

The Story of the Amulet



Remember to read the introduction. It might contain important information.

In a quest story, characters have to find something or achieve a specific goal. The following extract is taken from *The Story of the Amulet* by Edith Nesbit, which is about a group of children who find half of a magical amulet and set out on a quest to find the missing half. Here, Robert, Cyril and Anthea ask the charm where they will find its other half.



The room was dark. The world outside was dark - darker than the darkest night that ever was. And all the sounds went out too, so that there was a silence deeper than any silence you have ever even dreamed of imagining. It was like being suddenly deaf and blind, only darker and quieter even than that.

But before the children had got over the sudden shock of it enough to be frightened, a faint, beautiful light began to show in the middle of the circle, and at the same moment a faint, beautiful voice began to speak. The light was too small for one to see anything by, and the voice was too small for you to hear what it said. You could just see the light and just hear the voice.

But the light grew stronger. It was greeny, like glow-worms' lamps, and it grew and grew till it was as though thousands and thousands of glow-worms were signalling to their winged sweethearts from the middle of the circle. And the voice grew, not so much in loudness as in sweetness (though it grew louder, too), till it was so sweet that you wanted to cry with pleasure just at the sound of it. It was like nightingales, and the sea, and the fiddle, and the voice of your mother when you have been a long time away, and she meets you at the door when you get home.

And the voice said —

'Speak. What is it that you would hear?'



I cannot tell you what language the voice used. I only know that everyone present understood it perfectly. If you come to think of it, there must be some language that everyone could understand, if we only knew what it was. Nor can I tell you how the charm spoke, nor whether it was the charm that spoke, or some presence in the charm. The children could not have told you either. Indeed, they could not look at the charm while it was speaking, because the light was too bright. They looked instead at the green radiance on the faded Kidderminster carpet at the edge of the circle. No one cared to speak.

It was Cyril who said at last —

'Please we want to know where the other half of the charm is.'

'The part of the Amulet which is lost,' said the beautiful voice, 'was broken and ground into the dust of the shrine that held it. It and the pin that joined the two halves are themselves dust, and the dust is scattered over many lands and sunk in many seas.'

'Oh, I say!' murmured Robert, and a blank silence fell.

'Then it's all up?' said Cyril at last; 'It's no use our looking for a thing that's smashed into dust, and the dust scattered all over the place.'

'If you would find it,' said the voice, 'you must seek it where it still is, perfect as ever.'

'I don't understand,' said Cyril.

'In the Past you may find it,' said the voice.



An extract from *The Story of the Amulet* by Edith Nesbit.

Discuss

The end of the extract suggest the children are going to have to go back in time. How do you think they will try and do this? Come up with a few ideas of how children could time-travel in a story. Which of your ideas is best?

