



SPRING TERM PUFFIN VIRTUAL VISITS

Dear teachers, librarians and readers,

We are so excited that you're joining us for a Puffin Virtual Visit this Spring. Let the adventure begin!

Puffin authors will be beaming into classrooms all over the country, so that your pupils can hear from wonderful writers and illustrators and gain a behind-the-scenes look at their books, characters and inspiration for writing

These Virtual Visits are the perfect opportunity to encourage reading for pleasure in your school, introduce new books and authors, and inspire a love of reading in even the most reluctant of readers. Taking part will support pupils' literacy, creative writing and encourage the habit of reading widely and often.

It's so easy to join the fun: just make sure you've registered online and prepared pupils with a pen and some paper at the ready! Before the event, you can even submit your pupils' questions for our authors to answer during their Visit, by using the form on our Puffin Schools website.

Help spread the word in your school by printing the Spring line-up poster at the back of this pack, and putting up in your library or staff-room.

We can't wait for you to join us!

Puffin

What's included in this pack?

To help you create long-lasting reading memories, we've put together this pack to give you all the information needed on our Autumn Virtual Visits, support pupils during the visit, and prompt further discussion about the authors and books featured.

This pack contains

- Our Spring Virtual Visits schedule
- A booklist so that you can discover more about the books featured in this series
- Extracts from the books in this Spring series
- A printable 'watch along' page for notes and doodles
- A printable poster to put up in your school to raise awareness for the Visits



PUFFIN VIRTUAL VISITS



SPRING TERM SCHEDULE

Simply register for any of our below events in advance and install Zoom on your computer.

FRIDAY 8TH MARCH

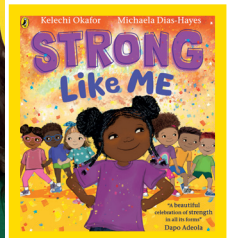
1:30PM



JEN CARNEY

FRIDAY 15TH MARCH

2.00PM



KELECHI OKAFOR &
MICHAELA DIAS-HAYES

FRIDAY 22ND MARCH

10.30AM



STRUAN MURRAY

Share photos of
your class watching
by tagging
@PuffinBooks
#VirtualVisits
on Twitter/X

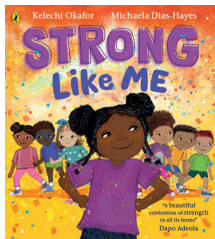
PUFFIN VIRTUAL VISITS



SPRING TERM READING LIST



KS1



STRONG LIKE ME

Written by: Kelechi Okafor

Illustrated by:
Michaela Dias-Hayes

Genre: picture book

The story: A heart-warming picture-book story about finding your own ways to be strong, from writer and social commentator Kelechi Okafor. Kamara loves being super strong - it makes her feel fizzy and zappy! But her classmates and their negative words lead her to question herself and the confidence she has in her physical ability. With sport's day and the Big Race looming, does Kamara have what it takes to reach the finish line?

KS2



THE DAY MY DOG GOT FAMOUS

Written by: Jen Carney

Genre: Humour

The story: A few things you should know about Ferris Foster:

1. He's the cartooning genius behind ASTOUNDOG (star of The Hoot, available exclusively in his school playground)
2. His best friend is his actual dog, Aldo who is anything but astounding
3. He's had 13 foster brothers and 8 foster sisters and now he's about to meet his new foster sister, Tia, for the first time
4. His NEMESIS is his totally annoying neighbour Destiny Dean!

When Destiny boasts about videos of her dog, Princess Foo-Foo, going viral, Ferris foolishly claims that Aldo can easily become a BIGGER internet star. There's just one problem: Aldo has about as much talent as a teaspoon. Then Ferris and Tia accidentally film Aldo doing what looks like an amazing trick... will Aldo finally live up to the name of his comic book alter-ego and wow the world with his skills or is this about to be the biggest EPIC FAIL ever?



THE SECRET OF THE MOONSHARD

Written by: Struan Murray

Genre: Adventure

The story: Domino has lived her whole life believing that just one drop of magic could kill her. Held in a floating laboratory by scheming Science Barons, she has never known a single day of freedom. When Domino discovers that everything she's been told by the Barons is a lie, she escapes to Abzalaymon, a wondrous city filled with scientific marvels, hulking thunder lizards and hidden magic. But the Barons are soon on Domino's trail. Because a war is brewing between science and magic. A war that could destroy the world. And Domino might just be the key to saving everyone...



THE DAY MY DOG GOT FAMOUS

FRIDAY, TEN MINUTES UNTIL A FORTNIGHT OF FREEDOM

DRUM ROLL, PLEASE!

Miss Grogan makes a final circuit of the display boards, then clip-clops back to her desk.

CLIP CLOP

‘You’ve made it very tricky for me, Year Five,’ she says, her eyes twinkling. ‘But I’ve made my decision. Drum roll, please!’

Some kids rap their knuckles on their tables. Others use pencils and rulers. Most also stamp their feet. Usually, I’d join in with this rare opportunity to make as much noise as physically possible in class. Today, I stay as still as I can, squeezing my thighs together to hold on to the nervous wee bubbling inside me. If I’m to believe my classmates, my entry into the end-of-term art challenge has a high chance of winning. A wet patch on my pants would definitely ruin the moment.

I make the mistake of catching Destiny Dean’s eye across the table. She flashes me a confident sneer, then flutters her eyelashes in Miss Grogan’s direction, her right index finger placed firmly across her lips. Typical Destiny. As if our teacher’s decision will be swayed by noticing who’s pointing at their nostrils. Although, to be honest, Destiny’s a regular winner of our class competitions. But we’ve never been set an art challenge before. And drawing’s my thing.

My mum says I was born holding a felt-tip pen and announced my ‘artistic genius’ by drawing the intricate ring of leaves that circle her bellybutton. I used to scrawl on anything I could lay my hands on when I was little – walls, floors, clothes, my own naked body (!) – so I totally didn’t get this was a joke until I was about six and discovered what tattoos were. I’m such a doofus.

Nowadays, I stick to paper and my favourite things to draw are cartoons. That’s what I’ve entered into the competition: a comic strip of my most popular character: Astoundog.

‘It’s got to be you, Ferris!’ whispers Cal, my best mate, nudging me in my ribs as Miss Grogan makes a grand show of writing the winner’s name on the certificate. He jerks his head to the display boards. ‘That Astoundog cartoon you entered is brilliant.’

I smile. Astoundog is a regular feature of *The Hoot* – the monthly comic I make – and all my friends love him. For a moment, I let myself dream that Miss Grogan might love my genius super dog too.

‘Without further ado,’ announces Miss Grogan, ‘the winner of the end-of-term art challenge is . . .’ She flaps her hands up and down to silence the drum-rolling. Her eyes scan the classroom, stopping at my table. My stomach flips a somersault. A few of my friends turn to grin at me. Cal grips my knee.



I cross my fingers and squirm in my seat. Miss Grogan picks up the certificate and smiles. ‘DESTINY DEAN!’

A collective gasp sweeps the classroom. I feel my insides go cold. Destiny punches the air, then, to a ripple of unenthusiastic applause, skips to the front to collect her certificate. She sneers at me on her way back to her seat and, after checking Miss Grogan’s not looking, whips her hand to her forehead and throws me the L for Loser sign.

I shrug and pretend I’m not bothered. Inside, I’m reeling.

It’s not that Destiny’s entry was rubbish. She’s a pretty good artist. Just like she’s a good writer, and a talented musician, and a fast runner. Art’s the only thing I’m any good at; I thought this was my chance to finally beat her.

When the bell sounds for home time, I run to the toilets as fast as my crossed legs will take me. Two minutes later, I head to the cloakroom feeling deflated, and not just because my bladder’s empty.

‘Told you I’d win, Ferris!’ snipes Destiny, barging past me to grab her glittery backpack from her peg. ‘Cartoons are for babies.’

Jenson scowls at Destiny on my behalf. ‘No, they’re not!’ He turns to me and smiles. ‘Hard luck, Ferris. I thought your entry was best by MILES.’

‘Me, too,’ says Penny. ‘I can’t wait for the next edition of *The Hoot* to come out.’

‘Yeah!’ adds Idris. ‘When will it be ready? After the holidays?’

‘I hope so,’ I say. That’s my aim anyway. Alfie thrusts his fist towards me. ‘Wicked!’ he shouts, as we bump knuckles. ‘I’ll save some of my spends!’

I smile. My friends are brilliant. Not just because they defend me against Destiny. They appreciate the work I put into my cartoons and not one of them complained when I started charging for *The Hoot*.

Creating ten pages of original content every month has been pretty full on. But boy, it’s been worth it. So far, from four issues, I’ve made £76.50, one green yo-yo and three packets of chewing gum. I’m OK with swapsies; I know what it’s like not to have money for the things you desperately want. It’s the reason I had to stop giving my work away for free: I’m desperate for a d-TAB.

You probably already know this, but d-TABs are THE BEST drawing tablets money can buy. I’ve been dying for one since the day I watched a video of Clare-the-Flare, my comic-strip hero, using theirs to demonstrate how to draw Brainy Baz – the genius toddler that landed them a job as one of the chief content creators at KidToon, the biggest comic company in the world. Basically, d-TABs have EVERYTHING I need to take my cartooning to the next level: whizzy digital drawing software; tons of built-in pen styles; every colour in the world available at the tap of a button; unique animation features; and nifty functions that will make it mega quick and super easy to share my best work with comic companies, get my characters noticed and move a step closer to my dream of becoming a professional comic-strip artist. Ideally, I’d love a d-5000, but I’d be happy with a d-4000. Both come with a d-Pen.



The problem is, even the cheapest d-TABs cost five hundred pounds, and my mums are very particular about the difference between ‘need’ and ‘want’. One of their favourite phrases is telling me that two pounds a week spending money is ‘more than enough for a ten-year-old boy who has everything he really needs’.

As you can tell, it’s a long time since my mums were ten. And, as far as I know, they’ve never been boys. What do they know?

‘You were robbed, Ferris,’ says Cal, jolting me from my thoughts. He manoeuvres his wheelchair over to me, claps me on the back, then turns to face Destiny. ‘You only won because your entry was a portrait of Miss Grogan and it made her look twenty years younger than she is. Everyone knows Ferris is a better artist than you.’

I’m not. Not really. We just have different styles. But most people nod. No one likes Destiny when she’s in one of her showy-offy mean moods, which, unfortunately, is more often than not these days.

Destiny waves her certificate so close to Cal’s face his fringe wafts up and down. ‘I think this proves otherwise, California!’

‘Whatever,’ says Cal. He rolls his eyes at me. ‘Ignore her.’

I glance over my shoulder as though Destiny’s invisible. ‘Ignore who?’

As usual, Cal dissolves into a fit of giggles at my quick wit. ‘Enjoy your holiday, Ferris. I hope you don’t encounter that annoying neighbour of yours.’

Did I mention, not only is Destiny Dean my classmate, she’s my next-door neighbour, too. Can you believe my luck? I literally have no escape.

As Cal wheels himself to After School Club, the scowl on Destiny’s face is replaced with a sly smile. ‘Face it, Ferris, I’m SO MUCH better at art than you.’

Grrr. If I had 50p for every time Destiny Dean told me she was SO MUCH better than me at something, or that she owned something that was SO MUCH better than mine, I’d be able to buy a d-TAB for everyone in Year Five. I bite my tongue to save myself getting into an argument, then grab my bookbag and pull out the only copy of *The Hoot* I didn’t manage to sell at afternoon break. ‘Anyone want to buy this?’ I ask no one in particular.

‘Me, please!’ says Destiny.

Wait, what?

Of all my classmates, Destiny’s the only person who’s never bought a copy of *The Hoot*. I frown. What’s the catch? There’s got to be a catch.

‘Here you are!’ she says, pulling a 50p piece from the front pocket of her backpack and thrusting it towards me.

After a moment of suspicious hesitation, I unnarrow my eyes, take the money and hand her my creation. ‘Thanks,’ I say. ‘And well done on winning the art challenge. You deserved it.’



She didn't. Cal was right. Her entry was a suck-up. But it's the start of the spring holidays tomorrow and, like I mentioned, she's my nextdoor neighbour. There's no way I can avoid her for a whole fortnight. Playing nice is probably a good call, especially as she's finally supporting my comic venture. Plus, I feel a bit sorry for her. Not a single person has congratulated her for winning the art challenge.

Destiny examines *The Hoot* and nods her head. 'Just as I thought. Flimsy! And the perfect size to put through Daddy's shredder. Harmony will love pooing on this.'

The cheek of her! *The Hoot* is a work of art. How dare she suggest all it's good for is hamster poop.

I've a mind to grab my comic back and tell her to stuff her money where the sun doesn't shine. But 50p's 50p at the end of the day, and I need every penny I can get.

Hmph. So much for playing nice.



SECRET OF THE MOONSHARD



A CRIME AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD

It was a cold morning among the clouds, and Mr Honeywinkle had only minutes to live.

Floating in the sky was a marble building as big as a mountain, propellers sprouting from it like metal sunflowers. Its roof was flat with a trapdoor at one edge, and if you had pressed your ear to it that morning you'd have heard the muffled thunder of footsteps, then brutal war cries, then a name, hurled like a curse:

'Domino!'

Sparrows scattered as the trapdoor slammed open and a girl burst out, a sack on her back and a crazed glint in her eye. She had a mane of black hair, wore a tattered grey dress, and was particularly tall for her age. She shivered as the wind wrapped around her, staring upward. The moon hung red in the sky, like a dollop of molten lava.

Fresh shouts swept up from below, howling for her head on a stake. The girl smiled and ran across the rooftop, swinging the sack down to her side. Overhead the moon had changed colour: from red to a deep emerald green.

Again the trapdoor banged open, and up came a pack of children, bleary-eyed, pyjama-clad, bristling with hate and rage. Their leader was an angelic girl with apple cheeks and golden locks, who looked ready to commit a murder.

'Give him back to me, Domino!' she cried, above the wind and the propellers.

Domino's heart pounded with the force of a sledgehammer, pumping blood as hot as fire. She approached the edge of the roof.

And dangled the sack over the side.

'Don't you dare!' Claudette screamed, taking a step closer.

Domino lowered the sack an inch. 'Say you're sorry.'

Claudette's eyes narrowed, and the other children ground their teeth and cracked their knuckles. Domino counted ten explosive heartbeats, then lowered the sack another inch.

'I'm sorry!' Claudette shrieked.

'For what?' She turned up her nose.

'For . . . not being nice to you.'



‘And?’

‘What else is there?’

‘I want details.’

Claudette rolled her eyes. ‘I don’t know! For throwing your clothes in the sea. For putting those ants in your bed. For . . . for writing you those letters where I pretended to be your dead parents.’

The other children giggled. ‘Don’t laugh, idiots!’ Claudette spat.

Domino wagged the sack. ‘Now say you’ll never be cruel to me again. Say you’ll treat me nice, and stop making fun of me for being sick and poor and everything else.’

‘Yes, fine, I’ll stop doing all of it. Just give me back Mr Honeywinkle!’

Domino looked down at the sack swaying gently in the wind. Through pink streaks of cloud she saw the sea, and beyond that a city that stretched towards the horizon: a whole country of twisting streets. Her breath caught as the sun flared, revealing colourful doll’ s- house buildings and, between them, roving figures smaller than sand grains. It was a city she thought about every moment of the day, a city that haunted her dreams. A city she’d never been to.

‘Fine.’ She stepped away from the edge. ‘Here you go.’

Claudette squealed in relief, striding towards Domino with her head held high, reaching out her hand with the confidence of someone who always gets her way.

‘You mean it?’ said Domino. ‘You promise?’

Claudette smiled – a kindly, tender smile. ‘Of course.’

Domino handed over the sack, and Claudette clutched it adoringly to her chest. She took a deep, satisfied breath, then slapped Domino hard across the face.

She fell to her knees, ear ringing, cheek burning hot. Claudette’s smile soured to a sneer, the other children rubbing their hands in malicious expectation.

‘You think I’m going to treat you nicely, after this? You think I’m ever going to stop, when you are such an evil, penniless spider?’

Domino held her hand to her cheek, staggering away from the others, who giggled as they spied the tears leaking between her fingers. Claudette tugged irritably at the string holding the sack shut. ‘You can’t even tie a knot right!’

Domino sniffed, now halfway back to the trapdoor. From her sleeve she retrieved a little box, which rattled as she opened it. She rubbed the last of the tears from her cheeks. There was no need to make any more.



At last, Claudette undid the knot. ‘What’s . . . what is this?’

She upturned the sack, and clumps of chicken feathers fell out. ‘What’s going on?’ Claudette said, her voice tight. ‘Where . . . where is Mr Honeywinkle?’

There was a scrape, and the fizz of a new flame. The others all turned, and found Domino holding up a lit match.

Claudette’s face paled. ‘What are you doing?’

‘I didn’t steal Mr Honeywinkle just now,’ said Domino. ‘I only pretended to so you’d follow me up here. I stole him an hour ago, while you were all asleep.’

She pointed to another sack tucked behind the trapdoor, which they’d all run past in their hurry. The sack was upside down, and poking from the bottom was a short string.

Claudette’s lip trembled. ‘What . . . what’s that?’

‘I gave you the chance to say sorry. This is your fault.’

Domino whipped off the sack with a flourish, and there he was: Mr Honeywinkle, button eyes and green bow tie, a little tuft of stuffing bursting from one ear. He was strapped to a bright red rocket.

‘No,’ Claudette whimpered. ‘No, please! I take it all back, I’ll – no, Domino, don’t!’

Domino had already lit the firework. She retreated to a safe distance, and Claudette squealed and ran towards her teddy bear. But it was too late – with a shrieking whoosh, the firework shot into the air, taking the bear with it. There was a spray of stuffing as Mr Honeywinkle’s leg brushed a propellor, but the rest of him kept going – higher, higher – thundering up towards the moon. Domino felt a warm, happy glow in her heart as the firework exploded, filling the sky with little shards of silver light, and little shards of Mr Honeywinkle.

Claudette dropped to her knees with a scream that split the air, the other children blinking in shock as stuffing fell about them like snow. Her work finished, Domino snuck back towards the trapdoor.

‘What’s that?’ said a boy.

Domino turned in confusion. Claudette’s face was buried in her hands, but the others were gaping at the sky.

The trails of firework smoke had been washed away by the wind. The moon was red again, but there was something glowing orange, getting larger with each second. It flared so bright that Domino had to cover her eyes.

‘Get downstairs!’ the others yelled, bundling up a weeping Claudette and rushing for the trapdoor. But Domino kept staring, wondering what the light in the sky could be. It only occurred to her too late that she should have been running for shelter as well.



There was a deafening crack then a spray of sandstone that became a dark biting cloud that smothered the roof. For a moment Domino couldn't see, coughing up mouthfuls of dust. Then the cloud cleared, and she took a wary step forward, gazing in wonder and fear.

It had carved a crater in the rooftop, and it sat at the centre, glowing red. Like a dollop of molten lava.

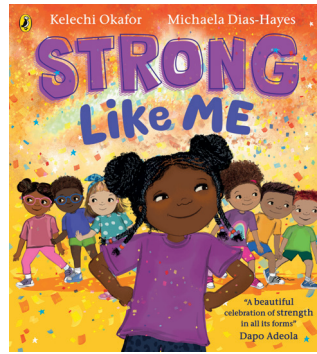
A piece of the moon.



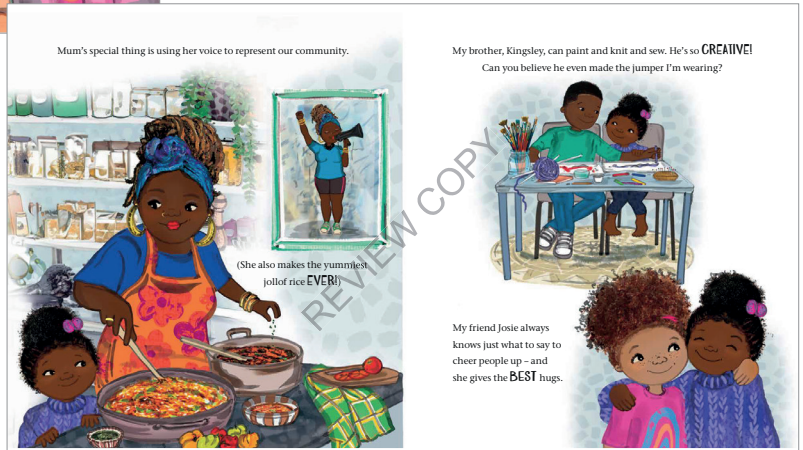


EXTRACT FROM

STRONG LIKE ME



My mum calls me Special K, but my real name is Kamara.
 Mum says EVERYONE has things that make them special.
 I wonder what my special thing is . . .
 Mum's special thing is using her voice to represent
 our community.
 (She also makes the yummiest jollof rice EVER!)
 My brother, Kingsley, can paint and knit and sew.
 He's so CREATIVE!
 Can you believe he even made the jumper I'm wearing?
 My friend Josie always knows just what to say to cheer
 people up – and she gives the best hugs.



PUFFIN VIRTUAL VISITS



WATCH-ALONG PAGE

Who was the author/illustrator who virtually visited your school?

.....

What book did they write?

.....

What top tips did the author / illustrator share?

1:

2:

3:

Doodle, draw and write - complete your author challenge here

MEMORABLE MOMENT

What was the most memorable thing the author/illustrator said?



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JOIN IN
FRIDAYS



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JEN CARNEY

1.30pm



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**KELECHI OKAFOR &
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Live events with our Puffin authors and illustrators!
www.puffinschools.co.uk/virtualvisits