her on her adventure?</li> </ul>	<p>'The Gruff Pub' under the bridge is based on elements of a fairy tale. Write your own modern story inspired by a fairy tale of your choosing.</p>	<p>LITERACY = Create two columns, one for Ramya and one for Marley. In each column, write a list of qualities of each character. Then consider how the two characters are different. How do they complement each other?</p> <p>LITERACY = Carry out more research into the author of The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Why Is it significant that the author was born in Edinburgh? Create a poem based on a city that inspires you.</p>

10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erica says there are no networks for her. How does this make her feel?</li> <li>• Why do they all jump at such a small noise?</li> <li>• What would the Fae want with Ramya?</li> <li>• Should you ever trust someone you don't know? Explain your reasoning.</li> <li>• Do you think fashion is art? Why is this?</li> </ul>	Write a persuasive speech from Ramya's point of view about why 'the best art is fashion.'	<p>ART = Explore a range of different paintings as a class - what makes them art? Do we all have the same perception and enjoyment of what art is? Create your own piece inspired by your favourite painting to create a class 'gallery'.</p> <p>D&amp;T = Create your own artistic outfit to show your unique style!</p>
11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should Ramya tell her parents the truth?</li> <li>• Why do you think Ramya and her parents argued?</li> <li>• Her Mum believes it's because of how much they're working. Do you think this is true?</li> <li>• Will Ramya's family all get along? What evidence tells you this?</li> <li>• What is your first impression of Ren?</li> <li>• Is Ramya surprised to see the Kelpies?</li> <li>• Will Ramya help the Kelpies?</li> <li>• Do you believe Ramya can work alone?</li> </ul>	Research Kelpies and write your own story involving a meeting with one. Try to include suspenseful elements in your story. What do you think it would be like, meeting a creature?	<p>PSHE = Look at how differences can make people stronger as a team. How can we work together in order to get things done?</p> <p>SCIENCE = Horses and Kelpies have similar characteristics. Compare other mythical creatures to real animals – what do you notice? Which are your favourite comparisons, and can you create your own fictional creature based on a real animal?</p>

12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you predict Ramya will find at the Grassmarket?</li> <li>• Do you think you'd be brave enough to go?</li> <li>• Does pineapple belong on pizza...?</li> <li>• Are you surprised at what is being sold at the Grassmarket?</li> <li>• Will Ramya and Freddy get on better when they're not in school?</li> <li>• Who do you think might be a Siren in the story?</li> <li>• Would it be easier for Ramya if she had someone other than Marley to help her? Why do you think this?</li> </ul>	Create a poster and advert for the Grassmarket. Think about the persuasive techniques you could use to encourage the other mythical creatures to come and buy the grasses.	<p>ART = Use different coloured straws and grasses to create an image of what you think the Grassmarket might look like.</p> <p>MUSIC = Create music that you think might play in the background of the Grassmarket. Think about sound effects you can add for effect.</p>
13.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will Ramya's parents be surprised by Mr Ishmael's comment? Why or why not?</li> <li>• Have you ever seen someone like YOU in a book?</li> <li>• Do you think we should all be the same? Why or why not?</li> <li>• What will The Stranger want to tell them this time?</li> <li>• Should Opal have been expelled?</li> <li>• Who do you think is to blame for Ramya's mum and grandpa falling out?</li> </ul>	Create a character inspired by yourself. What will your character be like? What adventure would your character go on? Put yourself in the story.	<p>D&amp;T = Create your own bookmark using origami.</p> <p>LITERACY = Think about 'representation' in children's literature by looking at a range of front covers in your library. Do you think there is fair representation? Can all types of readers 'see themselves' in books? Explain your reasoning. Then, design a cover for your own story.</p>



14.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the vampire trust Ramya?</li> <li>• What jobs do you imagine other mythical creatures to have?</li> <li>• What connections can you make to other stories that you know of or that you have read?</li> <li>• Are Opal and Ramya similar?</li> <li>• Do you agree that people will always help each other out?</li> <li>• Why are the Fae determined to find Ramya?</li> </ul>	Write your own autobiography as if you were the vampire. What events would you want to include depict your life?	LITERACY = Make a Connection Board of stories that have similarities in terms of genre, themes, plot events or characters.
15.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the 'first magical creature that is excited to be seen' (197)?</li> <li>• What does the word 'radical' mean?</li> <li>• What do you think is being said about Ramya?</li> <li>• Is Ramya impressed that her grandpa has a book out? Why or why not?</li> <li>• What does 'cordially' mean?</li> <li>• How does Ramya feel that only she can see the Kelpies?</li> <li>• Summarise the chapter – what do you learn?</li> </ul>	Write a non-chronological report about a Kelpie using the information you have found in the story so far.	<p>ART = Inspired by the Sprite, create an image which has a camouflaged animal or creature hidden within it.</p> <p>SCIENCE = Research 'evolution' and how animals adapt to the environment. What animals would evolve in the same way elephants might?</p>
16. A Witch Hunt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does Marley feel now he is seeing the world without Glamour for the first time?</li> <li>• Who would 'miss' Marley, according to the faerie? (215)</li> <li>• Why does this stop the Fae from hurting Marley?</li> </ul>	Write the start of the next chapter using the final line from this one as your opening sentence. What do you think will happen next?	<p>LITERACY = Create an alternate chapter where a different spell saves Marley and Ramya from the Fae.</p> <p>DANCE = Create a dance based on water and how it moves. How might Ramya and Marley have to move</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the Fae afraid of?</li> <li>• Who is filling the room with water?</li> <li>• How did Freddy know where to find them?</li> </ul>		<p>to get through the water? How might they escape the Fae and get to safety?</p>
<p><b>16.</b> <b>Substitute</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think Aunt Opal cares for Ramya? How can you tell?</li> <li>• Why is it important for Ramya to continue her adventure?</li> <li>• Which modern day person do you think could be compared to a Siren?</li> <li>• How does Ramya feel to be understood by someone in her family?</li> </ul>	<p>Write a diary entry from Aunt Opal's perspective of her visit to Ramya's.</p>	<p>PSHE = Look at what it means to be neurodiverse. Why is it important that we celebrate differences rather than make people feel bad for them? Why is it important to see these differences in books?</p> <p>D&amp;T = Design a stim toy that might help Ramya.</p>
<p><b>17.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does Ren not want Marley to go out with Ramya?</li> <li>• Is Marley right? Is Ramya jealous?</li> <li>• Do you believe there is sometimes a chosen one?</li> <li>• Where was Ren taking Marley?</li> <li>• Do you like Freddy as a character?</li> <li>• Are you surprised at what Freddy is revealed to be?</li> <li>• Do you think he is the same as Ren/Lavrentiy?</li> <li>• Should the creatures be scared of the Sirens?</li> </ul>	<p>Create a character profile for Freddy, now we know all about him. What is the important information we need to include? Try to use evidence from the text.</p>	<p>PSHE = Think about the school values Ramya is showing when she wants to face the Sirens. Do you always show these values? How can we do this in our everyday lives?</p> <p>LITERACY / CREATIVE WRITING = Write a poem about a family member or friend who you are grateful for.</p>

18.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think the Kelpies should help Ramya? Why?</li> <li>• What is intimidating or frightening about riding a Kelpie?</li> <li>• What do you expect Ramya to find on the island?</li> <li>• Why did Ren choose Ramya's parents as targets?</li> <li>• Are you expecting someone to come and save Ramya?</li> <li>• Ramya says she always knew she was magic and had power, deep down. Why do you think she didn't want to admit it to herself?</li> <li>• How was suspense built through this chapter?</li> </ul>	Write a newspaper article about the event on the island.	<p>DRAMA = Create a freeze frame of the three of the characters on the island. Focus on how they might be feeling, showing this through facial expressions and body language.</p> <p>SCIENCE/MATHS = Complete a science experiment looking at volumes of water in different objects and how quickly they are filled.</p>
19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has happened to stop the knife?</li> <li>• Did you expect the witch to be Aunt Opal?</li> <li>• How was Aunt Opal's identity hidden in the book? Or was it hinted at? When?</li> <li>• Give your opinion: is it easy to ask for help?</li> <li>• Why is it important that Ramya knows her brain is brilliant?</li> </ul>	Write a poem or creative piece inspired by the story's title: Like A Charm.	<p>ART = Ramya ends the chapter flying. Create a piece of art which represents how this feels.</p> <p>MUSIC = Create a piece of music inspired by flying and how it would feel for Ramya to experience this. Think about the mood you are trying to show.</p>
20.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has Ramya's relationship with her parents changed?</li> <li>• Why did the creatures choose to help Ramya?</li> <li>• Did Freddy have a part to play in the success of the plan?</li> </ul>	Write an apology letter from Marley to Ramya – what would he say?	<p>GEOGRAPHY = Look at different islands around the world and compare them.</p> <p>HISTORY / LITERACY = Research great witches and wizards within</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will Marley regret how he spoke to Ramya?</li> <li>• Ramya's Mum is also a witch. Why do you think she kept this hidden?</li> </ul>		literature and place any notable figures on a chronological timeline.
21.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give your opinion: is it easy to choose the right thing?</li> <li>• Magical creatures are different, just like people. True or false? Justify your reasons based on evidence in the story.</li> <li>• Was Ramya right to go to the island?</li> <li>• Is it a compliment to Ramya that she is like her Grandpa?</li> <li>• Why is the choice of vocabulary to have Ramya 'cackle' an interesting one?</li> <li>• Do you think Ramya should be rude to the Baroness? Why or why not? What does she prove here?</li> </ul>	<p>Write an apology letter from Marley to Ramya – what would he say?</p> <p>Create a list of interesting vocabulary you could use to describe a witch and then write a character description.</p> <p>Write a stage script to bring Ramya's exchange with the Baroness to life.</p> <p>Would you describe this exchange as a victory for Ramya? Why?</p>	<p>LITERACY = Consider the symbolism of 'the beret' in this chapter. Why is it significant? What does it represent for Ramya in her battle with the Baroness?</p> <p>PSHE = What item of clothing would you choose to represent your own individuality?</p> <p>LITERACY = Write a poem entitled: 'Cackle'.</p>
22.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is Gran a witch?</li> <li>• Why does Ramya want Marley to go too?</li> <li>• How will Ramya be trained as a witch?</li> <li>• What did Ramya discover on her journey?</li> <li>• Has the book changed your perception of the differences between people?</li> <li>• What are the main messages of the book?</li> </ul>	<p>Write a book review to encourage readers to pick up Like a Charm.</p> <p>Choose one character in the story and write a summary of what they have learned.</p>	<p>ART = Create a Gallery of Magical Creatures that you have met in the story.</p> <p>LITERACY = Come up with a list of 5–10 questions that you would like to ask the author, Elle McNicoll, if you got the chance.</p>