

# BELONGINGS

A Co-production by Tangled Feet and Rowan Tree

## Resource Pack



This resource pack has been designed to accompany Tangled Feet's production for 6-11 year old children, *Belongings*.



*We are all trying to work out our story. Who we are? How we are we shaped? Who made us? Sometimes you have to find the courage to be just you - the brilliant you*

Inspired by working with young people in Kent who don't live with their birth parents, *Belongings* is the story of finding your feet, finding your playmates & imagining a new future.

*Belongings* follows the stories of BT, Cleo & Leila. Leila & BT live in a foster home. Cleo joins them having left her home in an urgent way. Cleo is confused, she wants to see her mum (who has been struggling to look after her) & she wants to get home. Leila misses her sister & BT is preparing for a life with a new adoptive family. BT & Leila have become like siblings. Through games, dreams, talking to each other & facing their fears the three children learn & grow together supporting each other & understanding the strength inside them.

There are more than 92,000 Children in Care. They cannot be with their birth families, either because it is unsafe for them to be there, or because their parents are unable to look after them. *Belongings* is the third of our therapeutic theatre pieces for young audiences where we work alongside a group of young creative consultants, who have engaged in dramatherapy & whose lived experience inspire the process.

To create the show, we have partnered with Rowan Tree Dramatherapy to work with a group of young people with experience of the care system. The therapeutic theatre model allows us to engage with a way of making work through consultation & workshops.

We hope *Belongings* is both an entertaining & enlightening experience for young audiences & their grown ups but also offers a platform & space to process complex experiences of childhood. We hope the play brings empathy for children in challenging circumstances - whether it be an insecure home life, leaving home or coping with difference.

### **The themes of the show by Rowan Tree**

Rowan Tree Dramatherapy is an organisation that provides dramatherapy to young people & adults across Kent, including for groups of young people in care. The dramatherapists were inspired by the strength of all these young people who were able to tell their stories with such insight & creativity. Themes of fear, anger, of feeling lost and wanting to fit in, of the importance of a shared experience & hope are familiar to us all. In sharing their stories in dramatherapy, our creative consultants felt less alone; they are all hoping that in sharing feelings with other young people in the audience, they may feel less alone too.

All children need to be & feel safe, loved, & cared for. Sometimes parents are not able to give all that their child needs & deserves, and so they need support themselves. The child is always the most important person when professionals who know the family make decisions.

Sometimes professionals supporting the family decide the child needs to go to live with another family member or into foster care to make sure the child will get all the care they need - to healthily grow, emotionally and physically, both inside and outside. The child is always the most important person when professionals who know the family make decisions.

### Content

Please be aware that scenes within the play explore:

- children's feelings about not living with their birth families
- children's worries about their parents being unwell, unreliable or absent.
- themes of loss, bereavement and trauma



The activities in this pack will help you and the children/young people with you to think about, express, draw, write and talk about your feelings. We hope that these activities and ideas will give you the opportunity to explore the themes of the play in a safe and supportive way.

This resource pack has been designed for young people to work through with an adult. Giving space for questions, discussions, thoughts and reflections.

## *Sharing thoughts and asking questions*

To support your young person watching the show, offer them space to share their feelings & thoughts.

Allow them to fully explore these by asking open questions

*What do you think happened to Cleo? How do you think Leila is feeling? Why does BT always play games?*

While answering their questions, be honest if you do not know the answer. Ask them if maybe they have an answer to their own question.

We hope this resource pack will help support the after show experience and provide some prompts for exploring the themes of the production with your young person/people.

Consider that all adults surrounding a young person (for example school, family, clubs) are all looking out for them. You may want to talk about who are the important people to your young person.

Who would they talk to if they didn't feel they could tell you something difficult?

You might want to share who supports you to help you look after them.

### **Safe and simple questions:**

Below are some prompt questions to support you when talking to a young person about difficult or upsetting things.

It is important not to avoid what is difficult or upsetting. We can stay with the upsetting thing by talking about it in different ways and holding it safely in a more descriptive way and so discussing the upsetting thing without directly talking about it.

*If it was a colour, what would it be?*

*If it was an animal, what would it be?*

*If it was a shape – what would the shape be?*

*Is it big or small?*

*Is it loud or quiet?*

*Is it new or familiar?*

By exploring something with curiosity and symbolism in a safe, non-shaming way it can give some distance and perspective and therefore lower the felt intensity of 'the thing' and make it easier to talk about.



## *Paper Planes*

How to make a paper plane in 10 easy steps

All you need is 1 sheet of A4 paper.

1. Start with your A4 piece of paper, short end towards you
2. Fold the left hand to right to make a crease in the centre
3. Unfold
4. Fold both top corners to the centre
5. Fold the new left and right corners to the centre
6. Fold the plane in half from right to left

7. Now fold the left edge to the right to form the wing. Use your fingernail to help make the tip as pointy as possible
8. Turn the plane over
9. Fold the other wing to line up with the first wing
10. Unfold the wings
11. Make sure the wings are tilted up a little bit
12. Hold it in the centre underneath and throw! Watch it fly!

## *Let's Blow Our Worries Away*

Sometimes we have things that make us feel sad or upset and that's ok. Let's use our paper planes that we made earlier to notice these feelings and imagine blowing them away.

Draw or write your worries or any fears on to the plane. Now we use our breath to imagine letting go of these worries.

How far does your plane travel? Does it loop the loop?

As you hold your plane ready to fly, take a deep breath in and as you let go and throw your plane, let go of your breath and blow it away.

Perhaps we can think about the things that make us happy. Why not make another plane? But this time we draw all the things we love and our grateful for on it.

This time as we breathe in and get ready to fly our planes, picture something that makes you happy.

## Travel Tags

Think about the characters we meet in the show. Who are they? Talk about what we know about them and what we don't know about them. Can you think of any other characters that we don't meet?

Choose one of the characters and write or draw something you would like to give or say to this character. Once you've finished maybe you would like to share your tag and have a look at other people's tags too.



## *Lighthouse Meditation*

Find a comfortable spot, close your eyes and listen to the words.

What does a lighthouse do?

It is a shining, guiding light to help keep people safe, to warn them of danger and bring them home from stormy seas.

Sometimes people can be like lighthouses. Who are the lighthouses in your life? The people we can we talk to if we are worried or who make us feel safe.

Think of these people. Imagine them as a bright light.

Can we be our own lighthouses too? Focus on the qualities that you have. Imagine them shining like a bright light.

With your eyes still closed, slowly take some deep belly breaths.

Let all the air that is in your body out.

Breathe in 1, 2, 3, 4 and then out 1, 2, 3, 4 Repeat this 4 times and as you do imagine a bright light shining out of you, fading, and then returning.

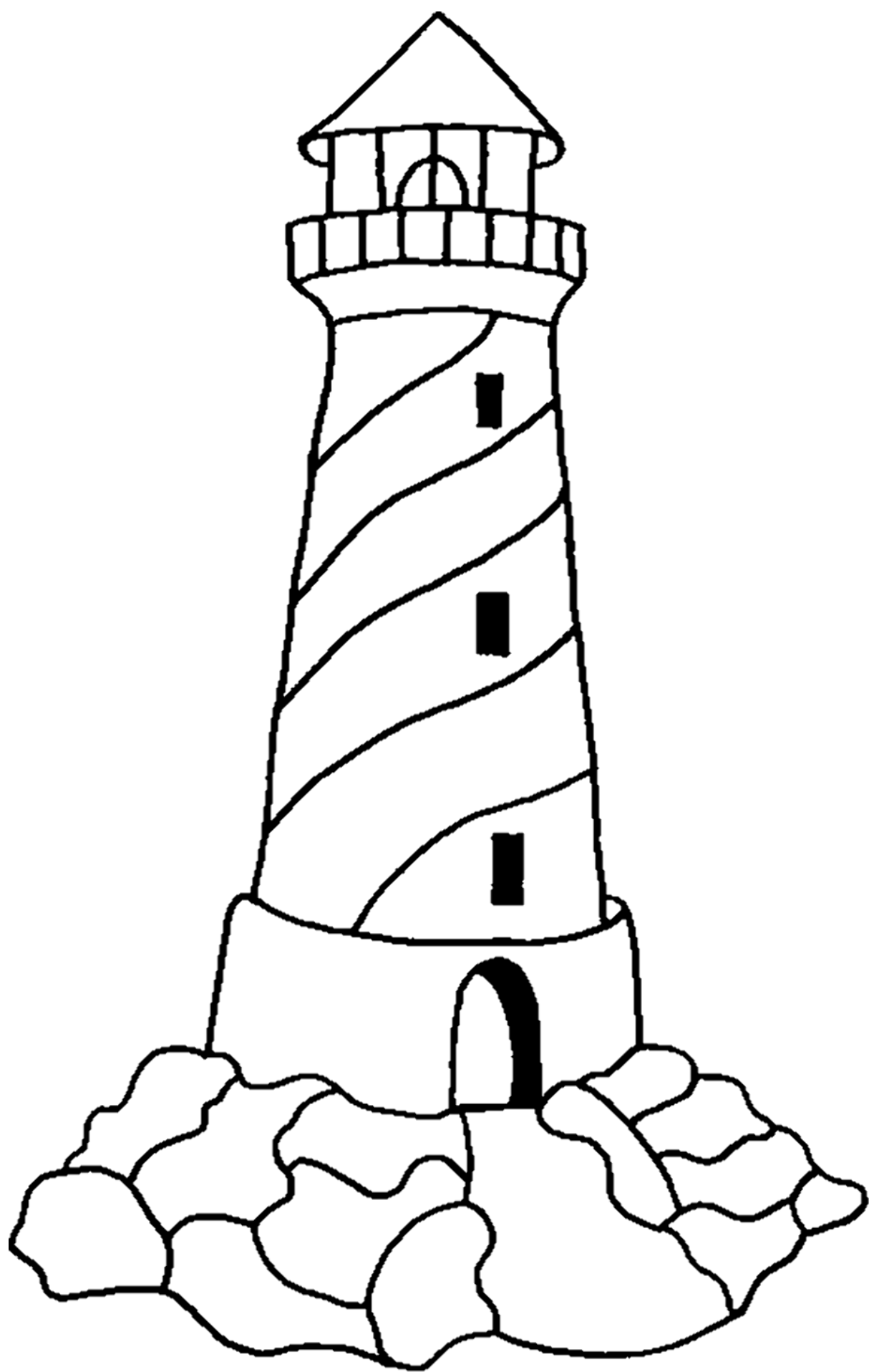
You are your own lighthouse.

## *Colour me in*

Who are the lighthouses in your life? Can you draw these people on and around your lighthouse? Where are you on the lighthouse?

Chose colours to represent your lighthouse and fill in the various sections.





## *Parachute Breath*

Can you place your hands on your belly? Imagine your belly is a parachute filling with air. As you picture your parachute imagine what colour it is.

To start, let all the air that is in your body out.

Breathe in for 1, 2, 3, 4 and then out for 1, 2, 3, 4.

As you feel your hands rise imagine your parachute being filled with air and picture your colour.

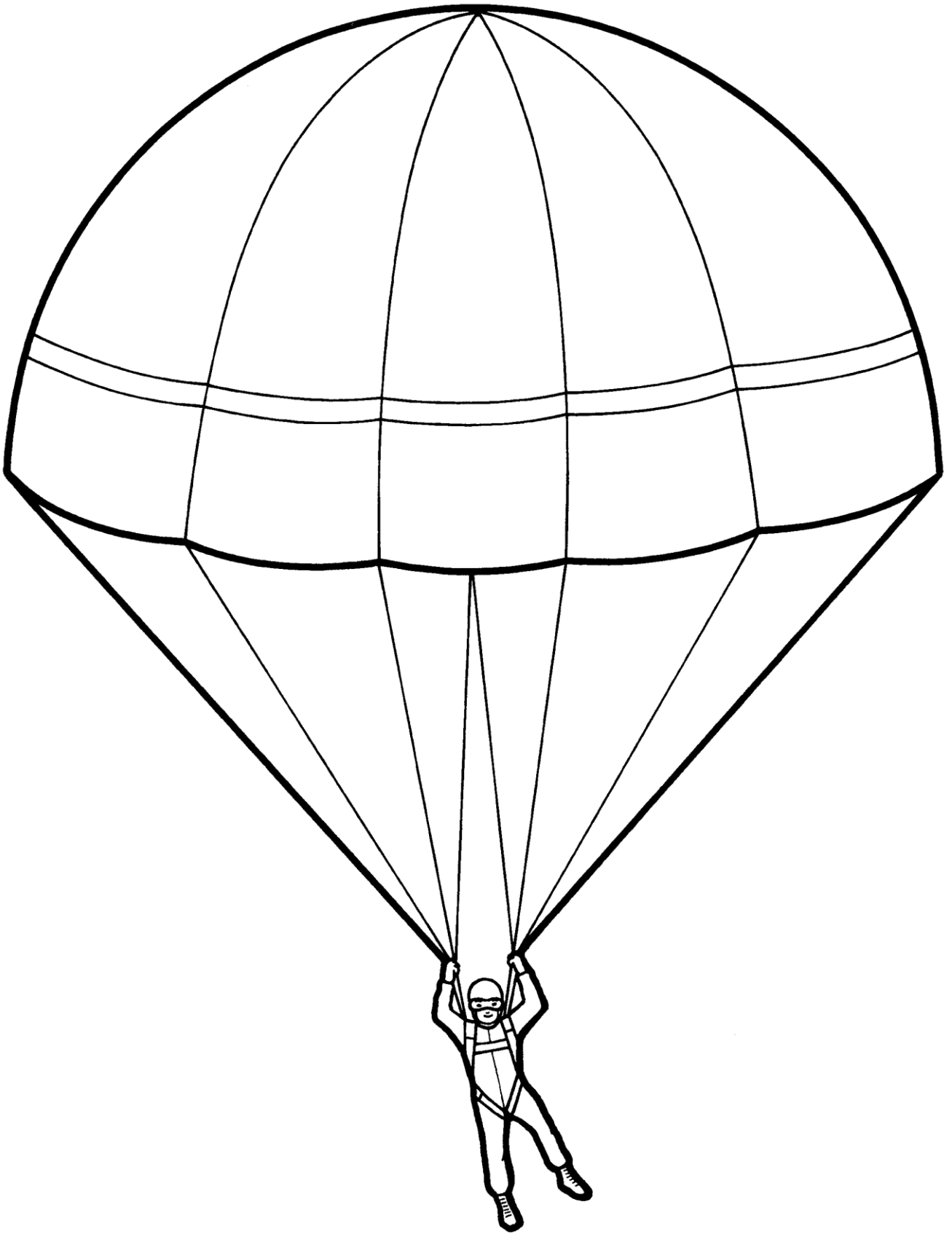
Do it nice and slowly, think of your parachute slowly and steadily expanding and then gently relaxing to the ground.

Can you do that 4 times? Keep picturing the coloured parachute filling with air and floating through the sky.

How does doing this make you feel?

## *Colour me in*

Think about all the things that make you who you are. On the parachute below write these things in each of the sections. Chose colours to represent these words and colour in your parachute.



## Survival Kit

If you were going on a journey, what would you need to put in to your survival kit backpack? What would the essential things be?

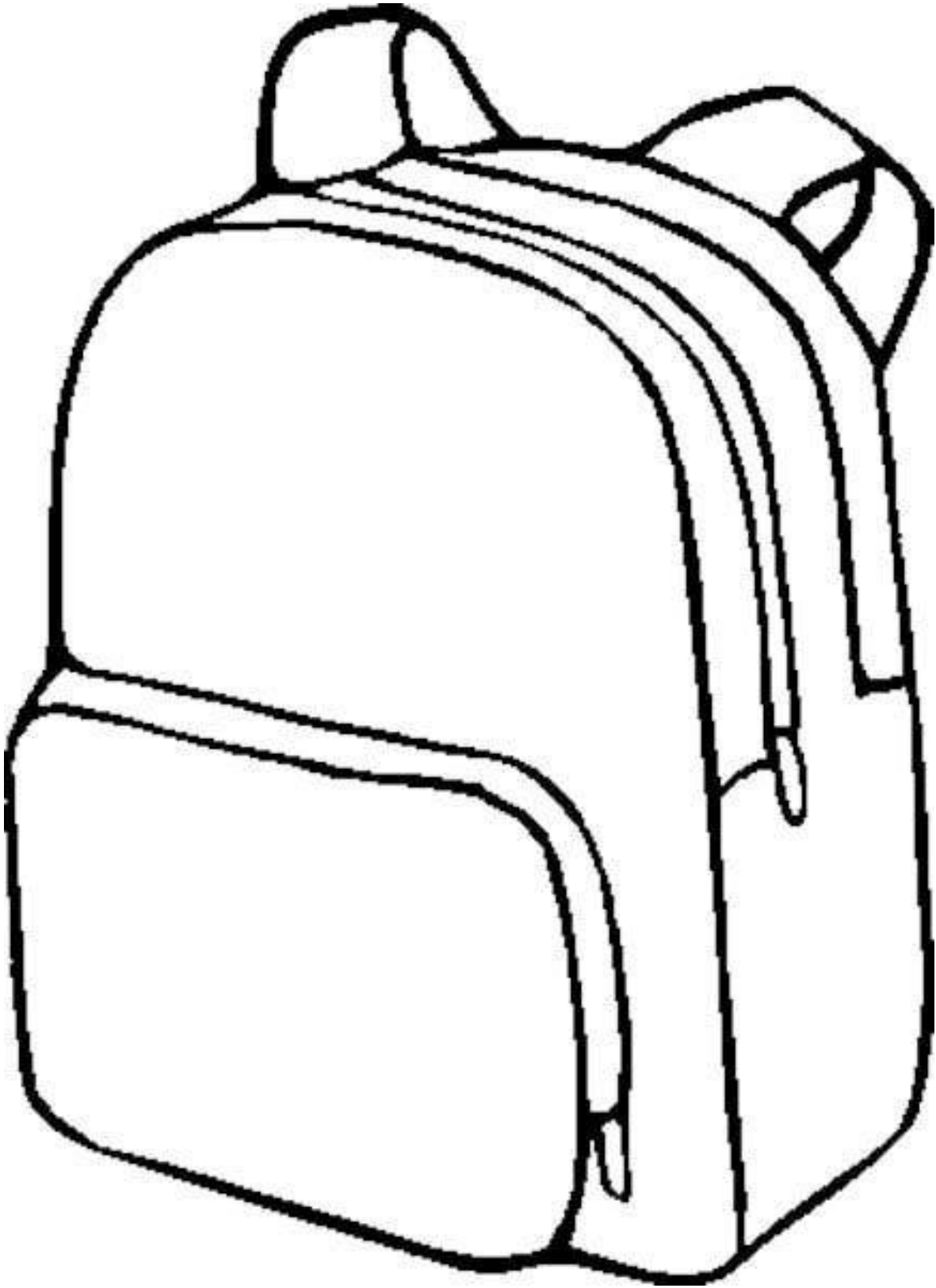
- A torch
- Matches and wood
- A tent
- Sleeping bag
- Food
- Water
- A coat
- Any others?

What do these objects offer you? These objects might represent the characters in the play, BT, Leila or Cleo? What do you think?

The objects might also represent some of the people in your life. For example, who is your torch, who helps you shine your light? Who gives you warmth?

Maybe an object represents you? Which one? What object would you like to be?

Add your essential objects to your backpack by drawing them below and then colour in your back pack, add your name and objects however you would like to.



## Signposting

Some scenes within Belongings explore children's feelings about not living with their birth families and also children's worries about their parents being unwell, unreliable or absent.

We are aware that some children may benefit from knowing in advance about these points or will have questions afterwards.

If you need some ideas about how to answer their questions, the following resource may be helpful: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/teaching-wiki/foster-care>

Other themes of loss, bereavement or trauma could also be evoked. The links below may be useful:

Beacon House - [Resources \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://www.beaconhouse.org.uk)

Child Bereavement UK - [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

Winston's Wish - [www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org)

British Association of Adoption and Fostering - [www.baaf.org.uk/info](http://www.baaf.org.uk/info)

Child Mental Health - [www.childmentalhealthcentre.org](http://www.childmentalhealthcentre.org)

Childline - [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) – 0800 11 11

Young Minds - [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

National Child Traumatic Stress Network - [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org)

Resource pack developed by Tangled Feet and Rowan Tree Dramatherapy

Belongings is funded by Arts Council England, The Steel Charitable Trust, Children In Need & Esmée Fairbairn Foundation as well as support in kind by Gulbenkian Theatre, Polka Theatre & The Culture Trust, Luton.



Supported using public funding by  
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