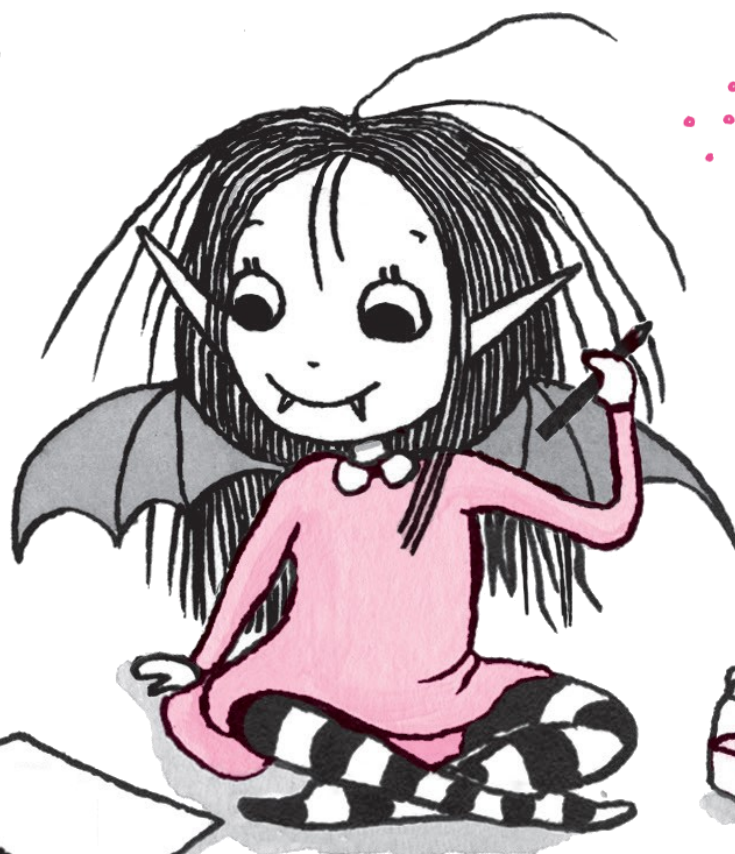


The ISADORA MOON

Guide to Writing Stories



Oxford
Children's
Books

trade@publicity.oup.com
www.oupchildrens.co.uk @OUPChildrens

Welcome to the

Isadora Moon Guide to Writing Stories

Creating your own worlds

When I was growing up, I loved writing and drawing my own stories. In every English class at school I always hoped we would be doing story-writing, and whenever we went on family holidays I would always spend my quiet time making up new adventures.

The thing I love most about writing is that you get to create your own little world, and you're the boss of it. You decide who lives in your world and what they will do. You can take the people in your world on exciting adventures and introduce them to new friends. You can have them fight scary monsters and find glittering treasure, or have them overcome every day challenges like their first day of school. Stories are places where magic and unicorns and dragons can come to life – literally anything is possible!

Using this guide

In this guide I want to show you some of the things I think about when I start writing a new story, using examples from my *Isadora Moon* books. There is no one right or wrong way to create stories, but I'll show you just one way to do it, and it's the way I created the whole world of *Isadora Moon*.

One of the greatest things about creating story worlds is that all you need to get started is some paper and a pen or pencil. Apart from this guide, that is all you will need too (except for scissors and glue if you want to make the story dice on page 28). You might also find it helpful to have a trusted grown-up to offer help and advice for some of the activities.

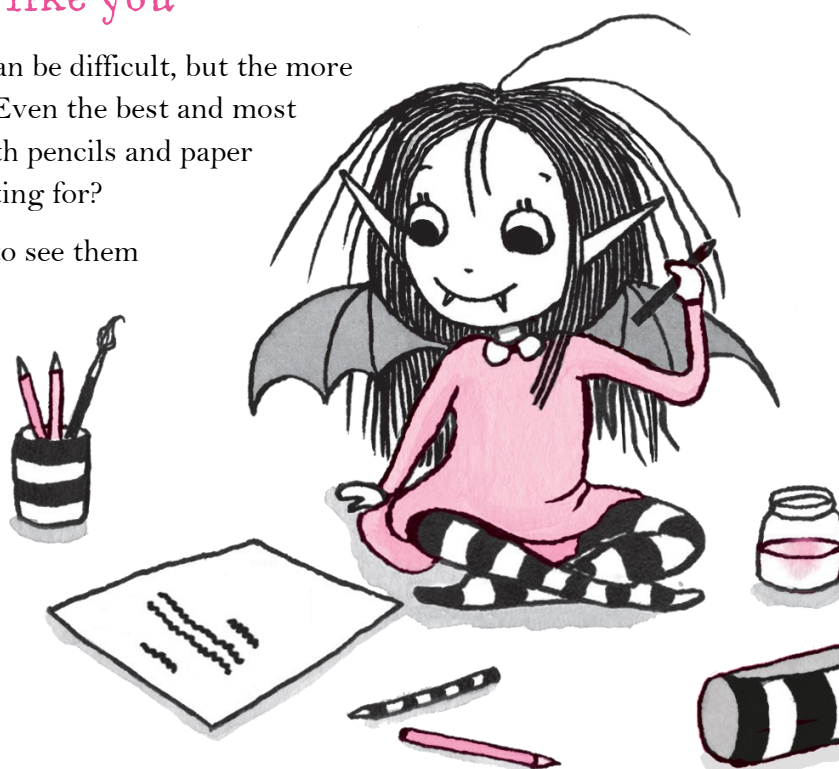
All writers started out just like you

Thinking up new ideas and writing stories can be difficult, but the more you practise, the better your stories will be. Even the best and most famous writers all started out as children with pencils and paper practising their stories. So what are you waiting for?

Have fun creating your stories, and I'd love to see them when they're finished! You can share them with me at harrietmuncaster.co.uk/contact.

Happy writing!

Harriet Muncaster x





Contents

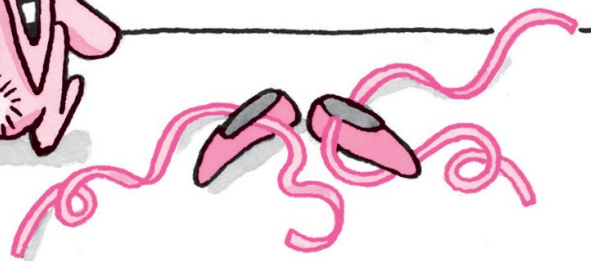
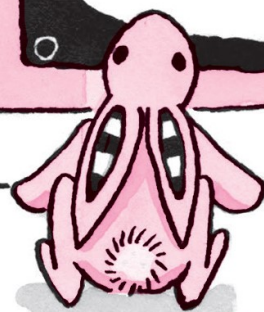
Part 1: Story Writing for Beginners.....	5
Harriet's Top 3 Writing Tips.....	6
Creating Characters.....	7
<i>Sketching Out Your Characters.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Who Will Your Character Be?</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Hybrids.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Can't Decide Your Character?</i>	
<i>Leave it to Chance!</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Name Your Character</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>4 Ways to Name Your Characters</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>What Is Your Character Like?</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Character Sheet (example)</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Character Sheet</i>	<i>12</i>
Plot.....	13
<i>Plot Summaries</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Problems</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Problems In Your Story</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Easy Problems Make Boring Stories</i>	<i>16</i>



Contents

<i>Making Problems Difficult</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Problem solved</i>	<i>18</i>
Get Started.....	19
Part 2: Story Writing for Experts.....	20
<i>Drafts and Editors</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Titles</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Point of View</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Description</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Illustrations</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Getting Published and Making Books</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Ideas For Starting More Stories</i>	<i>27</i>
Isadora Moon Story Dice.....	31
<i>How to Use the Isadora Moon Story Dice.....</i>	<i>31</i>
Thanks For Reading the Isadora Moon Guide to Writing Stories!	31

1. Story-writing For Beginners





Top 3 Writing Tips

1. Write Lots

The more you practice, the better you'll get!

2. Read Lots

You'll pick up new techniques and skills by seeing how other writers do it.

3. Write What You Want to Read

Don't worry what other people might think of your story.



Creating Characters

Characters are people a story is about. Usually stories are about people, but characters can also be animals, magical creatures or even toys that have come to life! Isadora Moon is a character because the *Isadora Moon* books are about her.

Sketching Out Your Characters

The first thing you should decide is who your characters will be.

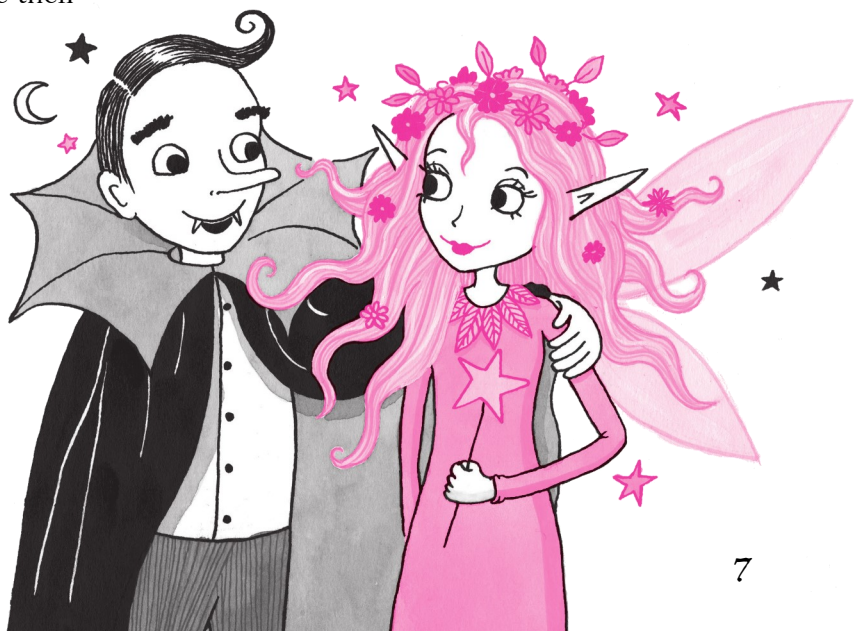
When I want to write a new story, I sometimes start by drawing different faces to help me create characters. I came up with Isadora Moon when I drew this picture:



I was pleased with the way this face looked, so I thought about who that face could belong to. She can't be human, because she has pointy ears and fangs... so she must be part vampire and part fairy.

Once I knew she was a vampire fairy, it became a lot easier to think of a story for her. A vampire fairy must have parents who are a vampire and a fairy, and they might have different ideas about where their child should go to school.

If I didn't start by thinking up the character of Isadora Moon, I would not have been able to write a story about her!

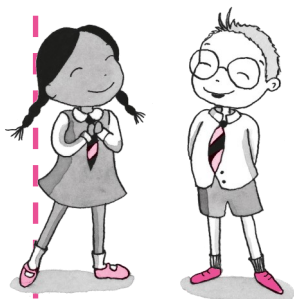


Who Will Your Character Be?

Your character can be anyone or anything you like. They can be a person, an animal, or even a creature you make up yourself. We'll look at some different ways to come up with a unique character, but here is a list of ideas to get you thinking:



Person



Boy
Girl
Man
Woman
Old man
Old woman

Elephant
Monkey
Polar bear
Penguin
Panda
Snake
Fish
Seal
Dolphin
Whale
Dinosaur



Animal

Dog
Cat
Mouse
Rabbit
Spider
Snail
Ladybird
Fox
Owl
Bat
Frog
Hedgehog
Bear
Wolf
Eagle

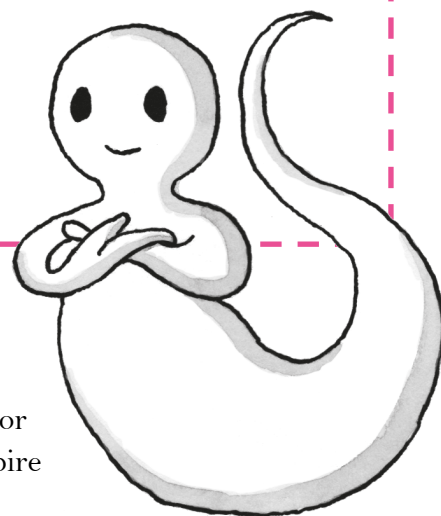
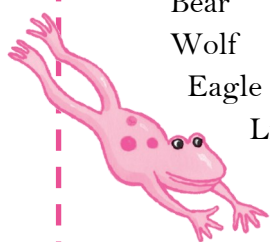
Lion
Tiger
Giraffe

Magical Creature

Witch
Wizard
Vampire
Fairy
Dragon
Mermaid
Ghost
Monster
Pixie
Elf
Unicorn
Pegasus
Goblin
Troll

Toy or Object

Doll
Teddy bear
Puppet
Action figure
Rocking horse
Rubber duck



Hybrids

'Hybrid' means a creature made up of two or more different animals or creatures. Isadora Moon is a hybrid because she is a mixture of vampire and fairy.

Mixing together different things that already exist is an excellent way to create something new and interesting. I didn't invent vampires, and I didn't invent fairies. Stories about both vampires and fairies have been around for hundreds of years. As far as I know though, there was never a story about a vampire fairy before I wrote about Isadora Moon. Being a mixture of two things is what makes her special.

Can't Decide Your Character? Leave it to Chance!



If you can't pick what sort of character you would like, you can roll a 6-sided die. You can use the numbers on the Isadora Moon Story dice on page 31 or a die from a board game. Sometimes even people who do writing for their job use dice or flip coins to help them pick new ideas.

- ★ Roll your die once, check the number and put your finger on that number at the top of the table. Keeping your finger on the number at the top, roll the die again and check the number. Now put another finger on the second number along the side of the table. If you move your first finger down, and your second finger to the right, where they meet will be your character.

Die 1 → Die 2 ↓	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Human	Dog	Cat	Mouse	Rabbit	Fox
2	Owl	Bear	Wolf	Lion	Eagle	Bear
3	Giraffe	Elephant	Monkey	Penguin	Panda	Snake
4	Fish	Dolphin	Dinosaur	Witch	Wizard	Vampire
5	Fairy	Dragon	Mermaid	Ghost	Monster	Elf
6	Unicorn	Troll	Doll	Puppet	Teddy bear	Action Doll

Example: If I rolled a 2 first and then I rolled a 5, my two fingers would meet on 'dragon'.

Name Your Character

A name will make your character seem more like a real person. Think carefully about what name you could give your character, as this will be the first thing someone who reads your story will find out. You might have a name in mind already, or you might like to come back to your character's name.

To come up with Isadora Moon's name, I looked at a list of 'vampire names' on the internet. I liked the sound of the name Isadora, so I chose it from the list. For her last name, I thought about different words that relate to vampires. Moon, bat, fang, cape, and coffin are some words I could have chosen, but 'Moon' went best with 'Isadora'.



4 Ways to Name Your Characters

1. Alliteration

‘Alliteration’ means putting words together that begin with the same letter. If your character is an animal or creature, you could give it a name beginning with the same letter. Here are some examples:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| ★ Georgina Giraffe | ★ Wally Wolf |
| ★ Oliver Owl | ★ Timothy the Troll |
| ★ Dino Dolphin | ★ Faith the Fox |

3. Related word

If you have chosen an animal or magical creature, try writing down all the words you can think of for that animal or creature. I already gave some examples for vampires. Here are some more:

- | Fairy: | Unicorn: | Witch: |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| ★ Blossom | ★ Rainbow | ★ Potion |
| ★ Leaf | ★ Sparkle | ★ Cauldron |
| ★ Spring | ★ Glitter | ★ Cloak |
| ★ Summer | ★ Dance | ★ Hemlock |
| ★ Flutter | ★ Berry | ★ Black Cat |
| ★ Shimmer | ★ Hoof | ★ Broomstick |

2. Characteristic

Isadora’s favourite toy is Pink Rabbit. Why is he called that? It’s because he’s a rabbit who’s pink!

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| ★ Angry Monkey | ★ Big Doll |
| ★ Fussy Penguin | ★ Sparkly Unicorn |
| ★ Lonely Dinosaur | ★ Friendly Eagle |

4. Combination names

Sometimes you can create cool and completely new names by mixing together two words.

When *Isadora Moon Goes to School* was released in America, the American publisher asked me to give the teacher at fairy school a new name.

I suggested Mr. Sparkletoes, which is a name I made up from the words ‘sparkle’ and ‘toes’.

You could mix any two random words, or you could try the ‘related words’ name method above, and put two of the words together:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ★ Mrs. Nightcoffin
(vampire) | ★ Miss. Blackcat (witch) |
| ★ Mr. Springflutter
(fairy) | ★ Heatherburrow the
Rabbit |
| ★ Glitterhoof the
Unicorn | ★ Scaleclaw the
Dinosaur |

What Is Your Character Like?

Really good writers know a lot about their characters before they even start to write. The more detail you know about your character, the better your story will be. Here are some questions to get you started.



- | | |
|--|---|
| ★ What is their favourite thing to do? | ★ Do they go to work or school or neither? |
| ★ What is their favourite thing they own? | ★ If they go to school, what is their best subject? |
| ★ What makes them happy? | ★ If they go to work, what is their job? |
| ★ What makes them sad? | ★ What do they want most in the world? |
| ★ Where do they live? What is their home like? | |
| ★ Who is in their family? | |
| ★ What is their favourite food? | |
| ★ Who is their best friend? | |

Think about these questions now, then turn to the next page. ➔

Character Sheet (example)

Now that you have created your character, fill in their details on the character sheet on the next page. This will remind you of all the details about your character that you may like to include in your story.

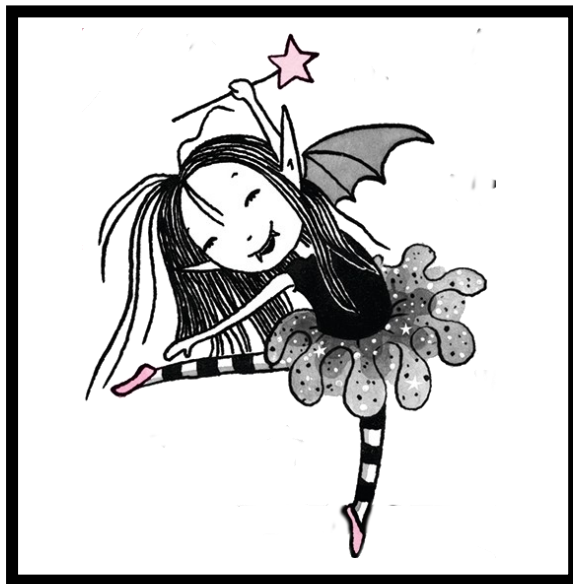
I've done an example character sheet for Isadora Moon:

This is Isadora Moon.

This is what She/~~he~~ looks like →

She/~~he~~ is a vampire fairy who loves to fly around using her bat wings and use her magic wand to cast spells.

The best thing she/~~he~~ owns is her stuffed Pink Rabbit toy that her mum magicked alive.



Spending time with her friends and meeting new friends makes her/~~him~~ happy.

Losing things and getting into trouble makes her/~~him~~ sad.

She/~~he~~ lives in a big house that is half pink and half black.

In her/~~his~~ family is her mum (a fairy), her dad (a vampire), and her baby sister, Honeyblossom, who is also a vampire fairy.

Her/~~his~~ favourite food is peanut butter.

Her/~~his~~ best friend is Pink Rabbit, who was her toy but came to life by magic.

Choose one:

☐ She/he goes to school and her/~~his~~ best subject is English.

☐ She/he goes to work as a _____.

☐ She/he does not go to work or school. Instead, she/he spends her time _____.

In the future, she/~~he~~ would most like to be a famous ballerina.

Your Character Sheet

Now try filling out your own character sheet:

This is _____

This is what She/he looks like ➔

She/he is _____ who loves
to _____

The best thing she/he owns is _____

_____ makes her/him happy.

_____ makes her/him sad.

She/he lives in _____

In her/his family _____

Her/his favourite food is _____

Her/his best friend is _____

Choose one:

☐ She/he goes to school and her/his best subject is _____

☐ She/he goes to work as a _____

☐ She/he does not go to work or school. Instead, she/he spends her time _____

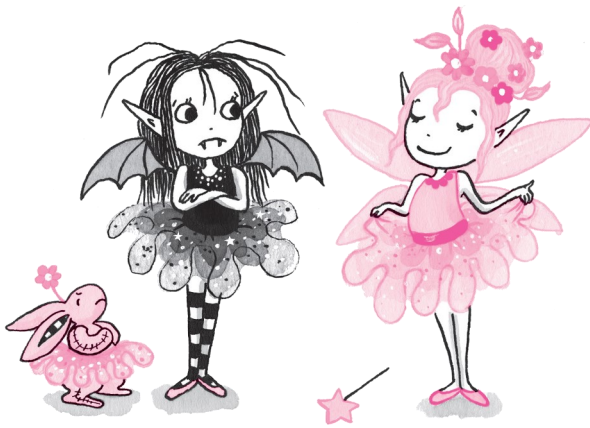
In the future, she/he would most like to _____

Plot

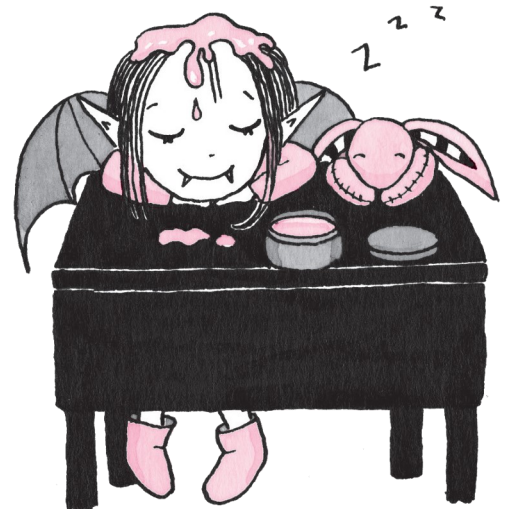
The events that happen in a story are called the 'plot'. You need to decide what will happen to your character and what they will do. Before you start writing your story, it is helpful to write a very short version of it called a 'plot summary'. Writing a plot summary helps you to remember all the things you want to include in a story. I write a plot summary every time I want to start writing a new story.

Plot Summaries

Here is the plot summary for *Isadora Moon Goes to School*:



1. Isadora Moon is a vampire fairy who lives in a big house with her parents.
2. Every day she sees human children going to school.
3. Isadora thinks she does not have to go to school because she is a vampire fairy....
4. ...but one day her parents tell her she needs to decide what school to go to.
5. Her mum thinks she should go to fairy school, but her dad wants her to go to vampire school.
6. They agree Isadora will try each school for one day and then decide.
7. Isadora goes to fairy school for a day, but does not like it because she finds the lessons difficult. This is because she is only half fairy and all the other children are full fairies.
8. Isadora then goes to vampire school for a night. She also finds this difficult because she is not a full vampire and does not fit in.
9. Isadora is sad because neither school is right for her and she has to pick one.
10. Then she has an idea: she can go to human school where everyone is different.
11. Isadora's parents agree and everyone is happy because Isadora has chosen a school where she can fit in.



PRACTICE: Try writing a plot summary for one of the other *Isadora Moon* books, or even another story that you like.

Problems

Every story needs to have some sort of problem for the main character. The problem can be anything you like, but it has to take some work for the main character to solve.

QUESTION: Look again at the plot summary on the last page. Can you see what Isadora Moon's problem is? (answer at the bottom of the page)



Here are some more examples of problems Isadora faces:

- ★ In *Isadora Moon Goes Camping*, Isadora loses her dad's favourite antique comb. It is very difficult to find again because it was washed out to sea.
- ★ In *Isadora Moon Has a Birthday*, Isadora wants a normal, human birthday party, but she is worried her parents will make it too magical.
- ★ In *Isadora Moon Goes to the Ballet*, Pink Rabbit wanders off in the busy theatre, and Isadora and her mum have to look for him.

Short stories often only have one problem, but in longer books, like *Isadora Moon*, one problem can lead to another, bigger problem. Having a bigger problem follow a small problem is one way to make your story more exciting.

QUESTION: Can you remember what bigger problems Isadora Moon has to deal with when she has a birthday and when she goes to the ballet? The pictures below might give you some clues:



CHALLENGE: What about the problems Isadora faces in some of the other stories? How many can you think of?

ANSWER: Isadora Moon has a problem because she does not know which school to go to, but she needs to make a decision. This is a difficult decision because she isn't sure where she belongs.

Problems In Your Story

Now start thinking of what problems your character might have to deal with. You can use your character sheet for inspiration. For example, you might look at what your character most wants to do or have in the future. What could stop them from doing or getting that?

Here is a list of problems to help get you started. Your character...

- ★ Sees someone who is upset about something
- ★ Feels lonely
- ★ Loses something important
- ★ Gets lost in a forest
- ★ Wants to find treasure and get rich
- ★ Feels left out by a group of people
- ★ Has to stay in a spooky place
- ★ Wants to go on holiday
- ★ Has a friend who is moving away
- ★ Needs to rescue someone
- ★ Wants to win a competition, game, or race



- ★ Is afraid of the dark or afraid of something else
- ★ Has had something stolen or broken by someone else
- ★ Really wants something from a shop window
- ★ Gets into an argument with someone and finds it hard to say sorry
- ★ Needs to defeat a scary monster
- ★ Finds something someone has lost
- ★ Breaks something that belongs to someone else
- ★ Is telling the truth, but nobody believes them
- ★ Wants to give someone a really good present or surprise

The above ideas are just to get you started, so you will have to add more details. For example, you will have to decide what the 'something' is if you choose 'finds something someone has lost' or 'breaks something that belongs to someone else'. There are also plenty more problems you could think of that are not listed above.

QUESTION: What problems from the list above might your character face?

Easy Problems Make Boring Stories

The most important thing to remember is that your problem cannot be too easy to solve. This would **not** be a very interesting story:



One day Isadora Moon was very hungry. Her tummy was rumbling and it felt like dinner was hours away. She went downstairs and said, "Mum, I'm hungry."

Her mum said "Don't worry, Isadora. I'll make you a peanut butter sandwich."

Her mum made her a delicious peanut butter sandwich and Isadora ate it. Afterwards, she was no longer at all hungry.

Isadora's problem was that she was hungry, but this was too easy to fix. In order to make a story interesting, the problem must be difficult.

Making Problems Difficult

There are a few different ways to make problems more difficult.

1. Didn't work first time

In life, you may not always get something right first time. It's the same in stories. The first thing your character tries might not work for some reason, so they will have to try something else.

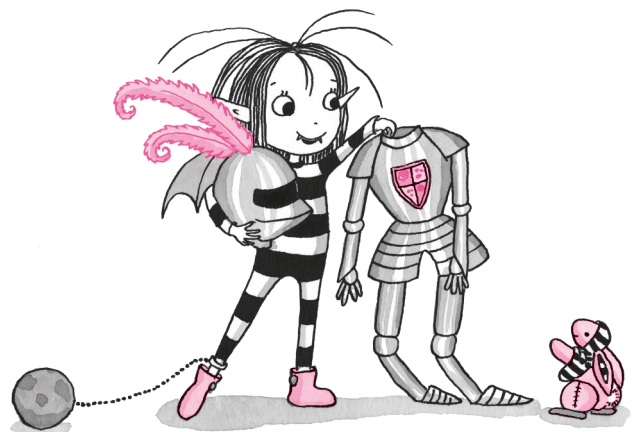
In *Isadora Moon Goes to School*, Isadora has to try fairy school and vampire school before she can solve her problem of which school to go to.

It is usually a good idea to have your character try two things that do not work, before they get it right on number three.

CHALLENGE: Can you think of any other stories where a character solves their problem on the third try? Hint: there is one very famous story involving a golden-haired girl, bears and porridge.

Ideas for 'didn't work first time':

- ★ Your character is looking for treasure, and looks in two places with no treasure before finding some.
- ★ Your character is lonely, so they try making friends with two different groups before finding a group to be friends with.
- ★ Your character wants to give a really good present to their friend, but the first two presents they think of don't work out.



2. Obstacles

An obstacle is something which gets in the way. Obstacles are like mini-problems that make the main problem worse. Some stories have lots of obstacles.

Obstacles could be:

- ★ Mountains, rivers, fallen trees, thorns or the sea.
- ★ Bad weather or long distances.
- ★ Walls, gates, locked doors, hedges or fences.
- ★ Animals, monsters or guards.

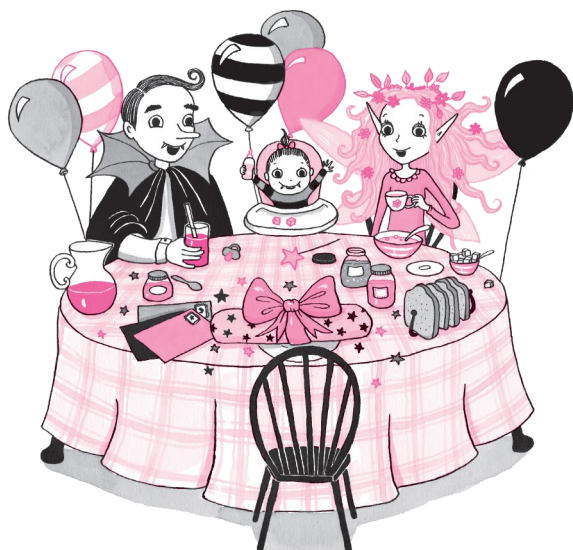
Obstacles could also be something your character doesn't have or can't do:

- ★ Your character might need a special tool or special clothes to do something.
- ★ They might not be strong enough, tall or small enough, or fast enough for what they need to do.
- ★ Your character might not have enough money or be running out of time.



These are just some examples of obstacles, but almost anything can be an obstacle in your story.

Here are three examples of obstacles from the *Isadora Moon* stories:



1. When Isadora wants a regular human birthday party, her parents don't understand how to make one.

Obstacle: Isadora's parents don't have enough understanding of human parties.

2. When Isadora wants to help the ballerina Tatiana Tutu perform on stage, Tatiana has a broken leg.

Obstacle: Tatiana's broken leg.

3. When Isadora loses her dad's favourite comb on the beach, it could be anywhere in the sea. **Obstacle:** the sea.

QUESTION: When have you wanted or tried to do something which you weren't able to do? What obstacle got in your way?

3. Other People Can Be Difficult!

Another person in your story may want or need or do something that makes things harder for your character.

Here are some examples:

1. Bruno has borrowed Jasper's toy truck and broken it (**problem**). Bruno's dad can fix it, but he **needs** Bruno to find some glue somewhere in the shed (**make it difficult**).
2. Wilbur would like to give his sister, Mirabelle, a colour-changing witch's hat for her birthday, but he doesn't know the spell to make the colours change (**problem**). Mirabelle's friend knows the spell, but **wants** Wilbur to bring her some fancy chocolates before she will share the secret (**make it difficult**).
3. Zoe has invited Isadora over to make bracelets together, but when she checks her bead box, all the beads are gone (**problem**). Zoe finds out that her brother has using her beads as slingshot bullets in the garden. Because of what he has been **doing**, all the beads will be really hard to find (**make it difficult**).



Your story might have a villain (or 'baddie') who makes things difficult on purpose to be mean, or you might have other characters who accidentally make things more difficult.

QUESTION: Can you remember which underwater person made it harder for Isadora to get back her dad's precious comb when she went camping? What did that person **want** Isadora to do before she would give back the comb?

Problem solved

In the final part of the story, you need to show how your character solves their problem.

This will depend on the type of character and their exact problem. Here are some questions you could ask about the solution:

- ★ Did they have to do something, or could they just talk to someone?
- ★ Did they need a special tool to solve their problem?
- ★ Did they need anyone else to help or did they do it on their own?
- ★ Was the problem somehow different to what they thought?
- ★ Is the problem solved forever or just for a while?



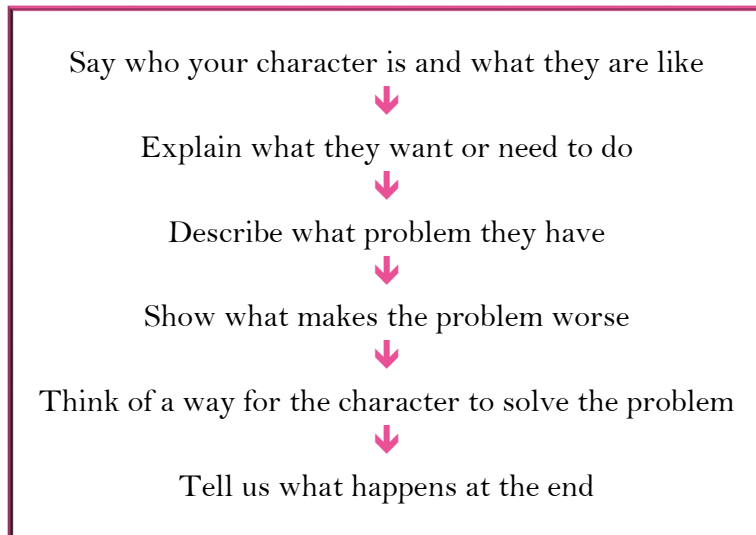
Get Started!

You now have everything you need to start writing your story!

- ☒ Character
- ☒ Problem
- ☒ Make it difficult
- ☒ Solve the problem
- ☒ Plot summary



Here is a rough outline for how to put your story together:

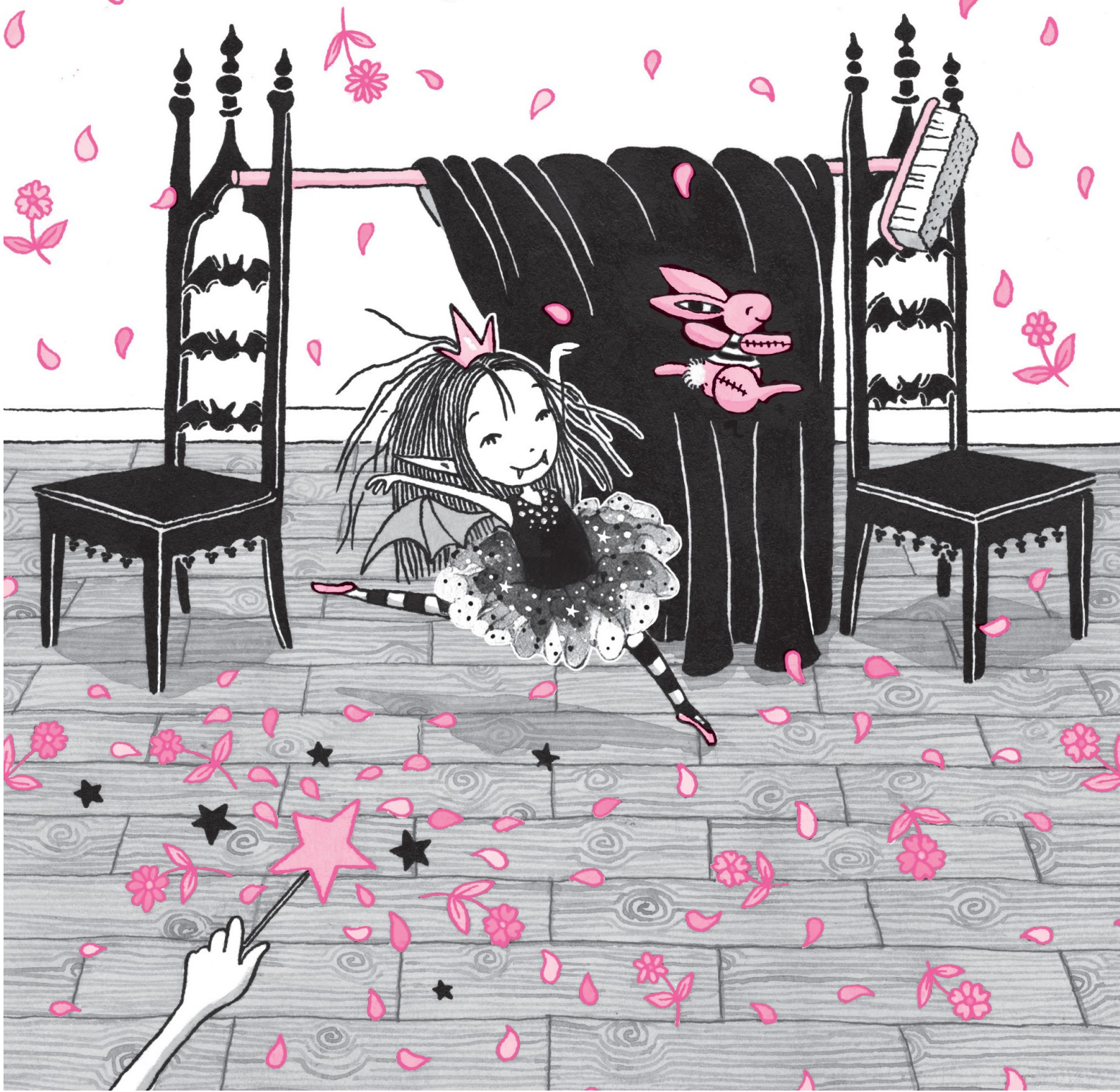


Have a go at writing your story now, then come back to this guide later for ideas on how to improve it.



STOP HERE! Come back when you've had a go at writing your story!

2. Story-writing For Experts



Expert Tips

There is more to really great stories than interesting characters and an exciting plot. The more you work on your stories, the better they will be. The tips in this next section will help you to really make your stories sparkle.

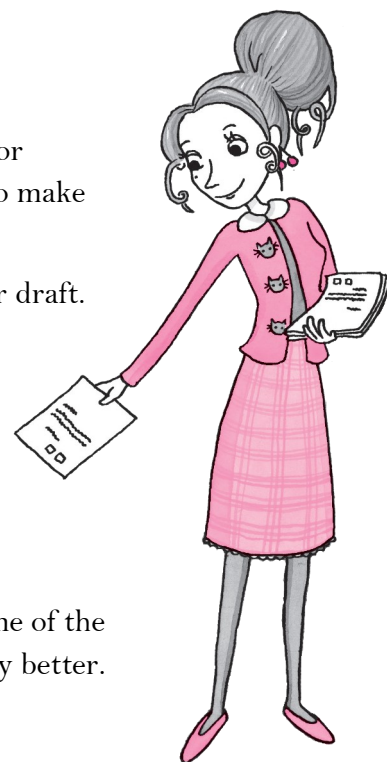
Drafts and Editors

At school, your teacher may have told you about 'first drafts' and 'final drafts' (sometimes called 'rough work' and 'best work'). Drafting isn't just for school – even writers who have written lots of books will do lots of drafts to make their stories perfect.

It's a good idea to get other people to read your story before you do another draft. You can ask a parent, friend or teacher to read it. They will be able to give you helpful suggestions for how to make it better.

Because I do writing for a job, I have a special person who reads my stories called an 'editor'. It is an editor's job to read stories and make them better. When a parent, friend or teacher is helping you improve your story, they are being your editor.

Once your editor has read your story, you start your second draft using some of the tips in the rest of this guide. Keep reading for more ways to make your story better.



Titles

Remember to give your story an interesting title. A good title tells you about something that will be in the story. Here are the titles of the first four *Isadora Moon* books:



- ★ *Isadora Moon Goes to School*
- ★ *Isadora Moon Goes Camping*
- ★ *Isadora Moon Has a Birthday*
- ★ *Isadora Moon Goes to the Ballet*

Each title lets you know that the story will be about Isadora Moon and gives you a hint about what she will be doing.

One of my favourite titles is *Isadora Moon Gets in Trouble* because when you read it, it makes you wonder 'Why is Isadora Moon in trouble? What has she done?'

Another way to write a title is to pick an interesting object that appears in your story. Titles like these could also be interesting:

- ★ *The Magic Key*
- ★ *The Angry Monkey*
- ★ *The Spooky House*

Point of View

When you wrote your story did you say ‘**I** did this...’ or did you say ‘**Oliver** did this...’ and ‘**She** did that...’?

If you used ‘I’ you were writing in the ‘first-person’. If you used your character’s name and ‘she’ or ‘he’, you were writing in the ‘third-person’. The *Isadora Moon* books are written in ‘first-person’.

First-Person point of view

“**I** usually have two breakfasts. **I** don’t mind because peanut butter on toast is **my** favourite thing to eat.”

If the *Isadora Moon* books were written in third person, it would like this...

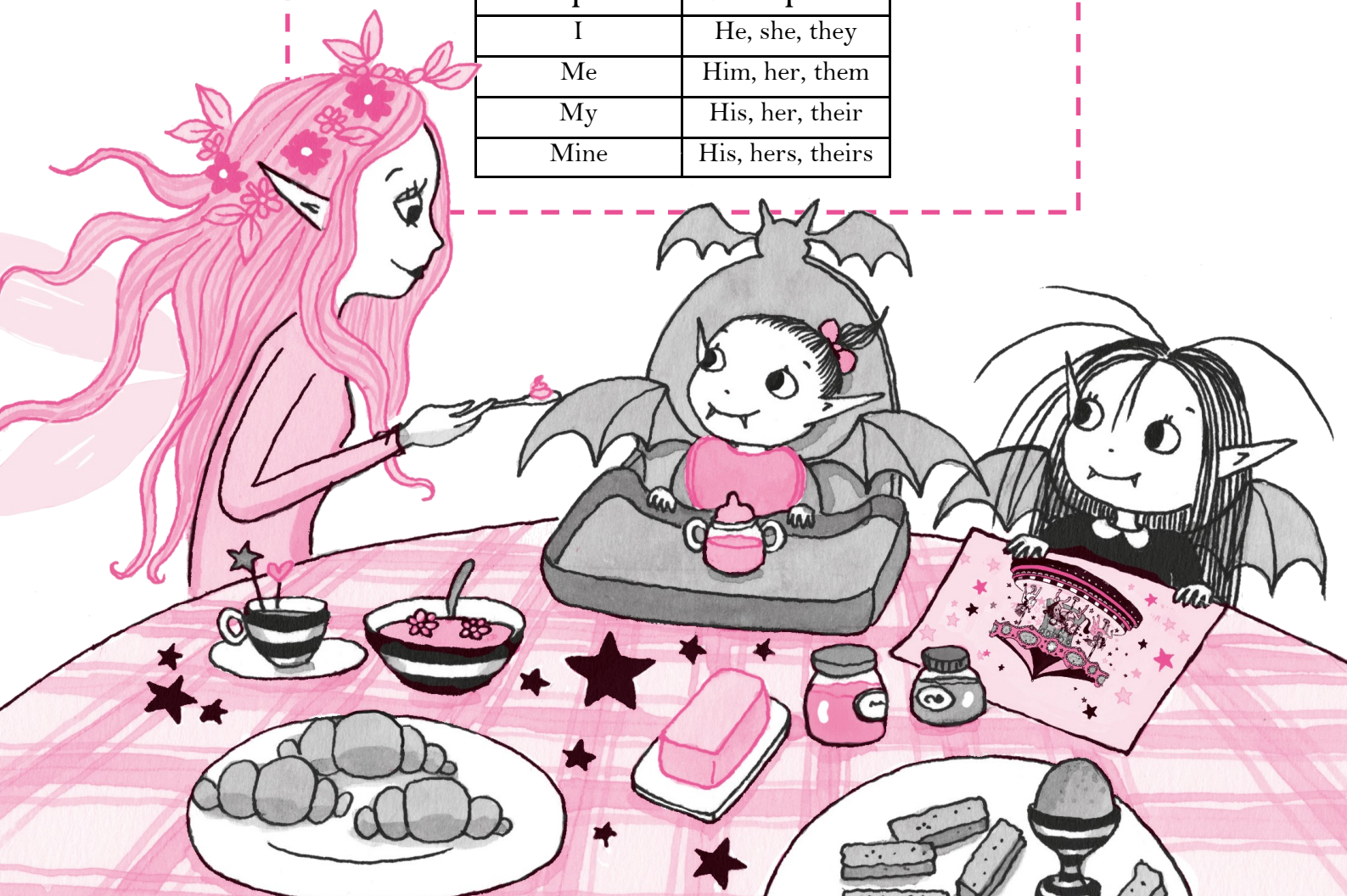
Third-Person point of view

“**Isadora** usually has two breakfasts. **She** doesn’t mind because peanut butter on toast is **her** favourite thing to eat.”

You may not have even realised you were making a choice when you started writing your story! Whichever one you used does not actually matter though. What is important is to make sure you use the same one all the way through.

TIP: When you are learning to write stories, I think third-person is easiest. This table will help you spot the difference:

First-person	Third-person
I	He, she, they
Me	Him, her, them
My	His, her, their
Mine	His, hers, theirs



Description

You use description whenever you say what something looks, smells, or sounds like, as well as when you use the other senses. It is a way of building up a picture using words. Description helps someone reading your story to imagine the thing you are describing.

Adjectives or 'Describing Words'

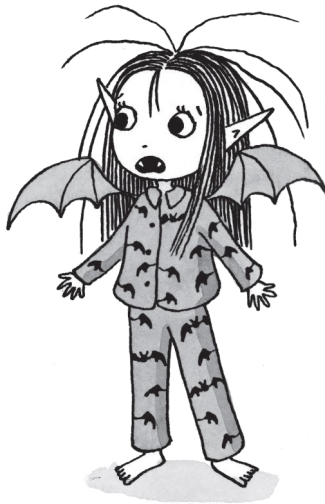
Adjectives are words which describe the things in your story. They are really useful for creating certain feelings or 'mood'.

Here is a plain sentence without any adjectives.

I saw a bear.

Look at how adjectives can change the way you feel when you read the same sentence again:

I saw a fierce, scary bear.



I saw a cute, fluffy bear.



I know which sort of bear I would rather see!

If you just write 'I saw a bear' then someone reading your story will not know whether it is nice and fluffy or big and scary. Using adjectives helps to put across what you can see in your imagination more.

Some Adjectives You Could Use

You can use adjectives to describe pretty much anything. They help to add more detail to your story. Here are some things you could describe, and some adjectives you can use:

Good and Bad

Terrible Awful Bad
Average Good
Excellent Amazing
Brilliant Fantastic
Super

Colours

Red Yellow Blue Green
Orange Purple Pink
Brown Black White

Weather

Sunny Rainy Stormy
Windy Snowy Icy Hot
Warm Cool Cold
Freezing

Feelings

Happy Joyful Excited
Confident Sad Lonely
Angry Scared Confused
Tired Sleepy Nervous
Shy Relaxed Bored
Cheerful

Characters

Friendly Helpful Kind
Cool Strong Honest
Tall Short Thin Skinny
Plump Mean

Size

Teeny-weeny Tiny
Small Little Medium

Big Huge Massive
Gigantic

Sound

Quiet Loud Deafening
Screechy Gentle
Rattling Banging
Tinkling Gurgling

Texture

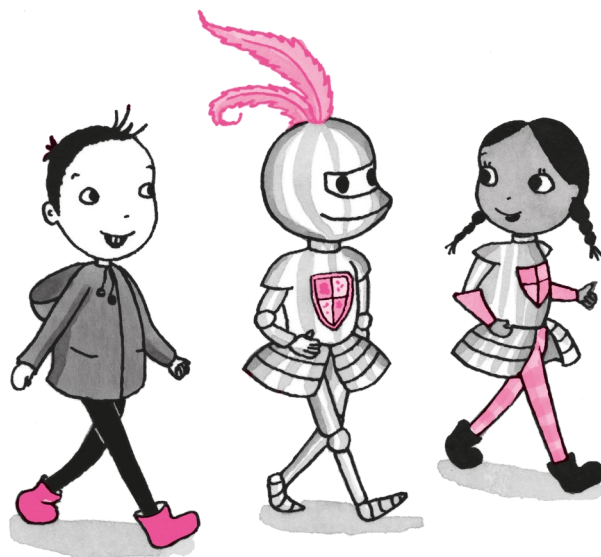
Fluffy Rough Smooth
Soft Hard Shiny Dull
Scratchy Itchy

Taste and Smell

Delicious Yummy
Tasty Sweet Fragrant
Sour Bitter Disgusting
Smelly Stinky Yucky

TIP: If you don't know any of the above words, try asking an adult or using a dictionary.

TIP: Use a Thesaurus to help you find more interesting words for what you want to describe. You can use a children's thesaurus if you have one, or ask an adult to help you find one online.



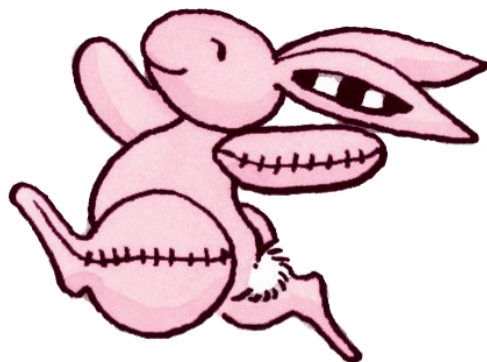
Spotting and Using Adjectives

Adjectives describe things, people, or places. They often appear in front of naming words (nouns). You can also check if something is an adjective by seeing if it will fit into this sentence:

He/She/It is very _____.

For example:

- ★ He is very happy.
- ★ She is very tall.
- ★ It is very fluffy.



CHALLENGE: Can you spot the adjectives in these sentences from *Isadora Moon*?

1. 'Dad spends at least an hour with his special comb, smoothing down his shiny black hair with gel.'
2. 'There was a cloud of pink glittery smoke and I landed with a soft thump on the squashy carpet. I was tiny!'
3. 'I felt my mouth drop open in amazement. We were in a *huge*, glittering auditorium. At the front of the massive hall was a stage with a curtain across the front. Everything looked very fancy.'

Answers on the next page ➔



SPOT THE ADJECTIVE ANSWERS:

1. 'Dad spends at least an hour with his **special** comb, smoothing down his **shiny black** hair with gel.'
2. 'There was a cloud of **pink glittery** smoke and I landed with a **soft** thump on the **squashy** carpet. I was **tiny**!'
3. 'I felt my mouth drop open in amazement. We were in a **huge**, glittering auditorium. At the front of the **massive** hall was a stage with a curtain across the front. Everything looked very **fancy**.'

CHALLENGE: Can you add some adjectives to the start of this story? You can use some of the Some Adjectives You Could Use above, or come up with your own:

It was a very _____ day. Isadora Moon woke up feeling _____. She pulled on her _____ clothes and went downstairs.

Downstairs she could smell a _____ smell coming from the kitchen.

'What could that smell be?' She asked Pink Rabbit.

Pink Rabbit shrugged. He looked _____.

Isadora and Pink Rabbit went into the _____ kitchen and...

If you like, you can continue the story with what Isadora Moon and Pink Rabbit found in the kitchen.

Adverbs or 'Describing Actions Words'

Adverbs are a little trickier than adjectives, so you may only want to use them if you're already happy with adjectives.

Adverbs are words which describes how someone does something, and they usually end in 'ly'.

Here are some examples:

- ★ Jasper walked **quickly**.
- ★ Jasper walked **slowly**.
- ★ Jasper walked **happily**.
- ★ Jasper walked **angrily**.

If your character is doing an action, see if you can add an '-ly' word after it to show how they were feeling while doing it, or how quickly or slowly they were doing it.



Similes

A simile is where you describe something as being like something else. They can help to make your descriptions really clear.

Here are some examples:

- ★ Zoe and I chatted about the show and looked out of the window at the darkening sky. Little flakes had started to fall. They looked like tiny twirling ballerinas.
- ★ The trains looked like giant metal caterpillars crawling up and down the tracks.
- ★ My teacher was called Monsieur Pamplemousse. He had pink hair that looked like the icing on a fairy cake.
- ★ My friends all looked astonished and excited. Their eyes were round like saucers.

Any time you say that something 'looked like' or 'sounded like' or 'felt like', you are making a simile.



CHALLENGE: Try making some of your own for practice. You can use the start below, or change them:

1. My room looks like _____.
2. When it's my birthday, I feel like _____.
3. My mum and dad's music sounds like _____.
4. Broccoli tastes like _____.
5. My mum's hair feels like _____.
6. My dad's socks smell like _____.



Illustrations

'Illustrations' is a fancy word meaning 'pictures that go with a story'. I love it when stories have illustrations, which is why I drew pictures to go with the *Isadora Moon* stories.

You could illustrate your stories to make them more interesting. Unfortunately, there isn't space to cover how to draw in this guide!

TIP: Drawing pictures of your story before you write it is also a good way to plan out your story before you write your plot summary.

Getting Published and Making Books

One question I often get asked is how I made my *Isadora Moon* stories into a book. Books are made by a type of company called a 'publisher'. A publisher will read lots of different stories from lots of different writers and then decide which ones to make into books that will be sold in shops. If you spend lots of time practising writing stories, then one day a publisher might turn one of your stories into a book and sell it in bookshops.

TIP: Every book you read was written by someone who was once your age and spent lots of time practising their writing.

If you write a story you are really pleased with you might not want to wait for a publisher to make it. There are websites that will print your story as a book for you if you can scan it into the computer. Ask a grown-up to help you do an internet search for 'print my book'.

Ideas For Starting More Stories

Fan Fiction

If you are struggling to come up with your own character, try using one that already exists. You can 'borrow' someone else's character and put them in your own story. So you could write a story about Isadora Moon, Pink Rabbit, Mirabelle or one of Isadora's friends.

Real People

Instead of making up a character, you could use a real person in your story. This could be yourself, a friend, or even someone from history.

What If...?

The ideas for lots of great stories come from asking 'what if...?'

- ★ What if a little girl had one vampire parent and one fairy parent?
- ★ What if that little girl had to decide which school to go to?
- ★ What if she wanted to invite her human friends to a normal human birthday party?
- ★ What if she was always good, but her cousin got her into trouble?

Stories are all about imagining possibilities. If you are stuck for story ideas, write the words 'what if' and then finish that question as many ways as you can:

For example:

- ★ What if you received a magic wand in the post by mistake?
- ★ What if a monster stole your favourite teddy bear?
- ★ What if your new neighbours were space aliens?
- ★ What if you could turn into any animal you wanted?
- ★ What if your friend found a magic door to another world at the bottom of their garden?

Isadora Moon Story Dice

Cut out the shapes below and stick the tabs with glue to make your own Isadora Moon story dice. Roll the dice and use the pictures to help you tell a story. You can do this on your own, with a friend or family member, or even in a group. Suggestions for using the dice are on Page 31.

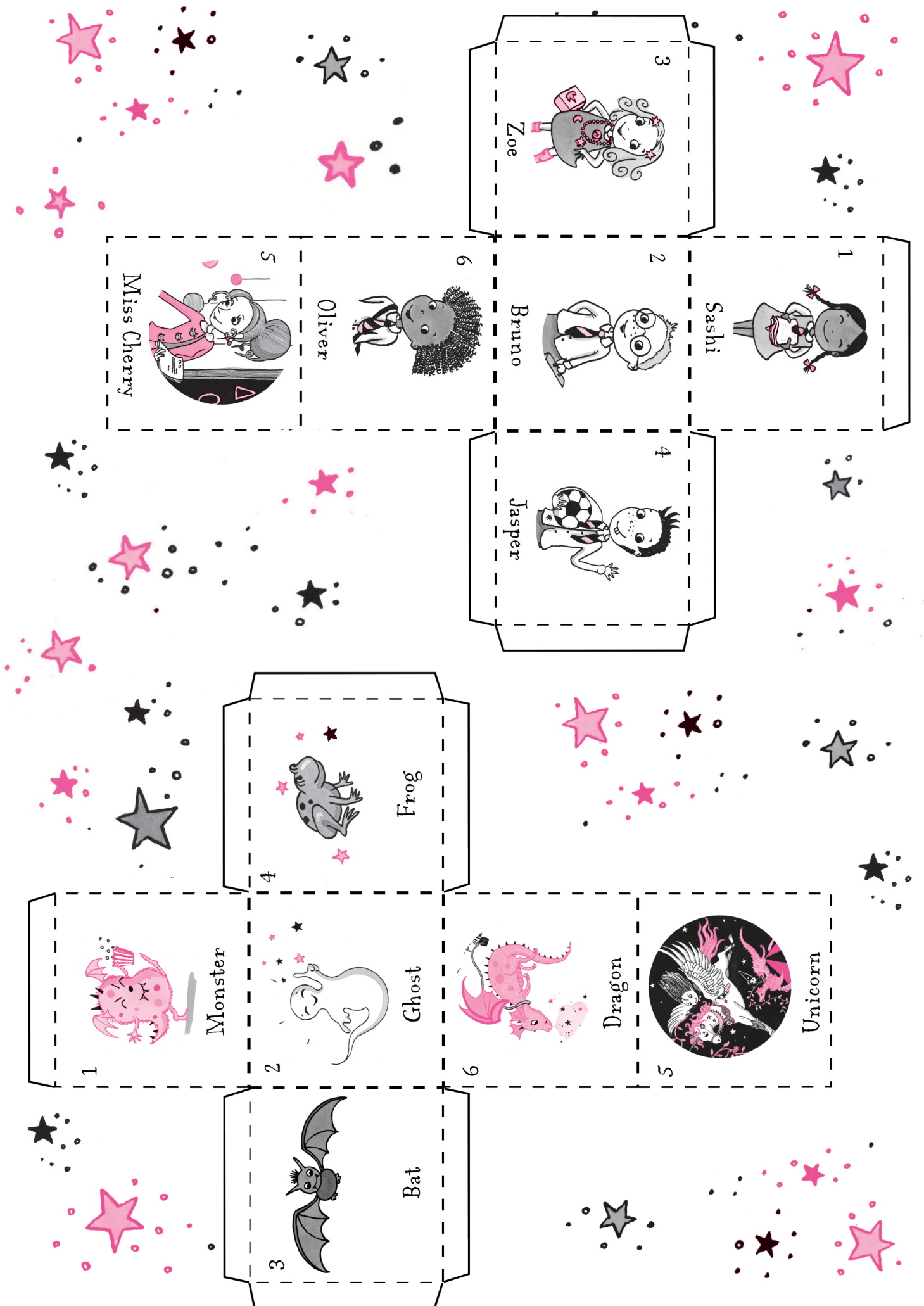


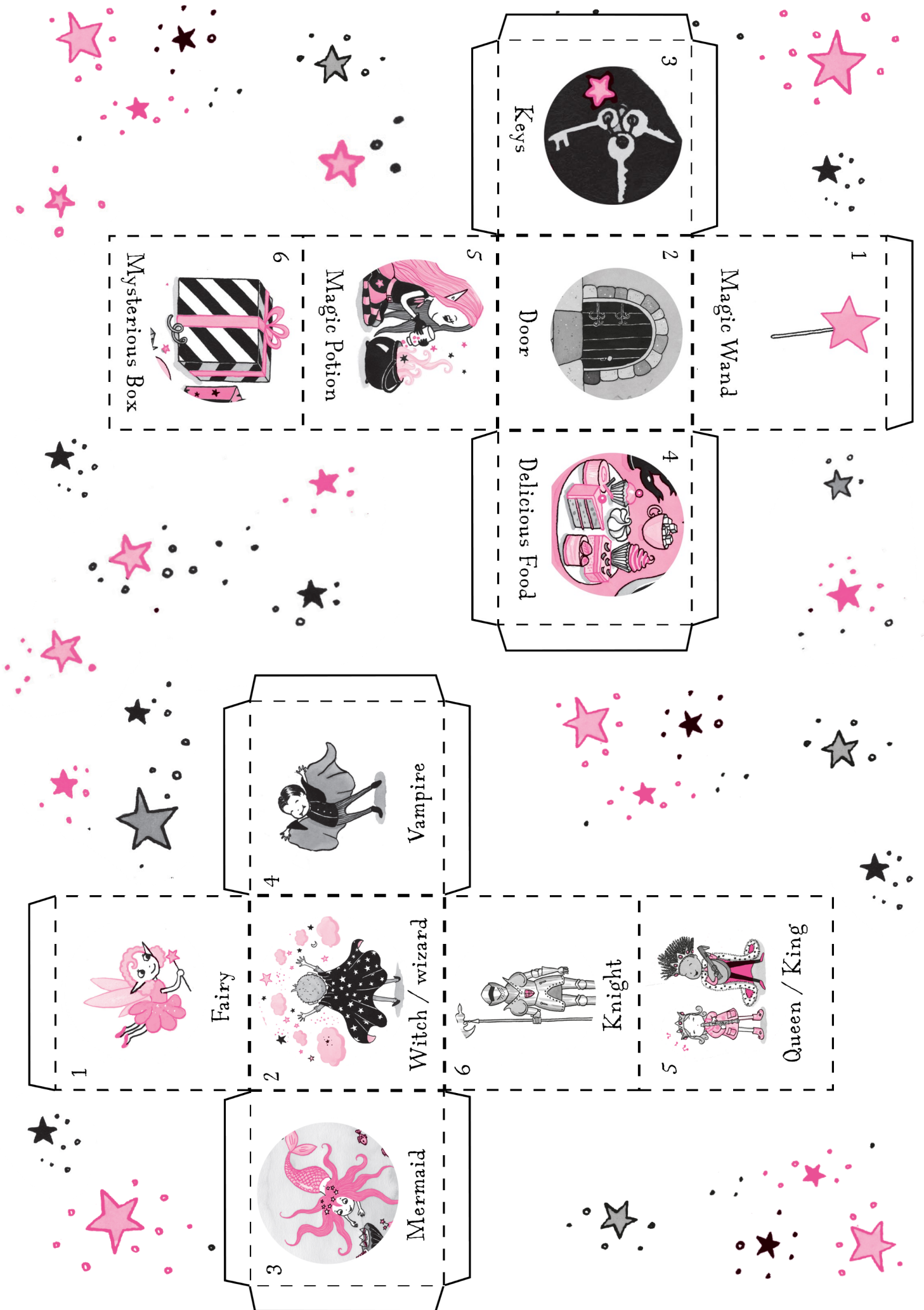
Instructions:

1. Cut along the edges of the dice, being careful not to cut off the tabs on some of the edges.
2. Fold along the dotted lines to make a cube.
3. Glue the tabs to stick the dice together.

Each die has the number 1-6 on it, so you can also use it as a regular die.

TIP: You can stick the dice sheets onto card before you cut them out to make sturdier dice.





How to Use the Isadora Moon Story Dice

There are a few different ways you can use these dice to tell a story.

1. **On your own or together with a partner:** roll all the dice at once and leave them all as they land. Try to create a story using every face-up picture. Once you have used every picture, work together to give your story a good ending.



2. **Cooperating with a partner or group:** The first person rolls a die of their choice and starts a story involving the picture they roll. After the first turn, take it in turns to each roll one die of your choice. You have to say a sentence which includes the picture you rolled and follows on from the last sentence in the story.

3. **Competing a bit with a partner or group:** The same as 2, except you don't choose or roll your own dice. Instead, the person to your right chooses and rolls the die and your sentence must include the picture they rolled.

4. **Competing a lot with a partner or group:** You'll need a pencil and paper, or tokens, to keep score for each player. This is the same as 2, but you can roll as many dice as you like on your turn. The catch is, for each die you roll, you have to include that picture in the next part of the story you add. You can speak for as long as you like during your turn, but once you start speaking, you can't pause for more than 2 seconds or repeat yourself. If you do, your turn ends and you get no points that turn. If you speak part of the story which includes all the pictures you rolled, you get that many points for the turn.

For ideas 2, 3, and 4 you might like to set a number of turns per player in advance, such as five or ten so you don't go on too long. However, if you are enjoying the story, you can continue for as long as you like.

Thanks For Reading the Isadora Moon Guide to Writing Stories!

I hope you now feel inspired and able to create your own masterpieces. Who knows, maybe one day one of your books will be available in shops, just like *Isadora Moon*!

Until then, remember that the best part of writing a story is sharing it when it's done. Make sure to share your stories with friends, family and teachers—I'm sure they'll love to see what you've created! If you like, you can even get an adult to help you share your story with me online using my website:

www.harrietmuncaster.co.uk

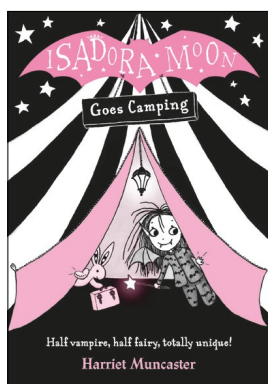
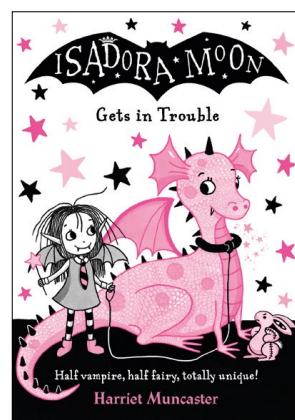
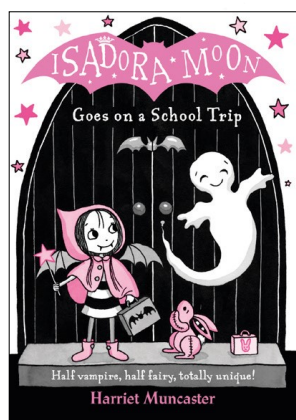
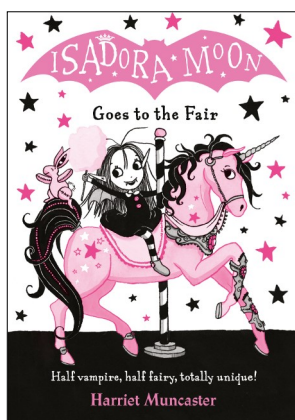
or my Facebook

www.facebook.com/HarrietMuncasterIllustration



You can find out more about Isadora Moon, and her creator, at

www.harrietmuncaster.co.uk



Isadora Moon and associated images,
copyright Harriet Muncaster 2018

**Oxford
Children's
Books**

tradepublicity.uk@oup.com

www.oupchildrens.co.uk @OUPChildrens