

Late October

At autumn half-term, Lucy and Dad stayed three nights at Clunny Cottage.

The days were golden, long-shadowed. Down in the orchard, the boughs of the apple trees were heavy with fruit. The branches were so low that, without even stretching, Lucy could hold an apple in her hand and give a little twist to make it drop. Wasps buzzed and drowsed, making fruity caves in fallen apples and plums.

Granny Annie made apple pie, and plum crumble, and blackberry jam. Dusk came early, and the cottage seemed

Loc 290

to shrug into itself. Grandpa chopped wood and lit a log fire.



Loc 295

18%

They'd picked and eaten the last of the runner¹⁶ beans that Lucy had sown and planted; now she and Grandpa collected potatoes. Grandpa thrust his fork into the ground, wriggled it and lifted. Potatoes tumbled free, smooth as eggs, clodded with soil. Lucy gathered them, brushed off the earth, and dropped them into a bucket. Grandpa dug up carrots too, but he said the parsnips would be best left a bit longer.

'What does Lob do in winter?' Lucy took off her muddy shoes, and stowed them under the bench.

'Oh, he don't do much when winter comes,' said Grandpa Will. 'Not once all the leaves are swept, and the logs in, and

we're tucked up snug. He likes to lie by the fire, night-times. He'll stir himself to do a few jobs on warmer days, but mainly he sleeps. Rests. Gets his energy back. He'll have earned it. He's worked hard this year.'

Sometimes Lucy saw Lob as a bent old man; sometimes as a flitty green thing like a dragonfly, quick and agile, young as herself, or younger.

'Will he be around for ever and ever?'

Grandpa nodded. 'I hope so. He never gets older, see. Every year he comes back, full of spring. Full of growing.'

After tea, the dusk drew Lucy outside. She sneaked out of the cottage when no one was looking. Down the garden she went, along the mown path.

There was a rustle by the compost heap, a ripple through the long grass. Lob was there. Lucy couldn't see him, but she knew he was pleased and boastful, full of pride in the glory of the garden and its harvest, his work well done. He darted and scurried and skittered ahead and alongside, he chivvied her from behind. Lucy laughed, and pretended to be frightened.

She crossed the stream, treading carefully on the stepping stones. It would be too cold to fall in now.

Loc 311

What is it that makes Lucy want to go outside?

Why do you think she needs to sneak out?

What emotion is Lucy feeling here?



Knowing she shouldn't, she took the leafy path into the woods, and stood in the thick of the trees. No one knows where I am, she thought: only Lob. And there was a deliciousness about that, salted with fear. She could run back, if she wanted. In the kitchen the light was on behind drawn curtains; Dad was washing up, and Granny Annie putting things away. Or had they finished now? Would they come looking for her?

The gap between indoors and out, tameness and wildness, lightness and dark, stretched wide and wider in the flittery dusk. Lucy didn't want to go in, not yet. Stars were pricking^[17] the sky, tree branches stretching out to muffle them.

Loc 318

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It was colder than she'd realized. A thorn snagged her sleeve. As she tried to free herself, her foot sank into soft mud. She jumped back as a stinging nettle seared her wrist. Perhaps she didn't like it here after all, not on her own. Where was he? Where was Lob?

A face was looking down at her, a face in the trees – a gnarled, knobbed, grizzled face. It scowled and grimaced, but no, that couldn't be Lob. Lob was farther on, laughing at her for being scared. He dared her to go on.

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Name the things that are making Lucy feel uncomfortable?



But I won't, Lucy decided. He'd get her into trouble. It was all right for Lob; he didn't have to think about getting told off, or being lost in the dark. She pulled her foot out of the mud with a *plotch*, and began feeling her way back to the stepping stones. Which way? This way? Or was that farther into the wood?

Loc 329

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Around the picture, or as notes in your book, write any words or phrases that come to mind about:

- Describe the surroundings (you can use language from the text to help you)
- Does the light and shadow, or the shape of the trees give the picture a certain feeling?
- What is Lucy thinking and feeling at this moment? What are YOU are feeling about Lucy being in the woods?



Task A - Prediction time!

- What do you think might happen next? Think about Lucy's feelings at this moment. Think about what led her here. What will happen next?

- Is Lob to blame if anything happens to her?

Keep going for lesson part 2!

'Lucy?' came Grandpa's voice, through the trees.

'Lucy-Lu?' called Dad's. And she saw the bobbing light of a torch beam.



'I'm here!' she shouted back, trying to sound brave.

And by the time they reached her, she'd crossed the stream and was back in the orchard, pretending not to have been far.

Dad was cross with her for going out in the dark on her own. She didn't make

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excuses, didn't try to blame it on Lob or on anyone but herself.

'You're all right,' Grandpa said, but she heard the shakiness in his voice, as if he was the one who'd been frightened. Indoors, he made hot chocolate for everyone.

Lucy was glad to be back by the warmth of the fire, but she hugged to herself the thrill of being out in the dark, with Lob and the trees and the stars. Her wrist burned with the sting of the nettle.

Task B

Wow, Lucy has been on an adventure! Below is an emotion graph. Have a look at the three moments already plotted.

Can you plot the emotion she might have been feeling when she took the leafy path? Then, add three more moments where her emotion changes through the short part of the story we have just read.



Task C

Think of a time when you have felt lots of emotions all at once and tell me about it. Have you been super excited about something, then worried, then overjoyed? Or maybe you were really nervous about something but then overjoyed at the result. You can use the words on the graph to help you.