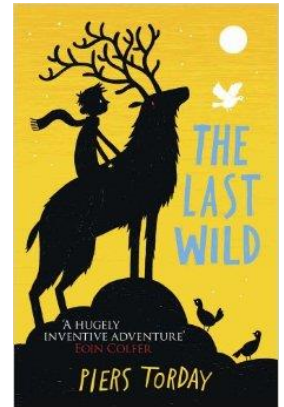


## Take 5: Ideas for Independent/Home Learning

### The Last Wild by Piers Torday (Quercus)

#### 1. Explore it



- Look at the map from the beginning of the book. What do you notice about the map? What can you see? Do you think it is somewhere real or imagined? Does it remind you of anything you have seen before? What questions does it raise for you?
- Using your knowledge of other stories, you have read, or films or television programmes you have seen, consider what kind of story this might be. What predictions do you have? What do the words and visual details in the map suggest about the likely shape and content of the story? Where do you think the story might take place? Who do you think the characters might be? Why?

#### 2. Illustrate it

Read this story opening. You might want to hear it read aloud as well as reading it for yourself.

My story begins with me sitting on a bed, looking out of the window.

I know that doesn't sound like much. But let me tell you where the bed is, and what I can see from it. This bed is right in the corner of a room only just big enough for it, and the bed is only just big enough for a kid my age. (Twelve – just about to be thirteen – and skinny.)

The window is the size of the whole wall, made of special tinted glass that means the room stays the same temperature all the time. The room is locked shut and you need an electronic keycard to open the door. If you could open it, you would be in a long corridor with absolutely *nothing* in it apart from cameras in the ceiling and a fat man in a purple jacket and trousers sitting opposite on a plastic chair. Sleeping, most likely.

This fat man is called a *warden*. And there are lots of them here. But I think he is probably the fattest.

The corridor with the cameras and the fat warden is on the seventh floor of a building which is like a big upside-down boat made of glass and metal. Everywhere you look there are reflections – of you, other faces, the storm clouds. The curved glass walls stretch all the way down to the edge of some very high cliffs – only grass and mud for miles around, with rocks and sea below. The cliffs are in the north of the Island, in the middle of the Quarantine Zone – far away from the city and my home.

The name of this building is Spectrum Hall.

Or in full: Spectrum Hall Academy for Challenging Children.

It's just like a big school mainly. Only the most boring school in the world, that you can never, ever leave.

And as for what I can see out of the window?

I know that what is really there is sea and sky and rocks, but the light in the ceiling bounces off the glass into my eyes. So when I look out into the dark sky all I can actually see is my reflection. That and the hairy grey varmint

- What is happening in this extract? Who are the central characters? Can you summarise what you've read in a couple of sentences?
- Talk about how this story opening makes you feel and what you like or dislike about it.

- Does it remind you of anything you know in stories or real life? How? Think about how it is written. What parts of this really stick in your mind? Which words and phrases do you like the best? What do you like about them? Do they look or sound interesting? Do they help you make a picture in your mind? What do other people think?

After you have read it a few times, take a pen or pencil and a bit of scrap paper. You can use the back of an old envelope or cereal packet; whatever is to hand. Draw what you see in your imagination. Maybe other people, your friends or in your family want to draw what they imagine as well. Remember, everyone has their own ideas and imagines things their own way. This is a good thing! To get started, ask yourself: *Where does this story begin? What happens? How do you know? How does it make me feel? How can I show this in a drawing?*

Re-read the opening and write some words and phrases that have helped you make your picture. Share what you have drawn with someone else: *Why have you chosen to draw it this way? Which words and phrases helped you make a picture?*

### 3. Talk about it

Re-read the text again and think more deeply about the narrator and the situation they find themselves in.

- *Where are they? What is it like there? How do you know?*
- *What does the name of the building ‘Spectrum Hall Academy for Challenging Children’, suggest about the narrator? Does this come across in their character from what you have read so far?*
- *What do the use of the words ‘warden’ and the phrases ‘locked shut with an electronic keypad’ and ‘cameras on the ceiling’ suggest about this place?*
- *Why do you think the narrator might be in this place?*
- *What do you understand by the phrase ‘Quarantine Zone’? What might this suggest about the action that might take place in the story?*

### 4. Imagine it

Think about the scene that you have read. What do we know about the narrator’s room? What do you think twelve and thirteen year olds usually like to do? What feels missing from the room of a regular twelve or thirteen year old? How do you think it might feel for the narrator to be held in this place? Have you ever been in a place where you have felt bored, trapped and unstimulated? What was it like? What suggestions would you give to the narrator to keep their mind occupied while stuck in this place?

### 5. Create it

Think back to the extract you read. Can you imagine what would happen if the boy in the story managed to break out of his room? What do you think would happen? Where might he go? What challenges might lie in his path? What adventures might he have? Draw and write your story ideas, trying out different ideas. Remember to use stories you already know and like for ideas. You could even publish your story in a handmade book by folding a piece of paper or on the computer, ready to share it with your teacher or your friends and family.

You can read the whole of chapter one from the book on Piers Torday’s website if you are able:

<https://www.pierstorday.co.uk/book/the-last-wild/>