

Varjak Paw

Chapter 9



Make sure you have read
chapter 9 or watched the
video before you start this
lesson.

5 minute starter task



- Read through the first 2 pages of Chapter 9 on the next slide.
- Can you find examples for all of the following within 5 minutes:
- 2 Powerful adjectives
- 2 Powerful verbs
- 2 Powerful adverbs
- 1 Simile

Good luck!

Chapter Nine

It was dark as midnight in the hut. It felt close and damp, but at least inside was drier than Outside. Varjak was safe at last. He relaxed. And then a low growl ripped the air.

The door slammed shut behind him.

‘Don’t move a muscle,’ said a gravelly voice. ‘You’re surrounded.’

Varjak’s claws slid out, ready to fight. ‘Put those claws away,’ commanded the voice.

Varjak opened his eyes wide. It was another cat! She had spiky black-and-white fur and mustard-coloured eyes. She looked about the same age as him; younger than Jasmine or Julius, but harder, as if she’d seen too much of the world already.

‘I’m not looking for a fight,’ she said, ‘but if you don’t put the claws away, I’ll rip you to shreds.’ Something in her gravelly voice left Varjak in no doubt that she meant it.

‘I’m not looking for a fight either,’ he said, and put away his claws. The rain thudded on the roof of the hut like a nervous heartbeat.

‘OK,’ she said. ‘This is my hut, my shelter. Everyone knows that. What are you doing here?’

Varjak glanced at the door. ‘It’s raining.’

‘And?’

‘And this was the only shelter I could find.’

‘Can’t you see it’s taken?’ she growled.

‘Isn’t it big enough for both of us?’

‘There’s only room for one.’

That certainly wasn’t true, but Varjak didn’t think she’d appreciate him saying it. He stared silently at the soggy timber floor. A puddle had already formed around him. He couldn’t face going out again. Besides, she was the only cat he’d met since leaving home. She was nothing like a Mesopotamian Blue, but she wasn’t like the Gentleman’s cats either. There was nothing strange or scary about her – though you wouldn’t want her for an enemy.

Varjak tried to smile through the dark at her. She glared back.

‘What’s your name?’ she said gruffly. ‘I haven’t seen you round here before.’

‘It’s Varjak Paw.’

‘Varjak Paw?’ she said. ‘Varjak Paw? What kind of a name is that?’

What was wrong with his name? ‘What’s yours?’

‘None of your business. Whose gang are you with? Who’s your Boss? Are you running from the Vanishings?’

Varjak hesitated. What did all these questions mean? He didn’t know – but he had to say something.

He blurted out the first thing that came to mind: something he didn’t even believe himself. ‘I’m a pure-bred Mesopotamian Blue.’

WALT infer a
characters' feelings,
thoughts and motives

'I'm not looking for a fight,' she said, 'but if you don't put the claws away, I'll rip you to shreds.' Something in her gravelly voice left Varjak in no doubt that she meant it.



Why do you think the black and white cat was so **hostile** when she met Varjak?

What might she be worried about or scared of?

Why do you think she seems to relax when she realises he's a pet and not a street cat?

Hostile: Acting like an enemy. Antagonistic. **Not** friendly or generous.

Task

You are going to use empathy to imagine that you are the spiky, black and white cat.

You are sleeping in the safety of the hut as the storm rages outside when you hear the sounds of someone coming in.

Use all of your descriptive writing tools to write at least 2 paragraphs of 5 sentences each, describing what you hear, see, think and feel.

WIN

Powerful adjectives

Powerful verbs

Powerful adverbs

Simile

Metaphor

Fronted adverbial (when, where or how)

Example

The icy wind howled like a wounded animal as the rain lashed mercilessly against the flimsy walls of the hut. My hut. Yes, it was small and rickety and it often smelled as if something had lived and died there, but it was the only thing standing between me and this ferocious cold. It may not be much but it was reasonably dry, moderately warm and most importantly, it was mine. As I lay there in the middle of this raging storm, I thanked my lucky stars for this refuge from the horrors that lay outside these four feeble walls.

As my eyelids were beginning to droop and I was drifting towards that state between waking and dreaming, where our imagined worlds mingle with our waking reality, I was startled by a creaking sound emanating from the corner. Was it real? Had I dreamt it, or was someone actually pushing open the door to the hut? My hut. My refuge!