

Let's read Chapter 8 and see what is happening to Raven Boy and Elf Girl!

'But . . . But, I don't know any nice thoughts! I'm an evil pirate captain! I don't know how to think nice!'

'You'll have to,' said Elf Girl, almost believing it herself. 'If you want to make it work, you're going to have to learn how to think nice things.'

'Garr!' said Scrim.

'I feel sorry for you,' Elf Girl went on. 'So I'll help you. Try thinking about fluffy bunnies. Lots of them. It's very hard to be mean if you're thinking about fluffy bunnies.'

With that, the lid slid shut again, with a bang, and they were plunged into darkness once more.

'Elf Girl!' whispered Raven Boy, 'you're a genius! He'll never do it!'

'Exactly, but he'll keep trying. It should buy us some time, at least.'

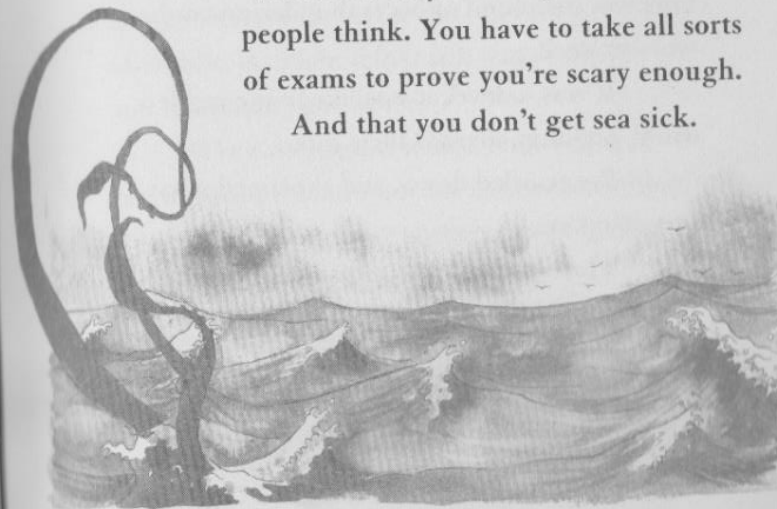
'But time's what we don't have. By tomorrow, we'll be sold as slaves on Blackheart Isle.'

All three of them fell silent again, pondering their gloomy fate.

## EIGHT

It's not as easy to be a pirate as some people think. You have to take all sorts of exams to prove you're scary enough.

And that you don't get sea sick.



The day wore on.

Rat went exploring again, searching for some way of getting his friends out of the trouble they were in.

Around teatime, one of the crew chucked a slice of dried bread down to them, and they glumly chewed it in silence.

Then, suddenly, they heard shouts. They couldn't hear what was being said – the

voices were muffled – but there was a lot of running about and all they could hear for a long time was the sound of boots thundering on the wooden deck.

It was so loud, it was like living inside a drum, and they covered their ears.

Rat scuttled down, and explained what was going on.

‘He says they’ve found another prisoner,’ Raven Boy told Elf Girl. ‘They saw someone in the sea and hauled her out.’

‘Who?’ asked Elf Girl.

‘Rat doesn’t know. They’re all happy, though.’

‘Why?’

‘Another slave to sell, of course. The captain says it will make them all very, very rich.’

‘Why?’ asked Elf Girl. ‘What’s so special about her? Why’s she worth so much?’

‘I don’t know,’ said Raven Boy. ‘Rat says she’s a bit smelly and skinny and her dress is all tattered. He can’t understand what all the fuss is about.’

But there was a fuss. A great fuss.

Even from beneath the deck, Raven Boy and Elf Girl could hear shouts of joy and laughter that went on for the rest of the afternoon. As night fell, it still hadn’t finished, and if anything got worse.

Then they heard music. Someone was playing a fiddle and someone else an accordion. The sound of stomping boots got even louder.

The pirates were dancing!





Rat scampered up to have a look around.

When he came back, he told them the pirates were having a big party. They were dancing and singing, and drinking rum. Lots of it.

The noise got louder and louder, and went on and on, into the night, and then it got louder still, as the hatch slid open once more and Captain Scrim shouted down to them.

'Fluffy bunnies?' he asked.

His voice sounded a bit funny.

'He's drunk,' whispered Elf Girl.

'Like when you have too much strawberry wine?' asked Raven Boy.

'Yes, but I think it's probably worse on rum.'

'I said, fluffy bunnies?' the captain asked again. 'Are you sure about that?'

'Oh yes,' said Elf Girl, nodding furiously.

'Hmmm,' said the captain. 'I'll have to try a bit harder then. To be nice.'

And off he went.

'Look!' cried Raven Boy. 'Look! He's left the hatch open! This is our chance.'

'Yes,' said Elf Girl, 'but we can't get out now! They're all just up there, on deck.'

It was true. Raven Boy nodded, and they sat down to wait, hoping that all the pirates had drunk too much rum to notice that the hatch was open.

The party went on, and on, and on, and Raven Boy wondered how anyone could be so loud for so long.

Eventually it started to get a bit quieter, then quieter still, and finally, all they could hear from up on deck was the sound of snoring. Lots of it.

'Now what?' asked Elf Girl.

'Now, you stand on my shoulders, and reach for the edge of the hatch.'

'I'm not tall enough!'

'You'll have to be. There's no other way.'

Elf Girl started to clamber up on to Raven Boy's back.

'Ow!' he said.

'Sorry, I'm not as good at climbing as you,' Elf Girl said.

'But you're lighter than me, so it has to be you on top. Just try and be more careful.'

Elf Girl did, and with a few wobbles, she



suddenly found herself standing on Raven Boy's shoulders.

'Quick!' she said. 'Quick! I can't keep up here for long. Left a bit and I think I can grab it!'

Raven Boy staggered to his left, and Elf Girl reached for the hatch.

'Got it!' she cried, just as she slipped from Raven Boy's shoulders.

She dangled there for a moment.

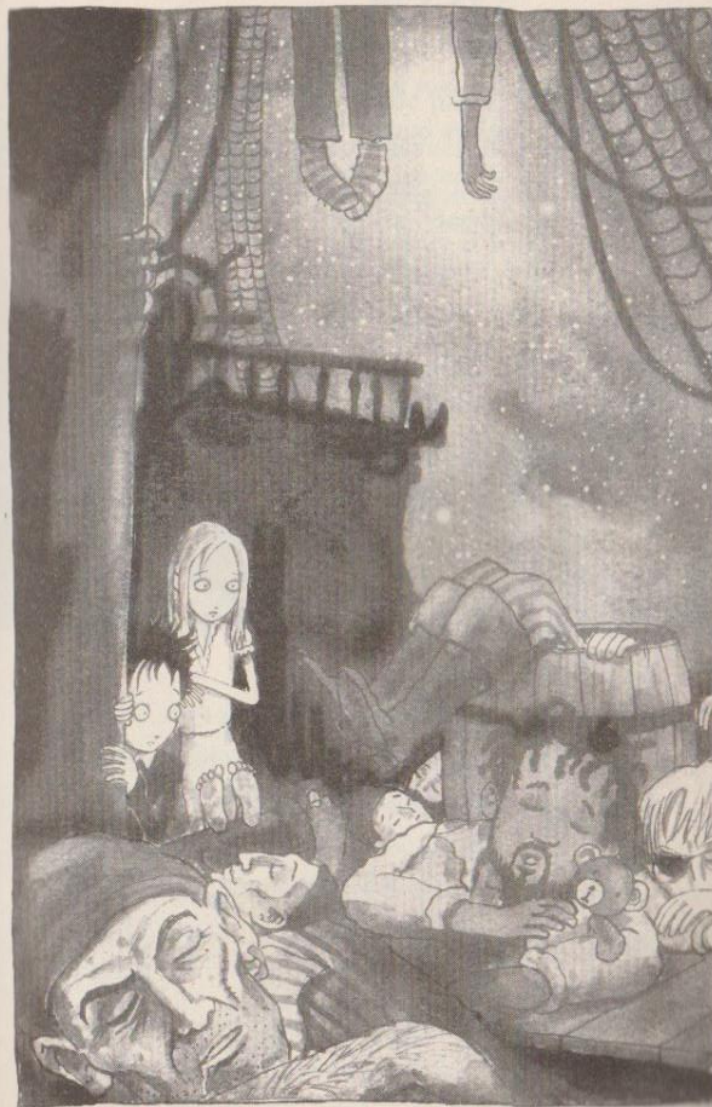
'Pull yourself up!' cried Raven Boy.

'Quick! Before you fall down!'

With great effort, Elf Girl managed to haul herself up onto the deck. It was a bright starlit night, and she could see almost as easily as by day. She looked around and saw nothing but sleeping pirates, everywhere. To her left, her right, even above her in the crow's nest, nothing but snoring sailors.

'*Meep!*' came Raven Boy's voice from below.

'Yes, yes,' whispered Elf Girl and, finding a rope, she tied it to the mast, and lowered the end down for Raven Boy, who shimmied up it in no time at all, with Rat on his head.





'My, you're a good climber,' said Elf Girl.  
'I'm impressed. Not bad for a boy.'

Raven Boy bowed solemnly.

'That's what happens when you live in trees.'

'Now what?' asked Elf Girl.

'Now, we get off. They must have a jolly boat for going ashore in. Let's find it, and set ourselves free!'

'Wait! We have to find my bow first.'

'Elf Girl! We don't have time. They could wake up at any moment!'

'I'm not going without it,' Elf Girl said, and her ears started to glow in the darkness.

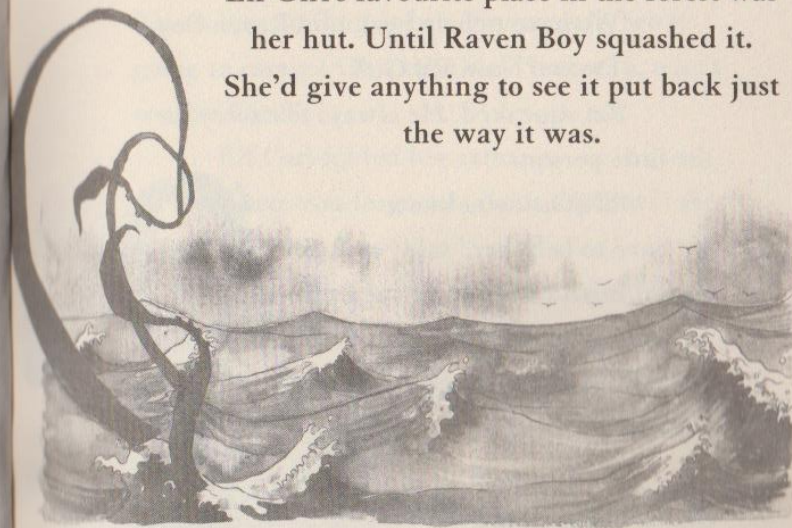
Raven Boy sighed. He knew there was no point in arguing.

'We'll have to hurry,' he said.

They were about to start looking when, suddenly, they heard a voice.

## NINE

Elf Girl's favourite place in the forest was her hut. Until Raven Boy squashed it. She'd give anything to see it put back just the way it was.



From just a way down the deck, someone was calling to them.

They could tell straight away that it wasn't a pirate, or even a pig, or a parrot.

For one thing, it was the voice of a young girl, and for another thing, what it had said was, 'Help!'

Raven Boy and Elf Girl were halfway towards the captain's cabin when they saw who

## Reading Vipers

**V**ocabulary

**I**nfer

**P**redict

**E**xplain

**R**etrieve

**S**ummarise



**V** What does the 'voices were muffled' mean?

**I** What does Raven Boy mean by 'This is our chance'.

**P** Whose voice do you think they have heard?

**E** Explain how the picture on page 75 makes you feel. Are there any surprises in the picture? Why do you think the author chose that picture?

**R** How do the pirates choose to celebrate finding a new prisoner?

**S** Summarise this chapter in 3 points.

# 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?

impress

Word Class:

Word Class:

Synonyms

Antonyms

@VocabularyNinja

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



The word I  
want you to  
investigate is  
  
impress