

Teaching Notes: GREAT BIG SOFTIE

Written by Kaye Baillie
Illustrated by Shane McG
Published by New Frontier Publishing



SYNOPSIS

Elliot is a GREAT BIG SOFTIE. But to fit in with the other monsters, he decides to perform some MONSTROUS deeds. After scaring a little girl on her bike, he must decide whether to continue being MONSTROUS or follow his heart.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kaye Baillie is an award-winning author with a passion for picture books and storytelling. She completed a Diploma in Professional Writing and Editing in 2005 and her favourite topic was Writing for Children. *Great Big Softie* is Kaye's second book with New Frontier Publishing, and she can't wait for young readers to meet Elliot, a soft-hearted monster.

Kaye is an active member and the Assistant Co-ordinator of SCBWI Victoria, and a member of the Children's Book Council of Australia. Kaye lives in a Victorian coastal town in Australia with her family and high-maintenance pets. When she is not writing or reading, she can be found baking or eating a scrumptious pudding.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Australian-born Shane McG has drawn robots, monsters and cars ever since he was knee high to a grasshopper. When he got a bit taller, he moved to London where he illustrated for newspapers, magazines, design studios and advertising agencies as well as painting big abstract canvases in his East London warehouse studio.

Shane now lives back in his hometown of Melbourne with his husband. He illustrates almost exclusively for picture books these days which he loves. He feels he has come full circle as he once again draws robots, monsters and cars. He loves bush walking, running around the park, eating gluten-free cake and drinking tea as he watches his ginger cat destroy the begonias.



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EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

Great Big Softie is a rip-roaring story about a soft-hearted monster who decides that to fit in with other monsters, he must perform some monstrous deeds. He then must work out whether to continue in this way or follow his heart. Key themes of wanting to fit in, staying true to yourself, being kind and forgiveness run through this book, making it a great starting point for discussions about integrity, inclusivity and differences.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

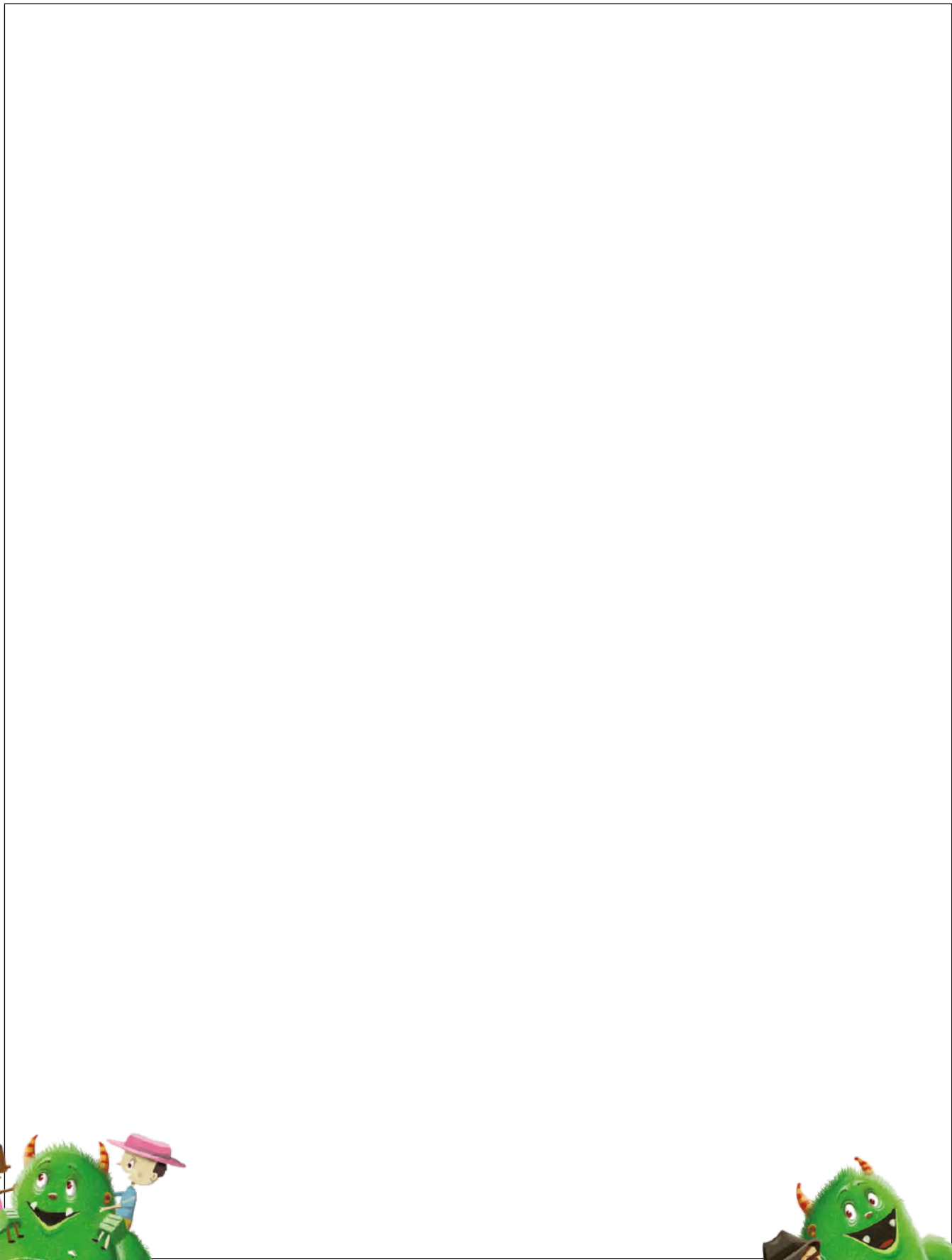
Read the book together, asking questions throughout.

1. Introduce *Great Big Softie* to the children and ask them what they think the book might be about.
2. What does the phrase 'great big softie' mean?
3. Elliot wants to fit in with the other monsters and therefore, he must change. Why can't he just be himself? Ask the children if they have ever had to change their behaviour to fit in? Is this wrong, or right?
4. How does Elliot feel when he scares a little girl on her bike? What does he then do?
5. Does Elliot find it difficult to say 'sorry'? Talk about times we've said 'sorry'. How easy or difficult is it to say this word? Do you feel better after you've said it?
6. Is it better to 'fit in' or 'be yourself'?
7. The little girl decides to forgive Elliot for scaring her. Have you ever forgiven somebody? How does it make you feel?
8. After reading the book, ask them what did they think of the story? Which was their favourite part and why?



DRAWING ACTIVITY

Draw a picture of Elliot. What else will you include in the picture? The other monsters?
The little girl? You decide!



WORDSEARCH ACTIVITY

Find all the words below in the *Great Big Softie* wordsearch.

GREAT BIG SOFTIE

H S F G O N A O D M O F
Y O I M I T H E D R C R
Y R T M U E T N E N T M
L R T C H T C O E H O S
C U I B H R L B D N I K
S H N R Y O U R S E L F
I C G L L S C T N A L O
S L I T S O E O N T E R
E S N A E R R W L N R G
S H E H A R H W H A O I
S F E C W Y S R T S T V
T N S S A O S B I E E E

CHURROS
DEEDS
ELLIOT
FITTINGIN

FORGIVE
GIRL
HOTCHOCOLATE
KIND

MONSTER
SCARE
SORRY
YOURSELF

GREAT BIG SOFTIE

H S F G O N A O D M O F
Y O I M I T H E D R C R
Y R T M U E T N E N T M
L R T C H T C O E H O S
C U I B H R L B D N I K
S H N R Y O U R S E L F
I C G L L S C T N A L O
S L I T S O E O N T E R
E S N A E R R W L N R G
S H E H A R H W H A O I
S F E C W Y S R T S T V
T N S S A O S B I E E E

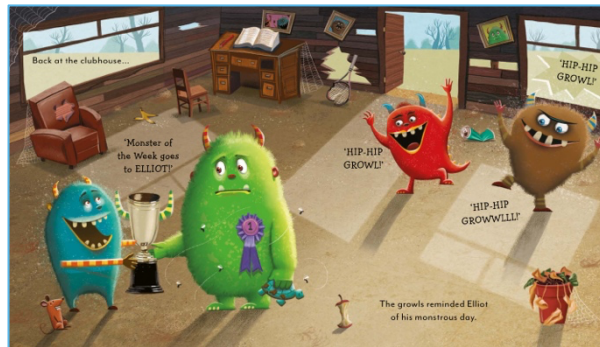
CHURROS
DEEDS
ELLIOT
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FORGIVE
GIRL
HOTCHOCOLATE
KIND

MONSTER
SCARE
SORRY
YOURSELF

MEMORY GAME

How well do you remember what happened in the story? Below are six pictures from the story, but they are jumbled up. Carefully cut them out (ask an adult to help you!) and arrange them in the correct order. Try to retell the story in your own words. Maybe you can tell it to your favourite bedtime cuddly toy!

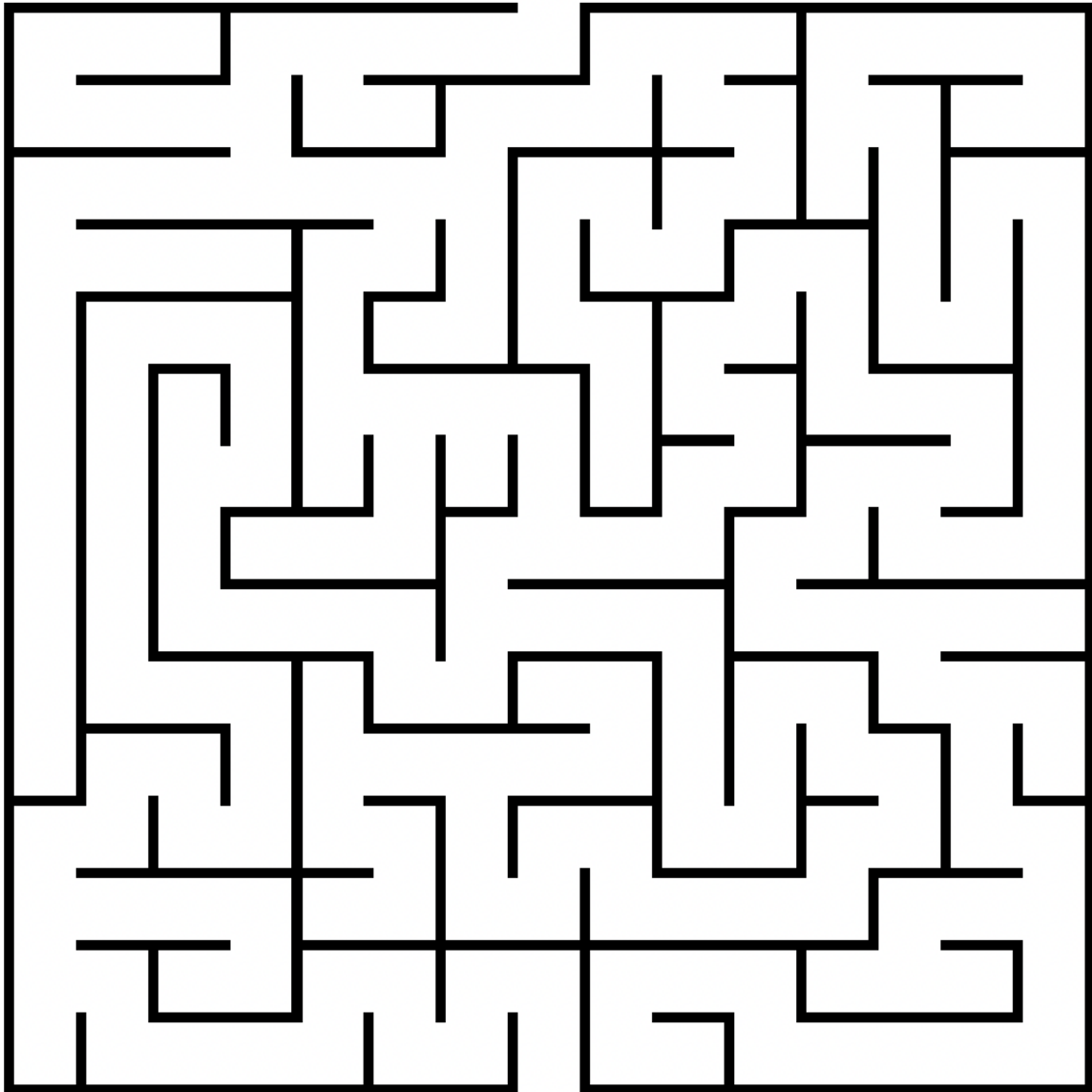


Ask an adult to help you cut these out!



A-MAZE-ING ELLIOT

Elliot wants to say 'sorry' to the little girl. Help Elliot find her.



A-MAZE-ING ELLIOT SOLUTION

