



Let's read Chapter
12 and see what is
happening to
Raven Boy and Elf
Girl!

But he already knew what Elf Girl was going to say.

'Before it's too late.'

Raven Boy nodded.

'MEEP,' he said quietly. And didn't say what he was also thinking, that it might already be too late.

TWELVE

The most dangerous thing in Fright Forest is in fact a tiny green beetle.

It's poisonous enough to kill a hundred warthogs.



'Raven Boy,' said Elf Girl.

'What?' said Raven Boy, who was trying to stretch and get some blood flowing in his veins again. Rat sat on his head, like a furry warm hat, trying to help. And help he did, though what Raven Boy could really have used was a couple of hot water bottles.

'We need to go.'

'Well,' said Raven Boy. 'As it happens I

agree with you, and I haven't been wasting my time here, you know.'

He nodded at the trees, and Rat slid off his head, clinging on to Raven Boy's ear for dear life.



'I was just having a brief chat to some woodpeckers,' said Raven Boy, lifting Rat back up again.

Elf Girl opened her mouth, saw the look on Raven Boy's face, and shut it again.

'Yes, woodpeckers. Nice birds, actually. Tend to repeat themselves but very polite.'

'I'm sure,' said Elf Girl, encouragingly.

'And they said we ought to follow the river till it forks. Then we take the left fork, and follow it into the swamp.'

'The swamp?' asked Elf Girl.

'Yes, the swamp.'

'That doesn't sound like fun.'

'It isn't. The woodpeckers advised us to turn around and go home.'

'Well, I would,' said Elf Girl. 'If I had a home left to go to. Or a family.'

Tears began to well up in her eyes and Raven Boy felt bad.

'But that's not what we're going to do,' he added hurriedly, 'although . . .'

'Although what?' she sniffed.

'Although the swamp isn't the worst

thing. It's the witch. The Witch Who Knows Everything. According to the woodpeckers, she's scary. Deadly. Horrible, old, smelly, did I mention scary? And she eats children.'

'Oh,' said Elf Girl in a small voice. 'Why does everyone want to eat us?'

'Food's hard to come by, I guess. Anyway, that's not the end of it,' said Raven Boy. 'Before you even get to her, you'd have to get past the monster that guards her hut.'

Elf Girl blinked.

'Yes, I know, I told you that already.'

'I know, it's just that the birds said that no one's ever managed it.'

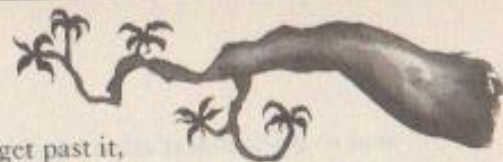
'They did?' she asked, in an even more tiny and miserable voice.

Raven Boy nodded.

'But we're not going to give up. We're going to get the answers we need and sort out the ogre and find your family and everything's going to be all right.'

Elf Girl cheered up a little.

'And you can ask your animal friends as we go. They must know more about this monster.



How we might get past it, for example.'

'Right!' said Raven Boy, but he didn't look too sure. 'And if all else fails, you can use your bow again, yes?'

Elf Girl forced a smile.

'It's worked for us, so far. Hasn't it? Sort of...'

So they set off again.

'I still feel like a fish,' Raven Boy grumbled.

'You smell like one too,' said Elf Girl, sniggering.

But the sniggering soon stopped, as the forest was getting thicker all the time. They had to force their way through bramble bushes, under spiky shrubs and past towering trees. Creepers hung down, tangling around their ankles like tentacles from the deepest, darkest oceans. A foul mist sprang up and once or twice they felt eyes watching them from the gloom.

Suddenly, they pulled up short.

'Look!' cried Elf Girl. 'The fork in the river!'

'So, let's go and find the swamp.'

They did. Morning came, but the forest

was so thick that it wasn't much lighter than in the night-time.

The morning wore on and became the afternoon, and Rat got tired of walking and sat on Raven Boy's head again. After he'd fallen off a couple of times, he tried exploring other parts of Raven Boy, and finally settled for the pocket of his coat, from which his nose emerged from time to time, sniffing the air.

The trees around them began to change. They got shorter but closer together, and the space between them was filled with thick and vicious bushes. Then the ground underneath started to get spongy and wet. The river had petered into a trickle that twisted this way and that among the trees, trees which were now strange and gnarled, with long strands of some



kind of moss hanging from them.

The sounds of the forest had changed too, bird calls were odd and unfamiliar. There were no more pleasant cheeping sounds from tiny birds, but instead, occasional loud squawks and cries that sounded like warnings to Elf Girl and Raven Boy.

Without realising it, they had stopped talking, and walked in silence, until suddenly they both spoke together.

'Which way do we go?' they said.

Elf Girl raised her eyebrows.

'Well?'

'I don't know,' Raven Boy whispered back. 'The river has disappeared. Wait. I'll see if I can find anyone to talk to. Wait here!'

Elf Girl swallowed.

'Don't go far! Don't be long! I don't like it here.'

Raven Boy nodded.

'I'll just go in a circle and see who I can find. Rat can stay with you.'

'Well, that makes me feel a whole lot safer.'

Rat squeaked huffily as Raven Boy

pulled him from his pocket and handed him to Elf Girl.

'Can you understand me?' Elf Girl asked. 'Really?'

Rat squeaked again and Elf Girl was quiet. Raven Boy had disappeared into the thickly crowded trees.

Elf Girl sat down.

'Well, Rat,' she said, 'if you can understand me, I'm going to tell you a story, just to pass the time until Raven Boy gets back, and so we don't get scared . . . I mean, bored. So we don't get bored. It's a funny story and it's called Elf Girl and Raven Boy Are Really Brave And Never Get Scared. Ready? It goes like this . . .'

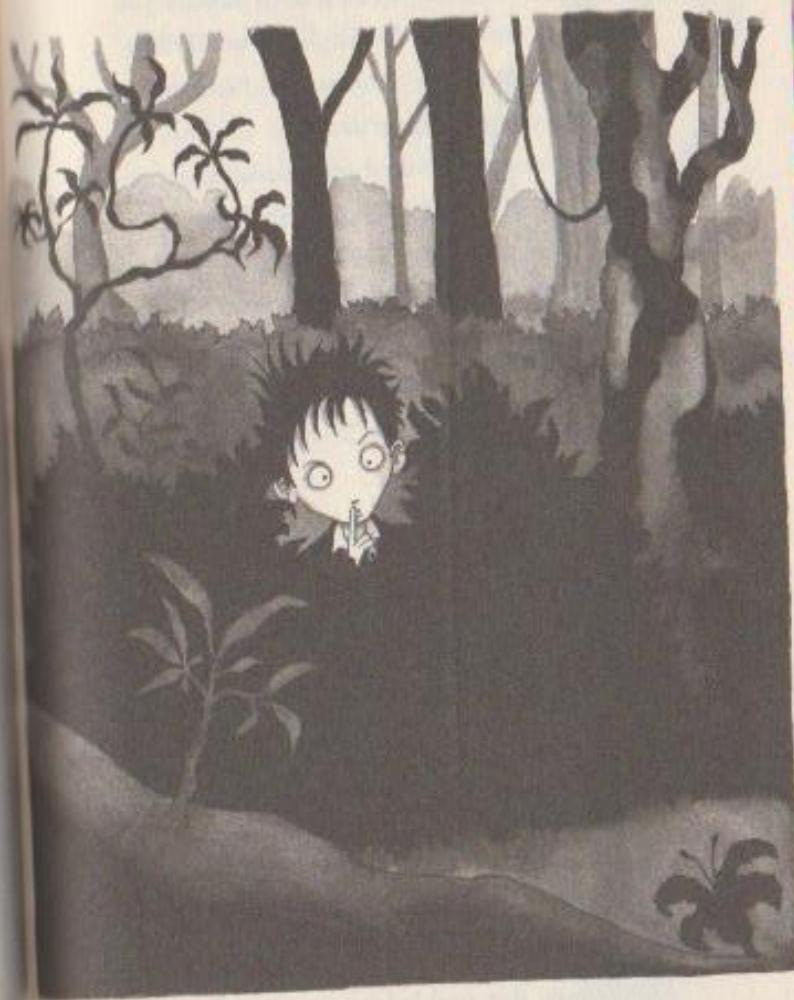
Suddenly, there was a rustling noise and Elf Girl screamed.

Raven Boy stuck his head out of the bushes.

'Shh! Don't do that!'

'You scared me stupid!' Elf Girl said angrily, her ears turning pink.

'I didn't mean to,' Raven Boy said. 'I just couldn't find my way back. Anyway, I just had a nice chat to a turtle.'



'A turtle? Raven Boy, are you sure you can talk to animals? We might be totally lost and miles from anywhere, and all because you think you can talk to turtles.'

Raven Boy looked offended.

'I'm offended,' he said. 'Shall I tell you what the turtle said, or not?'

Elf Girl nodded, but she was still a bit angry that Raven Boy had scared her.

'She, the turtle that is, said we should turn back and go home . . .'

'But . . . !'

'But we're not going to, I know!' Raven Boy said, before she could go on. 'And she said that if we really wanted to go and be eaten (her words) by the witch and her monster, then we're nearly there. In fact, it's just past the next clump of trees.'

He stopped and Elf Girl stared at him.

'So then, are we going?' he asked.

Now Elf Girl stared at the trees.

'Over there?' she asked. 'The witch, and her, er, monster.'

Raven Boy nodded.

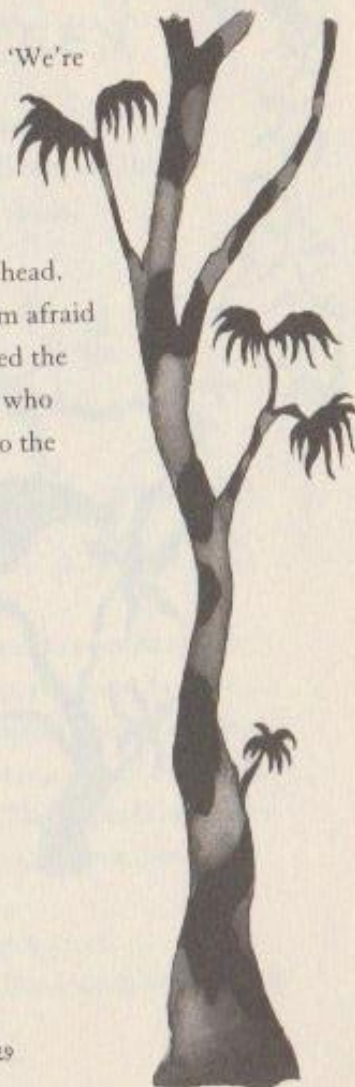
'We can always . . .'

'Nol' cried Elf Girl. 'We're going. If it kills us.'

And she began to stomp towards the trees.

Raven Boy picked Rat up and sat him on his head.

'That's just what I'm afraid of,' he said, as they followed the small but determined girl who looked a lot like an elf into the trees.



Chapter 12

Reading Vipers

Vocabulary

Infer

Predict

Explain

Retrieve

Summarise



V What does the word 'sniggering' mean?

I How are Elf Girl and Raven Boy feeling as they move into the changing forest? How do you know?

P What do you think will happen next?

E Find words and phrases that help make the forest seem a scary place?

R Why was Raven Boy offended?

S Write the 3 main things that have happened in this chapter.

VOCABULARY LABORATORY

Explain meaning / Definition:

Use in a sentence (add picture too):

Modifications:

Modify to past tense, present, plural singular, add prefix or suffix etc.
How many forms can you think of?

bossy

Word Class:

Word Class:

Synonyms

Antonyms

bossiest

adjective

@VocabularyNinja

'Words unlock the doors to a world of understanding...'



The word I
want you to
investigate is
bossy