

# 'THE NOWHERE EMPORIUM' BY ROSS MACKENZIE

*PUBLISHER: KELPIES SUGGESTED AGE GROUP: YEAR 6*

**SYNOPSIS AND REASONS FOR SELECTION:** Daniel is an orphan who accidentally stumbles into the mysterious, magical Nowhere Emporium in Glasgow. What follows is a twisting, thrilling adventure with breath-taking magic, wicked sorcerers and danger lurking in the shadows. This is a colourful, riotous book with sparkling language that leaps off the page like Lucien Silver's beautiful magpies. Young fans of J.K Rowling, Phillip Pullman and Neil Gaiman will devour this action-packed tale with enthusiasm.

## BEFORE READING...

Using the front cover, ask the children to make a list of what they see, on whiteboards. Ask the children:

- What is an emporium?
- What genre of book do you think this story belongs to?
- What do you think the story might be about?

The questions in this guide are merely intended as supplementary prompts – allow the children to ask questions, explore and read longer sections of the book independently and initiate discussions. They will be much more engaged and enthused.

## PROLOGUE AND CHAPTER 1

Describe to a partner what the shop looks like and where it is. Where do you think the shop has come from?

How did people pay to enter the shop?

Do the events in the prologue make you want to read on? Why?

Use a thought shaped post-it note to record what you think Daniel is thinking and feeling on page 11 and 12.

Why do you think Spud Harper is behaving in this manner?

Draw a picture of what you think the inside of the Nowhere Emporium looks like.

Can you find any language on page 13

and 14 to suggest the old man is cross at being interrupted?

Why do you think the man smiles at the end of the chapter?

Is there anything that is puzzling you so far? Tell a partner.

**Task 1: How does the author create a sense of mystery in the first few chapters? Explain your answer, using evidence from the story.**

---

---

---

---

## CHAPTER 2

Are there any clues on page 21 to show the shop owner is surprised to see Daniel again?

Can you act out the conversation between the shop owner and Daniel on page 22? Think about the character's tone of voice, body language and facial expressions.

Which word on page 23 suggests that Daniel is feeling downhearted as he walks home?

**Task 2: Look at page 21. Draw lines to match each object found in the shop to the material it is made from.**

rubies ●

● curtains

red  
velvet ●

● shoes

grey  
leather ●

● magpies

## CHAPTERS 3-5

Use a thought-shaped post-it to record how Smitty is feeling on page 25.

Who do you think the person in the grey suit is that saves Daniel from being hit by the

car? How do you know this?

What does the phrase, 'the world around him was lost to blackness' (page 27) mean?

Read up to page 30. Who do you think Vindictus Sharpe is? Who is the boy? Does the name 'Vindictus' sound like any other words you might have heard? Does it give you any clues as to his character?

Give two examples from page 31 that suggest the master is nervous.

Look at page 32. What do you think the boy likes about 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'Treasure Island'?

Does the boy remind you of any other characters in any other books about magic? Which animal had previously escaped into the corridors? Is there anything amusing about this?

Ask the children to create a story map, showing the key events that occur during these chapters.

**Task 3: After reading Chapters 3-5, read through the list of words with your partner. Write down the sentence in the story where each word appears. Next talk with your partner about what you think each word means. Finally, use a dictionary to check your ideas, then write down a definition.** (NB: Teachers may wish to identify their own set of target words to teach, which they feel are more appropriate to their class or group – see blank grid at end of student pack)

<b>Word</b>	<b>Sentence in the story</b>	<b>What I think the word means</b>	<b>Dictionary definition</b>
stout (page 29)			
stigma (page 30)			
contemplate (page 37)			
indicated (page 40)			

## CHAPTERS 6-10

Look at page 42. Why do you think the author has waited until now to reveal who the man is and what the shop is?

Why does Lucien Silver no longer allow people to remember their experience in the Emporium?

Look at page 46. Can you make a list of three things that convince Daniel to leave his old life behind and travel with Lucien?

Find and copy one word from page 50 that tells you the customers were keen to explore the treasures.

*Lucien is wrong to take the clueless customer's imagination to power the shop.*  
Discuss.

Look at page 55. What do you think the next test will be?

Look at page 58. What does the verb 'locked' suggest about Sharpe's daughter? What impression do you get of Vindictus Sharpe so far? Use evidence from the story.

Can you describe the room Daniel creates in Chapter 9?

Do you think Daniel will listen to the warning not to write in the book?

What would be in your room if you were asked to create one?

After reading Chapter 10, make a list of everything you have learnt about Ellie. Do you think readers will like Ellie's character? Explain fully, referring to the text in your answer.

*Ellie does not like her father.* Do you agree with this statement?

**Task 4: Using the information from Chapter 9, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is true or false.**

	True	False
Daniel's father drowned at sea.		
Swallows led Daniel to Lucien for his first lesson.		
The Library of Souls holds the life story of everyone who has ever lived.		
Daniel's dad collected snow globes.		

## CHAPTERS 11-14

Look at page 88. Why do you think Lucien is reluctant to talk about Ellie?

Look at page 89. Can you use clues from the text to work out what an *apothecary* is?

Can you find a word on page 91 that suggests Mr Silver is not bothered by the mugger's pleas for mercy?

What do you notice about the end of Chapter 11 and the beginning of Chapter 12?

Why is the flashback structured like this?

How does the young man feel about Birdie?

Read pages 96-97. Why do you think Vindictus behaves in such a cruel manner?

Why does Daniel think that Ellie hates him?

Who is Daniel desperate to see again?

Read to the end of page 103. What do you think will happen next?

Use a thought-shaped post-it note to record what you think Silver is feeling at the top of page 105.

**Task 5: After reading these chapters, use the internet and books to create a fact file about Paris or Venice. (optional)**

### WRITING OPPORTUNITIES:

Write an autobiography, re-telling Lucien Silver's life.

Create a diary, describing a day in the life on Ellie.

Write a rule book for explaining how apprentices should behave in the Emporium.

## CHAPTERS 14-17

What treasure do you think Silver is searching for and why?

Why do you think Ellie, Caleb and Anja trick the customers?

Can you give an example of how Ellie and Daniel's relationship is developing?

Why do you think Silver is drawn to New York? What makes it special?

Do you think Ellie really believes her father is fine and there is nothing wrong with him?

Look at page 120. What evidence is there to suggest that the shopkeeper is afraid of Lucien?

Find and copy a word on page 125 that suggests Caleb desperately wanted to see beyond the curtain.

Read pages 131-132. Who do you think is the more powerful character: Lucien or Vindictus? Use evidence from the text.

**Task 6: Write down what Vindictus Sharpe might be thinking and feeling as he sneakily enters the Emporium on page 127.**

## CHAPTERS 18-22

What sad event opens Chapter 18?

How has Birdie's death affected the relationship between Lucien and Vindictus?

How does Vindictus live forever?

What does the phrase 'former employer' (page 135) suggest about Lucien's feelings towards Vindictus?

Read page 136. What do you think Lucien will do next?

How does the description of the weather on page 137 create an atmosphere of foreboding and menace?

Use a thought-shaped post-it to record how Daniel is feeling when he reads the message from Silver on page 138.

*The staff living in the Emporium are afraid of Lucien Silver.* Discuss.

What clues are there on page 144 that something bad is beginning to happen to the Emporium?

Read page 153. Explain why Ellie doesn't trust Sharpe.

*Power is a good thing.* Discuss.

On page 159, Sharpe asks Daniel if he is afraid of anything. Why do you think he wants to find this out? Are you afraid of anything?

Imagine you are Sharpe. What would you say to Daniel to convince him to open the Book of Wonders?

Are there any clues in chapter 22 that hint at Sharpe's real character?

**Task 7: Re-read chapters 18-22. Put these events in order by numbering them from 1 to 5. One has been done for you.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Daniel is mugged by someone searching for the unicorn's blood</li></ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr Silver vanishes the day after Ellie's birthday ball</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vindictus Sharpe arrives at the Emporium, pretending to help the search for Lucien</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Daniel goes back to Bizarre's Bazaar</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Daniel and Sharpe explore the Emporium and are attacked by bony, ghostly hands</li></ul>

## CHAPTERS 23-26

What does 'a new wave of patrons descended on Edinburgh' (page 170) suggest about the popularity of the Emporium?

What propelled Lucien's desire to be successful? Have you ever been told you couldn't do anything? How did you feel? What did you do?

Find and copy a word on page 172 that has a similar meaning to 'deteriorate'.

Who do you think has injured Anya?

What does the ink inside Anya's body symbolise?

Read the opening to chapter 25. Draw up a table to compare the Nowhere Emporium at the beginning of the story to now. How has its appearance changed?

Make a list of everything you know about Caleb.

How does Silver think Michelle is different to Sharpe?

Read page 192. What do you think Michelle is planning?

## CHAPTERS 27-29

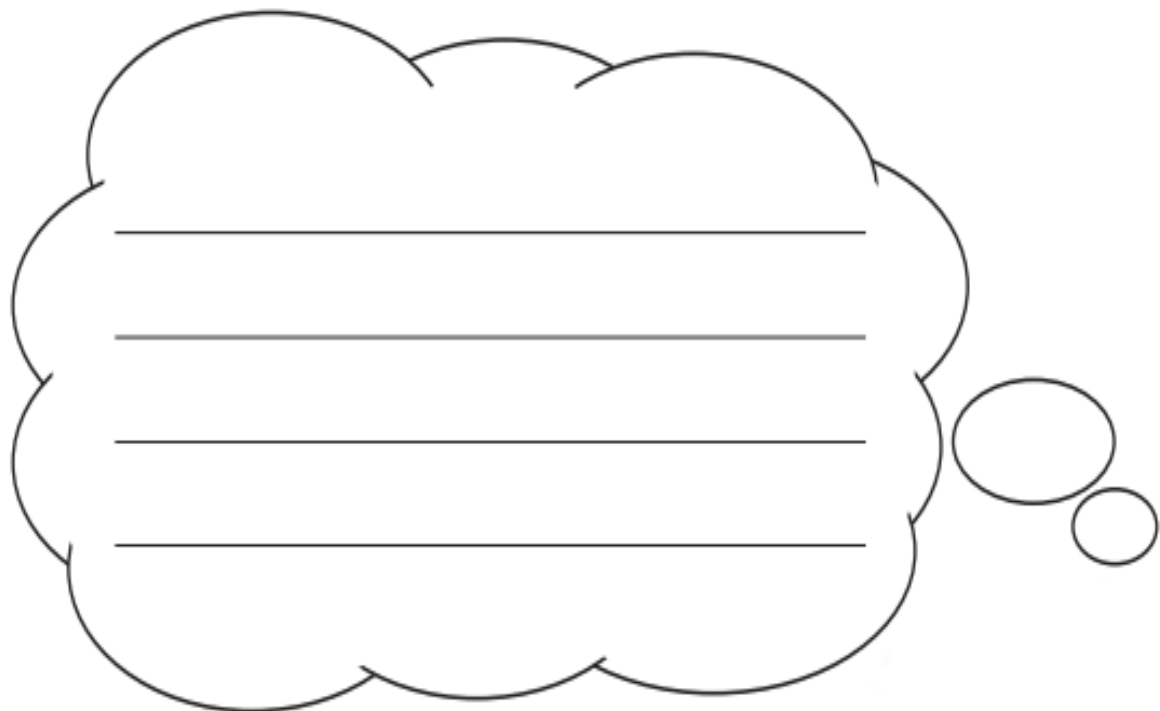
Read page 196. How has The Fountain changed? What does this symbolise?

How does death of the metal magpies make the reader feel towards Sharpe? Why do you think Daniel is so distraught over this?

What does Ellie learn on page 206 that might make her feel differently about her father?

*What you've done in the past does not matter. What you do today is more important.* Discuss.

**Task 8: Write down what Lucien might be thinking and feeling as he learns that Michelle has stolen *The Book of Wonders* on page 212.**



A large, irregular thought bubble shape with a scalloped border. Inside the bubble, there are four horizontal lines for writing. To the right of the main bubble, there are two smaller circles of decreasing size, connected to the main bubble, suggesting a thought process or a sequence of ideas.

## CHAPTERS 30-34

How effective is the word 'crawling' on page 213 in describing the cracks? What image does it create in your mind?

How would you read the words spoken by the librarian in The Library of Souls?

Maybe a deep, menacing voice? Practise with a partner.

If you were in the movie theatre, what event from the past would you choose to see and why?

Use a thought-shaped post-it note to record what Ellie might be thinking and feeling as she watches her father's life story on pages 226-227.

Read up to page 229. What do you think happened between Lucien and Vindictus that was so terrible it was erased?

How does the author create tension and intrigue on page 237?

Use thought-shaped post-its to compare how Lucien and Sharpe might be feeling on page 245.

Encourage the children to use freeze-frame drama and mime to re-enact the battle between Lucien and Vindictus.

Can you create a quiz about these chapters for your class?

**Task 9: After reading Chapters 33 and 34, read through the list of words with your partner. Write down the sentence in the story where each word appears. Next talk with your partner about what you think each word means. Finally, use a dictionary to check your ideas, then write down a definition. (NB:**

*Teachers may wish to identify their own set of target words to teach, which they feel are more appropriate to their class or group)*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Sentence in the story</b>	<b>What I think the word means</b>	<b>Dictionary definition</b>
stowed (page 237)			
imitation (page 241)			
veered (page 244)			
dwarfed (page 245)			

## CHAPTERS 35-37

*Sharpe and Silver* are BOTH monsters. Discuss.

Read up to page 251. What sort of Wonder do you think Daniel is going to create?

Look at page 259. Who do you think the man helping Daniel might be?

Why do you think Vindictus couldn't bring himself to say sorry for his daughter's death?

Look at page 272. What might Ellie be thinking, when she learns the Emporium will be passed to Daniel?

Write a list of adjectives to describe Daniel and a list to describe Ellie. Are any of them the same?

Discuss the following statement with a partner: *If you truly love someone, you must let them go.*

### FURTHER READING...

The 'Harry Potter' series by J.K Rowling

'Leon and the Place Between' by Angela McAllister

'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' by C.S Lewis

**Task 10: After reading 'The Nowhere Emporium', organise the children into groups or partners. Encourage the children to talk to each other and share which of these themes they feel are most important in the story and why. Ask the children to use evidence from the text.**

We all have a destiny that is already decided for us	Magic is dangerous	Being imaginative is more important than being rich
People only see what they want to see	Children are more creative than adults	Too much power can lead to terrible things