The background is a vibrant red with a fine, grainy texture. Overlaid on this are several black geometric shapes and lines. A prominent, thick black line runs diagonally from the top left towards the center. Other thinner black lines form various angular and curved shapes, some resembling architectural details or abstract patterns. The overall composition is dynamic and modern.

Tereza Nová, Jiří Forejt, Nikola Logosová

THE YOUNG PHOTO — GRAPHERS



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Graphic editing © Barbora Toman Tylová, 2021
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We drew inspiration for the writing of this book from the Malí fotografové [Young Photographers] workshops we run as the Free Cinema company, and from our children, Kryštof (Christopher), Tadeáš (Thaddaeus), Florentýna (Florentine), Jasmína (Jasmine) and Toniček (Tony).

PROLOGUE



Grandma's bedroom was flooded with light, just for a second. The lightning flash was followed by what sounded like a blast from a cannon. And another...

Little Christopher shuddered and pulled the duvet to his chin. His elder sister Jasmine was in the bed next to his, tablet in hand. The storm had startled her – who wouldn't be frightened by a storm like this? – but she wouldn't let it show. She continued to lie stock-still. Jasmine always tried to behave older than other girls her age. She felt the constant need to take care of her sensitive little brother, which was sometimes good, sometimes a bit of a drag.

Christopher's overactive imagination was a particular trial for her. Now he spilled out theory after theory about storms and lightning. 'The gods send down storms to show their anger. Did you know that? And lightning is the weapon of a huge monster who wants to destroy the world. And the dead look down on us, and when there's a storm, they take pictures of us with a flash.'

Jasmine's fingers went nimbly to Google, where they found an expert's article about how lightning is formed. Christopher grabbed his mobile, went online and scrolled through professional photos showing lightning in all its glory. Meanwhile, Jasmine gave him a lecture on meteorology.

As the children lay in their warm duvets with only their faces (lit by modern technology) showing, lightning broke below their window, illuminating the big house with its balconies and yard. Christopher had always been a scaredy-cat. But now his curiosity got the better of his fear, and he bounded over to the window. But for the raindrops drumming into the puddles, the yard looked empty. But something wasn't quite right, Christopher thought. Had he just

glimpsed a figure? Or was the storm making him see things? But yes! There was someone out there, on the roof of the house opposite!

'Come and look at this!' he whispered, waving to Jasmine without taking his eyes from the shadowy figure. 'There's a man on the roof opposite. And he's holding some pretty strange things. He seems to be waving a big stick about. Could he be a wizard, summoning thunder and lightning from on high?'

Jasmine rolled her eyes before turning back to a video about fancy-dress makeup. 'It's so dark out there, you might have seen anything,' she said. 'Cats climb on roofs, not people.' Christopher shook his head and snorted. Rubbish! Who had ever seen a cat in the rain? Just then, there was another flash. Followed by *Bang! Boom!* For a second it was as light as day out there! And there was someone standing there! Another flash. Now he was standing somewhere else. He's flying! Or teleporting. Or he's got magic shoes in which he can jump like a kangaroo rat, the rodent that jumps the highest. That guy is no ordinary mortal, that's for sure. No ordinary human has such superpowers. *Bang! Boom!*

'I've really had enough of this!' Jasmine was now visibly afraid. Where had the wizard moved on to this time?

PROJECTOR

Photos that tell a story



Christopher stood firm. 'I want my wellies!
I'm not going anywhere without my wellies!'

Grandma said how nice Jasmine looked in her dress and coat. Christopher's stubbornness would show them up, she added, tutting. That she, an elegant lady with excellent taste, proud posture and a fine line in hats, should be going into town with a boy in rubber boots best suited work for in the field!

But what choice did she have? Christopher dashed down the steps into the yard, where he jumped in the puddles like crazy. Then he remembered yesterday's storm. Danger could be lurking around every corner. He shuffled back to the steps.

'Ow! You clumsy lump! Look what you've done!' Jasmine's suede moccasins were splashed with mud.

Grandma was about to tell Christopher off when the heavy sheet-metal door of the garage creaked open and, ever so slowly, a robot came out. It had a concertina-shaped head, was wearing a black coat, and was about three metres tall. This was how Christopher saw it, at least. He yelped and hid behind his sister. All he was aware of now was the pounding of his heart and his rapid breathing.

'Good morning, Blossom.' Peeping out from the coat was the bearded face of an elderly man with tired eyes and a kindly smile.

Grandma blushed and stood up even straighter; her smile formed deep dimples in her cheeks, making wrinkles like annual rings in a tree stump. 'Joseph! How nice to see you!' Slowly she descended the steps. 'My grandchildren and I are going shopping. Can we get you anything?'

Joseph shook his head, said he had all he needed, waved goodbye, turned and walked away. Then he stopped and turned back. 'You're looking nice today, Blossom,' he said. 'You should come to my studio one day for a photo shoot.'

Grandma raised her chin briskly before laughing out loud. She would have said something more, but the mysterious neighbour had already disappeared – along with the huge, three-legged box resting on his shoulder. This appeared to have something inflatable inside. Christopher remained convinced that it was a robot with a single, cyclops-like eye, and told Jasmine so.

'Don't be stupid!' she said. She pronounced each syllable with emphasis, meanwhile wiping the toes of her shoes with a tissue. How pale her brother was looking!



'Th-that was *him!*' Christopher stammered. 'He f-fell from the sky last night... He b-brought the storm... He put a spell on our h-house... How strange his h-head is! He must be a w-wizard...'

Jasmine told Christopher to pull himself together or keep his wild ideas to himself. The man was their neighbour Joseph, who had some kind of workshop here that he referred to as a studio. He and Grandma always spoke; they had known each other for years.

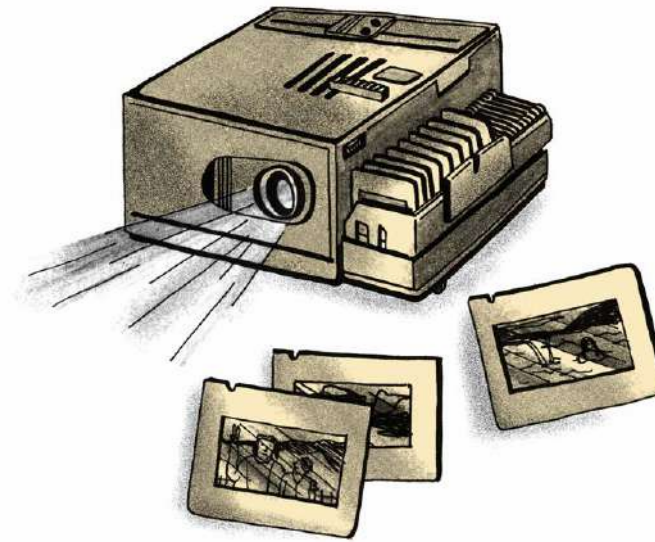
'That's not true!' Christopher interrupted. 'Beyond that door is an abandoned garage no one ever goes to, not some stupid workshop! I've never seen that guy around here before. He fell from the sky last night during that dreadful storm, I'm telling you.'

Jasmine listened with only half an ear. She was more concerned about the soaking her new shoes had got. She told Christopher: 'If you don't believe me, ask Grandma.'

That evening the children again lay in bed with their tablets and mobiles. As she was leaving the bedroom, Grandma muttered something about bad habits and poor-quality sleep. Christopher was online, looking at pictures of robots – round ones, rectangular ones, cone-shaped ones, ones with wheels and ones with tentacles... None had a concertina-like head, however.

A little later, Grandma returned with two boxes. From the dustier box she took an old, yellowing projector. From the other, she pulled out slides in little plastic frames, which she then loaded one by one in the projector's magazine.

'Your grandad and I spent many evenings projecting photos onto the wall,' she said. 'They contained so many beautiful memories – of our wedding, our children when little, family parties, holidays. What a lovely time we had! With a fire crackling in the hearth, we would sit in the unlit room with our arms around each other, remembering. We weren't



like the two of you, poring over your screens.'

Although they couldn't see much difference, the children turned with interest to the rectangle of light on the wall. Grandma clicked on the magazine and a blurry photo appeared on the wall. By turning a knob on the side of the projector she sharpened the image, and there was Grandpa's infectious smile! He was holding a balloon. At the bottom of the picture, they saw a child's hand reaching for the balloon.

'That's from a day at the fair!' laughed Grandma. 'Grandpa bought your mum a balloon and then refused to give it to her. It might fly away, he said, and then he would be sorry. He had to get one of his own in the end.'

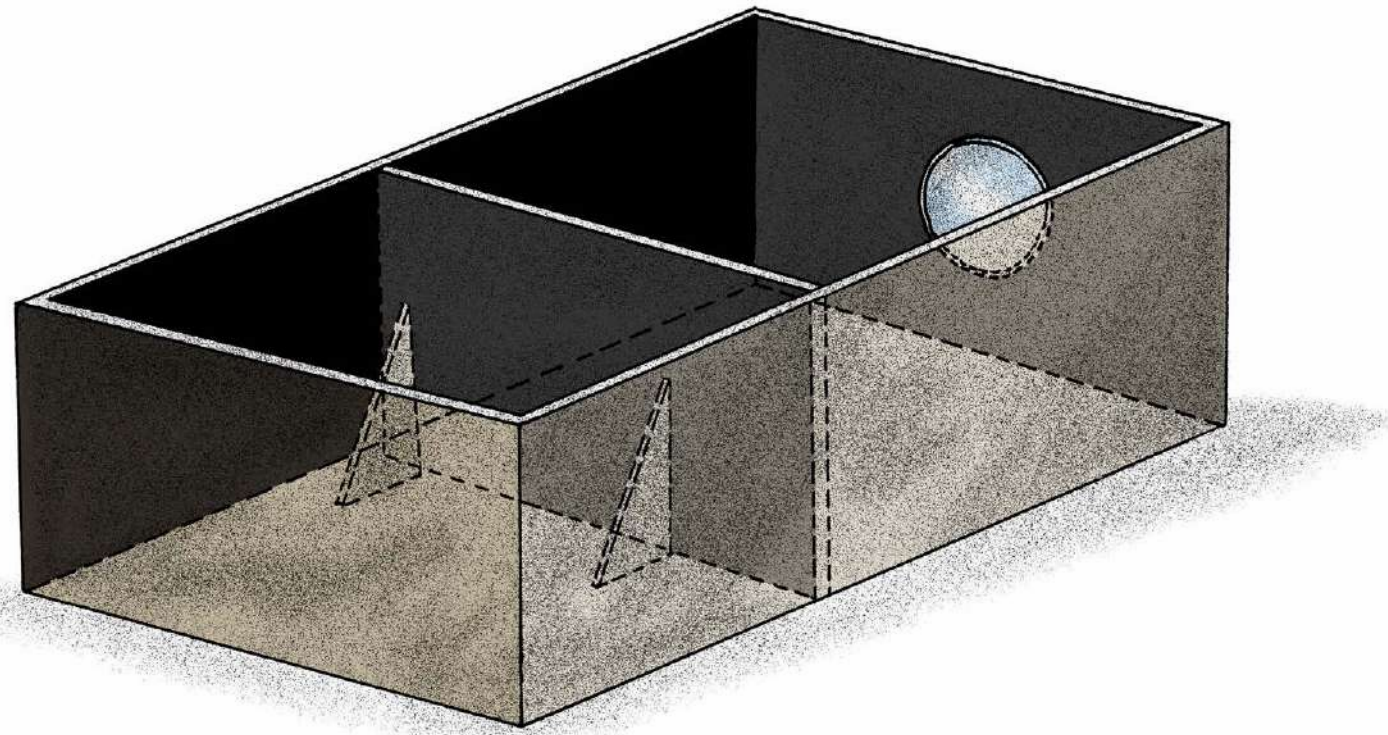
Jasmine and Christopher were delighted. Although they always enjoyed staying at Grandma's, they missed their parents. Mum and Dad wouldn't be home from their business trip abroad for a whole week, a terribly long time. Seeing photos of Mum as a child somehow brought her closer.



How to project videos or photos from your mobile telephone onto a wall.

You will need: a smartphone, a magnifying glass, a shoe box, black paint and a brush, a saw (to cut off the handle of the magnifying glass), a glue gun (to attach the lens of the magnifying glass), a paper cutter or scissors, part of a box or a piece of thick cardboard (for the stand)

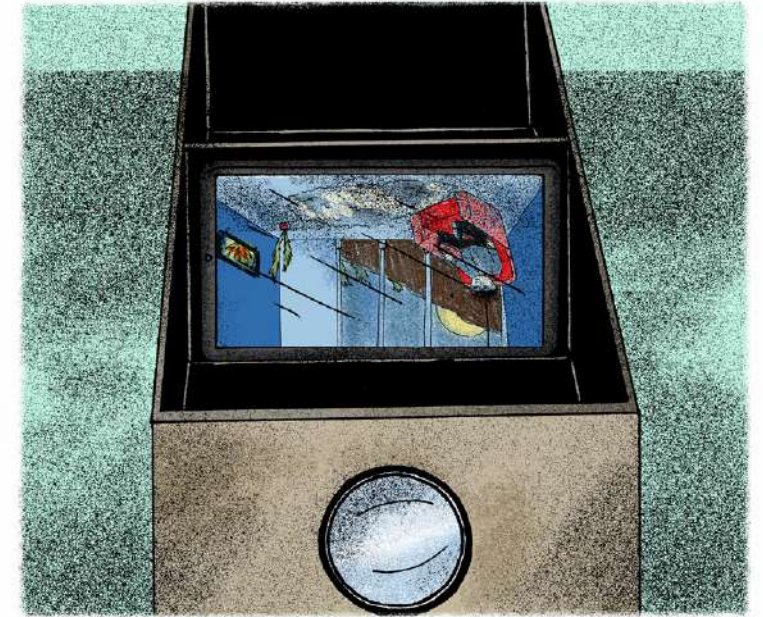
1. Paint the inside of the box black.
2. Cut off the handle of the magnifying glass.
3. Out of thick cardboard, make a stand that fits snugly in the box, and paint it black. **(A)**
4. Glue the magnifying glass into a hole on the shorter side of the box. **(B)**
5. Fit your phone onto the stand, with the display facing the lens. **(C)**
6. Switch off the lights and the show may begin! **(D)**



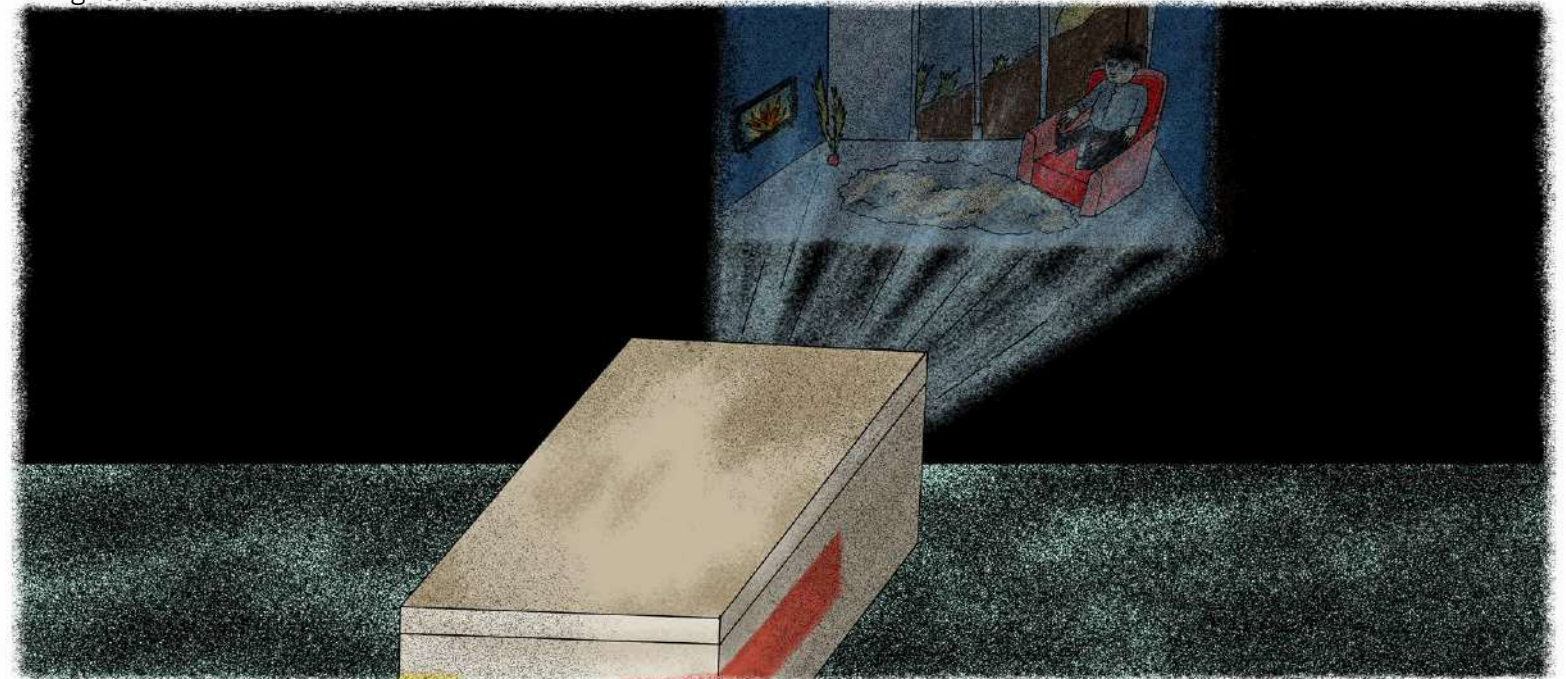
A) So that the stand can bear the weight of the phone, fit the box with supports.



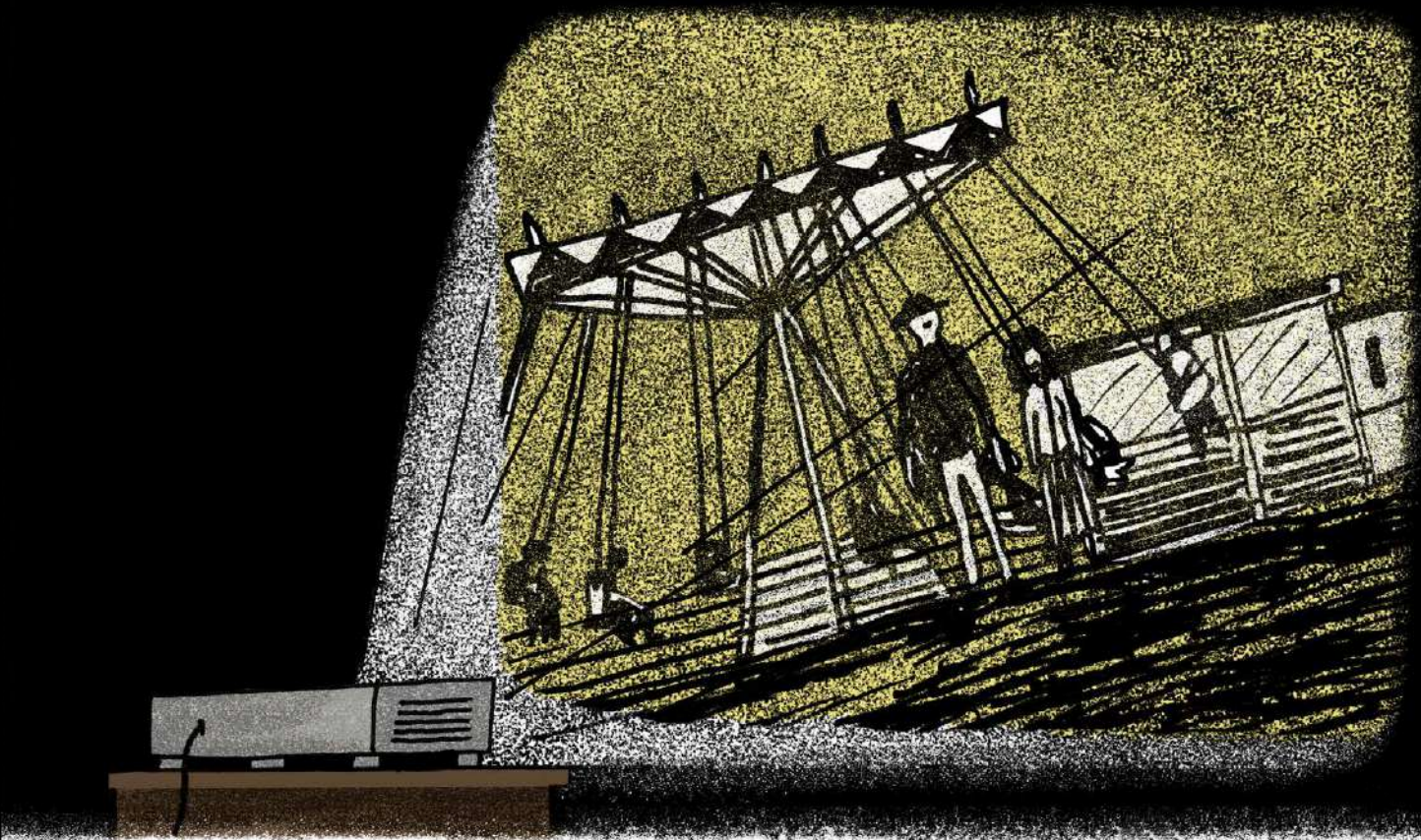
B) Use a glue gun to attach the magnifying glass.



C) Focus the image by moving the stand.



D) The lens will turn the image upside down and sideways.



The photos were marvellous. Jasmine imagined herself in the evening room in which Grandma and Grandpa would look at their family snaps as logs crackled in the hearth. With a dreamy expression, she praised the photography.

'Well, when I was young, I had an excellent teacher,' said Grandma with a wink.

The children asked how it was possible to take such good photos. But Grandma's answer was so mysterious – she spoke of the contrast of light and shadow, and the need for patience as you waited for the right moment – that it didn't make much sense to them. She used the word 'composition' to mean placing and arranging objects and people

in a photograph or on an artist's canvas, the first time the children had heard it used in this way.

'I'm not happy with the composition of this one,' said Grandma, pointing to the picture on the wall, one side of which showed a tilted fairground swing ride while the other appeared to be empty. 'If someone – an excited child, let's say – were standing on the meadow there, the photo would tell a story. It could be about a boy who wants to go on the swing ride but is too young for it. But I don't see an interesting story here. It's just an ordinary picture of a fairground ride, like thousands of others.'

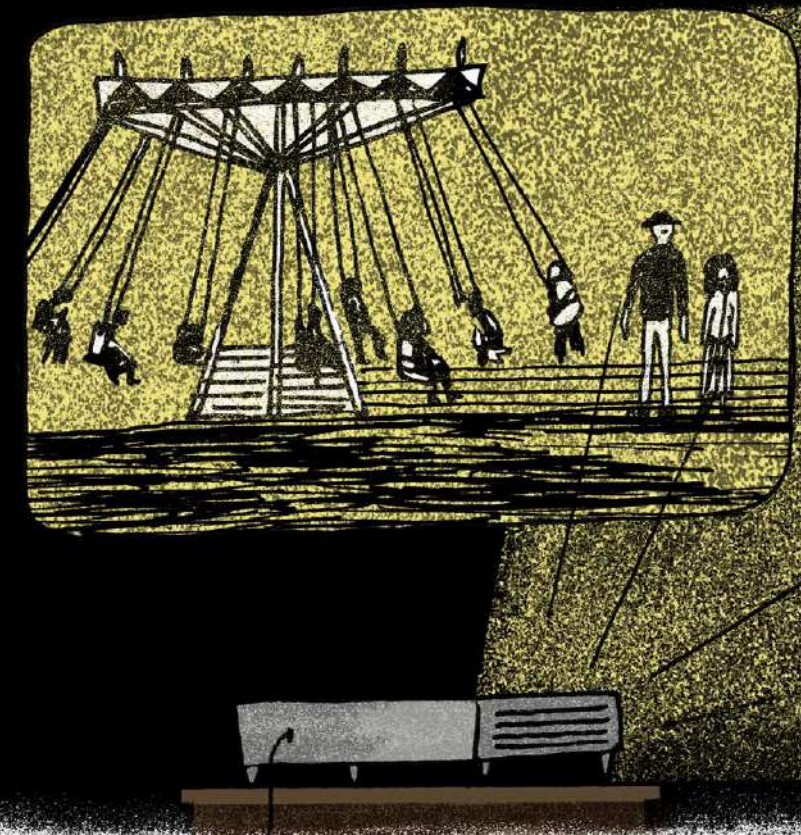
Jasmine was impressed by this talk of ordinary photos.



She looked at her phone and wondered how many selfies she had of herself wearing Grandma's hats. Dozens, maybe even hundreds! How many photos had she taken that were practically identical? How many shots did she have of herself and her friends with their tongues hanging out? Her phone was filled with nonsense. There certainly weren't many stories in it.

She got Christopher out of bed and made him stand in front of the projection wall. 'Look, Grandma – a little boy who's too young to go on a swing ride!' she said, pointing at him and laughing.

Christopher frowned and curled his lip before looking at



the swing ride on the wall. The image from the projector lay across anything else that stood in its light, too. So a stretch of green meadow lay across Christopher's cheek and a white cloud lay across his forehead.

'That's amazing!' cried Grandma. 'Now it looks as though there's a boy in front of the swing ride, and he's angry because he's not allowed on, but he can't help watching the ride. I was young when I took those photos at the fair. Your mum was about the age you are now. You've just brought the past and the present together! You've linked my memories with how happy I'm feeling with you now. To my eyes, as you have re-made it, this picture tells a really lovely story.'

'But there's one more thing,' muttered Christopher. 'The boy really *is* angry.'



How to experiment with photo composition at home.

Project onto a wall an old family photo, a photo from your phone, or maybe even a photo by a famous photographer. Add yourself to the composition by using the projector's ability to put its image on the first object in its way – in this case, your body. Become part of the photo by complementing it with your own creativity to produce an interesting artistic effect.

You can document the result on a digital camera. Don't use a flash; if you did, it would illuminate the wall so that the wall would be all you could see in the photo. Set the self-timer or ask someone else to photograph your work.

There are several ways in which you can work creatively with the projected photo. If you project the image onto your body, this will become part of the picture and add a three-dimensional effect. You can also interfere with the image by making a gesture that gives the photo extra meaning. Why not project someone's face in profile, stand next to it and try communicating with it? Imagine a photo in which friends or rivals are having an argument? This effect can be achieved by facial expression and other ways of imposing yourself on the composition.



My sister and I projected a few great photos onto the wall. Then we tried it with some famous works of art. She's always wanted to be a photographer! I fancy being a model. It's great to have such a pal to take photos with. Not only do you have real fun, but you can share creative ideas too.



STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY

Don't blink, twitch or shuffle your feet.



It was a Saturday, and the children had a whole day to themselves.

Early in the morning, Grandma announced a visit to a photographer's studio. Then she said no more about it, patiently ignoring their barrage of questions. They descended the steps at the front of the house and crossed the yard to the metal door, which to Christopher's surprise was open. Was the wizard expecting visitors? 'I should have known,' muttered Christopher. Jasmine was not at all afraid of the strange gentleman. Indeed, she was curious about his studio and the surprises it might hold.

They went inside, to find no one there. A large room, it could have been the store of the magician David Copperfield. They saw tripods and other stands, dark-coloured cases, strange concertinas, shoe boxes with black sticky tape all over them, wooden cameras, plastic cameras, heavy, metal cameras, lamps of all sizes, rolls of something or other, and much else besides. So many odd things in one place! Grandma sat down in an antique chair and warned the children not to touch anything. Then they waited for the photographer.

A sound came from beyond a small metal door with a red strip light above it. The light went out and the door opened. The man who came out was elderly, with a stoop, an untidy beard and a few white hairs around an otherwise bald, wrinkly head. He was plainly surprised to see the visitors, and his expression was stern. He said from under his beard: 'I see that you came, Blossom. Hmm... It's nice to have you here.' Grandma's eyes were brimming with anticipation and enthusiasm. But it was clear to the children that the grumpy old man had something else to do; they should have told him they were coming. Grandma noticed none of this, however. This photographing session was a big deal to her.

Joseph walked around Grandma as she sat in the chair, stopping occasionally, his index finger on his chin, his eyes narrowed. Then he fetched several lights and set them down in different places, before studying their effect on his model's face. As neither Grandma nor Joseph spoke while this was going on, the children began to get bored. Jasmine wished she could walk around the studio to see a few of its interesting things up close. These included, at the back, mannequins of the kind found in a boutique's window display, where they were carefully arranged and tastefully dressed by a designer. Although Christopher was calmer now, given the choice, he would have quit the studio for the sandpit in the yard.



The presence of restless, fidgety children (they had stopped moving around but were still shuffling their feet) was making the photographer uncomfortable. Gritting his teeth, he told himself he would try to get their attention by telling them a story.

'Stay quite still, Blossom,' he told Grandma. Then he reached into one of the many black boxes, brought out a glass objective lens, and pointed it at her. 'Did you know, children, that many years ago people being photographed were told to stay perfectly still for several minutes? That's hard to do for even thirty seconds. It means no blinking, no twitching, no shuffling of feet... Pretty difficult, isn't it, especially for children.' Joseph spoke slowly and softly, as if speaking only to himself.

'Exposure time,' Joseph muttered. 'Hmm. Exposure – that refers to the action of light on a photographic plate or film. The very first photograph was taken by my old friend Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, and it took him eight whole hours to do it. He did so outdoors, in direct sunlight.'

Jasmine wondered how a person had managed to stand in one place for eight hours, in the sun and without even blinking. What had they done for food and drink? How had they gone to the toilet? In answer to her questions, Joseph remarked drily that the picture was a view from a window of

some roofs. Christopher pricked up his ears. Roofs? Could this odd gentleman have been photographing roofs during the storm?

'But why did your old friend spend so much time on it when all he had to do was press a button?' asked Jasmine. 'Didn't he know that?'

'He didn't. He had to figure everything out for himself. He experimented with various chemicals to learn how they act on a polished tin plate that comes into contact with light. Later, he got together with a clever man called Louis Daguerre. The plate in Daguerre's camera was a silver-plated copper sheet exposed to vapour given off by iodine crystals. This allowed him to expose the image for several minutes or even hours before developing and fixing it using other chemicals in his so-called darkroom.' Joseph waved an arm towards the small metal door he had come through a few minutes earlier. 'And so the process of photography known as the daguerreotype was born. And how wonderful it was! Every apparently ordinary portrait was a masterpiece made by hours of work. The mobile-phone photos of today don't even come close!'

Jasmine longed to have her own daguerreotype. Imagine posting such a unique photo on Instagram! She wondered if



Hannah Stilley Gorby
USA, 1840

there was a filter that imitated this technique. Then she noticed, hanging above the studio's desk, a really old portrait of a woman. 'That photo must be terrifically old,' she said, pointing to it. 'And the lady in it looks like she's at least a hundred!'

'That's a daguerreotype of Mrs Hannah Stilley Gorby. She is the first-born woman to be photographed. The picture was taken in 1840. And yes, she was born about a hundred years before that.'

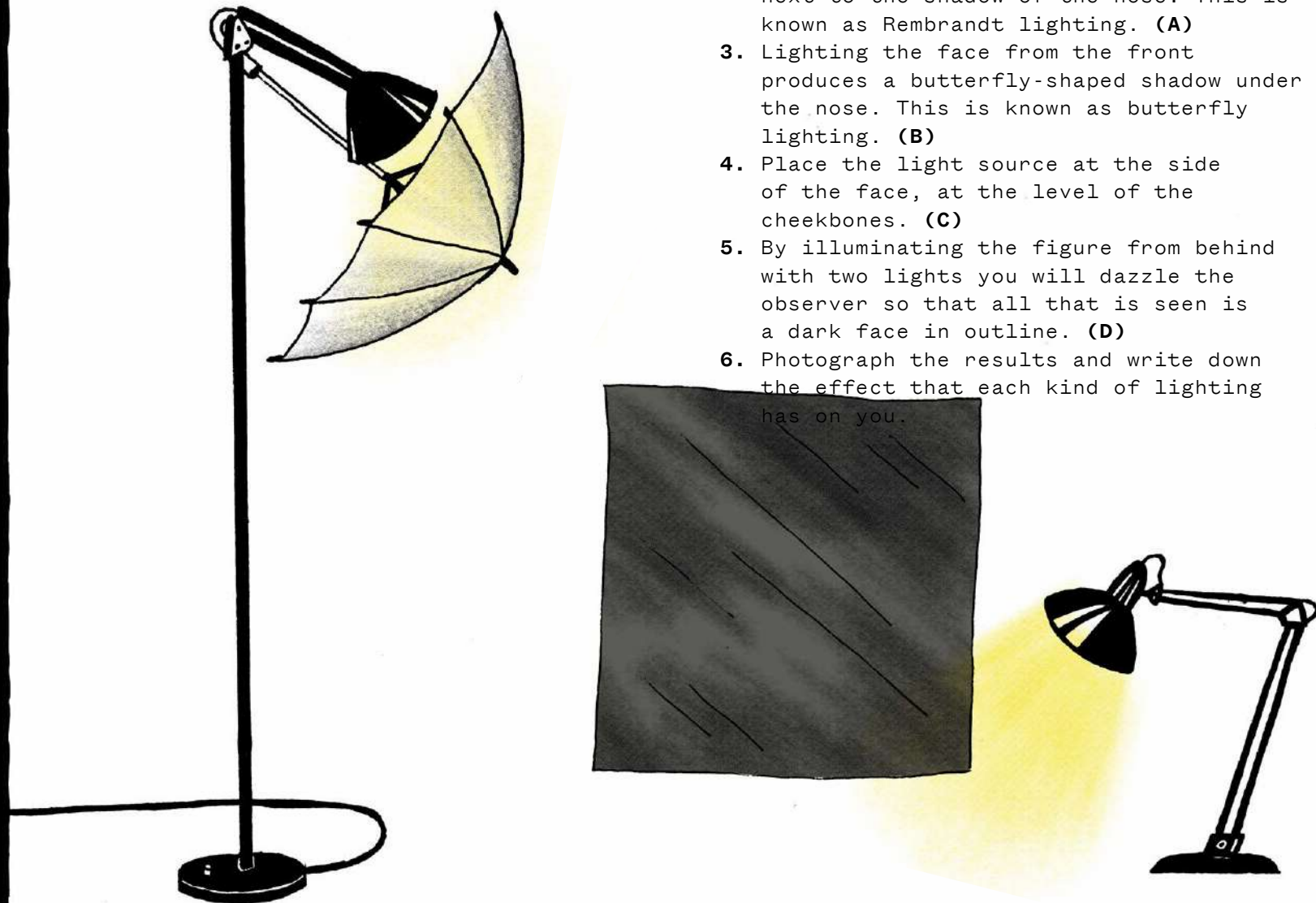
Wow! Jasmine could barely imagine a time so long ago. How exciting! The woman looked as though she were made of stone, and she was wearing the kind of bonnet and princess's gown only babies wear these days. *Concentrate and don't smile.* How long had she sat there without moving? If she had smiled, maybe she would have looked awkward and silly. Maybe that's why the subjects of old photos always look so serious.

'You'd think that after so many years of practice I'd find it easy to light a subject in the studio,' said Joseph. 'But I've got so used to working outside in daylight that no artificial light seems good enough.' As he repositioned the lights around Grandma, he asked the children to watch the working of the light on her face. At least this would keep them from fidgeting.



Become a creator of light and shadow.

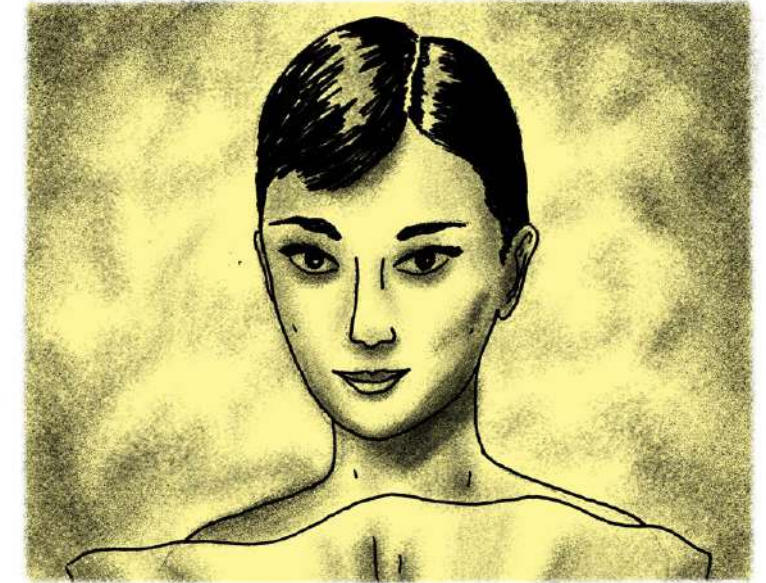
You will need: a few different sources of light (e.g. lamps, large flashlights), a white umbrella, a dark, single-colour canvas for the wall, a darkened room (it needn't be lightproof like a darkroom), a model, a camera, a tripod



1. Experiment with differences between hard and soft light. First light the face from the side with the strong light of a lamp; then place the open white umbrella in front of the light source.
2. Lighting the face diagonally from above creates a triangle of light on the face next to the shadow of the nose. This is known as Rembrandt lighting. (A)
3. Lighting the face from the front produces a butterfly-shaped shadow under the nose. This is known as butterfly lighting. (B)
4. Place the light source at the side of the face, at the level of the cheekbones. (C)
5. By illuminating the figure from behind with two lights you will dazzle the observer so that all that is seen is a dark face in outline. (D)
6. Photograph the results and write down the effect that each kind of lighting has on you.



A) Oblique lighting from above works with both light and shadow.



B) 'Hollywood' lighting from the front and above accentuates the features of the face.



C) Side lighting at the level of the face gives the impression that the model is sitting by a window.



D) Backlighting is mysterious and dramatic.

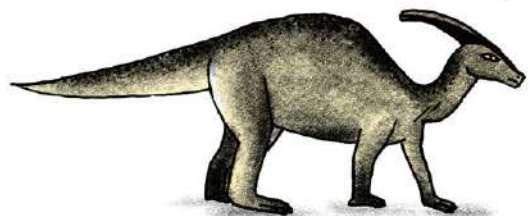
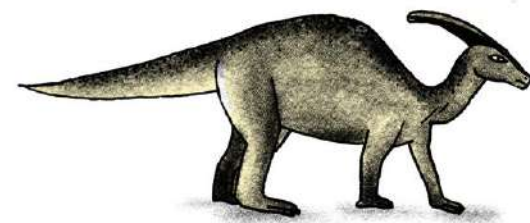
Lamps were trained on Grandma from all sides. Under these she had the face of a porcelain doll; the few wrinkles the lights revealed only added dignity. Jasmine was mesmerized by the play of lights and shadows. It conjured up so much beauty!

'Thank you, kids. Now I'm satisfied,' said Joseph. Then he began to take photographs.

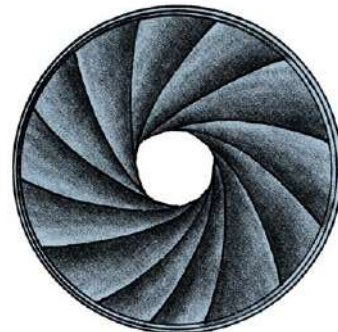
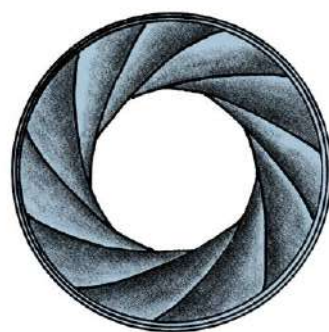
He adjusted his camera, which was on top of a tripod. 'The lights are just the beginning,' he explained. 'Now we must get the image properly in focus.' He looked into the viewfinder and turned the round objective lens to the right and then slightly to the left. 'I will get the aperture just right by adjusting the diaphragm.'

Joseph muttered to himself before straightening up and nodding with satisfaction. Then he took several photos of Grandma. 'It'll be ready tomorrow or the day after, Blossom,' he said with a smile, all his grumpiness gone. 'Thanks so much for coming.'

Grandma pushed the children towards the exit. Joseph promised to tell them more about photography soon, if they could find time for it. Jasmine was delighted, and she determined to take him up on this.



clone



iris aperture



Joseph the photographer explained the importance of exposure: the length of time for which the camera's shutter is open. This controls the amount of light that penetrates the film.

To play with time and light creatively, you will need a dark room, or to wait until it gets dark. It is best to wear dark clothing. You will also need a camera, a tripod and some sources of light (e.g. a flashlight, sparklers, a laser pointer).

The setting for exposure-time management most commonly used on a camera is marked with the letter 'A' (for 'automatic'). Now, however, choose the letter 'M' and set the time at 15—30 seconds. (Time settings are in seconds or fractions of seconds.)

Set the self-timer and start photographing. You will only have a few seconds for each creative act. Why not trace the shape of a heart with a flashlight, make spirals with a sparkler, write something in the air with a laser pointer, or put on a bright-coloured luminous bracelet and paint shapes with it?

The longer exposure time allows the camera to capture the entire path of the point of light, not just an isolated place on this path.



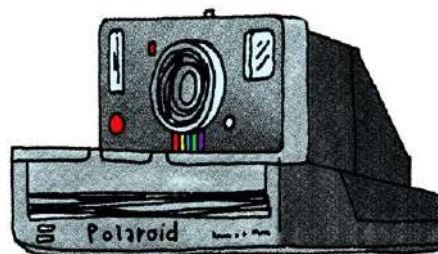
An hour of darkness and my best friend. One evening at summer camp there was a power cut, so we couldn't charge our phones. We had some sparklers left from our fighting game, and I had Mum's old camera with me. 'I know a great trick,' I told my friend. The next thing she knew, she had wings!

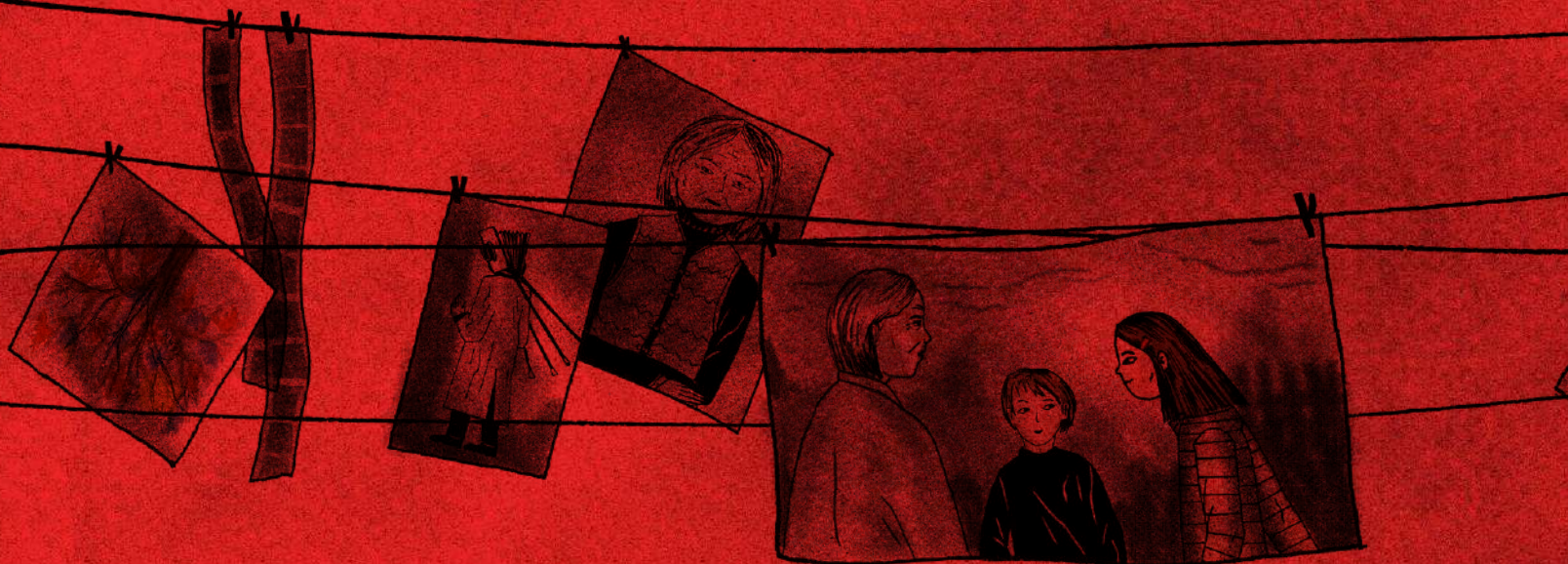
THE YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS

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At last I understand
how photos are made –
and it's magical!

Schoolkids Christopher and Jasmine meet a mysterious photographer called Joseph, who may just be a sinister wizard, as well as a close friend of Leonardo da Vinci.

Although Joseph treats the children with reserve at first, their directness and interest in photography bring him round, and soon he is introducing them to the principles of analogue photography.

Along with Christopher and Jasmine, the reader can make their own camera obscura, create photographs in a darkroom, and get these photos moving in the form of a flipbook. So, what lies beyond the mysterious sheet-metal door? And how thin is the line between reality and fantasy?