

Here is the rest of the chapter. Have a read and answer the questions in your book, as you go along. Remember with comprehension questions, you must use a full sentence and evidence from the text.



‘How long has Lob been here?’ Lucy asked. She knew the story, but liked hearing it over and over again.

‘Oh, a long, long time. Long before you were born. Before your dad was born,’

Grandpa said, his voice settling comfortably into the telling. ‘It was just after

your gran and I got married, and came to live here. I was chopping wood one evening, when all of a sudden I knew I was being watched. So I stopped chopping and turned round. In the corner of my eye I saw him. There he stood' – he turned round to look – 'just there, by the bench. But I could only see him side-long. When I stared straight at him, he faded away. Still, I knew who he was, knew at once. I'd heard about Lob from my grandfather, and he'd heard from *his* grandfather, and so on, back and back and back. There's always been Lob. He walks the roads, that's what he does. He walks and he walks, and he looks for the right person. When he finds that person,

he stays around for a very long time. So I hoped he'd stay with me, and when he did I knew how lucky I was.'



'Lob chose you!'

'He did.'

'Will he always stay?'

'Till I die, I hope,' said Grandpa, looking round as if he wanted Lob to hear.

'But you're not going to die, are you, Grandpa?'

'We all will, in the end,' Grandpa said. 'But we needn't worry ourselves. I'm not expecting it for a while yet.'

They walked down to the end of the vegetable garden. Just the two of them, or perhaps it was the three of them.

'Is he here now?' Lucy asked, peering into the thicket of raspberry canes. 'Can you see him?'

'He'll be around somewhere. He don't always choose to be seen, Lob doesn't.'

'Will I see him?'

'I wouldn't be at all surprised,' said Grandpa. 'You're good at seeing.'<sup>2</sup>

Lucy wanted and wanted and wanted to be a Lob person. She squeezed

her hands into fists with wanting; she clenched her eyes tight shut, and hoped that Lob would be there when she opened them.

He wasn't. But she was sure that one day he would be.

The others – Mum and Dad and Granny Annie – thought Lob was just a game, though Grandpa often mentioned him.

'It's lucky<sup>3</sup> I've got Lob,' Grandpa would say, sitting down on the bench for a rest. 'I'd find it all a bit much, these days.' And always he said, 'Thank you, my friend' – first thing in the morning, and every time he finished work and went indoors.

### Question 1

What is Lob?

### Question 2

Why do you think it is lucky that Grandpa has Lob?

'Don't fill the child's head with your nonsense!' Granny would tell him, tutting. And she'd look at Lucy and shake her head, smiling, as if Lucy was old enough to know better, and Grandpa was the **child**.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the grown-ups said, Lucy knew there was special magic here.

She knew it whenever she came to Granny and Grandpa's. On summer mornings, early, when the grass glittered with dew. On winter nights, looking through the window of her attic room. The darkness out there was giddy with stars, and she heard the cry of an owl, or a fox, or a something, from down in the woods.

Garden magic tingled through her, from her hair to her toe-nails.

Mum said that the magic was in Grandpa's fingers. Green fingers, Mum said he had. And Lucy giggled, imagining Grandpa with green pointy fingers like an elf. In fact his hands were square and stubby, with tough, cracked nails, from all the garden work he did. He had to do a lot of scrubbing<sup>5</sup> to get his hands clean when he came indoors.

Every day, Grandpa Will worked on his vegetable patch. He grew peas and runner beans, raspberries and gooseberries, carrots and parsnips, lettuces and onions and potatoes: all in neat

rows, in beds that were perfectly dug and weeded.



It was a lot for him to do, all by himself. But of course, according to Grandpa, he didn't do it on his own; he was helped by Lob, in all sorts of ways. When Lob wasn't skittering about the woods



or sleeping in the hedge, he found jobs to do. He collected logs, swept up piles of leaves, cleaned the tools, weeded the beds and picked off slugs<sup>6</sup> and snails.

Lob only did it when no one was looking, Grandpa said. And only when he wanted.

‘You can’t give him orders, tell him what to do,’ Grandpa told Lucy. ‘He does what he likes, Lob does.’

Often, Lucy tried to spy on Lob, hoping for just a glimpse. She’d dart out of the back door, or stalk round the corner of the cottage. But she’d never seen him, no matter how hard she searched or how cold she got, lurking in wait.<sup>7</sup>

### Question 3

What does Granny think about Lob?

### Question 4

What tells us that Grandpa worked hard?

### Question 5

Find and copy the jobs Lob did for Grandpa?

### Question 6

Reread the last paragraph and tell me what you think ‘*lurking in wait*’ means.