

The Stargazer's Discovery: A Reading Comprehension Challenge

Learning objective: To analyze a literary text, identifying how authors use language to create atmosphere and character, and to retrieve and infer information from the passage.

Read the following passage carefully. Ensure you look for clues about Nova's personality and the setting. Answer the questions in full sentences, using evidence from the text where appropriate to justify your thoughts.

Nova the barn owl perched upon the gnarled branch of the ancient oak tree, her feathers ruffled against the cool night breeze. Above her, the velvet sky stretched out like an infinite tapestry, stitched with thousands of shimmering, luminescent diamonds. While the rest of the forest slept in the deep silence of midnight, Nova's amber eyes were wide, tracking the slow, majestic dance of the constellations. She held a small, leather-bound notebook in her talons, meticulously recording the position of a new, flickering star she had spotted near the horizon. To Nova, the night was not a time for darkness, but a brilliant, silent laboratory waiting to be mapped. She adjusted her spectacles, her heart fluttering with the thrill of discovery; she knew that every pinprick of light held a story, and it was her mission to read them all.

Word bank: celestial · nocturnal · constellation · luminescent · observation · infinite · tranquillity

1. Explain why the author uses the metaphor 'velvet sky stretched out like an infinite tapestry'. What does this tell the reader about the setting? (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast how Nova views the night compared to the 'rest of the forest'. Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (3 marks)

3. Justify why the author describes the night as a 'silent laboratory'. What does this suggest about Nova's character? (2 marks)

4. What might happen if Nova were to stop recording her observations in her leather-bound notebook? Explain the consequences for her work. (2 marks)

5. Identify the word in the passage that suggests the light of the stars is soft and glowing. Explain how this word contributes to the atmosphere of the scene. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a detailed illustration of Nova's 'laboratory' in the sky. Include at least three constellations you have invented and label them with scientific-sounding names.



Extension challenge: Nova believes every star has a story. Write a creative paragraph (100-150 words) describing the 'story' of the new, flickering star that Nova discovered. Use rich, descriptive vocabulary and maintain the tranquil tone of the passage.