

RUNNING ON THE CRACKS



BY JULIA DONALDSON

ADAPTED AS A PLAY BY
ANDY ARNOLD

DIRECTED BY KATIE POSNER

A Co-Production with

pilot
-theatre

Run. Keep running. You're doing the right thing. Lay low. Head down. Don't look back. Just keep running, but whatever you do don't tread on the cracks...

Leo's world has been turned upside down. With her parents gone and a creepy uncle becoming too close for comfort she's certainly sure of one thing...she must get out. Leo's on the run. She knows what she's running from. Problem is where is she running to?

Adapted from the novel of the same name by the internationally acclaimed writer Julia Donaldson, Running on the Cracks is a fast-moving new play about runaways, identity, survival and how friendships can develop in the strangest situations.



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The Running On The Cracks Education Pack is designed to support teachers and students in drama, performing arts and PHSE.

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Acknowledgements

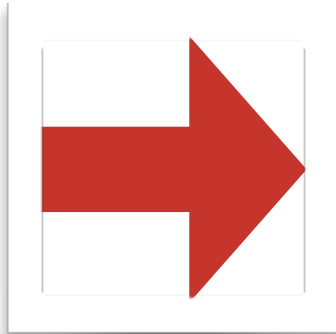
Thank you to Deborah McArthur and Tron Participation; the cast, creative and production team on Running On The Cracks; the staff at Pilot; Julia Donaldson; Aberlour and Railway Children charities.

This pack was created by Helen Cadbury theatrestudy.co.uk





The Cast



Creative Team

Novel written by Julia Donaldson

Adapted as a play by Andy Arnold

Directed by Katie Posner

Designed by Gem Greaves

Lighting Design by Mark Beasley

Sound Design by RJ McConnell

Stephen Clyde *Uncle*

*John / Rab the
Newsagent / Ticket
Collector/ Nurse/ The
Godfather/ Clubber/
Music School Man/
Grandfather*



Jessica Henwick *Leo*



Gaylie Runciman

*Mary / Aunt Sarah /
Finlay's Mum / Nurse*



Suni La *Kim / Marina /
Wilma/ Old Woman /
Lorraine*



Grant McDonald *Finlay*





Meet Katie Posner directing the play

How did this exciting co-production between the Tron and Pilot Theatre come about?

Pilot Theatre took *Blackbird* (by David Harrower) to the Tron and I got to know Andy Arnold, Tron's Artistic Director. He had the rights for the book and was starting to look at the adaptation. He'd shown the first few pages he'd written to Julia Donaldson and then he'd sent them to me. We suggested we would do a co-production together. It's a very good fit for Pilot because of our target audience and because we are always interested in creating theatre around the themes of the transition into adulthood.

What did you like about the book?

I was interested to find that Julia Donaldson had written this book for older teenagers and I wanted to hear her voice for that age group. The themes and issues of the book are quite large and she deals with them in an interesting and insightful way. That drew me in and made me begin to think about how we could explore those themes dramatically. The other thing that grabbed me is that the characters are so likeable.

Which of the characters do you most identify with?

Probably Finlay. I think I was a bit like him when I was younger. They call him Sherlock Holmes. I love the idea of him being this curious kid, trying to make connections. I guess I was like that too at his age. It's Leo's story, and everything happens around her, but Finlay is the one who is making

Go to
page 8 to read about
Katie in action in
rehearsal

things happen. He helps Leo and finds the links to her family. With Mary he is really sensitive, which is not necessarily what people expect of a young lad of his age.

How do think young people will relate to Mary's character?

I'm not sure how well the issue of mental health is made available to young people but I think everyone will have a different response depending on their own experience and knowledge. Maybe it will open people's minds up a bit. It's not really a play that sets out to be about mental health per se, it just so happens that one of the characters is dealing with those issues. She is a really kind character who is trying to look after everyone else. She's very complex and when she begins to behave in a way that's really challenging, that's almost frightening, as it would be if you don't know how to help that person. The audience sees Leo and Finlay trying to deal with Mary's troubles and I think that's really important.

You're in the middle of the casting process and you've just broken off to do this interview. Is it fun, casting a play?

Yes! I have met so many really brilliant actors. Even if they don't do this role, you meet people you can think about for the future for other roles. It's been a good process on this show and I think I've met people who are just right, but as we are still doing recalls and contracts aren't signed yet, you'll have to wait and see!



Meet Andy Arnold adapting the play

What drew you to the book as a potential stage show?

I've been very familiar with Julia Donaldson's work for younger children as my own children have been growing up. I read an interview where she talked about having written a novel for teenagers, *Running on the Cracks*, and I thought it sounded interesting so I bought a copy. I loved it, partly because it is set in Glasgow and partly because Julia writes dialogue in a way that lends itself to adaptation. Julia is based in Glasgow too, so I approached her and asked if I could adapt it.

Meanwhile, I had written an adaptation of *The Water Babies* for *The Arches* in Glasgow, which featured an actor called Neil Simpson playing the part of Tom. Neil does a lot of work with Julia in theatre performances of her children's stories. It turned out that Julia had seen *The Water Babies* and really liked the adaptation, so she was happy for me to write a stage play of *Running on the Cracks*.

What were the essential elements that you felt had to be retained in the adaptation?

The central idea of a girl running away from home and being pursued by a sinister Uncle, who's trying to get to her before the police do, is exactly as it is in the book. The key characters of Leo, Finlay and Mary, and the relationship between them, are also at the heart of both the book and the play. I love stories that deal with a certain kind of eccentricity.

Mary's state of mind exists in a peculiarly Glaswegian atmosphere of hedonism, so it was very important to keep that in. Leo and Finlay experience Mary's mental health problem and we see it through their eyes, so we don't try to explain it, just to show it.

What choices did you make that involved changing things from the original book?

I have made the story a little darker. Glasgow would be a terrifying place to arrive in as a runaway, so I have tried to create that feeling. It would have been wonderful to populate Mary's flat with all her friends, but the cast size only allows for Lorraine and The Godfather. I also chose to make The Godfather more shady, especially in how he relates to Leo. Also Jacqueline (from the book) has been absorbed into Kim and actors double up to play other characters. One of the most important choices was to leave the ending more open than in the novel because theatre works differently to fiction. I would like a theatre audience to go away thinking and asking questions about what they've seen.

What sort of audience will enjoy *Running on the Cracks*?

From the start, I wanted the story to work for adults as well as young people. It's a bit darker and more menacing than the book, so as a play I think it will appeal to anyone over twelve.



Meet Gem Greaves the designer

What was your starting point for the design?

In my initial meetings with director Katie Posner we spoke of an idea of a set which was like play apparatus, a useable framework which would enable the actors to run around, climb, pull things out, spin them around and keep the fast paced energy of the play flowing, without the need to carry on too many extra props or set pieces.

How has the set developed, with touring in mind?

I created a space which is practical for both the needs of a touring production and the needs of the play, for instance: a certain size for transportation, easy to assemble, designed to fit the smallest venue of the tour, as well as the largest and all the others in-between, then giving the actors different playing areas, height and structure.

How will the actors interact with the set?

The layout of the set is like an island. It enables the actors to move all the way around. The configuration of the platforms allows different areas to be isolated by the lighting design, closing in the space for intimacy, for example in Mary's flat, then opening back up quickly, by lighting the higher levels. This will enable the narrative to move easily from one scene to the next.

The design allows the actors to inhabit different areas of the space, lending itself to a multitude of locations without the need to be naturalistic and it

becomes a box of tricks, using the relatively simple structure to create new possibilities with hidden objects, which can be revealed as part of the action.

What were your influences?

Central to the design is the industrial, rusty structure made up of old girders. In our creative meetings we discussed the need to include an element reminiscent of the gateway to the Barras Market in Glasgow. This inspired the design of the structure, along with the influence of ancient Chinese gateways as a nod to Leo's heritage. The steel girders represent Leo's long journey by train with the trusses based on the amazing roof of Glasgow central station, the station where Leo first arrives in Scotland. The bars of the framework create a sort of cage to the central raised area in which Uncle John can stand and pet his canaries inside *their* birdcage. Thus the shape of the structure creates a nice frame for many different moments in the play.

It's early days, but can you tell us about the costumes?

The actors in **Running on the Cracks** are playing multiple characters and as the play moves swiftly from one scene to the next this means we have to give consideration to the different costume changes which are required. We will be creating costumes which give an indication of the character that can be added and removed with ease without the need for a whole change of outfit.

See next page for set images!

Design Images model box and white card

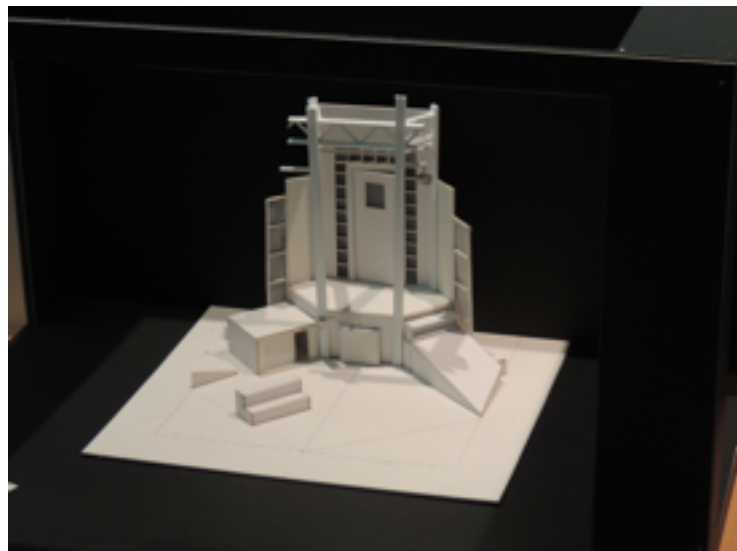


At the 'white card meeting' Gem demonstrates her ideas with a scale model of the set.

She also has colour images to give an idea of the shades and tones of the scenic painting.



The white card model will help the lighting designer know what angles and spaces will need to be lit.





In Rehearsal with Katie Posner and the Cast

It's Week Two, Monday morning...

The day begins with a hot drink as we wait for the room to warm up. The next thing is to warm up bodies and voices. The actors start with a ball game. The object is to keep a large soft ball in the air between the players, one round in which each player can only touch it once and then it's a free-for-all (but no double-dips!) The object: to get the ball in a plastic bucket. When the cast have scored a bucket, they move on to a shake out and a stretch. Gaylie leads a Shiatsu based self-massage, to wake up the central nervous system and then it's on to a vocal warm-up, which ends in the team sharing tongue-twisters which are delivered as if they're part of a natural conversation. Everyone is smiling and laughing by the end of "Susie sits in the shoe shine shop."

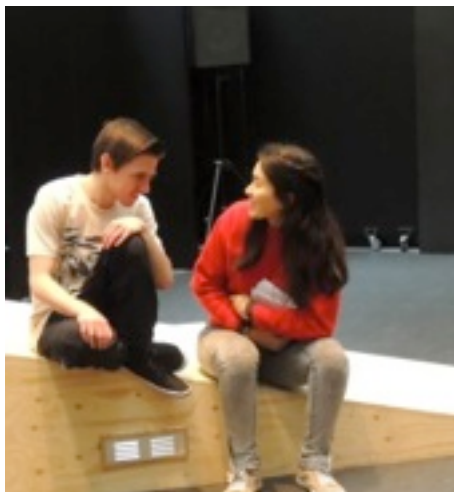
The actors move on to the set and start to work through scenes. It is week two and there is still the possibility of shifting sections of dialogue or adding words and phrases to help the quick-moving scenes run fluidly.

In week one, the cast put the play on its feet straight away. One of the challenges of adapting a story from a novel is the number of characters who now have to be played by only five people. With some of the minor characters, names and gender may need to be altered. The company has been working on narrative

changes and the opening and closing of scenes.

Now the casting is fixed, the blocking is being worked out. Katie Posner says her normal process is usually more fluid and organic, letting the blocking emerge from the motivation of the actors to move in line with their emotional journeys. But in this show, the blocking needs to come earlier because of the number of quick changes of character and the importance of being exactly in the right place to come on as someone else in the next scene. The ingenious shape of the set makes it possible to create different places within the space. The actors are juggling a combination of choreographing moves, interacting with the set, and developing the emotional motivation in scenes where the mood, the location and the characters change in a matter of a few lines.

One of the challenges, says Katie, is for the actors to be able to root everything in a naturalistic purpose while still making it stylised. She asks them to give each moment a 'nice, big offer' - in other words to make the character and the line clear, with all the emotional truth required. David Dunnachie, DSM on the book, introduces the soundscape and a new dimension is added to the scenes. The atmosphere of the busy station feels almost real and gives Jess - playing Leo - a genuine sense of the place, and how lost Leo feels within it.





Meet the Actors 1

Suni La and Gaylie Runciman

How did the rehearsal process begin?

G: The process in week one was to walk through it. There are so many characters, so it was necessary to get the clarity. It also became clear that there might need to be changes. You sometimes realised: 'I can't be that character because I'll be talking to myself.'

S: Or we were finding that we didn't have time to switch from one character to another. It was about ironing out those practical problems, finding the framework of how the whole play moves. This week (week two) we'll be able to go into even more detail.

G: What was great was that Katie put it on its feet immediately. There wasn't a lot of sitting and talking around a table. We did the first read-through sitting down and then we were on our feet, after a few games and tongue twisters and a ball game to help us to get to know each other.

S: Yes, it was good to make a start without over-analysing it, or each other. We didn't sit around introducing ourselves. It was better just to get up and do something.

G: Yes, and work as a team, straight away. And by Friday we'd walked through the whole play, which was great.

The set was installed in the rehearsal room on Thursday, was that helpful?

S: It made a big difference because of working on the different levels. We hadn't realized it would be so high!

G: It was very helpful to get it so early because it put definition on what we'd already done. It gave us another layer. We've made changes in the script as we've gone along too, because there are things you wouldn't know until it was on its feet.

Is it different working on a play that has been adapted from a novel?

S: It's lovely to have the book to base your character on, because you've got the backstory. A lot of the characters come in and out quite quickly in the play, whereas in the book there's a lot more to them.

G: Sometimes, in the play, two or three characters have been rolled into one, so if you look at the book you can find out about the different aspects of that character.

Is there any advice you'd give someone going into acting?

G: Well, I never went to drama school. I got turned down everywhere because I was terribly shy and I found auditions terrifying. But I got my Equity Card doing a stage circus and I did an Acting ASM job, then I saved up money and went to a voice coach. Then I wrote about a million letters and I started to get work professionally. So, keep going, and keep working at it!

S: I've been out of drama school for four years now. Things I wish I'd known? At the beginning I think you can be scared of going wrong. I wish I'd been braver and realised that in the rehearsal room you can try things out, not be afraid of making mistakes. Especially when you're playing lots of different characters, it's about not being afraid to look a bit silly but just to try things out. If it doesn't work, don't worry, take what does work. The character in the scene we've just been doing, Dressing Gown, I'm trying things out with her. I don't want to make her a caricature, but she can't be too small and naturalistic.

G: Yes, that's what Katie means when she says, 'make a big offer' - she means give something definite, give me something to work with!



Meet the Actors 2

Grant McDonald, Jessica Henwick, and Stephen Clyde

Grant, how did you get to this stage in your acting career?

G: Well, I'm twenty years old and I'm still currently at college. This is only my second job. I did a job in 2011 and then had my first experience as an actor of not getting work for over a year! And then this came literally out of nowhere. I just got asked to audition one night when I was at the Young Company here at the Tron. I went for the audition and got a phone call a couple of days later saying that I'd got it.

You came up through the Tron youth theatre, is it good to be back?

G: Yes, I was at Skillshops for two years and then I was away working and I came back just in October to start in the Young Company. It's really cool to be working here at the Tron because I'm used to the rehearsal space, having done workshops here for three years. Suddenly doing it in a professional show is strange because there's the familiarity of the place and then I realise I've made that step up. It's quite exciting!

Are your family & friends coming to see you in Glasgow?

Oh, yes! There's going to be a rumbling in the ground when hoards of my family come rushing towards the theatre.

Jess, is the first time you've worked in Scotland?

J: No, I worked here for two days in December doing a BBC Radio Scotland play called *Monday to Friday*, which is coming out in February.

You play Leo in the show, do you identify with Leo's character at all?

J: Definitely. I feel like the journey she goes on is about her coming to grips with her Chinese heritage. Any British born Chinese person goes through this at some stage or another. I went through that journey when I was about sixteen and I went to the Far-East for three months and completely immersed myself in the culture.

How did you get involved in acting as a career?

J: I started doing LAMDA exams at quite a young age and then I went to the National Youth Theatre and Redbridge Theatre School. After one year, I was booked for my first professional role on the BBC, which was *Spirit Warriors*. That took me out of college for four months and then I just carried on working and here I am!

Stephen, what are the challenges for you as an actor in *Running On The Cracks*?

S: Coming up with lots of different accents! I'm from Glasgow but when I was young, because of my Dad's job, we moved from place to place, so I lived both South and North of the border, although I've lived most of my life in Scotland. Children are very good at picking up accents. As a child, I liked mucking around and trying out different choices and I was always very prone to that.

Are you enjoying rehearsing a show in your home city?

S: It's quite normal for me, but it is good to be back at the Tron. I hadn't worked in this theatre for quite some time until September last year. Andy Arnold who's the Artistic Director of the Tron, asked me if I wanted to do *Ulysses*. I'd worked with Andy on many productions when he was at The Arches, some time ago. It will happen sometimes, you'll work with someone a lot and then you don't, and then you come back. So I've been here twice now in the last few months, with another show elsewhere sandwiched in between.

Are you looking forward to visiting the other venues on the tour?

S: Yes, very much so, because although I've been working as a professional actor for over twenty years and I've been to a lot of places, as far north as John O' Groats and as far south as Bexhill on Sea, three places I've never been are York, Exeter and Lincoln.



Production Notes

David Dunnachie

Rehearsal Note 7: Tuesday 22 January 2013.

GENERAL:

1. Ms Lisa Lee (Julia Donaldson's inspiration for Kim and the story) spent an hour with the cast in rehearsals this afternoon.

WRITERS:

2. No notes today, thank you.

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT:

3. No notes today, thank you.

COMPANY and STAGE MANAGEMENT

4. A second bag of doughnuts are required (1st bag is taken by Leo the second bag by Customer.)
5. A second £20 note is required (Marina gives this to Customer.)
6. There should be two cockatiels in the drawing. The drawing should be monochrome pencil drawing.
7. Can we have a camera in rehearsals that flashes. Thank you.
8. Do we have Leo's actual bag yet? If so, can we have it in rehearsals.

SET DESIGN:

9. No notes today, thank you.

COSTUME DESIGN / WARDROBE:

10. Rab the Newsagent's (Mr Clyde) coat has been cut.
11. Can Uncle John have thicker-rimmed glasses please.
12. Mr Clyde's base costume shirt should have a pocket in the chest (to put his spectacles into when not playing Uncle John).

LIGHTING DESIGN:

13. Can the isolated areas of the set be as tight as possible, with as little bleed as possible.

SOUND DESIGN:

14. In Missing People call - can the line that starts "Can I just take down a few details...", and ends "...what's your name", can the end section be a separate cue in QLab ("What's your name?"). Thank you.
15. Can we please have an additional SQ "what are you doing?" (P17 - discuss at plotting meeting this evening).
16. P24 - Can we please have country music intro into crackly radio announcement that starts "Police have received a number of sightings..." Please have an underscore of the country music under the announcement, returning to full volume at end of announcement. Thanks.

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT (LX/SOUND/AV):

17. No notes today, thank you.

When you see the play, watch out for these details and moments. These notes were from two weeks before the show opened, so things may have changed again!



PSHE Resources Running Away

Every year in the UK, over 100,000 children run away from home. That's one child every five minutes...

30% of these are 12 or younger, and 1 in 6 will sleep rough.

These children run away or are forced to leave homes where violence, abuse, and neglect have become part of their daily lives. They also run from 'normal' family backgrounds to escape common problems such as bullying, relationship issues, loneliness and family breakdown.

Research shows it can happen to anyone, with as many children running away from affluent homes as low-income households. 70% of UK runaways are never even reported missing by those supposedly responsible for their welfare and safety.

Unwanted, unloved and often abused, they find themselves living on our streets simply because there's nowhere to go and no one to turn to. Society often denies their existence, but they are out there, and they are failed by a system that should be protecting them.

The problems on the street are often worse than those they endured at home. The threat of violence is often around the next corner and the danger of sexual abuse and exploitation never goes away. Drugs often become a way of life, a welcome escape from the realities of their daily struggles.

source: www.railwaychildren.org.uk

Aberlour

When Julia Donaldson was researching the story *Running on the Cracks*, she visited the charity Aberlour.

Aberlour is the largest, solely Scottish, children's charity and they provide help to over 6000 of Scotland's most vulnerable children, young people and their families each year.

They provide Scotland's only refuge offering a safe haven for young runaways. Did you know 9,000 of Scotland's children and young people will run away every year?

Aberlour is a partner of Railway Children, a charity working on behalf of runaways in the UK and abroad.

**To find out more, including how to raise funds for Aberlour go to: www.aberlour.org.uk
Why not adopt Aberlour or Railway Children as your school charity?**

Follow Up Activity

Why not create an information booklet or poster, giving advice to a young person who is having problems at home. On the next few pages, Aberlour have provided resources for you to print off.

Here is an important helpline number from Missing People to get you started.

Runaway Helpline: You can contact us whenever you want us and however you want, we are here for you.

Runaway Helpline is free, confidential and 24/7:

- Call 116 000
- Text 116 000
- Email 116000@missingpeople.org.uk

You can text us even if you have no credit left on your mobile phone. We will talk to you in confidence to explain your options and try to get you the help you want. We won't tell anybody you have called us unless you want us to. We can't trace your calls, emails or texts.

Call us if you need advice, have run away, or are thinking of running away.

24 Hour Free Helpline
0800 783 6686
to speak to us in confidence

Text us for free on 80800 with the word SAFE and then your name. We will call you back within 24 hours.

Website:
www.aberlour.org.uk/safe

Email:
safe@aberlour.org.uk



We can give you a safe place to stay and take time out.

Aberlour Young Runaways Service is dedicated to young people under the age of 16, especially those that are thinking about or have run away.

We think that it's important to understand the reasons why you may feel you have to run away and we help you look at what needs to change to keep you safe. Running away can sometimes feel like the only choice but this can often put you or others into danger.

We can help!



Aberlour Young Runaways Service provides:

A Safe Place to stay - in a confidential location where you can stay for up to 7 days.

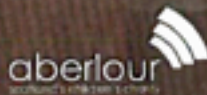
Time to talk - support from an Aberlour worker to help resolve your difficulties.

Advocacy - helping you have your views heard and helping you to make decisions about your life.

Health and Wellbeing - making sure you get the help you need to cope with the difficult situations in your life.

Education - providing information on school and college and helping you make the most of your education.

**ABERLOUR YOUNG
RUNAWAYS SERVICE**
0800 783 6686



14 year old Carla ran away after violent arguments caused by her mum's alcohol problems. Her dad had died the year before. With no other relatives to turn to, she decided running away was the only answer. One of her teachers referred her to Aberlour Young Runaways Service where she spent time talking to the team. We are helping Carla and her family to be reunited.

carla's story

FRANK'S STORY

Frank lived with his dad and two brothers, but life had become difficult because his dad was depressed and very angry. Frank was doing well at school, but his dad told him that he had to leave and get a job when he was sixteen.

After one argument, his dad threw him out and he spent two nights sleeping in a stairwell.

Frank's headmaster contacted Aberlour and he was offered a bed at the refuge. Frank has moved on to supported accommodation and regularly sees his brothers. Frank says his life is more settled and plans to fulfil his ambition of going to university.

We helped Frank when he had no-where to go.

jemma's story

Jemma is 13 and lives with her aunt and uncle. Jemma found it difficult living there and was thinking about running away. She contacted the Aberlour Young Runaways refuge.

Jemma decided to take time out in the refuge to think about things. Aberlour Young Runaways Service spoke to each family member about her coming home, and arranged for Jemma to stay with her grandmother.

By supporting Jemma with one to one sessions we helped Jemma to return home.

We helped Jemma build relationships with her family.



ABERLOUR YOUNG RUNAWAYS SERVICE

**REFUGE
OUTREACH
HEALTH & WELLBEING
EDUCATION
ADVOCACY
1:1 SUPPORT**

WE DO EVERYTHING WE CAN

**Aberlour Young
Runaways Service Refuge:
0800 783 6686**

www.aberlour.org.uk/runaways
Email: runaways@aberlour.org.uk

Scottish Charity no: SC007991 Company Reg no: SC312912

aberlour
scotland's children's charity





PSHE Resources

Mental Health Awareness

Katie Posner (director)

There is something very important about the way Finlay and Leo relate to Mary. They may never have encountered someone living with a mental illness but they don't judge her. When things get very difficult, Finlay does what he has to do to. When Leo finds herself in Mary's world, she is accepted unconditionally and for a while, feels safe. Sometimes we need to remember that being kind and being caring are basic human instincts and that our strengths as people come out in the most surprising ways.

Gaylie Runciman (playing Mary)

Mary is not presented in a way that we just pity her. She's wonderful in that she enables Leo and Finlay to develop and find themselves, even though she's got her own problems. I like the fact that it's not an idealistic characterisation of someone with a mental health problem. There are times when she's really hard to live with!



Mary (Gaylie Runciman) and the Godfather (Stephen Clyde) dancing at Mary's party

Follow Up

After seeing the play, discuss the statements above. Students may want to find out more about bi-polar disorder or other mental health diagnoses.

Further Resources

Teaching pack from Mind -

http://www.mind.org.uk/get_involved/membership/minds_membership_fortnightly_email_newsletter/on-line_education_pack_launch

A powerful insight into a the life of a Elyn Saks, a university professor who lives with schizophrenia

http://www.ted.com/talks/elyn_saks_seeing_mental_illness.html

Julia Donaldson's personal story of her son Hamish

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2009/feb/28/family-mental-health1>

Moving account of a father and son dealing with cannabis induced psychosis

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/is-this-the-tobacco-moment-for-cannabis-8349054.html>



PSHE Resources

Anti-Racist Education

What's In A Word?

by Suni La

Read and Discuss

The word 'chinky' is used in the play, and you know, I really hate that word. It wasn't really a word I heard when I was living in London, not to my face. I grew up on an estate off the Old Kent Road, which was ethnically very diverse. It wasn't until I came back to Scotland that I heard it more. It didn't help that I came back with a London accent but when I said I was born in Scotland, I was born in Abroath, then people would accept me. I was only ten when I came back to Abroath and as my accent developed, then I blended in more.

When I was fourteen or fifteen, if someone called out 'chinky,' I would turn round and tell them to shut up, that would just fuel them and they'd respond: 'Ooh, she's getting her knickers in a twist'. I learned from my Chinese friends how to deal with it. Once, we were coming back from a Spice Girls concert in Glasgow and these guys started trying to chat us up and when we weren't responding they said: 'You think you're better than us, you chinkies'. And that word just gives me a horrible feeling, makes the hairs stand up on my neck. The girls I was with, they didn't get angry, they just told the boys: 'Oh, you're so witty. That's really clever, well done.' They put them down without being defensive. I was able to use that when I was about sixteen. I lived in Stirling then and I was walking into town one day when I passed two boys and a girl sitting outside MacDonalds. For some reason I knew they were going to say something, even they were only about twelve years old. They started shouting stuff, so I turned round and said: 'That's really clever, is that what they teach you in school these days, how to be racist?' As soon as they heard that they said: 'I'm not racist!' I replied: 'Is that not racist? Because I think it is. I bet your mum and dad are really proud of you.' They knew they weren't supposed to be racist, but they didn't a clue what that meant.

I'm afraid it's a word that's used a lot in Scotland, even when it's used to describe a take away, friends have said it in front of me, and I've had to ask them not to. In the play, when Mary uses the word, Finlay picks her up on it. It's meant quite innocently with Mary, but I wonder what a Chinese audience will think. They might think it should have been challenged more. I hope young people will understand it's not in the play because we think it's okay. It's in the play because it does happen in the real world, but it's not okay!

Further Links and Resources

Show Racism the Red Card <http://www.srtrc.org/>

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/supportinglearners/positivelearningenvironments/inclusionandequality/antiracism/index.asp>

RUNNING ON THE CRACKS



Julia Donaldson has kindly given Tron Participation a variety of scenes lifted from her book 'Running on the Cracks'. Julia hopes pupils will re-enact these scenes.

Why not challenge your class to learn the art of doubling. Doubling is when an actor plays more than one character during a performance. Different characters can be identified by items of costume and/or the actor's physical and vocal changes.

When you have watched Andy Arnold's adaptation, you may notice some differences, discuss or write about what you notice.

Dramatised Scenes from *RUNNING ON THE CRACKS* by Julia Donaldson

These scenes are suitable for acting out by S1-S2 pupils.

1 – CHAN CONVERSATIONS

Introduction: 15-year-old Leonora (Leo for short) has run away to Glasgow, Scotland, and is trying to track down her Chinese Grandparents, Mr and Mrs Chan, whom she has never met. She has decided to ring up all the Chans in the telephone directory.

Characters

Leo
Voice 1
Voice 2
Voice 3
Voice 4
Voice 5

Leo dials a number.

1 Hello.

Leo Hello, is that Mrs Chan?

1 Who's speaking?

Leo It's . . . my name's Chan too. Um . . . I'm trying to do some research into my family tree and . . .

1 Where did you get my number?

Leo From the phone book. It's just that . . .

1 I'm sorry, I can't help you.

Leo dials again

2 The number you have dialled has not been recognised.

Leo dials again.

3 Tsiu twing. Tsiu fong. Wu Chan.

Leo Hello, is that Mr Chan?

3 Cha twang. Chan . . . tsiu chong . . .

Leo I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch that. I'm looking for either Mr or Mrs Chan.

3 Cha sing no help you. . . . liu chong.

Leo I'm sorry, I can't understand.

Leo dials again.

Leo Hello, I'm looking for my grandmother or grandfather. Their surname's Chan.

4 I don't think you've got the right number.

Leo dials again.

5 Hello.

Leo Hello, is that Mrs Chan?

5 Mrs Chan, yes.

Leo I'm sorry if I've got the wrong number. I'm looking for the Mrs Chan who used to own a Chinese restaurant.

5 This not a restaurant, no.

Leo No, I know it's not a restaurant, but I wonder if you used to work in a restaurant?

5 I think you got the wrong number. This not a restaurant.

2 – THE BARRAS

Introduction: Finlay is a 13-year-old boy who is often in trouble at school. During the week he does a paper round, and he also has a Saturday morning job in The Barras market in Glasgow, working in a doughnut van for a woman called Marina.

Characters

Finlay (13)

Marina (middle-aged)

Man

Child 1

Child 2

Leo (15, non-speaking in this scene)

China-seller

Finlay and Marina are in a doughnut van at the Barras market. Finlay is stirring the doughnut mixture, while Marina fishes the doughnuts out of the hot fat and rolls them in the sugar tray. Finlay sighs.

Marina *(waving a bag of doughnuts)* Five for a pound! Five for a pound! *(She turns to Finlay.)*
That's a long face for a Saturday. Cheer up, it may never happen.

Finlay It already has.

Marina What is it this time? School or Mum and Dad?

Finlay Both. I keep getting these N of Ms.

Marina I thought N of M was a rock band.

Finlay That's Eminem and he's a rapper. N of M is short for Notification of Misconduct. They're these slips of paper the school give you, and your parents have to sign them. Mum said if I got any more she'd stop this week's pocket money. Then I was late for school on Tuesday and got one. So I forged her signature.

Marina Finlay! This sounds like the slippery downward slope. Did the school swallow it?

Finlay Yes, but then on Wednesday one of the other paper boys was off and I had to do all these extra houses, so I was late again.

Marina And you got another Eminem?

Finlay N of M – no, but I would have. I couldn't face that, so I wrote a note from Mum saying I'd been to the dentist.

Marina Finlay! I wouldn't have given you this job if I'd known you were such a hardened criminal.

Finlay Only the school went and phoned her.

Marina What gave you away? The handwriting, was it?

Finlay No, it was the Ps. Apparently there's only one in "apologise" and two in "appointment". What a stupid language.

Marina So now the pocket money's gone.

Finlay And Mum's going to stop me doing the paper round if I'm late again. I'll never be able to save up for that guitar, and Ross'll probably find someone else to be in his band. It's so unfair!

Marina (*waving a bag of doughnuts*). Five for a pound! (*To Finlay*) All that talk of Ps has gone to my bladder. Mind the van a minute, can you, son? (*She goes off.*)

Finlay Five for a pound! Five for a pound!

Enter a man with 3 snotty-nosed children.

Child 1 I'm hungry.

Child 2 Can we have some doughnuts, Dad?

Man All right, then. (*To Finlay*) I'll have three bags, son.

Finlay Here you are. That's three pounds.

The man gives Finlay a five-pound note.

Finlay I'll just get your change.

Enter Leo. She grabs a bag of doughnuts and runs off.

Finlay Hey! Stop! *He runs after her, into a shed full of china ornaments.*

Man What about my change?

Re-enter Marina.

Marina Can I help you, Sir?

Man Yes, you can give me my change. That lad of yours has run off with my fiver. Two pounds, you owe me.

Marina Finlay! FINLAY! Where's he gone?

Child 1 He's a thief!

Child 2 No – that girl's the thief.

Marina I'm sorry, Sir. Here you are. *(She gives him two pounds.)*

Man Ta. *(He goes off with his children.)*

Re-enter Finlay with the china-seller. She is holding 2 broken mugs and a broken china seal.

Marina There you are! That gentleman over there says you ran off with his change.

Finlay Oh no! sorry, I didn't mean to! *(He searches his pockets.)* I must have dropped it when I fell. I was trying to catch this thief, you see.

Marina Don't worry. I've given him his money, but it's coming off today's wages – and they're the last wages you're getting. Running off like that! Supposing someone had robbed the till while you were gone!

China-seller I knew he was up to now good. Look at these things he's broken. If you're his mum, you owe me fifty-five pounds. That's twenty-five each for the coronation mugs and a fiver for the seal.

Marina I'm not his mum – heaven forbid! But fifty-five quid sounds a bit steep to me. I'd have thought you'd keep your valuable pieces locked up or at the back of the stall. Here, you can have twenty for the mugs. That seal looks like something left behind at a jumble sale, but I'll give you a pound for it.

China-seller *(taking the money quickly)* That's pure robbery. That's less than I paid for them. *(But she hurries away.)*

Finlay Thanks, Marina – I'll pay it back out of my pocket money.

Marina I somehow doubt you'll be getting much pocket money with all these Eminems you keep getting. I'll take it out of the next couple of weeks' wages.

Finlay But . . . I thought you said . . .

Marina Aye, but I'm giving you another chance. Now, tell me what happened, you daft wee man!

(Possible improvisation: Finlay tells Marina about the doughnut thief, and as he does so he realises where he's seen her before. It was in yesterday's paper: ORCHESTRA ORPHAN MISSING.)

3 – MISSING PEOPLE

Introduction: following on from the last scene, Finlay has realised that the girl who stole his doughnuts is Leonora Watts-Chan, whose disappearance has been reported in the newspapers. He decides to phone the Missing People office to report his sighting of her.

Characters

Finlay (13)

Voice (speaking from the Missing People office)

Finlay's Dad

Finlay dials a number.

Voice Hello, you're through to Missing People.

Finlay Oh, hi . . . er, I've seen the girl that's gone missing.

Voice Can you give us the name of the missing person, please?

Finlay That one in the paper.

Voice We do have several thousand missing people in our files. We need to work from a name.

Finlay I'm sorry, I can't remember. It wasn't my paper, see. I just deliver them. But it was yesterday she was in it. She's kind of Chinesey-looking.

Voice Do you mean Leonora Watts-Chan?

Finlay Yes, that was it. I'm sure it was her. She nicked a bag of doughnuts from my van. Well, it's not my van really, it's

Voice Can I just take down a few details, first, please. What's your name?

Finlay Finlay Grant.

Voice And your address?

Finlay 58 Tiverton Road.

Voice Where is that?

Finlay It's in Glasgow . . . but you won't write to me, will you? I don't want you to write. My parents don't know about this, see. I broke some stuff when I was chasing after the girl, and I don't want them to find out. Is there a reward, by the way? I don't mind you writing to me if there's a reward.

Dad (*outside the room*) FINLAY!

Finlay Oh no, that's my dad. I'll have to be quick.

Voice Can you tell me when and where you think you saw the girl?

Finlay Yes, it was at the Barras this morning.

Voice The barrows, did you say?

Finlay No, the Barras. It's a market. She nicked a bag of doughnuts and ran off. I nearly lost my job because of her.

Voice Can you remember what she was wearing?

Finlay It was some kind of anorak. Light-coloured. I think it had a hood. She had a great big bag, too.

Voice Was it a school bag?

Finlay No, not really.

Dad FINLAY! STOP HOGGING THAT PHONE!

Voice Can you describe the bag? Hello? Hello?

Dad (*coming in*) You know Mum's expecting a call.

Finlay Sorry, Dad.

Dad Who were you calling, anyway?

Finlay Ross. It was about the physics homework.

4 – LEO AND MARY

Introduction: Mary is a woman in her mid 50s who has befriended the runaway Leo. Leo is in Mary's flat for the first time and has been telling her about her family background – how her musician parents were killed in a plane crash and she had been staying with her English aunt, uncle and spiteful cousins in Bristol and has run away to Glasgow.

Characters

Leo

Mary

Mary What about your uncle? What was he like?

Leo I used to like him when I was little. I thought I did, anyway. Maybe it was his birds I liked really. He keeps all these birds – about twenty of them. I used to like sketching them.

Mary Pigeons, are they? Wee puddie-doods?

Leo No, budgies and canaries mostly. And there were these two yellow cockatiels called Clemmy and Lemmy. There's a picture of them here somewhere. *(She shows Mary a picture in her sketchbook.)*

Mary The wee rascals! Did they talk, aye?

Leo Not that I ever heard, but Uncle John talked to them all the time. He kept them in the spare room. That was where I slept, but their cages took up nearly half the room.

Mary Did the birds no keep you awake?

Leo No, because he'd rigged up a curtain across the cages to stop the light getting through. I liked sharing with the birds – at first, anyway. The social worker wasn't happy, though.

Mary Are they ever?

Leo She said it was against the law and I could get some disease off the birds – but I was just glad not to be sharing with Flo and Caitlin.

Mary Aye, the wee witches.

Leo I was supposed to be starting at their school the next day, but I ran away instead.

Mary Did they have a gang then, aye? Were they going to bully you?

Leo Oh, it wasn't them I was running away from – not really. It was Uncle John.

Mary The bird man?

Leo Yes.

Mary What did he do?

Leo Well, it's hard to explain. . . .He always used to bring me in a cup of tea in the mornings when he came in to feed the birds. Sometimes the tea would be a bit cold, but I just thought he'd been pottering about and had forgotten to bring it in to me – he was a bit absent-minded like that. But one morning I woke up and . . . he was kneeling there, leaning over me and staring at me. Usually he wears glasses, but he hadn't got them on, and his brown eyes were just inches away from my face. They looked smaller without the glasses, and all watery. It was so creepy. Of course then he started rummaging around under the bed, pretending he'd lost a packet of birdseed or something, but I knew he hadn't.

Mary Did you tell your auntie?

Leo No. I didn't know what to say. I didn't think she'd believe me anyway. And then I started wondering if it had really happened – until it happened again a few days later.

Mary Tried to mess about with you, did he?

Leo No – no, he didn't actually touch me or anything. Just knelt there, staring with his little watery eyes. The second time he didn't do the "Whoops, I've lost the birdseed" routine though. He just gave me this sort of sappy smile for a few seconds, and then he gave me my tea. It was cold again. He'd probably been staring at me for ages. Maybe he'd been doing it every morning. It was such a horrible thought.

Mary What did you do – throw the tea in his face?

Leo No. It was stupid really – I just whispered "thanks" like I usually did. And then he went away, but he still had that stupid soft kind of smile on his face. It was as if he was sharing a secret with me.

Mary I'll wipe that smile off his face if I ever see him, the dirty old man.

Leo I hope you never do see him. He thinks I'm in London. But I came here, to try and track down my Dad's parents.

Mary Your grandma and grandpa.

Leo Yes, but I've never met them. They fell out with Dad before I was born. I thought it would be easy to track them down, only it's not. I've been phoning up all the Chans in the phone book, but half of them put the phone before I've got going, and some of them never pick it up in the first place.

Mary You'd be better going to their houses.

Leo Yes, that's what I decided. I copied all the addresses out of the phone book and I bought an A-Z of Glasgow. But now I feel too scared.

Mary Why? They willnae bite your head off.

Leo It's not that. It's because my picture was in yesterday's *Sun*.

Mary You'll want to lie low for a wee while then.

Leo But where? I can't afford to go to that café any more. My money's run out. I'm so tired, and I feel so dirty! (*Near to tears*) I just want a bath!

Mary You can have a bath, hen. And you can have a bed too.

5 – FACE TO FACE

Introduction: Finlay has tracked Leo down and taken a photo of her when she was out sketching early in the morning. Leo has snatched the camera from him and run home to Mary's flat. Finlay has chased after her. He has been in this block of flats before because he delivers papers to Mary.

Characters

Mary

Leo

Finlay

Neighbour (called "Dressing Gown" by Finlay)

Leo lets herself into the flat.

Mary Hiya, Leo hen! Did you do some nice pictures, aye? What's the matter?

Leo (*whispering*) Shh, Mary! Someone's seen me! He's there outside – he's on the landing!

Mary Who is? It's no the bird man, is it?

Leo No, it's that boy . . . I'm sure it's him – the one I told you about, the one from the doughnut van.

The doorbell rings.

Leo That's him!

Mary We willnae let him in!

Leo But I've got his camera, Mary! He took a photo of me and I just grabbed it . . . Oh, what shall I do?

The bell rings again.

Finlay Open the door! I know you're there! Open the door I'll call the police!

Mary Get in the wardrobe, hen! I'll stop his blethering.

Leo gets into the wardrobe. Mary looks through the peephole.

Mary (laughing) I spy with my little eye! It's my wee paper boy all the time! Can ye no put it in the letter box, son?

Finlay I need to talk to the girl you've got in there.

Mary What girl? There's only me and the moggie – there's nae lassie here. You've got the wrong house.

Finlay She is here! I saw her! She's got my mum's camera!

Mary Just give me my *Morning Post* and stop blethering. You'll be late for school.

Finlay I'm not going to school! I'm going to the police station!

Mary Aye, and I'll go with you and tell them you've caused a breach of the peace.

Leo (*opening the wardrobe door*) Ssh! Everyone will hear! You'd better let him in. I'll give him his camera back.

Mary opens the door.

Finlay Where is she? And where's my camera?

Mary (*to Leo*) Is it him, aye? Is it the doughnut boy?

Finlay No – she's the doughnut girl! She stole my doughnuts and now she's got my mum's camera. Give it back, you thief!

Leo Here you are, but stop spying on me.

Finlay I'd rather be a spy than a thief.

Leo Stop calling me a thief!

Finlay Well, you are one. Stealing things and running away all the time. I bet that's why you ran away in the first place isn't it? I bet you stole stuff from your aunt and uncle?

Mary What aunt and uncle? I'm her auntie.

Finlay You're not! You're not the one that was in the paper, anyway. *(To Leo)* I recognised you the first time I saw you, and now I'm going to get the reward.

Leo No . . . listen . . . you don't understand!

Finlay *(shouting)* You're the one who doesn't understand! You just go round stealing things, not caring how other people feel. How do you think I'd feel if I lost my job? How do you think my mum would feel if her camera was stolen? My dad gave her that camera for Christmas.

Mary *(turning on Finlay)* Your da! Your ma! You're lucky to have a da and a ma. How d'ye think this wean feels? She's got no da and no ma – all she's got is an auntie who's a snob and an uncle who's a pervert and two nasty wee cousins. She didnae want your ma's camera. She just diesnae want her photie splashed in all the papers. But you widnae think about that, would ye? Ye'd have her back with that perverted bird man, s that it?

Finlay I'm sorry . . . I didn't know . . .

Mary Christmas, you're on about! Christmas! What about the poor wee lassie? No ma, no da – what sort of Christmas do you think she's going to have?

Finlay All right. I won't tell anyone. I'd better go.

Neighbour *(outside on the landing)* Is everything all right, Miss McNally?

Finlay It's Dressing Gown!

Mary *(hooting with laughter)* Dressing gown! Aye, it's Dressing Gown! I'm fine, Dressing Gown! Never better! How's yerself, Dressing Gown?

Neighbour I'll be fine if you can just keep the noise down.

Mary keeps on laughing.

Leo Why don't you sit down, Mary? I'll make you a cup of tea. *(To Finlay)* Do you want some?

Mary Aye, of course he doesn, don't you, wee man? And I know what he'll be wanting as well – chocolate Hob Nobs!

6 – MACBETH

Introduction: Leo and Finlay have become friends.

Characters

Leo

Finlay

Mary

Leo and Finlay are in Mary's flat. Leo is helping Finlay with his English homework.

Leo Where are you up to? Has Macbeth killed the king yet?

Finlay Yes, and now he's just had this other guy bumped off – you know, his friend, Banquet.

Mary *(cackling with laughter)* Banquet! That's a good name. How do you do, Banquet? Sit down, Banquet – have a cup of tea!

Leo It's not Banquet, it's Banquo.

Finlay Sorry, I was getting mixed up – we've been doing the banqueting scene.

Leo Oh, that's a great scene.

Finlay It is if you don't have to write an essay about it.

Leo What's the title of the essay?

Finlay "Is Banquo's ghost supposed to be real?"

Leo Well, what do you think?

Finlay Of course he's real. Shakespeare says so. Look, it says here "Enter Banquo's ghost."

Leo But don't you think that's really meant to be happening in Macbeth's mind?

Mary Aye, it's like with Ronnie on Ward Seven. One time he saw this chimney sweep talking to him out of the telly. There's that much funny stuff going on in people's heads.

Leo That's right. After all, no one else can see the ghost – and remember what Lady Macbeth says: "You look but on a chair."

Finlay *(a bit fed up)* I suppose you always come top in English?

Leo No I don't. As a matter of fact, I don't even go to school.

Finlay I know you don't any more, but I mean . . . well, before . . .

Leo I never did. I was home-educated. Mum and Dad used to take me to see a lot of plays and then we'd talk and talk about them.

Finlay (*slightly embarrassed*) Oh. Sorry. . . . So you think Macbeth's a bit mental then? I think that's what Lady Macbeth says too. She says something about how he often has these fits and how everyone should take no notice and just get on with the banquet.

Mary (*cackling again*) Take no notice and get on with the banquet! That's good advice, that is! Take no notice and get on with the banquet!

Leo But don't you see, Lady Macbeth is just trying to cover up for him. He doesn't really have fits. The real reason he sees the ghost is because he feels so guilty. I mean, he's just murdered his friend. Think how you'd feel if you'd murdered . . . well, me for example.

Mary Aye. Say you'd killed her after she'd taken your doughnuts. You'd feel guilty then, wouldn't you, wee man?

Finlay (*laughing*) No I wouldn't. It would serve her right.

Mary This play sounds a hoot! Take no notice and get on with the banquet. Aye, let's have a banquet. Let's get in a Chinky!

Leo Listen, Mary, you can't keep spending your money on us like this. You've already bought me all these clothes.

Mary I've just got my DLA and I'll spend it how I like. I'll spend it on a banquet. (*She picks up the phone.*)

Finlay (*whispering to Leo*) what's DLA?

Leo Disability Living Allowance. It's this money she gets every month from the government.

Mary (*on the phone, ordering.*) One spare rib special. One beef in oyster sauce. One sweet and sour king prawn. One chicken with ginger and pineapple. . . .

Leo We've got to stop her.

Finlay Hey – that restaurant could be the one your Gran and Grandad run.

Mary One crispy beef with noodles. Three egg-fried rice. Three spring rolls. Three spicy chicken wings.

Leo Mary, that's enough!

Mary 95 Struan Drive. Flat 2/1. And hurry up, we're having a banquet!

THE END