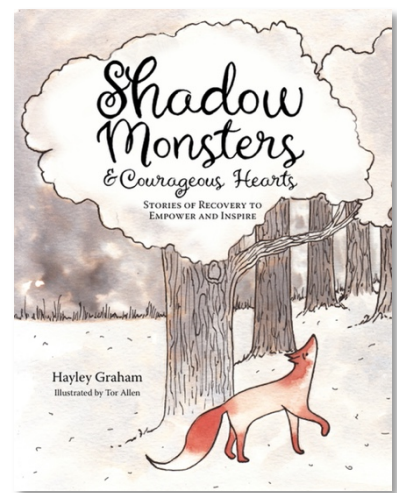


## TEACHING NOTES: SHADOW MONSTERS AND COURAGEOUS HEARTS

Written by Hayley Graham

Illustrated by Tor Allen

Published by Little Steps Publishing



### SYNOPSIS

Have you ever wanted to understand more about mental health difficulties, such as trauma, OCD, attachment, shame and grief, but been put off by lengthy, academic texts? Have you ever wanted to start a conversation with a child about mental health concerns but not known where to begin? Would you like to help empower your kids to take control of their own psychological wellbeing? If the answer is yes to any or all of these questions, this is the book for you.

Child and adolescent psychotherapist, Hayley Graham, draws on her years of experience to create an accessible resource perfect for parents, teachers and therapists. *In Shadow Monsters and Courageous Hearts*, she gives us five beautifully written and deeply affecting stories designed to educate, empower and inspire. What's more she provides succinct explanations of the mental health challenges explored and suggests questions related to the stories to facilitate adults to start conversations with children. Conversations to further understanding, empower and nurture compassion.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hayley Graham is a psychotherapist working with children, adolescents and adults. She is registered and accredited by the UKCP as a specialist child and adolescent psychotherapist, as well as being an accredited registered member of the BACP and an EMDR therapist. She has many years of experience working with children, young people and adults – both within school settings and in private practice. Hayley is the founder and director of BOUNCE! Brighter Futures Foundation, a registered charity based in Devon. BOUNCE! provides counselling and psychotherapy services to children, young people and their families, as well as providing training and support for educators. The service is delivered within primary and secondary schools, alongside low-cost therapy provision delivered directly to the community. You can find Hayley on Instagram @hayleyjanegraham and @bouncebrighterfutures, websites: [www.bouncebrighterfutures.co.uk](http://www.bouncebrighterfutures.co.uk) and [www.kaleidoscopetherapy.com](http://www.kaleidoscopetherapy.com)

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Tor Allen is an illustrator/painter who was brought up in the South Hams. She has loved drawing and making things from an early age with her rural environment playing a huge influence on her work. She studied graphic design in Bath and did her post graduate studies at PCA, Plymouth. Working both digitally and traditionally, Tor often has diverse projects on the go and really enjoys the challenge of creating a wide range of work. Clients have included Oxfam, the Woodland Trust, the National Trust and more locally, Coast and Country Salcombe, Heron Valley, Gitcombe Estate, Food & Drink Devon and Challons Combe Farm. By teaching a regular art class for six and a half years in Modbury and three years of adult education classes in Plymouth before that, Tor was encouraged to experiment with materials and techniques that she wouldn't normally use. Tor was delighted to be selected to exhibit at the Wildlife Artist of the Year exhibition in 2021. She can be contacted on her website: [www.torallen.com](http://www.torallen.com) and on Instagram: @torallen\_illustrator.

## SHADOW MONSTERS AND COURAGEOUS HEARTS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### THE COURAGEOUS HEART: A story about trauma

1. Have you heard about trauma? What do you know?
2. What happened to Fox to cause her trauma? Why do you think Stag didn't get trauma?
3. What sort of feelings was Fox struggling to control? Who was it causing problems with?
4. What do you think it would be like to have a friend who was often angry or scared? What do you think you might do in that situation? Do you know what 'depressed' means?
5. Can you see why Fox felt worried when the sun was setting, the dog barked or the horn blew?
6. Have you ever noticed yourself wanting to fight, run or freeze when you felt scared? What was it like?
7. What do you imagine it was like for Fox to suddenly remember everything? Were you surprised that she couldn't remember such a terrifying thing? What else do you think helped Fox to overcome her trauma? How could you help someone who has trauma?



## THE SHADOW MONSTER: A story about anxiety

1. Have you heard about OCD? What do you know about it?
2. What is the 'worst possible thing' that Mouse worries about? Can you see the difference between Mouse's worry compared to worrying about falling off your bike or taking a test?
3. To begin with, did you think the creature was real or imagined? How can we tell if a worry is 'real' or not? Is it the worry that isn't real or the thought behind it? Why do you think the creature got bigger in the story?
4. What does Mouse do to try and cope with the worry?
5. Why do you think the creature vanished when Mouse jumped into its jaws?
6. How did Badger help Mouse in the story?
7. What do you think Badger meant when he said shadow monsters never 'survive the light'?





## FINDING SOMEONE THERE: A story about attachment

1. What do you think about being independent and not asking for help? Do you think it's always a good thing to just rely on yourself, or do you think it's good to be able to ask for help? When Squirrel meets Hare, he isn't sure whether to stay or go. Why do you think that is?
2. Why do you think we feel lonely and empty when we shut away our feelings? What does it feel like to share your feelings with someone that you trust?
3. Do you think it helps to talk to someone about what has happened to you? Have you ever shared a painful memory? How did it feel? When Hare asks him where he found 'it', why do you think Squirrel says, 'it was somewhere along the way with you'?
4. Why do you think we all keep parts of ourselves hidden? Can you think of times when you've chosen not to show your feelings?
5. Who can't you trust with your feelings? Who can you trust?





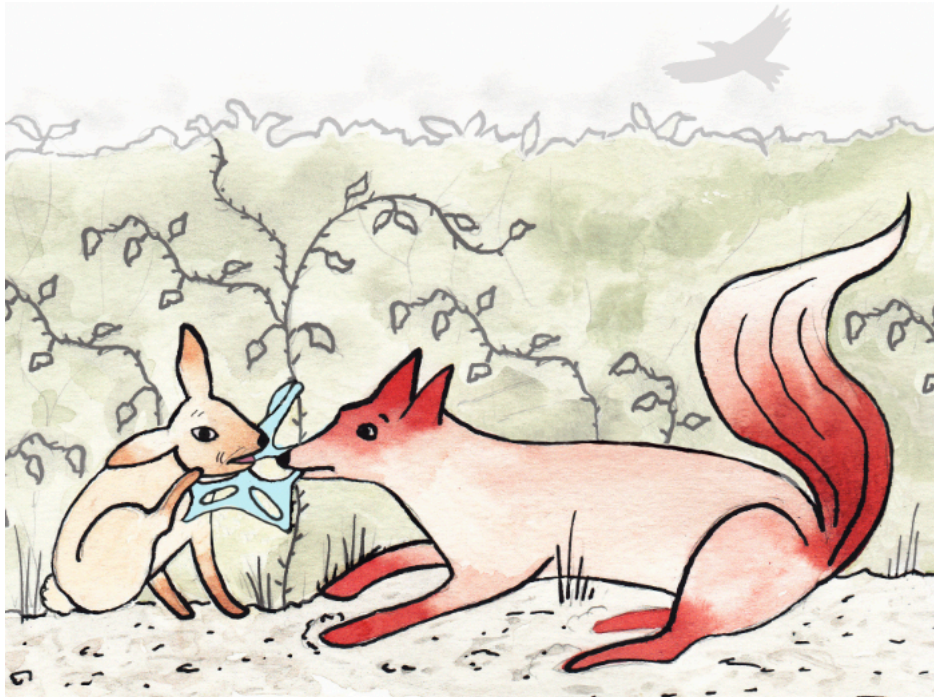
## BEAUTIFUL TAIL: A story about shame

1. What is shame? How would you explain it to someone?
2. Do you think Rat has done anything wrong? Why do you think the mother screams in the park and the little girl cries when they see Rat?
3. Why do you think Rat feels shame? What has happened to her?
4. Do you think it's right that Rat feels this way?
5. What does Rat do to try and protect herself from further feelings of shame?
6. What changes when Rat reaches the wood? How do the other animals seem to accept her?
7. Do you ever say mean things about yourself either out loud or in your head? How does it make you feel? Would you say those things to a friend? Why not? How did Rat bully herself?
8. Do you ever feel too much shame? Have you got any ideas about how you might help yourself or someone else who feels shame? What are you proud of? What are your strengths?



## WHISPERS: A story about grief

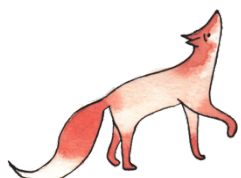
1. Have you ever lost something or someone you love very much? How did it make you feel?
2. What feelings did Fox feel when she heard Stag had died?
3. Can you think of other reasons someone might feel guilty if someone dies? What do you think about Fox feeling angry? Do you think she is angry with Crow or with someone else?
4. Why do you think Fox went back to the old stone wall where she first met Stag?
5. Do you think Fox is looking in the wrong place? Where does Crow think she should look? What do you think happened on the moor afterwards when Fox sees Stag? Do you think she was dreaming or seeing things, or was it Stag's spirit? What do you think happens after we die?
6. Where does Fox find Stag at the end of the story? What do you think Stag meant when he told Hare to tell Fox she never left his side? When a person or an animal dies, what do you think they leave behind?



## THINKING ABOUT EMOTIONS

This exercise helps us think about the many different emotions we can experience.

In groups, think about the characters in *Shadow Monsters & Courageous Hearts*. What words can you think of to describe their emotions in each of the stories? Write your answers on the following pages.



Word key for feelings and emotions:

Look at the list of feelings provided if you need some help.

Happy	Sad	Angry	Frightened	Ashamed
Content	Disappointed	Furious	Afraid	Disgusted
Excited	Hurt	Irritated	Scared	Confused
Pleased	Heartbroken	Bothered	Terrified	Jealous
Relaxed	Devastated	Annoyed	Horried	Envious
Delighted	Despairing	Raging	Worried	Embarrassed
Joyful	Fed-up	Enraged	Anxious	Guilt
Grateful	Flat	Frustrated	Stressed	Responsible
Satisfied	Low	Grumpy	Uneasy	Bored
Ecstatic	Down	Infuriated	Tense	Shy
Thrilled	Hopeless	Cranky	Concerned	Interested
Cheerful	Discouraged	Prickly	Shaky	Curious
Safe	Helpless	Snappy	Disturbed	Detached
Calm	Miserable	Fuming	Perturbed	Weird
Glad	Unhappy	Livid	Panicky	Unreal
Bubbly	Blue	Incensed	Petrified	Empty
Loved/loving	Lonely	Offended	Shocked	Lost
Thankful	Crushed		Startled	Numb
Hopeful	Downhearted		Agitated	Surprised
Elated	Upset		Wary	Astonished
Overjoyed	Tearful		Distressed	Bewildered
	Heavy-hearted		Hateful	Overwhelmed
				Revolted
				sickened
				Confident

Can you think of any more feelings or emotions to add to the list?





## THINKING ABOUT EMOTIONS

What words can you think of to describe these characters' emotions?

### The Courageous Heart

Fox

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Owl

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Badger

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Hare

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### The Shadow Monster

Mouse

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Badger

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### Finding Someone There

Squirrel

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Badger

---



Beautiful Tail

Rat

---

Baby Rabbit

---

Mother Rabbit

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Crow

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Fox

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Whispers

Fox

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Hare

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Crow

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## PHYSICAL SENSATIONS

(Thinking about how our emotions are connected to the physical sensations we feel in our bodies)

The physical sensations we feel in our bodies help us understand what emotions we are experiencing. For example, in *The Shadow Monster*, Mouse feels a weight so heavy in his stomach he fears it might drag him deep into the ground. This heavy, sinking sensation in the stomach is often associated with the emotion of shame. The better we become at paying attention to these physical sensations, the more able we become at knowing what emotions we are experiencing.

This exercise helps us to think about how our emotions are connected to the sensations we feel in our body. See if you can identify the sensations you feel in your body when you experience different emotions.

### For The Courageous Heart

In a group, brainstorm the sensations you feel and where in your body you feel them.

1. When you are feeling angry
2. When you are feeling scared
3. When you are feeling surprised
4. When you are feeling grateful
5. When you are feeling joyful

If you need some help, look at the provided sheet that lists some common body sensations. Write your answers below and don't worry if your answers are different to others in the group. This is about what YOU feel. Remember to write down what physical sensation you feel and where you feel it.

When I feel angry, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel scared, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel surprised, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel grateful, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel joyful, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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## For The Shadow Monster

In a group, brainstorm the sensations you feel and where in your body you feel them:

1. When you are feeling anxious or worried
2. When you are feeling frustrated
3. When you are feeling brave
4. When you are feeling safe

Now write your answers below:

When I feel anxious or worried, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel frustrated, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel brave, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel safe, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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## For Finding Someone There

In a group, brainstorm the sensations you feel and where in your body you feel them:

1. When you are feeling nervous
2. When you are feeling confused
3. When you are feeling lonely
4. When you feel loved or liked
5. When you feel relaxed

Now write your answers below:

When I feel nervous, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel confused, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel lonely, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel loved, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel relaxed, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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## For Beautiful Tail

In a group, brainstorm the sensations you feel and where in your body you feel them:

1. When you feel disliked
2. When you feel frightened
3. When you feel proud

Now write your answers below:

When I feel disliked, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel frightened, the Physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel proud, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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For Whispers

In a group, brainstorm the sensations you feel and where in your body you feel them:

1. When you feel shocked
2. When you feel sad
3. When you feel love for someone else
4. When you feel loved

Now write your answers below:

When I feel shocked, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel sad, the physical sensation I notice in my body are:

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When I feel love for someone, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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When I feel loved, the physical sensations I notice in my body are:

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Can you think of any more bodily sensations to add to the list?

Some words for bodily sensations:



Aching	Empty	Burning
Sharp	Flat	Fluttery
Fizzy	Sharp stabbing	Solid
Stabbing	Sharp twisting	Tingly
Tight	Crushing	Shaky
Heavy	Pain	Shivery
Pressing	Bursting out	Still
Tense	Pressing in	Weak
Wobbly	Squeezing	Sick
Light	Breathless	Nauseous
Floaty	Hard to breathe	Numb
Bursting	Pulsing	Full
Hot	Throbbing	Soft
Cold	Dull	Smooth
Warm	Dull ache	Knotted
Sinking	Flushed	Clenching



## DIFFICULT FEELINGS

(Thinking about things that might help us or others who are experiencing difficult feelings)

When we or others experience difficult feelings, there are things that we can do that might help. It's important to remember that these things won't always help. When they don't, speak to someone you trust about your feelings so you can get more support.

This exercise helps us think about strategies. As a group, think about things you could do to help with feelings, such as sadness, anger and fear. The book gives some ideas, but you may well have your own thoughts about things you could try. You may have some tried and tested strategies that you already know help you.

List three things you can try:

1. When feeling sad.

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2. When feeling angry.

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3. When feeling scared.

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## COMMON MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

*Shadow Monsters and Courageous Hearts* helps us to understand more about some common mental health challenges. This exercise helps us think about what we have learned. As a group, brainstorm what you now know about common mental health challenges. In the spaces below, write a few sentences about what you have learned. Think about how you might explain it to someone else.

What I know about TRAUMA:

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What I know about OCD and ANXIETY:

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What I know about AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT:

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What I know about SHAME:

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What I know about LOSS:

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## YOUR OWN STORY

Stories can help us understand, and they can help us heal. They're also a great way of connecting with others. Try writing your own story and think about the following:

1. What is your goal for the story? What do you want your reader to get from it? Do you want to help them understand something or maybe feel something? Or is this story just for you? Is it a story to help understand something about you or to explore something that has happened to you?
2. Think about your main character. What do they look like? Where do they live? How do they feel? What has happened to them to make them feel the way they do? How do their feelings affect their behaviour? For example, Fox felt scared. She was always looking out for danger. This was because she had been chased by the hunt when she was young.
3. Think about what needs to change in your character's life. Fox needed to feel safe so she could relax and be happy.
4. Think about how your character's life is at the beginning of the story. Maybe start by writing a little bit to show this to your reader. At the beginning of *The Courageous Heart*, we see that Fox has a good friend in Owl but her anxiety and angry outbursts are causing difficulties in their friendship as well as in Fox's life.
5. Think about what happens next. What event triggers the start of change in your character's life? The farmer tooting his horn and the dog barking sent Fox into a blind panic, then she ran into Badger. This trigger event sets in motion a series of encounters with other characters. What happens in your story? Perhaps your character makes a new friend or loses one? Perhaps they receive some unexpected news. Or does something happen to them, for example, do they fall off their bike or get lost at a theme park? What are your ideas?
6. What happens next? Where will your character's journey take them? Who do they meet? Where do they go? How do these events change your character? The characters Fox meets lead her to Stag. When Fox finds him and hears his story, she realises what happened to her, understands her fears and starts to feel that she is safe.
7. Think about how this change will change your character and their life. How does the story end?

