

"Come on.... We are going to be late home if you don't stop dawdling! Stop hopping about, lift your head up and walk quicker Flip!"

Phillip, also fondly known by his family as 'Flip', jumped carefully from slab to slab, concentration etched onto his face as he avoided the deadly cracks in the pavement. It was a warm, summer's day and the siblings were walking home from school together as they did every week day.

"You do know if you tread on the cracks the bears will get you! Daisy, you have trodden on at least 200 today so you are going to be a 'sleuth of bears' dinner, pudding, midnight feast and breakfast!" exclaimed Phillip as he continued hopping from one pavestone to another.

"Sleuth of Bears? What on earth is that?" quizzed Daisy, not really wanting to ask her younger brother but intrigue had got the better of her.

Phillip rolled his eyes, secretly pleased to have known something his older (only by 2 years, 2months 3 days!), usually cleverer, older sister didn't.

"A collective noun of course! A sleuth of bears, a gaggle of geese, a crash of hippos, a murder of crows..... Dun dun der..... " sang Flip as he bumped crash, bang, whollop into a large recycling bin by the side of the road, knocking it over scattering the contents everywhere.

"PHILLIP!!!!" shouted Daisy, angrily pulling him sharply up by his hood from the pavement. "What a mess! Come on, we need to pick this lot up before we get into serious trouble."

The pavement was scattered with cardboard boxes, cereal packets and newspapers so they both quickly started to pick up the rubbish and put it back in the now up righted bin.

As Daisy wandered off to collect a box blown by a sudden, fierce gust of wind, Phillip saw something strange peering out from the dark recess behind the bin. His curiosity getting the better of him, he crept cautiously around the bin into the dark space behind. Daisy was too distracted to even notice he had disappeared, wondering where this warm gust of wind had suddenly appeared from? The darkness enveloped him as he stepped closer to the object that had caught his eye. He reached down to touch it. It was cold and rough under his fingertips but he could also feel indentations in its surface. He picked it up carefully and brought it out into the light to see more clearly. As he did so, a flash of lightning zig-zagged viciously across the previously clear, blue sky and thunder cracked ominously directly above him.

"Come on Flip! Where are you? It's going to pour down, we need to run home quickly before we get drenched!" shouted Daisy above the noise of the sudden storm. Phillip quickly stuffed the object into his rucksack and rushed out into the street towards his sister who was anxiously waiting, looking up into the sky.

"I don't know where this storm has come from? It was beautiful just a moment before! Quick.... Let's run!" She grabbed Phillip by his arm and they both ran towards home through the park, hoping to escape a soaking from the rain which had now started to come down more heavily.

As they left the street behind, out of the dark recess in the wall, a face appeared. A deep frown creased the already etched forehead, a scar zig-zagged across his right cheek and anger flashed across his eyes as he muttered to himself words which sounded like "Mine..... That is mine!"

The summer seemed to have ended abruptly. Everywhere Phillip and Daisy went that weekend the bad weather followed them. Rain, hail, thunder and lightning! It didn't stop! Phillip had completely forgotten about the mysterious object in his bag until he went to get his homework out on Sunday afternoon. As he reached into his bag, his knuckles rubbed painfully against the stone. Cautiously, he pulled it out of the bag and onto his desk. It stared menacingly at him. It was a mask he thought, made of stone and shaped like some kind of cat. It had flared nostrils, scrolled eyebrows and sharp, pointed feline teeth. 'Where had it come from? Who did it belong to? What exactly was it?' Hundreds of questions flashed through his mind. As they did, so did the lightening! A huge fork shot across Phillip's bedroom window followed by a deafening crack. He ran to the window to see the huge, old oak tree at the bottom of the garden tip slowly, dangerously sideways then come crashing down on top of their garden shed. Shocked he shouted for Daisy forgetting he had left the mask out on his desk.

Daisy rushed in and Phillip showed her the devastation outside. As they both looked nervously down the garden at the fallen oak, someone was standing just out of sight by their garden gate. Watching, waiting..... Daisy turned away from the window, unaware of the watching stranger she spotted the mask.

"What Is this Phillip? And more importantly, where did you get it from?" she asked accusingly.

Phillip told her where he had found it and they both examined the artefact, turning it over in their hands, feeling the roughness of the carved stone surface. "I'm sure I have seen this before!" exclaimed Daisy. "It was at the museum we visited when we were doing our topic on The Maya Civilisation. Professor Parker showed us lots of artefacts, some of them priceless! Let me find my booklet and we can have a look."

As they sat together huddled over Daisy's book, the stranger in the garden retreated intending to return later when the time was right...

Meanwhile, across the town at the History Museum, Professor Parker finished his interview with the Local Police. Professor Parker had worked at the museum for 15 years and had been responsible for collecting a great many important artefacts, in particular from The Maya Civilisation which was his favourite, most precious exhibition. He was devastated, when on Friday someone had purposely set a small fire in a stockroom, causing an evacuation of the museum. This same person had then stolen several objects but more importantly, his most valuable artefact, something very old (around 3000 years!) and something that in the wrong hands could produce dangerous consequences. He had to find it.... and soon!

Daisy and Phillip poured over the Museum booklet and discovered the artefact was actually an Ancient Maya mask.....the mask of Xul, The Jaguar God of Thunder and Lightning. The Jaguar God inhabited the Underworld, the home of the Dead. Each morning he became the Sun God and travelled across the sky from East to West, where he then fell back into the Underworld.

“Do you think this terrible weather is connected to this mask being taken from the Museum?” enquired Phillip.

“Well if it is then let’s hope it stops when we return it. Come on Phillip, we need to return it before this storm gets worse. If we sneak out and hurry back, Mum will never know we are missing. Let’s just hope we don’t catch **pneumonia** in this weather!”

The 2 children quickly wrapped up the Jaguar God Mask and then themselves as the storm battled outside. They crept quietly out of the back door and ran towards town and the Museum. As the rain drenched their clothes a hooded figure followed unnoticed, closely behind them.

When they eventually arrived at the Museum the doors were locked. There was note on the door:

‘MUSEUM CLOSED DUE TO RECENT BREAK IN. PLEASE CONTACT PROFESSOR PARKER ON 07485567444 OR THE POLICE WITH ANY INFORMATION. THANKYOU’

Daisy and Phillip looked nervously at one another. What should they do now? Neither of them had a mobile phone with them so perhaps the only option was to go to the Police Station. As they turned around they suddenly noticed a strange figure watching them from behind the Museum gates. Fear prickled at the back of Phillip’s neck. The man slowly started to come towards them and from the scowl on his face it was obvious he was not friendly. The children looked at one another, panic stricken! Where could they run? He had blocked their only escape route and the huge, wooden door was locked shut behind them. Daisy and Phillip backed up, holding hands tightly until they were trapped by the museum doorway, the stranger approached reaching for something from within his coat.

Step by step he approached them and as he did so a huge crash of thunder made them all jump and the children **cowered** in fear. This was immediately followed by a fork of lightning shooting down directly in front of the stranger stopping him in his tracks. As he made another step towards them another fork of lightning hit the tarmac, burning a hole in it’s path and a strange ominous growl rumbled all around them. The growl of a jaguar! The stranger looked all around him, panic etched into his face. The growl increased in **intensity**, growing louder and more **insistent**. The stranger took a step backwards, then another, as the growls continued. Suddenly the door opened behind them and the children fell backwards into the museum. Professor Parker stood and glared at the stranger at which point he turned quickly on his heels and ran, out through the gates and off into the distance.

Professor Parker picked the 2 children and the rucksack up from the floor. Feeling the weight of the bag, he peered inside and pulled out the Jaguar God Mask.

“Well, well, well..... What have we got here?” he asked raising his eyebrows.

Inside the museum Daisy and Phillip explained where they had found the mask and told the professor all about what had happened. As they did so the telephone rang and Professor Parker answered, listening **intently** to the caller, occasionally nodding his head in agreement. A smile touched his eyes then spread quickly to his mouth.

“That’s wonderful news!” he replied. “Thank you so much. Goodbye Inspector!”

He explained to the children that the Police had caught the thief! He had turned himself into the Police Station, carrying with him a bag full of stolen artefacts from the Museum. Apparently he had been shaking, crying and ranting about a jaguar chasing him saying he wanted protection. They told him that he’d be very safe locked up in their cells.

The children and the Professor laughed. Everything had turned out well in the long run. He thanked Daisy and Phillip for returning the mask and told them they would always be welcome at the museum, giving them special VIP passes. Smiling and waving goodbye, the children left the museum. The sun had reappeared and there was not a cloud to be seen in the sky.

“Next time you decide to avoid the bears in the cracks Flip,” joked Daisy “look a bit more carefully please! You never know.....a Jaguar may appear instead!” They both laughed loudly and continued hopping from one paving stone to the next.

“Now that wouldn’t be funny!” said Phillip hopping even more carefully... Just in case!

By Adele Jackson

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The Mystery of the Jaguar God Mask – 4b – Text

## The Mystery of The Jaguar God Mask – Oral Teacher Questions

What is the relationship between the two key characters? (AF2) **They are siblings and Daisy is the elder sister of Phillip.**

Using evidence from the text, find the phrase used to describe the reason Daisy asked Phillip what he meant about the 'sleuth of bears'? What do you think it means? (AF3) **The phrase was 'intrigue got the better of her.' Daisy didn't want to ask because he was younger than her but felt curious because she didn't know what he meant.**

Why does Daisy refer to Phillip as 'Flip' but then when he knocks over the bin shouts 'PHILLIP'? (AF3) **It is a nickname used by the family but when he knocks over the bin she uses his real name because she is cross with him.**

What words or phrases in paragraph two create atmosphere in the story. (AF5) **Sudden, fierce, 'curiosity got the better of him', cautiously, 'the darkness enveloped him', 'a flash of lightning zigzagged viciously' and 'thunder cracked ominously'.**

Why does the author use lots of questions in the story? (AF5) **The questions make you want to find out more and encourage you to ask your own questions about the story.**

Why does the author use ellipses in these sentences? 'Someone was standing just out of sight by their garden gate. Watching, waiting.....' and the stranger in the garden retreated intending to return later when the time was right...' (AF4) **To make you wonder what will happen next, to create atmosphere and anticipation.**

What word tells you how the Professor felt about the robbery? Why did he feel like this? (AF5) **He was devastated because someone had set fire to a storeroom to distract everyone and stolen artefacts, in particular the Jaguar God Mask, which were precious to him.**

Why do you think the Jaguar God Mask could have dangerous consequences if it fell into the wrong hands? (AF3) **The weather had changed dramatically since it had been stolen so this could continue if it wasn't found.**

Is this story set in the present, past or future? What evidence can you find to support your answer? (AF7) **The present times as the author refers to mobile phones and that the Maya artefact was 3000 years old.**

Why do the children 'sneak out' of the house? (AF3) **They do not want their mum to know they are missing as she may ask them where they are going and stop them.**

Where do the main characters live? In the countryside? City? Town? Why do you think this? (AF3) **In a town because the children walk home from their school down streets and through a park. Plus there is a museum and a Police station on the town.**

Which part of the story did you find the most exciting – why? (AF6) **Individual opinion/answers.**

If the Professor hadn't opened the Museum door what do you think may have happened next? (AF6) **Individual opinion/answers.**

Why do you think the Professor 'raised his eyebrows' when he found the Jaguar God Mask in Phillip's rucksack? (AF5) **Because he was suspicious about why they had the mask.**

What is the relationship between the two key characters? (AF2)

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Using evidence from the text find the phrase used to describe the reason Daisy asked Phillip what he meant about the 'sleuth of bears'? What do you think it means? (AF3)

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Why does Daisy refer to Phillip as 'Flip' but then when he knocks over the bin shouts 'PHILLIP'? (AF3)

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What words or phrases in paragraph two create atmosphere in the story. (AF5)

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Why does the author use lots of questions in the story? (AF5)

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Why does the author use ellipses in these sentences? 'Someone was standing just out of sight by their garden gate. Watching, waiting...' and 'the stranger in the garden retreated intending to return later when the time was right...' (AF4)

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What word tells you how the Professor felt about the robbery? Why did he feel like this? (AF5)

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Why do you think the Jaguar God Mask could have dangerous consequences if it fell into the wrong hands? (AF3)

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Is this story set in the present, past or future? What evidence can you find to support your answer? (AF7)

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Why do you think the Professor 'raised his eyebrows' when he found the Jaguar God Mask? (AF5)

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## The Mystery of The Jaguar God Mask – Vocab 1

Write the meaning of each of these words. (AF2)

dawdling \_\_\_\_\_

recess \_\_\_\_\_

indentations \_\_\_\_\_

enveloped \_\_\_\_\_

ominously \_\_\_\_\_

anxiously \_\_\_\_\_

menacingly \_\_\_\_\_

devastation \_\_\_\_\_

intensity \_\_\_\_\_

pneumonia \_\_\_\_\_

cowered \_\_\_\_\_

insistent \_\_\_\_\_

intently \_\_\_\_\_



Write the meaning of each of these words. (AF2)

dawdling – waste time; to be slow

recess – a secluded area or space

indentations – a notch, mark, cut or recess

enveloped – to surround entirely

ominously – threateningly, indicating the nature a future event for good or evil.

anxiously – greatly worried or afraid

menacingly – something that threatens to cause evil or harm

devastation – destruction, to ruin

intensity – great energy, strength, concentration or depth of feeling

pneumonia – a serious illness, an inflammation of the lungs

covered – to crouch in fear or shame

insistent – to continue in a prolonged and demanding way

intently – with eager attention



Find examples in the text and copy the following:

Two sentences that use ellipses to create suspense:

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Two sentences that contain a sub-ordinate clause:

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A sentence with many different types of comma:

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Words which contain the prefixes in, dis and im.

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Find examples in the text and copy the following:

Two sentences that use ellipses to create suspense:

“A collective noun of course! A sleuth of bears, a gaggle of geese, a crash of hippos, a murder of crows..... Dun dun der!”

Quick.... Let’s run!”

“Mine..... That is mine!”

Watching, waiting.....

As they sat together huddled over Daisy’s book, the stranger in the garden retreated intending to return later when the time was right.....

You never know.... a Jaguar may appear instead!”

“Now that wouldn’t be funny!” said Phillip hopping even more carefully.... Just in case!

Two sentences with a sub-ordinate clause:

Phillip, also fondly known by his family as ‘Flip’, jumped carefully from slab to slab, concentration etched onto his face as he avoided the deadly cracks in the pavement.

His curiosity getting the better of him, he crept cautiously around the bin into the dark space behind.

As they left the street behind, out of the dark recess in the wall, a face appeared.

Daisy and Phillip backed up, holding hands tightly until they were trapped by the museum doorway, the stranger approached reaching for something from within his coat.

As they did so the telephone rang and Professor Parker answered, listening intently to the caller, occasionally nodding his head in agreement.

A sentence with many different types of comma:

Phillip rolled his eyes, secretly pleased to have known something his older (only by 2 years, 2months 3 days!), *usually* cleverer, older sister didn’t.

Daisy, you have trodden on at least 200 today so you are going to be a ‘sleuth of bears’ dinner, pudding, midnight feast and breakfast!”

Words which contain the prefixes in, dis and im.

intrigue, indentations, intently, insistent

distracted, disappeared, discovered

important