C. J. McGuire BOOKS

A room full of detectives.

A classroom & library companion to C. J. McGuire's picture book.
Suggested ages 5-7 · Low-ink pages · No special equipment

The story and three things to practice

Penelope and Scott have a very hairy theory about Dad. Invite children to **notice a detail**, **give a reason for a guess** and **try another explanation**. Talking, pointing and drawing all count. This author-created companion welcomes educator feedback.

Before the children arrive

You'll need the book or a review copy, pencils and one chosen sheet. Read the book's grown-up note **silently to yourself, not aloud to the children**. Preview its monster imagery and sounds. Invite quiet watching, pointing or drawing as equally good ways to join in.

A suggested 20-minute session

0-2 min · Notice. Show the cover. Ask: "What do you see? What do you think might happen?" Keep noticing separate from guessing.

2-10 min · Read. Read the story, with time to see the pictures. Pause at one or two clues, not every page. Invite an optional "Suspicious. Very suspicious."

10-13 min · Think again. Choose one clue. Ask: "What did the children think it meant? What else could it mean?" Accept more than one possibility.

13-18 min · Make a case file. Use Activity 1 (pack page 5). Children draw a clue, give a first guess and try another explanation. An adult may write their words.

18-20 min · Share. Invite one or two volunteers to share. Close with: "A good detective can change their mind."

Timing is a starting point, not a target. If the reading runs longer, save the activity for later. No book yet? Try the object game on guide page 2 or any activity sheet on its own.

One small performance choice

Pause: leave a beat before a surprising word.
Refrain: model a repeated line, then offer listeners a turn.
Voice: say "Who's there?" as a sleepy bear, then a curious mouse. Change pace or tone instead of getting louder.

Free 30-minute introductory workshop
Live on Zoom: the whole book + voices + a turn directing C. J.
Adults: cjmcguirebooks.com/visit
Subject to availability. School/library groups; a teacher or librarian hosts.
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Notice. Guess. Think again.

One useful distinction: what we can see or hear is not always the same as what we think it means.

Model it with an ordinary object

Hold up a closed lunchbox. Say: **“I notice a lunchbox. I think there might be a sandwich inside. But it could hold crayons.”** Invite a different possibility, then open it. Use an everyday item you have checked first; avoid food tasting, allergens or frightening surprises.

Pick two questions

Look: What did Penelope or Scott notice? Point to the part of the picture that helped you.

Separate: What do we know from looking? What are we guessing?

Reconsider: Could that same clue have another explanation?

Reflect: Did your idea change? What helped you think differently?

Useful words to offer

“I notice…” “I think… because…” “It could also be…”
Model these aloud. Children can point, draw, speak, sign or use their usual communication supports; no independent reading or writing is required.

Make room for different listeners

Offer a quiet version before making any sounds. Allow children to listen without joining in, sit beside a familiar adult or choose another activity. For children ready for more, ask which explanation fits the clue best and why. Avoid treating the quickest answer as the best one.

Keep the investigation safe

Investigate a picture or an object - not someone’s appearance. A hairy face or unusual look does not tell us what a person is like. Keep the story’s risky schemes on the page; this pack does not ask children to set traps or startle anyone.

Listen for the thinking

There is no single answer key. Try: “You noticed a detail. What makes that guess fit?” If a child needs a start, offer two possibilities. Drawing skill, spelling and choosing the adult’s guess are not the goal.

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For the storytime circle.

A flexible library session for ages 5-7 and accompanying grown-ups. Worksheets are optional; the conversation is the activity.

Set up before people arrive

Put one case-file sheet and pencils at an optional activity table. Keep the read-aloud circle separate so families can listen without a writing task. Display the book where pictures are visible; check the view from the back of the group.

A suggested 25-30-minute program

Welcome · 3 minutes. Explain that today everyone can be a detective. Show an ordinary object and collect two guesses. Let families know the story has pretend monsters and playful sounds; offer a quiet listening choice.

Read together · 10-12 minutes. Read the book at your group's pace. Let adults join the refrain, but leave space for children to inspect the pictures. Reduce extra questions if the story needs more time.

Try another idea · 4-5 minutes. Revisit one clue. Ask families to think of another explanation together. A whispered answer to a grown-up counts.

Stay and draw · 8-10 minutes. Offer the case file or three-picture mystery (Activity 5). Send the friendly werewolf coloring page (Activity 6) or a take-home slip (Activity 4) home. Families may simply listen and go.

For a drop-in table without the book

Place a safe everyday object beside Activity 1. Add this prompt: "Draw what you notice. What could it be for? Can you think of another use?" Adults can write children's answers. No copy of the story is needed for this version.

Keep it easy to join

Welcome siblings and caregivers without assuming every child lives with a dad. Invite "a grown-up you read with" for home activities. For a mixed-age group, younger children can draw while older children add reasons for their guesses.

Want to review the book or discuss a reading? Adults can contact C. J. at **hello@cjmcguirebooks.com**. Please share a role and the kind of session - not children's names or photographs. Availability and arrangements are confirmed individually.

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Choose a word. Make it yours.

One new word and one activity can be plenty. Keep the grown-up pages for yourself.

Let the language stretch.

Welcome words children may not know yet. The story, pictures and a reading partner can help. Let the story flow; return to a word afterward. Enjoy its sound, talk about its meaning, then try it in a new situation. Questions are part of the pleasure.

Puzzled: unsure what something means. **Peculiar:** unusual or unexpected.
Troubling: causing worry. **Qualified:** having the skills or knowledge needed.
The two-page **Word Explorer** offers 12 story words with meanings, examples and playful prompts. Talk, act, draw or dictate; there is no need to work through every word.

Print only what you need

Full pack: 12 pages; pages 1–4 are for adults. **Activity Sheets:** 8 pages.
Word Explorer is also a separate two-page download and an online word list.

ACTIVITY	PACK	SHEETS	TIME
1. Your turn, detective	5	1	5–10 min
2. What do you notice?	6	2	5–10 min
3. A few good noises	7	3	3–5 min
4. Two take-home slips	8	4	Adult cuts
5. A mystery in three pictures	9	5	10–15 min
6. Werewolf Dad to take home	10	6	5–10 min
7. Word Explorer (two pages)	11–12	7–8	Pick a word

Print single-sided in black and white. Letter: actual size. A4: “Fit.” Times are flexible. Offer the object-only activity if monsters do not suit a child.

Permission to use these resources

Free noncommercial classroom, library and home copying, including closed class platforms. Keep the credit and website link. For public sharing, link to the resource page. These permissions cover the companion, not the full book or recorded readings.

Feedback: hello@cjmcguirebooks.com. Please omit children’s names, photographs and identifiable work.

Book in reader review. Author-created activities with AI assistance; not independently evaluated or standards-aligned. Line artwork is AI-generated under C. J. McGuire’s creative direction. Revised October 2026.

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Your turn, detective.



Choose a safe object with a grown-up. Draw your clue.
What could it be? Tell, draw or write your guesses.

MY CLUE

My first guess:

Another explanation:

A good detective can change their mind.

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What do you notice?



Choose a picture or a safe object with a grown-up.
Draw, point or tell. A grown-up can write your words.

I notice…

Something I can see or hear.

I think…

My idea about what it means.

It could also be…

Another idea that might fit.

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A few good noises.



Try a voice. Try it another way. Which one fits?
You can whisper, make a face, point or just listen.

AWOOOOOO!

A pretend howl. Try it curious, then sleepy.

OOOOOOOW!

A pretend “ow.” Imagine a bumped toe - no real bump needed.

Grrrr...

A soft, silly growl. Try it as a tiny, grumpy creature.

Now be the listener

A partner chooses a voice. What did it make you imagine?
Draw it here, or tell your partner.

Grown-up note: Agree on a comfortable volume first. No shouting, sudden scares or touching. Joining in is always optional.

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Keep the detective work going.

A small activity from **My Dad the Werewolf**
by C. J. McGuire · For a child and a grown-up

1. Notice. Pick a safe everyday object or look at a picture together.
2. Guess. Ask: “What do you think it could be - or be for?”
3. Think again. Ask: “What else could it be?”

Draw, point or talk. You do not need the book, a printer or a “right” answer. Keep it playful; a few minutes is plenty.

Free activities for home, classrooms and libraries:
cjmcguirebooks.com/for-educators/
No signup required. Grown-ups manage any website visit.

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A mystery in three pictures.



Make up a tiny mystery. Draw it in order.
A missing sock? A strange shadow? You choose.

1. FIRST: THE MYSTERY

Show where your mystery begins.

2. NEXT: ONE CLUE

Draw one small detail BIG.

3. THEN: AN IDEA

Draw what you think happened.

Tell your story. Could it have a different ending?

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But what if...?

What if Dad really were a werewolf? Color him your way.
This is an imagined extra, not the story's ending.



Your colors. Your theory. The mug stays.

ONE MORE LITTLE CASE, TOGETHER

With a grown-up, choose a safe everyday object.
What do you notice? What else could it be?

More stories & free activities for grown-ups:

cjmcguirebooks.com

Grown-ups scan

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Words worth trying.

Words from the story, ready for everyday adventures. Pick one or two. Read together, ask questions, then talk, act, draw or make a sentence.

legend

p. 5

An old story passed down over time. It might be true... or not.

Try it: The legend told of a giant who slept under the hill.

Your turn: Imagine the title of a legend about your neighborhood.

peculiar

p. 13

Strange. Odd. Not the way things usually are.

Try it: A purple carrot would be a peculiar bookmark.

Your turn: Invent another peculiar bookmark.

troubling

p. 13

Making you feel worried. Time to investigate!

Try it: The drip from the ceiling was troubling.

Your turn: Who could you tell about a troubling drip?

gnaw

p. 14

To chew again and again. Like Dad with ribs.

Try it: The puppy likes to gnaw on her chew toy.

Your turn: Pretend to gnaw a crunchy carrot. What might a rabbit gnaw?

suspicious

p. 15

Making you think something might be wrong. Hmm...

Try it: I was suspicious when the empty biscuit tin rattled.

Your turn: What else could be making that rattle?

shedding

p. 18

Losing hair or fur. Dogs do it. Dads too?

Try it: Our dog was shedding, so we brushed out the loose fur.

Your turn: What might you notice when a pet is shedding?

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Words worth trying.

A good word can make an idea clearer, a story funnier or a question more interesting. Which of these will you try today?

qualified

p. 21

Having the skills or knowledge needed to do something. Plunger training? Check.

Try it: A trained swimming teacher is qualified to teach swimming.

Your turn: What would help someone become qualified for a job?

sacrifices

p. 27

Things you give up for something important. Even chocolate syrup.

Try it: Sharing the last biscuit was one of our picnic sacrifices.

Your turn: What could you give up to help a friend?

protested

p. 27

Said that something was wrong or unfair. “But our ice cream!”

Try it: "But it is my turn!" I protested.

Your turn: Try a pretend protest in a firm, quiet voice.

puzzled

p. 30

Not sure what’s going on.

Try it: I was puzzled when my sock turned up in the toy box.

Your turn: Show a puzzled face. What might puzzle you?

squirming

p. 32

Wiggling and twisting, like something caught in a net.

Try it: The puppy was squirming while I tried to dry her paws.

Your turn: Show squirming with just your fingers.

demanded

p. 33

Asked firmly and expected an answer or action. Right NOW!

Try it: "Who moved my crown?" the pretend queen demanded.

Your turn: Try the line as a question, then as a demand.

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