

The Night Spinner

Reading Skills

First read chapter 1, highlighting any new vocab in yellow.



and placing two indignant fists on her hips.

‘Sorry, Ma,’ he mumbled. ‘But I couldn’t sleep knowing the last two Shadowmasks will be coming for us soon. We can’t just wait it out . . .’

Moll nodded. ‘People wait for water to boil and rain to stop. They don’t wait for dark magic.’

‘So what exactly do they do, Moll?’ Mooshie asked wearily.

Moll budged up to make room on her log for Sidy. ‘They pounce,’ she replied tartly. ‘And they—’

Her words were cut short by a gasp from across the fire.

‘Look!’ Cinderella Bull whispered. ‘In the flames!’

Moll watched the flickers dance, but saw nothing unusual.

‘Look closer,’ Cinderella Bull urged, ‘with believing eyes, because it’s not only the tree spirits and the water spirits who dwell within Tanglefern Forest.’

Moll’s skin prickled. Was the old magic stirring? She leant in towards the fire and let her eyes travel up from the blackened logs to the twisting flames and the sparks flitting up into the surrounding trees. But she saw no sign of magic. She watched the Elders, their faces aglow in the firelight, their eyes locked on to something just out of her sight. Then she slid a look to Sidy who was also scouring the flames with a crinkled brow and, just as Moll was thinking that perhaps the old magic was only going to show itself to the Elders, she and Sidy saw it too.

Deep within the fire, like a scene stolen from another world, shapes were moving. They were not fitful and darting, like the flames around them: these images moved to a different rhythm. Moll held her breath as large clouds drifted across the heart of the fire, then melted away, and a huddle of houses appeared, still like stone amid the crackling flames. They slipped from sight and in their place were two hands clasped in greeting, which fizzled away to reveal a row of jagged peaks.

Moll narrowed her eyes, trying to understand, then there was a bang, like a gunshot, as the fire snuffed out and the gypsies were plunged into darkness.

Domino leapt up and grabbed a couple of lanterns from the surrounding trees which he placed in the middle of the Elders’ circle and Moll saw in their flickering glow that Cinderella Bull was smiling.

‘The fire spirits found a way through to us for a moment before the dark magic forced them away,’ the fortune-teller said. She turned to Moll. ‘The old magic listens for the sounds that our ears miss – the straining of our hearts and the fear in our blood – and it heard the pain beating inside you tonight, Moll. That’s why the fire spirits came.’

Moll felt her cheeks redden. ‘What was the old magic saying? I saw clouds and houses – and hands and mountains!’

Cinderella Bull’s eyes glittered. ‘Not clouds, my dear, but steam. You have a train journey ahead of you. And the clasped hands, houses and mountains – they signify a meeting with strangers in the last village before the land grows fully wild. The northern wilderness – that’s where the next part of your quest will start. That’s where you will begin your search for the final amulet.’

‘A train journey!’ Sidy cried. ‘I’ve never been on a train before, only horses and wagons. What a way to kick things off!’

But Moll wasn’t listening. ‘The northern wilderness . . .’ she murmured, looking over her shoulder to see Gryff watching from the steps of her wagon. None of the camp knew where the wildcat had come from – he had simply arrived in the forest to keep Moll safe the night the Shadowmasks killed her parents – and he had been by her side ever since. But there was talk that wildcats came from the north and Moll had always wondered whether the wilderness was where Gryff really belonged. She swallowed. What if this last adventure was a journey to lead him

home?

Cinderella Bull leant forward. 'Now the old magic has sent a sign, you must leave at dawn.'

Mooshie shook her head. 'The children need more rest and—'

'There's no time to spare, Moosh,' Oak interrupted. 'It's a two-day walk to the train line from here. They have to leave tomorrow.'

'*They?*' Moll said quietly. 'You – you aren't coming with us?'

Oak turned to Moll and Sidy. 'The old magic might have saved me from the Shadowmasks' cursed owls – their wings, all sharpened like knives and coated in poison, couldn't kill me back on the cliff tops – but ever since that fight my legs have been slower. And you need to be led by someone strong, someone fast, someone who can keep you safe.'

Domino crossed the fire and crouched before them and Moll suddenly understood why he had been called to the Elders' meeting.

'You're coming with us, aren't you?'

Domino nodded. 'I promised my pa I'd protect you, Moll. You, Sidy and Gryff – and that I'd do everything in my power to find the last amulet.'

Moll tried to imagine a journey to the northern wilderness without Oak, without the man who had taught her how to climb trees and fire a catapult. But the old familiar structures that had once held up her world were gradually falling apart. Alfie was gone, Oak would be staying in the forest and she and Sidy would be on the move again, away from the safety of their camp.

Domino twisted the spiked rings on his fingers. 'For what it's worth, I don't believe Alfie's gone either, Moll. We've got no proof, of course, but sometimes a feeling deep in your gut is all you need to find someone.' He paused. 'I know I'm not the same as Pa, but I'll help you bring Alfie home, I promise.'

Everything Moll had ever learnt about speed in the wild – how to outswim the river's currents, how to track the swiftest deer and how to run with wild ponies out on the heath – had come from Domino. And as she thought about those times and looked at Domino's face, the same dark hair, olive skin and kind eyes as Oak's, suddenly the shift from father to son didn't seem quite so strange.

The Elders began to clear away their upturned logs and tin cups, but Oak, Mooshie and Domino stayed with Moll and Sidy. Beneath the silent trees, they spoke of the northern wilderness and all that might be waiting for them there. And, when the rest of the Elders had gone to bed and only they were left, they wrapped arms around each other and, in the fragile shell of lantern light, Mooshie called upon the old magic to keep them safe.

Using your new vocab highlighted in yellow - use 5 of the words from the text that you are unsure of to complete the table.

Word	Definition	Put the word into a sentence

Complete a word explorer for one of the words.

WORD EXPLORERS!

Word:

Are there contextual clues?

Can I explore the Morphology?

Synonyms:

What is the Etymology of the word?

Antonyms:

Dictionary Definition:

Can I use it in a sentence?

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graph TD; A[Word] --- B[Are there contextual clues?]; B --> C[Can I explore the Morphology?]; C --> D[What is the Etymology of the word?]; D --> E[Synonyms]; D --> F[Antonyms]; E --- G[Dictionary Definition]; F --- G; G --- H[Can I use it in a sentence?];
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Using a different word now look at another word explorer.

Clues from the context ***WORD EXPLORERS!*** **Synonyms**

Example

Antonyms **Write 3 sentences using the word.**

To Summarise Chapter 1.

1. Read through Chapter 1 and split it into 3 different subheadings/sections?
2. In 100 words summarise what has happened in Chapter 1?

To Predict using Chapter 1.

1. Now predict what you think will happen in the following chapter of 'The Night Spinner' in exactly 50 words.
2. Why do you think the author choose the forest, camp fire setting? Do you think the whole book will be set here? Why?
3. Can you think of any other stories that started this way? Do you think they will end the same?