

Comprehension Fact Retrieval

The extract on the next few pages is taken from *Sky Song* by Abi Elphinstone. Please read carefully and then answer the questions.



Sky Song by Abi Elphinstone

Beyond the footsteps of the greatest explorers and up past the reach of the trustiest maps there lies a kingdom called Erkenwald.

Here, the sun still shines at midnight in the summer, glinting off the icebergs in the north and slipping between the snow-capped Never Cliffs in the west. But it does not rise at all in the long, cold winters. Then, the nights bleed on and on and the darkness is so thick you cannot see your hand in front of your face.

This far north, even the stars do not behave as you might expect. And that is probably just as well because without Ursa Minor breaking a few rules we would not have a story to tell at all...


Sky Song by Abi Elphinstone

The little bear, some call this constellation, but if astronomers knew the truth – if they could see into the heart of things and out of the other side – perhaps they would have used a different name. For these seven stars are in fact Sky Gods, mighty giants carved from stardust, and the brightest of them all, the North Star, was the one who first breathed life into Erkenwald.

Such was his power that he only needed to blow the legendary Frost Horn once and the empty stretches of ice many miles below began to change. Mountains, forests and glaciers appeared. Then animals arrived: polar bears to roam the tundra, whales to glide through the oceans and wolves to stalk between the trees. Finally, the music of the Frost Horn conjured people: men and women of different shapes, sizes and colours scattered throughout the land.

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As the years passed, these men and women formed three tribes: the Fur Tribe built teepees from caribou hides in a forest to the south of the kingdom; the Feather Tribe settled inside caves in the Never Cliffs to the west; and the Tusk Tribe built igloos along the cliff tops on the northern coast. Each tribe had their own customs and beliefs, but they lived in harmony with one another, sharing food whenever they passed and offering shelter when the weather closed in.

Because magic often lingers long after it has been used, the power of the Frost Horn hovered over Erkenwald, and as time went by the people learnt how to use it. They spun hammocks from moonlight which granted wonderful dreams; they trapped sunbeams in lanterns which burned through the winter months; they stored wind inside gemstones which granted their boats safe passage through stormy seas. And the people knew all was well in their kingdom whenever they saw the northern lights. For these rippling colours were a sign that the Sky Gods were dancing – and that meant the world was as it should be. 

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But Darkness can come to any kingdom, and so it came to Erkenwald.

The smallest Sky God grew jealous of the North Star's power and, seeking to rule Erkenwald herself, she pulled away from the constellation one winter night and plunged towards Earth. The North Star acted swiftly and trapped her in a glacier before she could spread evil across the land. But the Sky Gods stopped dancing then because they knew that it was only a matter of time before someone heard the whispers of the fallen star calling out behind the ice.

And, before long, someone did.

Now have a go at answering the following questions

1. What do some people call the group of stars which are in fact the Sky Gods?

2. Look at the paragraph beginning: Because magic often lingers... to the end of the extract.

What did the North Star do after the smallest Sky God removed herself from the constellation?

3. How did the Sky Gods react when one of the Gods plunged towards Earth?

4. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
The stars in the north are normal.		
The North star had to blow the Frost Horn several times.		
The sun shines in all seasons throughout the year.		
The smallest Sky God became trapped in a glacier.		

Spellings

Spellings	Cover and write	Cover and write
changeable		
noticeable		
dependable		
comfortable		
understandable		
reasonable		
enjoyable		
adaptable		