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The Parsnips

My Circus Life

A Traveller in Time

Reading Booklet

2022 key stage 2 English reading booklet

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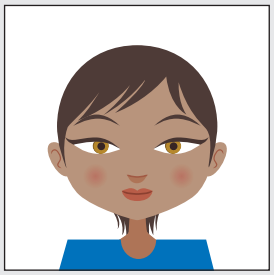
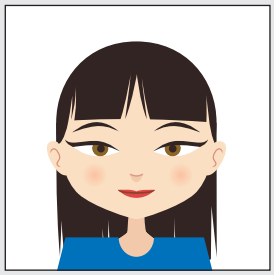
THE TEAM

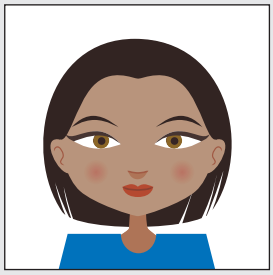


Gemma Hurst
DEFENDER



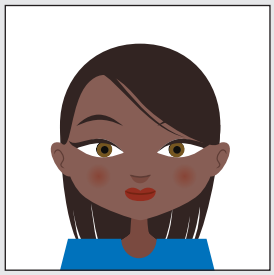
Holly Woolcock
DEFENDER

Dylan McNeil
LEFT WING



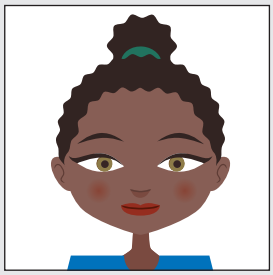
Tabinda Shah
STRIKER/MIDFIELDER

Megan Fawcett
GOALKEEPER

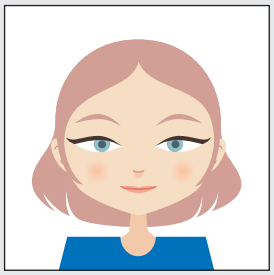


Lucy Skidmore
DEFENDER

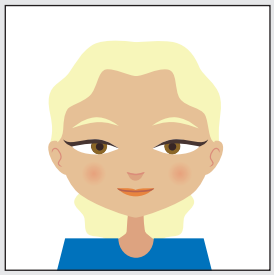
Jenny-Jane Bayliss
MIDFIELDER



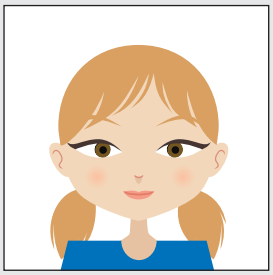
Eve Akboh
STRIKER



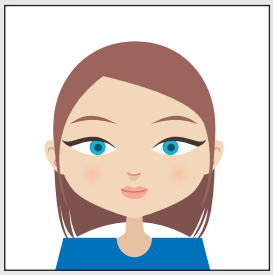
Petra Ward
DEFENDER



Veronika Kozak
MIDFIELDER



Daisy McNeil
RIGHT WING



Amy Minter
SUBSTITUTE

THE CLUB – THE FACTS

Name: Parrs Under 11s, also known as "The Parsnips"

Ground: Lornton FC, Low Road, Lornton

Capacity: 500

Plays in: The Nettie Honeyball Women's League

Sponsor: Sweet Peas Garden Centre, Mowborough

Coach: Hannah Preston

Assistant coach: Katie Regan

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Veronika plays for "The Parsnips", a girls' football team. In the extract below, Veronika is running late and has just got back to her house. Her sister (Sofi), brother (Yuri) and uncle are all waiting for the arrival of the team bus to pick her up. She is very excited because this is the day of the team's biggest challenge.

THE PARSNIPS

Waiting for me by the gate was Sofi, her wispy hair stuck to her chubby cheeks, her bottom lip jutting out. "You didn't come when I called you! You didn't come and I didn't know where you were."

"I am here now, silly," I said, offering her my hand.

She yawned and slid her hand in mine. It was warm and sticky. "You didn't come," she repeated.

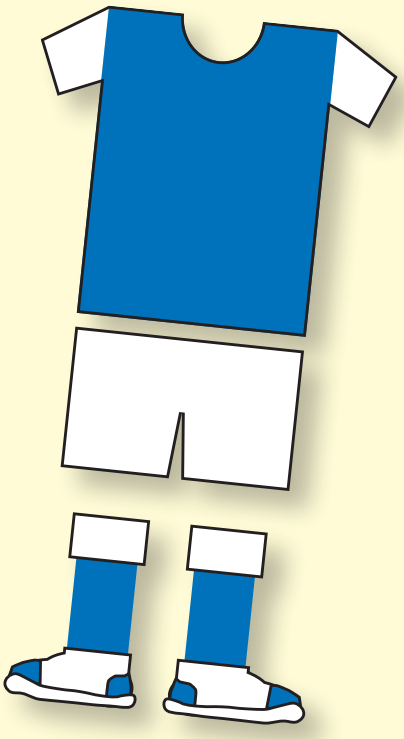
"Veronika, your boots," Uncle reminded me as I helped him and Sofi up the steps.

"Yes, Uncle, thank you."

"Always look after your boots. Look after your boots and they will look after you…"

Before I could reply, a banging on the front door startled all three of us. They were here!

Megan, my captain, beamed at me, her face shiny and excited. "Last port of call for Sherburn Sands! All aboard! Who's coming?"



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Behind her, I could see our minibus parked in the middle of the street. Several faces peered through the windows and my team-mates waved at me.

"Please wait," I said, panicking. "I just have to…" I turned, almost bumping into Yuri.

He dumped my bag at my feet. "Your belongings, ma'am."

I frowned at him. What was this? My brother being helpful!

"Is everything in there? My toothbrush? My kit?" I asked anxiously.

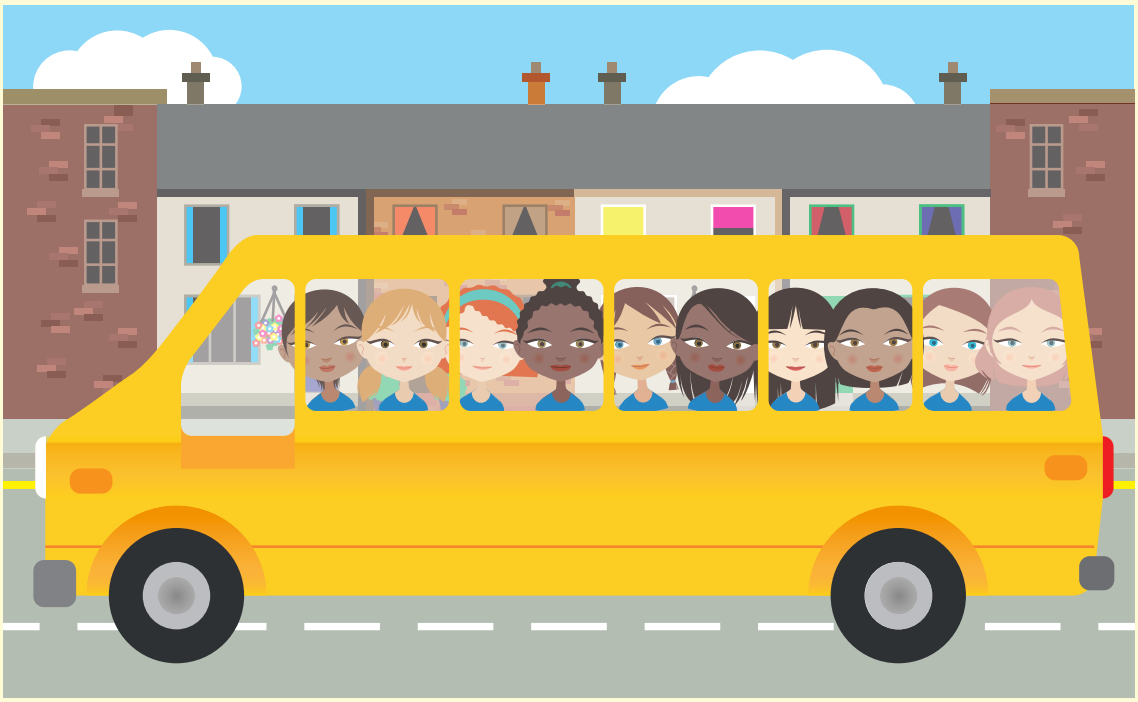
He bowed. "Your toothbrush. Your kit. Your Highness."

"You're sure?" I said. If he was playing one of his tricks…

"I'm sure." He gave me a sheepish grin.

"I believe you," I said, giving him a swift kiss on the cheek. I dashed into the front room and kissed Uncle and Sofi, too, then darted back into the hallway. "Be good," I instructed Yuri, hoisting my bag onto my shoulders and following Megan into the street. My heart began beating fast. It was actually happening. World Cup tournament, here I come!

I turned and waved at the three figures at the window – and for a moment I didn't want to go. But only for a moment.



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The test continues on the next page.
Turn over to read the next text.

This text is an interview with Vladik Miagkostoupov, a juggler and acrobat with a famous travelling circus.

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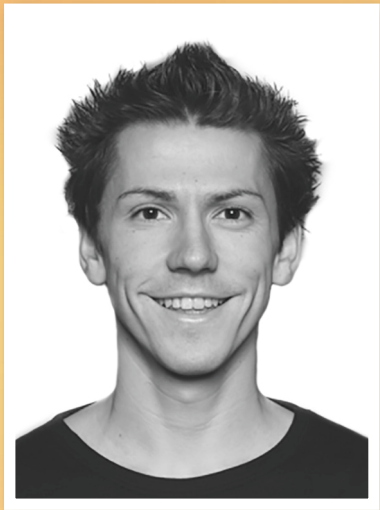
My Circus Life

Interview by Kari Kamin



Some people might be good at their jobs, but performer Vladik Miagkostoupov was actually born to do his! Raised by two Moscow Circus performers, young Vladik was tutored early on by his juggler father. By age nine, he'd perfected enough of his natural acrobatic and juggling skills to work full time with the circus.

Combining a seamless mix of acrobatics, dance and juggling, the star has performed with a range of companies in Paris and Monte Carlo. Several years ago, Vladik – who is now 28, married and a dad – began as a character in Dralion, an epic performance piece.

What will most appeal to kids about this show?

For children, the clowns! The show itself, I'm sure the kids will love because there are a lot of acrobatics. There's a lot of movement. It's very colourful. It's an uplifting show. You leave feeling happy. There's always something going on onstage.

You've performed this character for many years, since 2006. How often does your routine in Dralion change?

I'm always changing it. This routine I've actually been doing for 14 years. Every time I look at it, I'm putting in a new trick or changing the choreography. It's constantly changing.

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Do those changes happen naturally, or are you looking for ways to change it?

Sometimes those changes happen naturally, yeah. Sometimes I say to myself, “Wait a minute! I’m doing this differently.” I don’t know how it even happens. Some things, of course, I modify deliberately; I add a trick in or something. It’s easy to do it in practice. I have many, many tricks in training. But when you’re on stage, it’s different because you really have to have it perfect. Especially because you get used to doing the same things for that long. So when you start to put in something new, you automatically feel your body doing something wrong. [Laughs]

How does your daughter react to your act?

Actually, she likes it! After she was ten months old, she started walking. You know when they start walking, they just run away. Surprisingly when you watch a show with her, as soon as we sit down, she’s sitting there, watching the show. I don’t know; maybe she’ll be a performer also.

Did you react similarly when your father performed?

Yeah, yeah! All the shows they were doing, the kids were running around backstage. For me, I really liked watching.

Are there any particular lessons your father taught you that you still use today?

Everything he taught me! [Laughs] He taught me everything. One main thing: if you want to juggle, try and take dance classes. Do some other stuff, especially dance and acting. It helps you be a better performer. As a performer, you should be able to move well onstage and present yourself. It’s very important. I was lucky because my parents started taking me to dance classes when I was four years old. That’s a big part of it. My act is more performance juggling. I do movement and acrobatics, so it’s not just static juggling. It makes it more interesting.

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This text is about a young girl called Penelope who describes an unusual experience in her home. The story takes place in the early 20th century before electric lights were common in most households.

A Traveller in Time

Ours was a steep, crooked stair, with a handrail on one side, very narrow, with rooms leading off it so suddenly that it was easy to fall headlong as one stepped from a doorway. We had wallpaper with leaves on it, like a green wood in spring, and I used to sit on the stairs, pretending I was in a forest with birds singing around me. I was sitting there one evening, with my feet tucked under me, in a blue dusk, waiting for the lamplighter to come whistling down the street to bring a gleam to the stairway. There was a street lamp near, and this shone over the door and saved us from using our own gas-lamp.

I was suddenly aware how quiet it was. I might have been the only person in the world. Even the clock stopped ticking, and the mice ceased rustling in the wainscot. I turned my head and saw a lady coming downstairs from the upper floor. She was dressed in a black dress which swept round her like a cloud, and at her neck was a narrow white frill which shone like ivory. Her eyes were very bright and blue as violets. I sprang to my feet and smiled up at her, into the beautiful grave face she bent towards me. She gave an answering smile, and her deep-set eyes seemed to pierce me, and I caught my breath as I stood aside to let her pass. I never heard a footstep; she was there before I was aware.

She went by as I leaned against the wall, and I pressed myself against the paper to leave room for her full floating skirts which took all the stairway. I never felt them touch me, and this gave me a curious sensation. Soundlessly she swayed down the stairway, and I stood watching her, smelling the sweet, faint odour of her dress, seeing the pallor of the hands which held her ruffled skirts, yet hearing nothing at all.

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I leaned over the rail to watch her, and suddenly she was gone. The clock ticked loudly, the sounds of the street came to my ears, the lamplighter's whistle, clear and round, fluted through the air, and the bright gleam of the gas danced upon the patterned wall. I ran downstairs and pushed open the door into the sitting room, expecting to see her there. The room was empty, and I went thoughtfully down to the basement where my mother was cooking, and I asked about the lady.

"There is no one, child," she exclaimed. "You've imagined her. It is easy to think you see someone in the dusk with flickering street lights falling on the walls. It was the shadow of somebody in the street perhaps."

I was positive I had seen the lady and I described her.

Mother was very quiet, as if she were thinking what to say next. Then she changed the conversation, asking me if I would like to make treacle toffee that night.

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