

Varjak Paw

Chapter 10

Make sure you have read
chapter 10 or watched the
video before you start this
lesson.

Chapter Ten

Varjak dreamed.

He dreamed he was back in Mesopotamia. Zigzag trees swayed in the warm night breeze. The sky was bright with stars. The air smelled like cinnamon and tasted of ripe dates.



Jalal walked beside him.

'Can you teach me how to talk to dogs, Jalal?'

'What kind of trees are these?' said the old cat abruptly.

'Trees?'

'All around us, there are trees. Perhaps you have noticed?'

The zigzag trees: Varjak nodded.

'So, what kind of trees are they, Varjak Paw?'

Varjak bit his tongue. Jalal wasn't talking about dogs, and Varjak had no idea about the trees. He didn't want to disappoint his ancestor, but what else could he do? 'I don't know,' he admitted.

Jalal stopped walking, and placed his paws squarely on the earth. 'Awareness,' he said. 'The Second Skill. If you are to survive in the world, you must be aware of everything in it. Whether you need to find food, fight an enemy, or even talk to a dog – before you do anything, you must know what you are dealing with. Assume nothing; be sure of the facts. Open your senses. Spread them wide, like a net. Observe the world: what it looks like, what it sounds like. Even what it tastes like.'

'The air tastes of dates,' suggested Varjak.

'It does indeed. That is because these trees are date palms. See the zigzag patterns on the trunk? That is how to recognize a date palm tree.'

Jalal pointed out the other trees on the riverbank. He gave names to the trees, and taught Varjak how to recognize them by

the patterns on their trunks and the scents of their fruits. Varjak stored the knowledge carefully in his mind as they stood under the palms, practising Awareness, for a timeless time.

'Again,' Jalal always said. He was a stern teacher. 'Again.' And then, at last, 'Enough.'

'I never knew there was so much in the world,' said Varjak.

'That is because until now, you have used only a small part of your potential. The rest is locked within you. But you are capable of anything, my son, anything at all. Each sense is like a fine web that goes out into the world. Your whiskers can detect the slightest changes in the air, the smallest movements. Your nose can scent fear. Once developed, your Awareness can even feel danger, and tell you when you are being watched.' Jalal's ears suddenly pricked up. He dropped into a low crouch. 'Listen! Can you hear it?'

Varjak listened to the peaceful Mesopotamian night. He could hear nothing unusual.

'Pay attention!' said Jalal. 'Near the top of the range, there is a scratching, squeaking, chirping noise. It comes from the edge of the water. Can you hear it now?'

Varjak closed his eyes, and concentrated. There it was, just as Jalal said.

'I hear it. But what is it?'

'Breakfast,' said Jalal.

5 minute starter task



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- Can you remember the five senses?
 - Read through the Chapter 10.
 - Can you find examples for all of the following within 5 minutes:
 - What does Varjak see?:
 - What scents does Varjak smell?
 - What does Varjak see?
 - What does Varjak physically feel or touch?
 - What does Varjak taste?

Good luck!

5 minute starter task:

some possible answers



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- sounds heard: scratching, squeaking, chirping
 - scents smelt: cinnamon, fruits
 - sights seen: zig-zag tree swaying, date palms, patterns on tree-trunks
 - feel/touch: warm breeze
 - tastes tasted: ripe dates

Good luck!

WALT use language
that describes the
senses

Task

In chapter 10, you will have discovered that Jalal has introduced the second skill of The Way: Awareness.

- Why do you think ‘awareness’ is so important for a cat?
- What parts of the cat’s body help the cat to *be* aware?
- How are his new surroundings and the places he *meets* Jalal different from the Contessa’s house?

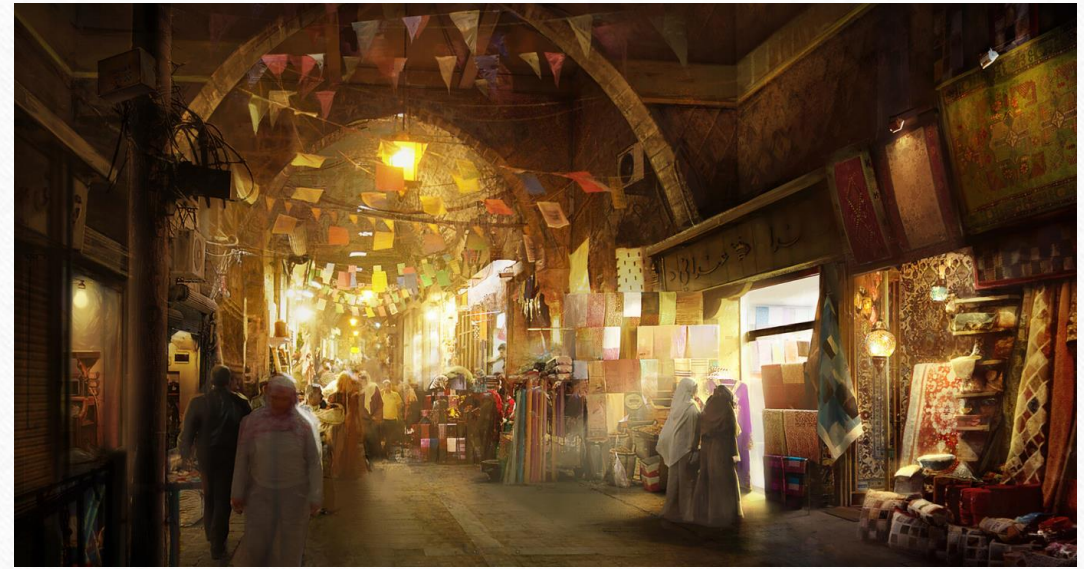
On the following slide, you will be shown images of places where Varjak may have met Jalal in his dreams or of where he now lives. You need to think about *what* things Varjak could become aware of in these scenes and *why* he might need to be aware of them. (Are there opportunities for food, to be fearful or in danger? What might his *whiskers* detect?).

There is also an example, on slide 10, of how you could set out your ideas *if* you wanted to record them.



A Mesopotamian garden, a market in Syria, and a busy city in Kuwait are examples of places Varjak might visit when dreaming of Jalal or of where he is living now.

How might Varjak develop the second skill of awareness if he were in any of these settings?



Example

Sentence starters:

He might be fearful because...

The dangers might be that...

He needs to be aware of...

He needs to be aware because...

His whiskers might detect...

His ears might prick up because...

His fur may stand up of end because...

Varjak can **HEAR** the rush of water.
He needs to be aware of water as it can be dangerous, but also a source of food (fish) and to quench his thirst.

Varjak can **SEE**...

Varjak can **SMELL**...

Varjak can **FEEL** with his whiskers...



Varjak can **TOUCH**...