

# Author & Illustrator ACADEMY

## NADIA SHIREEN MERGING WORDS AND PICTURES:

### NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS



### FREAKISHLY FUNNY IDEAS!

#### Before watching the video or reading the extract...

Nadia explains that in *Grimwood: Five Freakishly Funny Fables*, there are lots of animals doing strange things. They bite each other's heads off, drive around in Land Rovers, and find shopping trolleys in the local pond. What freakishly funny or strange things can you imagine animals doing in the woods? Come up with a few animals and ideas for what they might be doing in Grimwood. Who can come up with the most extraordinary, odd or freakishly funny scenarios?

### DISCUSS THE EXTRACT!

#### TAKEN FROM PAGES 12–15 OF THE PROLOGUE.

Before you get into the detail of the discussion get the group's initial responses to the extract – how did they feel about it? Are they keen to read more? Do they have any questions?

1. How does Willow wake Ted up? Does this scene make you laugh? Why? (page 12)
2. Where did Ted grow up? How is it different to his surroundings in Grimwood? (page 14)
3. How does Nadia Shireen use words and pictures to tell the story in this extract?

### FIND INSPIRATION

#### AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO, DEVELOP NADIA'S IDEAS

#### INSPIRATION 1: CITY OR COUNTRYSIDE?

In the video (00:38–1:33), Nadia describes Grimwood as 'kind of like a nice story set in the English countryside, except a bit wonky'. Her setting is inspired by where she grew up; it is made up of the countryside and the city – two places that are very different!

- What sorts of things do you find in the city and what sorts of things do you find in the countryside? Either by yourself or in pairs create two sketches – one of the countryside and one of the city – use these sketches to have a discussion about the differences between the two.
- Now, put two of your ideas together. For example – what if some creatures that you find in the countryside (e.g. badgers), find a Land Rover? What if there is a nearby pond with an electricity pylon in it? How can these two opposite ideas or images be funny?
- Create a new setting inspired by your hometown or local area, just like Nadia does!

#### INSPIRATION 2: A BALANCING ACT

In the video, Nadia describes what she does as a 'balancing act' between words and pictures. She says that, sometimes, things are funnier when there is a picture and no words.

- Nadia encourages readers to 'use their imaginations' to fill in the gaps of the story. How does she do this?
- Use Nadia's example of the rat and the eagle to create your own scene in which you make the reader guess what happens. Try to use very few words and show the rest through a picture.

#### CREATIVE CHALLENGE FROM NADIA SHIREEN

Choose an animal and put it in a human setting – e.g. driving a car, going to school, or becoming prime minister (the sillier the better)! As a Super Challenge, draw your chosen animal in their human context. Include pictures, scribbles, odd thoughts and speech bubbles to bring your animal scene to life!