





CHAPTER 15

I come round in a shadowy place that smells of bonfires and popcorn.

I'm slumped on a beanbag and Win is sitting next to me playing a one-man game of Hungry Hippos. For a moment I just stare as Win's hands fly around and the hippos gobble up little white balls. I squeeze my eyes shut, then open them again. Win's hands are still flying around and the hippos are still gobbling.

If crawling through the camp bed and into Roar was a dream, then I should have woken up back in the attic. But I'm not in the attic. I'm in a

balls. I squeeze my eyes shut, then open them again. Win's hands are still flying around and the hippos are still gobbling.

If crawling through the camp bed and into Roar was a dream, then I should have woken up back in the attic. But I'm not in the attic. I'm in a cave that's messy with dropped clothes and abandoned toys and comics. Ninja robes hang from a jutting rock and a strange collection of weapons are stashed in a leather trunk.

Win sees that my eyes are open and immediately leans over and starts thumping my chest. '*Breathe*, Arthur, *breathe*!'

'I can't . . . you're . . . punching . . . me.'

'Oh, sorry. I thought you might be dead.'

I'm too dazed to ask why he was playing Hungry Hippos if he thought I was dead. Instead I let my eyes wander around the cave, taking in Win's hammock, his shoebox of apples and the glow of a fire burning just outside. I vaguely remember that Win always kept a fire going there, ready for toasting marshmallows or

making toast.

My memories of Win's cave become more solid until I'm sure that if I turn my head I will see a stash of firewood and a cauldron sitting high on a shelf. I look to the left, and there they are, a pyramid of logs and a rusty cauldron, just where I knew they would be.

One thing I know for certain: I've been here before.

Win gives me a shake. 'Hey, Arthur, you've only been back an hour and look how much fun we're having. First, you got trapped in that net –'

'By you.'

'Right. Then you fell in that pool and nearly drowned!'

'Because of you.'

'You're welcome. And now I've saved your life!' He throws his arms round me and gives me a big hug. 'It's so good to have you back, Arthur.' He squeezes me tight. 'Roar needs its masters, and seeing as Rose isn't here we'll have to make do with you.'



I open my mouth to complain about this, but already Win's dropped me back on the beanbag and jumped to his feet. He darts around the cave practising ninja moves. 'Leaping tiger kick!' he shouts, knocking over a pile of comics. 'Iron fist punch!' He spins round and delivers a deadly blow to a pillow. Then he whips out his wand and

moves on to spells. 'Belly wham!' he cries, and the pillow bursts open in an explosion of feathers and blue smoke. 'Cheese storm!' Green stars shoot from Win's wand and the comics flutter up into the air then scatter across the floor.



'Oh . . .' Win takes in his trashed cave. 'I was trying to tidy up.'

‘Still working on the magic?’ I say.

He frowns at his wand. ‘Yep.’ Just then I spot Grandad’s asthma inhaler poking out of his pocket and my head clears enough to remember why I’m here. I stagger to my feet. ‘I’ve got to get to Grandad,’ I say, but before I’ve taken a step my legs buckle under me and I crash back down.



Win throws me an apple. ‘Eat this. It will build up your energy.’ Obediently I bite into the apple. It’s sweet and tastes of butterscotch jelly beans – nothing like normal apples – and after a few bites I’m able to stand up. Clinging to the bumpy wall, I make my way towards the entrance of the cave,

determined to find Grandad.

Win trots along by my side. ‘Were you surprised when you saw me in the attic, Arthur?’

‘Very,’ I say, pausing while a wave of dizziness washes over me. ‘How did you do it?’

‘I’m not sure, but I reckon it had something to do with this.’ He reaches inside his robes and pulls out a golden chain. Hanging from the chain is a lime-green fidget spinner. ‘Behold: the Relic of Arthur!’ He touches it with a finger, making it spin. ‘Isn’t it beautiful?’

I stare at the fidget spinner, which I’m fairly certain I found in a bin at the park. ‘I don’t know if I’d call it *beautiful* . . .’

‘You’re right. It’s miraculous because I’ve been visiting that tunnel for months, trying to get to Home, and the first time I wore this it took me straight to you. Can you imagine what would happen if Crowky got hold of it? He’d be visiting Home every day!’

Win’s words are enough to get me moving again. At the mouth of the cave I see a network of paths leading off into a forest.

I don’t bother asking Win which way to go, he was always getting us lost. Instead I reach for the map, and that’s when I remember it flying out of my hands by the waterfall. I groan.

‘What’s up?’ says Win.

‘I had this map of Roar, but I lost it!’

Win’s eyes light up and he pulls out his wand. ‘Salty grin!’ he cries and thick yellow smoke fills the air.

I cough and squeeze my eyes shut, and when I open them again Win is holding the map in his hands.

I laugh in amazement. ‘Win . . . that was *really* good magic!’

He shrugs. ‘Actually the map was in my pocket. I found it by the pool when I pulled you out.’

‘So . . . why did you do the spell?’

He grins sheepishly. ‘Just wanted to know what it felt like to do an awesome spell.’

I’m not sure Win understands just how urgent this situation is, but at least I’ve got the map and can get my head round where I’ve got to go. I open it and find the Crow’s Nest. The castle is

stuck out at sea surrounded by huge waves. I have no memory of being inside it, and suddenly I realise why. ‘We never got there, did we?’

Win shakes his head. ‘We tried, but the sea there is so wild that only the *Raven* can reach the Crow’s Nest. Any other boat would be smashed to pieces.’

I stare at the crooked towers on the castle. At Crowky’s grinning face. ‘Win, if that’s where Grandad’s been taken then I’ve got to get in there!’

‘It’s OK. I know a secret way. It’s the scarecrow army you should be worrying about. Crowky’s got loads of them guarding the Crow’s Nest.’

‘The scarecrow army . . . What’s that?’

‘What do you think? An army of scarecrows! Crowky started making them after you left. They’re like violent scarecrow zombies and I reckon Crowky controls them with his *mind*.’

I stuff the map in my pocket and stagger towards the trees. ‘Win, don’t say another word. Let’s just go and get Grandad before anything bad happens to him.’

I’m about to step into the forest when Win yells, ‘Surprise hand grab!’ and yanks me back. He looks nervous. ‘We can’t go now, Arthur. It’s almost night-time.’

‘But you’re half ninja. I thought ninjas loved creeping around in the dark.’

‘Darkness is my friend and I can melt into it, but it’s also when the scarecrow army go on the rampage. In fact –’ his eyes flick out into the gloomy forest and he drops his voice to a whisper – ‘they’re probably out there right now, *listening* to us! It’s at night that they cause most of their mayhem.’

‘What sort of mayhem? Do they go round breaking stuff?’

Win shakes his head violently. ‘No! They go round *eating* stuff.’

And that’s when a twig snaps somewhere in the trees.

I shuffle closer to Win. ‘Did you hear that? It was probably a rabbit, right? There were always loads of rabbits in Roar.’

‘Not since the scarecrows started catching

changed in Roar.’ He takes a step back from the forest. ‘There’s one more thing you should know about Crowky’s scarecrow army . . .’

‘What’s that?’

‘They’re excellent at standing still.’

The dark forest stretches out in front of us.

‘What, like standing still between trees?’

‘*Especially* between trees.’

Suddenly Win lets go of me, takes a step forward and cries out, ‘Arthur Trout, Master of Roar, is back, you bunch of *dingly-dangly* idiots, and he’s going to rip your straw-stuffed heads from your bodies and shove them where the sun don’t shine, so COME AND GET IT!’

‘*LATER!*’ I shout. ‘I’ll do all that later!’

But already something is stepping out of the trees, something that is big and dark and has spectacularly sparkly teeth.

Chapter 15



Questions

1. What adjective was used to describe the place where Arthur came round? Page 71 **(1 mark)**
2. Arthur woke up in a different place to where he thought he should have been. Where was it and describe it? Page 71 **(3 marks)**
3. Why was Win punching Arthur? Page 72 **(1 mark)**
4. How did Arthur's memories of Win's cave become clearer? Page 72 **(2 marks)**
5. On page 73, look at the sentence 'I stagger to my feet' Find 2 synonyms for the word *stagger*. **(1 mark)**
6. What happened to the map of Roar and how was it recovered? Page 75 **(3 marks)**

