



Staring into Space –

2. Charcoal Journey Drawings:

a Waterstones Children's Laureate creative resource
by Lauren Child and Josey Scullard, inspired by
Anthony Browne's book *Into the Forest* (Walker Books)



© Polly Borland

“When we read a book, we interpret the story in our own way. Depending on our experiences or how we are feeling at the time of reading, we might find former Children's Laureate Anthony Browne's book *Into The Forest* clever, funny, unsettling or even scary.

This is my understanding of the story: a boy has woken in the night to hear an argument between his parents, and in the morning his father is not there. Fear starts to creep into

his mind and the boy begins to imagine bad things. While he is walking he is mulling over bits and pieces of the fairytales told to him by his grandmother and gradually these tales begin to merge with the ‘real’ world of the boy.

The fairytale world, shown in black and white, represents the boy's anxiety about his missing father. The more one looks at the illustrations the more one sees, which is just what happens when we become

overwhelmed by worry, we begin to see more and more things which might be things to worry about.

Sometimes when I look at these illustrations I am not quite sure if I am actually seeing creatures in the bark of the trees or if I am beginning to imagine them. I particularly like this element to the book because it means I am experiencing that same uncertainty the boy experiences.”

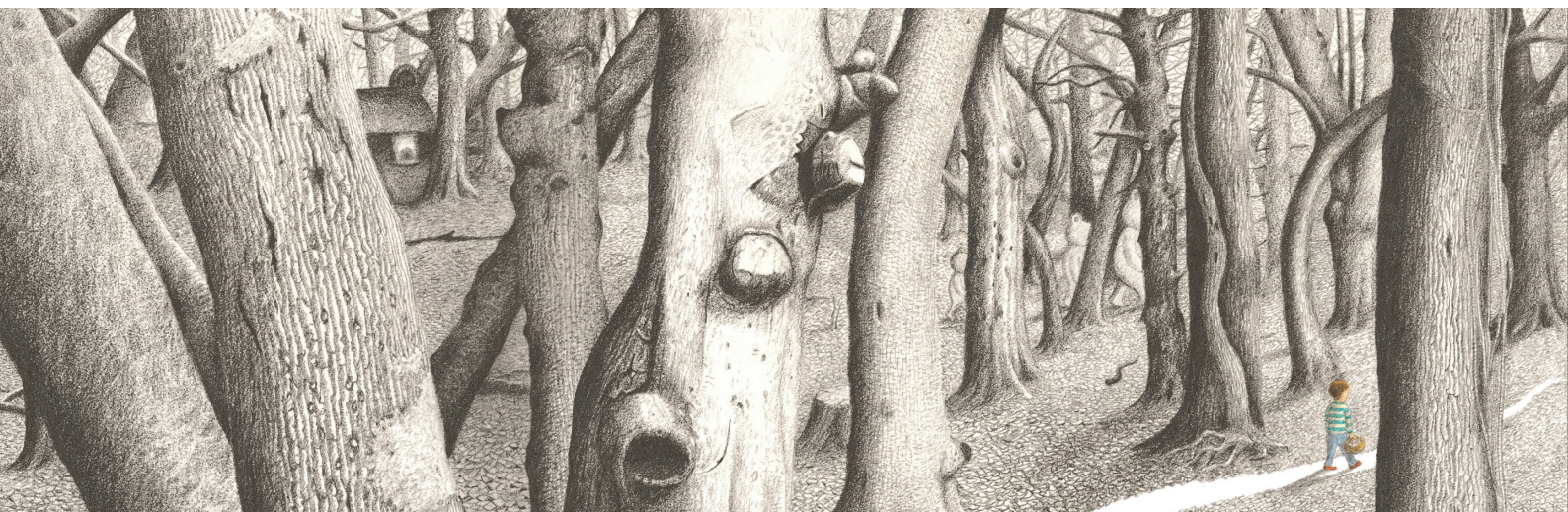


Illustration © Anthony Browne (Walker Books).

Activity by Josey Scullard:

Charcoal journey drawings!

What if you could make your journey to school more fun with nothing more than your amazing imagination?! What if you started looking at those same things you see every day in a completely different way? What would things smell like or feel

like if you were a cat? What if you had special powers to see through things? Is it just letters sitting in that post box or is it someone's cosy home? The more you think, the more you imagine... things are not always quite what they seem...

What you need:**Sticks of charcoal**

(x 2 per child)

An eraser

(one between 2)

Conte crayons or charcoal pencils (1 per child - optional but good for detail)

White chalk

(optional 1 piece per child)

A3 pieces of paper

(2 per child, ideal if one of them can be thick cartridge paper but ordinary paper will work)

Steps to create:

1. First of all you need to experiment with using charcoal: so take a stick of charcoal and make as many different marks with it as you possibly can. Make some dots, make some dashes, make soft swirls and hard angled shapes. Turn the charcoal on its side and make sweeping marks right across the paper. Now rub your finger over the surface, you will see how soft your marks become. Try holding the charcoal at the very end, and drag it gently from one side of the paper to the other. See how the line you make is so light it is barely there. Now hold the charcoal firmly and make hard marks. See if you can make the darkest black.

2. You can now start drawing your imagined journey, ideally on a large piece of cartridge paper but normal white paper will do fine. First, completely cover your paper with charcoal and rub it well in; this creates a surface and an atmosphere for you to start drawing on.

**A****B****C***A: Draw it**B: Smudge it**C: Trees or sky?*

3. Now very lightly sketch out the basic shapes in your picture, such as the sky, mountains, and the foreground. Keep it big and bold with no detail whatsoever... that comes later!

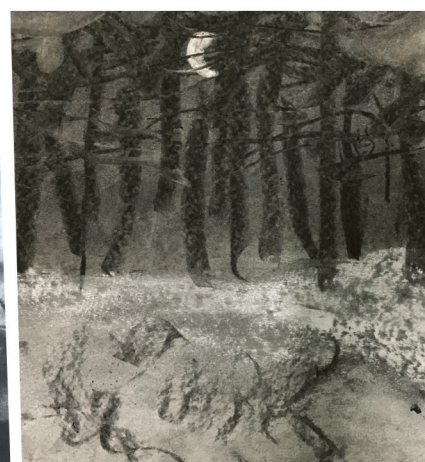
4. Think about the journey across your paper; does your path go from left to right or is it disappearing into the distance? You could draw buildings or some trees, the simpler the better.

5. Now think about what could be hiding amongst your mass of marks. Something peeking out of a window? Something flying behind the branches of a tree? Camouflage your creatures, show just a little bit of something peeking out.

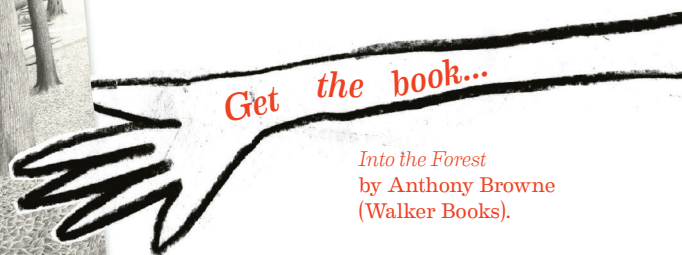
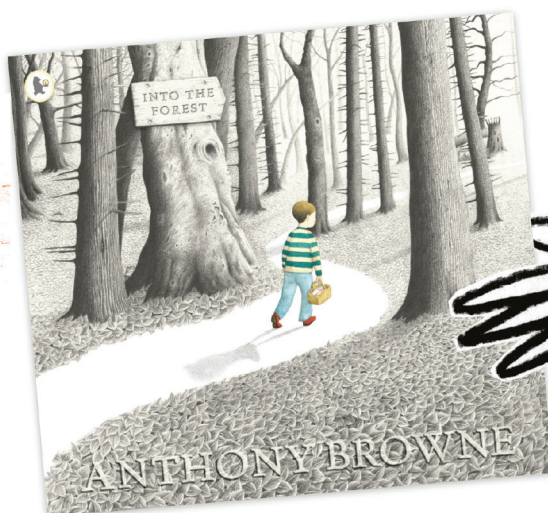
*Free and easy*

6. Use your darkest darks to create a moody atmosphere. Then make your lightest lights by using your eraser - you can rub the charcoal away to make a moon in the sky, or reflections in windows and puddles.

7. Now for the details! A stick of Conte crayon or a charcoal pencil is good for this, but normal charcoal is fine... are there faces in the tree trunks? You can rub something out with your finger or eraser, and re-draw it in seconds. It smudges a lot so don't worry if you lose an image along the way... something else might happen in your picture as you erase. This is called "serendipity" ... or a "happy accident" and it makes a drawing even better!

*Try to cover a whole sheet.**Light and dark / paper and charcoal.**Add white detail with chalk.*

Charcoal photos by Josey Scullard
using artwork by the children of
Rosendale School, London.



Into the Forest
by Anthony Browne
(Walker Books).

Download all the creative resources plus
find more information and images
www.childrenslaureate.org.uk/staringintospace.

See Lauren's website www.staringintospace.me
for more creative inspiration