

# The Pendle Witch Trilogy – Chapter Guides

## The Curse of the Pendle Witch

### Overview

#### Suggested use

This resource has been put together to accompany the book, The Curse of the Pendle Witch – the first book in Rachel Helen's Pendle Witch Trilogy.

For each chapter there is a guide suitable for Upper Key Stage Two, which includes a chapter summary as a quick reference for the teacher/adult; a suggested list of new or unfamiliar vocabulary from the chapter; questions which can be used in verbal discussion or to be answered in written sentences; and an activity ideas section of additional short writing ideas.

Each of the chapters is short and can be read aloud within ten minutes. It would be suitable to read one chapter per lesson and to follow it with discussion, vocabulary work and one of the written tasks. Alternatively, you could divide the book into five days by reading two or three chapters per day and focusing on a couple of discussion points then either vocabulary work or a short written task.

The final page of this guide has a suggested plan for how the book can be used to produce a longer piece of writing, with a five day exemplar for planning, modelling, writing and editing.

#### Vocabulary

Each vocabulary list contains a suggestion of words from the chapter which may be new or unfamiliar to the children. Doing work around their meaning can assist with children's understanding of the book, as well as helping them to expand their own vocabulary.

A suggested approach would be

- after each chapter, discuss some of or all the words from the list – talking about possible meanings and looking these up in a dictionary or using a website such as Word Hippo.
- Words and their meanings should be added to a working wall or vocabulary display.
- One or more of the words could be focused on with children writing the meaning in their own words, writing a list of synonyms, or writing their own sentences containing the words.

#### Prompts and activities

The prompt questions are designed to enable children to explore and deepen their understanding of the book and of authorial devices. By pre-selecting one of the writing activities or one to two of the questions to focus on in writing, discussions can then be built around the most relevant areas to support children in their learning and understanding.

Children's ideas can be added to a working wall throughout the reading stage and later be referred to during the course of children developing their own ideas and producing their own extended written work.

# The Pendle Witch Trilogy – Chapter Guides

## The Curse of the Pendle Witch

### Chapter One

#### Chapter Summary

- Introduction to the main characters - Alice and Izzy, two sisters who have recently moved to a remote farmhouse near Pendle Hill
- Story is narrated in first person and present tense by Alice
- It's the school holiday. Mum is renovating the house. The children go off together to the barn on the hill behind the house
- Next to the barn, they find a carved stone

#### Vocabulary

- Intensified
- Dominates
- Auburn
- Concession
- Solitude
- Indecipherable
- Dilapidated
- Retorts
- Lichen

#### Activity ideas

- Rewrite the end of the chapter from Izzy's point of view, instead of Alice's.
- Sketch the setting and label it with noun phrases from the chapter.
- Explore the use of brackets in the chapter and rewrite the sentences using different punctuation and structure.
- Write a prediction about what might happen in the next couple of chapters.

#### Prompts for discussion / writing

- What do we learn about the characters?
- What similarities and differences are there between Alice and Izzy?
- What do we learn about the setting?
- How does the setting compare to where our school is/where we live?
- Can you summarise what happens in the chapter in your own words?
- Why do you think the author has written the book in first person?
- Why do you think the author has written the book in present tense?
- What do you think the carved stone might be?

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#### Chapter Two

##### Chapter Summary

- Alice and Izzy ask mum to help with digging up the stone, but she says she's too busy
- Alice and Izzy spend all morning trying to dig up the stone
- Izzy realises she hasn't had lunch and stomps back to the house
- Mum is angry with them because of the mess they have made

##### Vocabulary

- Debris
- Scurry
- Determinedly
- Oblivious
- Anticipation
- Frantically

##### Activity ideas

- Rewrite the chapter, using a diary format (past tense, recounting the day that has happened). This could be done in role as Alice, or for more of a challenge, in role as Izzy or Mum.
- Revisit chapter one and the use of brackets. Practice writing sentences using brackets for adding extra information to parts of this chapter.

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- What new things do we learn about the characters?
- What new things do we learn about the setting?
- How do you think Alice feels at different points of the chapter – when Mum won't help? When Izzy stops helping? When Izzy goes back home and tells Mum it's Alice's fault? When they get home and Mum is angry with them?
- Can you summarise what happens in the chapter in your own words?
- Read the last page of the chapter again – would you have reacted the same as Izzy in that situation? What might you have done differently?

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#### Chapter Three

##### Chapter Summary

- Alice, Izzy and Mum eat their evening meal together on the patio because Mum has ripped the kitchen out, ready for a new one coming the following week
- Dad is late home from work and Mum is annoyed by it
- Izzy is sulking and not talking
- Alice and Izzy go back to the stone with Floss and their parents
- The parents think the stone is from a cheese press
- They take the stone to the house then return to the field to fill in the hole
- Floss makes the hole bigger and finds something wrapped in dark red cloth

##### Vocabulary

- Restricted
- Disapprovingly
- Stubbornly
- Interjects
- Unison
- Pleadingly
- Theatrical
- Anticipation

##### Activity ideas

- Research what a cheese press is and how they work.
- Vocabulary focus – revisit the new/unfamiliar vocabulary discussed so far. Write sentences using a selection of the words.

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- What is the stone they have found?
- How do they feel about finding it?
- What do they decide to do with it?
- How do they then find something else at the end of the chapter?
- Can you summarise what happens in the chapter in your own words?
- What do you think they might have found?

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#### Chapter Four

#### Chapter Summary

- The family find a carved wooden box wrapped in dark red cloth
- The box is carved with the numbers 1612 – the year in which the Pendle Witch trial took place
- Dad manages to open the box
- Inside the box there is a black and white photo in a frame

#### Vocabulary

- Crimson
- Eager
- Curiosity
- Persisting
- Significance
- Folklore
- Intrude
- Tarnished
- Instinctively

#### Activity ideas

- Draw the box and label it with noun phrases from the chapter
- Imagine finding something old/special – what would you like to find? Why would it be so important? How would you feel? Write a couple of paragraphs describing the find and your reactions to it.

#### Prompts for discussion / writing

- What have they found?
- How does Alice react when she holds it?
- How do they manage to open the box?
- What is the significance of the numbers 1612 being carved onto the box?
- How do each of the characters react once the box is opened?
- Can you summarise what happens in the chapter in your own words?
- Why do you think the photo is inside the box?

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#### Chapter Five

##### Chapter Summary

- The photo in the box is of a family from the 1960s
- Mum sends Alice and Izzy to bed
- Alice has a nightmare about running and falling and thinks she hears a scream
- Alice gets up early and creeps downstairs to look again at the box and its contents
- Alice takes the photo out of the frame, behind it is a lock of hair, a buttercup and a letter
- The letter talks about things going wrong with the family and thinks it is their fault
- The writer has spoken to their neighbour and been told to bury the box to bury a curse
- Alice worries that the box could be cursed

##### Vocabulary

- Identical
- Finality
- Punctuated
- Fragments
- Eerie
- Dislodge

##### Activity ideas

- Summarise what was in the letter in your own words. Can you do it with a restricted word count (such as a Tweet) to ensure succinctness.
- Imagine Alice has told you the situation and asked for your advice. Should she tell her parents about the letter, her nightmares and that she believes the box is cursed? Why?

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- What was inside the box?
- How do you think Alice and Izzy feel about having to go to bed?
- Why does Alice struggle sleeping?
- What is behind the photo?
- What does the letter tell us?
- How does Alice react to what is in the letter?
- Can you summarise the chapter in your own words?
- What do you think might happen next?

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#### Chapter Six

##### Chapter Summary

- The following morning, Floss is very poorly
- Alice is angry and upset, but also worried – because she has read the letter and thinks she has brought a curse into the house
- Alice goes for a walk, upset that Floss is ill and thinks again about the letter in the box and the idea it might be cursed
- The vet comes, gives Floss some medicine and takes her away for some tests
- Mum worries that Floss has eaten some of the debris from the ripped-out kitchen and is blaming herself

##### Vocabulary

- Limply
- Ignorantly
- Eagerly
- Hunched
- Awkward
- Gaping
- hesitates

##### Activity ideas

- Create an emotions graph to show how Alice feels at different points in the chapter
- Create a character study for Alice, comparing what she says, what she is thinking and how she is feeling. These can be displayed in speech bubbles, thought bubbles and hearts.

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- What has happened to Floss?
- What range of emotions does Alice feel about Floss being poorly?
- How do the different characters react to Floss being poorly?
- Why is mum blaming herself for Floss being poorly?
- What does Alice think might have caused Floss to be poorly?
- Can you summarise what happens in the chapter in your own words?
- What do you predict will happen to Floss?

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#### Chapter Seven

##### Chapter Summary

- Alice and Izzy return from the field and find the house in silence
- Mum has been crying
- The phone rings and mum answers it, crying when she ends the call
- Izzy hugs Mum, who explains that Floss is very poorly
- Alice runs from the house and keeps running, even beyond the point she's not allowed to pass on her own
- Alice returns home, determined to find a way to make Floss better
- As she tries to climb the wall into the garden, she finds something hidden in it, wrapped in crimson velvet

##### Vocabulary

- Overwhelming
- ShriII
- Reassuring
- Forbidden
- Disobey
- Momentarily
- Idyllic
- Resigned

##### Activity ideas

- Write the start of the next chapter with Alice taking out whatever is in the wall. Describe what you predict it might be and Alice's reactions to finding it.
- Vocabulary focus – revisit the new/unfamiliar vocabulary discussed so far. Write sentences using a selection of the words.

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- Who does Mum speak to on the phone and what do they tell her?
- In what ways do Alice and Izzy react differently to seeing Mum crying?
- *The silence is almost deafening.* What does the author mean by this and what effect does she want it to have on the reader?
- Why does Alice go beyond the two trees even though she knows she isn't allowed?
- How do Alice's feelings change while she is by the river?
- What does Alice find?
- What is the significance of the red cloth?
- Can you summarise what happens in the chapter in your own words?
- What do you predict might be inside the red cloth and why?



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#### Chapter Eight

##### Chapter Summary

- Alice unwraps the cloth
- In it, is a silver crucifix and a small animal skull
- Alice hears Izzy so she quickly wraps the items back up and hides them in the wall
- Mum is upset with Alice for running off
- Alice apologises, and she and Izzy help Mum with tearing off the wallpaper
- Dad returns home, saying he's been to see Floss and that she's still poorly
- Izzy comes to sleep in Alice's room
- Alice has nightmares about the day's events and the red cloth, but also hears the scream again and sees an image of something she thinks is blood

##### Vocabulary

- Anticipation
- Justify
- Delicate
- Caverns
- Pendulum
- Scuttling
- Interrogate
- Acknowledge
- Frantic

##### Activity ideas

- Write a list of all the things Alice has found and suggest how they could be linked.
- What advice would you give to Alice about whether to tell her family about what she has found (remember the family don't know about the letter etc behind the photo, or about the skull and necklace)?

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- What does Alice find?
- Why could it be linked to the box, photograph and letter?
- How does the weather change when Alice has the objects and why might the author have included this?
- Why doesn't Alice tell Izzy about where she has been and what she found?
- Why does Alice find it hard to sleep?
- *My eyelids heavy and blinking, but too afraid to close.* What is the author wanting the reader to think about Alice by including this line?
- Can you write a summary of the chapter in your own words?

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#### Chapter Nine

##### Chapter Summary

- The following morning, Alice returns to the items in the wall and realises that rest of the family haven't seen the letter behind the photo
- Mum calls for the girls. Alice returns, but there is no sign of Izzy
- Alice wants to tell her Mum about the curse, but Mum is upset about Izzy
- Mum searches the field behind the house while Alice returns inside
- Alice picks up the box and takes it to where the other items are hidden in the wall
- Mum rings Dad who returns home from work

##### Vocabulary

- Scouting
- Frantically
- Compels
- Shroud
- Muffled

##### Activity ideas

- Write a list of things that Alice could do to try to make things right.
- Investigate and collect examples from the chapter where dialogue and narrative or action are woven together. Use these to write some similar sentences of your own.

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- Why does Alice go to the garden wall?
- How does Mum react when Izzy doesn't come back?
- How do you think Alice feels about the way Mum talks to her after she asks if she has read the letter?
- *The call of the birds, my happy childhood soundtrack that yesterday made me feel at peace, suddenly seems to torture me.* Why does the author include this line and what effect is she wanting to create?
- How does Alice feel at the end of the chapter?
- Can you summarise the chapter in your own words?
- What do you think Alice could do to try to put things right?

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#### Chapter Ten

##### Chapter Summary

- The police arrive and talk to Alice's parents
- Alice gets the box, skull and necklace and goes to sit by the barn where the box was found
- Alice thinks about where Izzy might have gone
- She crosses the road to 'Witches Quarry', in case Izzy might have gone there
- She climbs the steep banking, shouting Izzy's name
- She slips and hurts her knee but carries on climbing, but she then passes out

##### Vocabulary

- Blaring
- Conscious
- Instinctively
- Combination
- Unceasing
- Awe
- Crinoids
- Consuming
- Incline

##### Activity ideas

- Act out a conscience alley of the reasons Alice should and shouldn't have gone looking for Izzy.
- Write a list of the reasons for and against Alice going to look for Izzy.

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- Why does Alice gather everything together and sit by the barn?
- What does she think Floss would have done?
- What possible places does Alice think Izzy might have gone to and why?
- Why does Alice think Izzy might have gone to the old quarry?
- What happens to Alice at the end of the chapter?
- Do you think it was right for Alice to go off looking for Izzy?
- Can you summarise what has happened in the chapter?

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#### Chapter Eleven

##### Chapter Summary

- When Alice comes around, she finds that there is an old lady with her
- Alice starts to tell the lady about Izzy going missing
- The lady introduces herself as Maggie Duerden, and Alice recognises her name from the letter
- Maggie tells Alice about a place called Cat Gallows Wood
- Maggie talks to Alice about some of the stories about what happened in 1612
- They go home and Maggie explains to Alice's parents that they need to bury the box in the woods
- Mum thinks it's a ridiculous idea, but Dad agrees to try it

##### Vocabulary

- Frantically
- Gnarled
- Gallows
- Mummified
- Intently

##### Activity ideas

- Write in your own words a summary of what Maggie tells Alice about the box and the witches.
- What would you have done if you were Mum and Dad? What would you have said to Alice and Maggie? Would you have gone to the woods?

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- How do you think Alice feels when she first regains consciousness?
- Why do you think she starts to tell Maggie about Izzy and Floss?
- What does Maggie explain to Alice about the box and the curse?
- What do we learn about the photograph, letter and other items Alice has found?
- What do Maggie and Alice do?
- Do you think Alice is right to believe/trust Maggie?
- Why do you think Mum doesn't agree to going to the woods, but Dad does?
- Can you write a summary of what has happened in the chapter?
- What do you predict will happen next?

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#### Chapter Twelve

##### Chapter Summary

- Alice, Dad and Maggie go to Cat Gallows Wood
- Maggie explains the items must be buried around the woods
- She leads the way and advises Dad and Alice where to bury each item
- Maggie tells Alice that she knows where to bury the items because of a feeling, and suggests to Alice that she has the feelings too
- Alice thinks she feels something touch her, and Maggie seems nervous
- After all the items are buried, they return home

##### Vocabulary

- Dispersing
- Authority
- Incessantly
- Ominous
- Foreboding
- Contort
- consumed

##### Activity ideas

- The author uses the weather to create certain moods throughout the book – find examples from this chapter, then create some sentences of your own using this technique.

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- What are Alice's fears at the start of the chapter?
- How does the author use the weather to create tension/a sense of eeriness in the chapter?
- Do you think something touches Alice, or do you think she is imagining it? Explain your answer.
- Can you summarise in your own words what happens in the chapter?
- What do you predict will happen in the final chapter of the book?

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#### Chapter Thirteen

##### Chapter Summary

- Alice, Dad and Maggie return home to find Izzy is back home, and is singing in the kitchen with Mum
- Izzy had returned ten minutes previously and says she doesn't know where she has been
- Maggie tries to convince Mum that the curse is true
- The vet rings to say Floss can come home
- Alice has another nightmare in which she hears a scream, sees a pool of blood, hears footsteps behind her and feels a pain in her leg

##### Vocabulary

- Sheepishly
- Sceptical
- Reassuringly
- Rapidly
- Eagerly

##### Activity ideas

- Write a review of the book – include a summary of the plot, your favourite part, how much you enjoyed it, and who you would recommend it to. Email it to [rachel@rachelhelenauthor.co.uk](mailto:rachel@rachelhelenauthor.co.uk) and it might feature on the website!

##### Prompts for discussion / writing

- How does Alice react when she realises Izzy is home?
- What is Izzy's version of what happened?
- What do you think Mum thinks about what Maggie says to her about the curse?
- Why does Alice think she might get into trouble when she gets back to school?
- What happens in Alice's nightmare?
- Why is she worried that the nightmares might signify something else is going to happen?
- Can you summarise what happened in the chapter?

## The Pendle Witch Trilogy – Chapter Guides

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#### Writing Plan

##### Day one

Refer back to the chapter summaries and children's responses after each chapter.

Create a boxed plot/story map/story mountain for the book, picking out the key events (an example is available to download from the website: [www.rachelhelenauthor.co.uk](http://www.rachelhelenauthor.co.uk))

Give children parameters for what needs to stay the same and what can be changed for them to create their own story. For example, things they could change might be: the characters could be friends/brothers/cousins, they might have a cat/horse/chicken which becomes sick or disappears, inside the box might be a diary/drawing/piece of jewellery, and they might have to break the curse by burning the item/chanting a spell. Things they might need to keep the same, could be the box is from 1612, it is linked to the witches, two bad things happen to the family, the curse has to be broken at the end.

Model this to them by creating a plan which will be used to model writing during the week.

##### Day two

Refer back to the model plan. Recap the style of writing used by the author – first person and present tense.

Write the opening paragraph / two paragraphs, modelling the writing and collecting children's ideas to assist with this. During this, also include modelling reading back and self-correcting. Set objectives which relate to work the children have done during the reading of the book – ideas for these are included in the boxed plot download.

Children then write the first two boxes from their plan, with an emphasis on achieving the relevant objectives.

##### Day three

Read back what was written on day two. Model the writing of the next part of the story, including self-correcting.

Children then write the next two boxes from their plan, again with an emphasis on achieving the relevant objectives.

#### **Day four**

Read back what was written on day three. Model the writing of the final part of the story, including self-correcting.

Children then write the final boxes from their plan, again with an emphasis on achieving the relevant objectives.

#### **Day five**

Model how to edit and improve work. Children should then check their work against the objectives and against examples taken from the book. They should use a dictionary to check spellings, check punctuation is correct against any non-negotiables set, and use a thesaurus or Word Hippo website to improve vocabulary.

Once children have edited and improved their own work, they could swap with a partner who could write 'two stars and a wish', focused on the objectives.

**Designed and written by Rachel Helen for use with her book, *The Curse of the Pendle Witch*.**

**Books can be purchased, and resources can be downloaded from [www.rachelhelenauthor.co.uk](http://www.rachelhelenauthor.co.uk)**

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