

5VB / 6A / 4LN / 3K World Book Day story

‘Come on Jo, Cheer up!’ mum turned and looked exasperatedly at her daughter in the back of the car. Without response, Jo silently turned her gaze from her lap and let it drift outside the window. Here she spent the next few seconds staring at the passing trees and fields. With a sigh, mum turned back in her seat and started inaudibly talking to dad.

Jo knew that if she tried to talk her voice may betray her, her parents would know how utterly miserable she was. She was trying to stay strong but inside she was breaking. They knew that the move was not her favourite idea, they knew how much she would miss all her friends at home, especially Sarah, her best friend since nursery. Mum and dad had been so excited, dad had his new job and mum was over the moon about the ‘big’ house they had bought. It was just Jo who wasn’t excited about the idea of moving miles and miles away from everything she had ever known. They didn’t understand.

Arriving at the country house, Jo knew they had hit the point of no return. Getting out of the car, she stomped into the house behind mum whilst dad started to unpack the boot. Pushing open the large, wooden door, Jo noticed how the house appeared not to have been lived in for some time. Cobwebs hung from every corner. Scuttling along the floor, Jo swore she could see a cockroach but she pushed the thought to the back of her mind. Mum was excitedly going from room to room.

She walked reluctantly up the stairs in search of her new quarters. Dropping her rucksack onto the empty wooden floor, Jo turn around and went to explore the house further. She tip toed outside, to avoid being called to help with the boxes.

With a sharp intake of breath, Jo’s emotions lifted, she had never seen such a wonderful expanse of green, rich, wild meadow-like foliage. Her feelings of apprehension started to fade as she spotted an outline of an old ramshackled shed in the distance. With a determined stride she made her way into the small building, hidden amongst brambles and bushes.

As she made her way into the shed, she noticed a glint of something underneath the years of dust which had settled there. Reaching out she realised that there was a safe which was wide open as if someone had left in a hurry. Reaching inside she lifted out a heavy, leather book. Blowing the dust from the surface she could just about make the words on the front cover ‘Annabel’s Diary’. Intrigued Jo carried the book back to her new bedroom where she planned to read it later that night.

In bed after a long day of moving, Jo nestled into her covers. ‘What’s that book Jo?’ asked mum.

‘Oh, it’s just something I bought from home’ Jo responded. She wasn’t sure why she had lied but had said it without thinking, as if an invisible force had made her do it.

Opening the heavily bound book, Jo noticed that the pages were age-worn and she swore she could see the faintest outline of something, but she wasn’t sure what. Quickly falling into a deep sleep the book lay open on her chest. Gradually, the book started to move, the words from the diary started to grow into a long string of Ivy.....

The ivy grew and whirled and gripped the sleeping girl. It yanked her and soon the bed was empty. A swirling vortex full of words devoured Jo. The words churned and twisted as she fell helplessly through the black and white cyclone of words, reading about dragons and trolls and all sorts of amazing creatures. Feeling dazed, her mind raced; she had no control of what was happening. This must be a nightmare.

Without warning, the tempest began to die down. Jo felt herself falling ... falling. She had no choice. She jumped into the mysterious land which lay ahead. Where was she? What had happened? So many clueless questions running through her mind were left unanswered.

Suddenly she stopped. As Jo stumbled to her feet, she froze. She caught a glimpse of a figure, darting between tall, towering trees. She snatched a hint of wind rustling up high. Jo shrank back, frightened, petrified. Opening her mouth to cry in fright, she felt sick. No sun. No light. Just darkness – everywhere. A blood-curdling howl screeched in the darkness. Jo sprinted. She dashed. Out of the darkness and into the light. This was a split land – one side luxurious light, the other dreadful darkness.

Jo stopped. In front of her, she could see a tall, magnificent being sat on top of a castle built into solid cloud. It was impossible to even touch the surface on which she sat. Her blond, silky hair cascaded to her shoulders while her blue eyes sparkled. She wore a light blue dress – forged from diamonds and orbs of lightning – giving her a very royal look. She held out a hand. It seemed as though light surrounded her.

“You can’t get out now. The evil queen is at large,” her harmonic voice echoed around the light world.

“Sorry, I don’t understand,” mumbled Jo.

“No one is safe while the evil queen is alive!”

“Um, I don’t mean to be rude, but who are you?” Jo asked timidly.

“I’m Annabel, Queen of the Light. My sister is Queen of the Darkness. My sister’s name is Topaz. She is the most evil queen around. She is out to get me, you and everyone who sets foot in this wondrous land of mine.”

“How do I get out of here?” Jo asked. There was no way she wanted to stay in this place and face certain death!

“You can only go back to your family when the evil queen is dead.” Annabel looked into the darkness. “I knew someone was here to save us. The prophecy said that.”

“The prophecy?” Jo was confused.

“The darkness has tried to take over our land many a time,” explained Annabel. “We need a hero like you.”

“Me?” Jo swallowed.

“Yes,” replied Annabel. “Our allies are the dragons. Go to them to see what you can do. I have left a map in the chests behind me.”

Without warning, Annabel suddenly disappeared into thin air and all Jo was left with was the old rustic, wooden chest. Frozen with fear and feeling like her feet had taken root in the soft ground below, Jo gradually found the courage and inner strength to approach the daunting chest. Nervously, she stretched her shaking arm out to turn the key on the chest.

As she opened the chest a beam of gold light almost blinded her. Slowly peeling her eye lids open she dreamily gazed at the gold encrusted scroll. Enthusiastically, Jo grabbed the scroll, untied it and took a first look at the map. This was only one of 3 maps she needed to get to the Dragons cove. The first map would lead her to another map and shield and enchanted armour. The second chest would lead to another map where she would collect a gauntlet of fire arrows. Finally, she would be led to the third chest at Dragons Cove where she would be rewarded with the dragons bow.

Courage was starting to bubble up within her and she felt she was ready to take on the long and twisting challenge ahead. Without hesitation, she grabbed the map, checked her bearings and swiftly raced off to face her quest.

After what seemed like days Jo arrived at her second destination. A glint of glittering, sparkling gold led her to the second chest which was underneath a tall, twisted, gnarly oak tree. As she moved forwards she could hear a rustling sound above her head in the trees.

“Who is there?” trembled Jo.

“I am Tom and I have been sent by Annabel the kind and fair light queen, who has sent you on your quest,” said the cheerful and youthful voice. “We need to reach the dragons’ cove by midnight to ask the dragons to help us on our quest. If we fail to do this, the whole kingdom will be destroyed by Topaz and face certain death...”

On arrival at the third chest, Jo and Tom heaved opened the lid and looked inside. There they found the final map and the gauntlet of fire arrows. "This is where the real quest begins," Jo exclaimed to Tom. "We need to get to Dragons Cove before nightfall." As they sprinted off across the bear and endless, barren land. An hour later they arrived and lifted the chest, inside lay the dragons bow.

"Wow I've never seen anything like that before" gasped Jo and Tom in union. Jo carefully lifted the heavy dragons bow from the old, dusty, wooden chest. Suddenly they felt the hard, bumpy ground beneath them tremor. "Tom did you feel that?" Jo asked in a small panicked voice.

"Yes, it's the dragons coming to help us. Look!" replied Tom.

Jo looked towards the oncoming dragons in disbelief; they were largest creatures she had ever seen. In a low grunting voice the lead dragon said, "We hear you need our help to defeat the evil dark queen Topaz."

While Jo was gazing at the dragons a glint from the back of the cove caught Tom's eye. There lay two golden, diamond encrusted saddles which would allow Tom and Jo to ride on the dragon's back. Quickly they attached the saddles to the dragon's back, picked up the fire arrows and the dragon bow ready to make their way to the dark kingdom.

As they glided through the grey, darkening sky, Jo was feeling excited yet terrified at the thought of what may lay ahead. Suddenly out of nowhere there was a blinding strobe of lightening, immediately followed by a mighty clap of thunder! Out of the clouds, appeared the petrifying Queen Topaz.

Quick as lightening, Tom and Jo aimed a fire arrow at Topaz while the dragons roared flaming hot fire with all their might. Topaz screamed in horror as she exploded into a ball of light before falling to the ground. As the ball landed in the dark kingdom, it slowly started to merge with the light kingdom where Annabel reigned.

Tom and Jo looked below to where all the villagers in the kingdom were happily celebrating the demise of Queen Topaz. "Look, I think that's your way home Jo," said Tom pointing towards a swirling whirlpool headed their way.

"Thank you for all your help" Jo shouted over to Tom and the dragons as the whirlpool started to twist and turn her round and round.

Jo felt herself tumbling down and down while turning round and round. Seconds later she heard a loud bang and woke with a start. Confused, Jo looked around her new room and noticed the diary on the floor beside her bed. What had just happened?