



## Chapter 5 · A Circus Star

Bolts is in real danger, and it seems all hope is lost when Frances and Bray step up to attempt a daring river rescue. Can they save Bolts from the rushing water and will Bolts trust them?

### THE LONGEST NIGHT

Christina Clover

## CONTENT



### READ!

- **Reading comprehension questions:** 10 multiple choice questions to test text retrieval and reading comprehension. These questions may also be completed online at [www.fictionexpress.co.uk](http://www.fictionexpress.co.uk)
- **Guided reading:** teacher's notes and a written response worksheet comprising 6 questions which allow for deeper response to the story, looking at personal response, inference and prediction



### WRITE!

- **"Inspire!" words** to encourage children to include them in their own writing
- **Writing worksheet:** write notes for your own story
- **Grammar worksheet:** fronted adverbials to create flow



### TALK!

- **Discussion activity:** discuss your own story ideas



### EXPLORE!

- **Activity:** design a zoo map



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1

**Why does Christian let Bray rescue Bolts?**

- A. He wants to frighten Bolts
- B. Only Bray is strong enough
- C. He wants Bolts to trust Bray

2

**Why does Bray stop in the middle of the river?**

- A. He doesn't understand what to do
- B. He wants to punish Bolts
- C. He can't swim against the current

3

**Why do the children think that Frances was in the circus?**

- A. She walks across the branch like a tightrope walker
- B. She swings across the river like a trapeze artist
- C. She balances on Bray like an acrobat

4

**How does Frances rescue Bolts?**

- A. She pulls him through the water
- B. She carries him along the branch
- C. She tells Bray to push him to the bank

5

**Why is Bolts jealous of Christian?**

- A. Christian's dad owns a zoo
- B. Christian has a proper friend
- C. Christian is tall and cool



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

6

**Who does Cathryn see coming up the path?**

- A. Bray
- B. Bolts
- C. Alfie

7

**Why will Frances and Bray have to leave the forest?**

- A. Because Bray has become dangerous
- B. Because Bolts' family will insist
- C. Because people know about them

8

**What does Bray do when he sees the children at the zoo?**

- A. Roars in excitement
- B. Tries to climb over the fence
- C. Only glances at them

9

**What is Bray's enclosure like at the zoo?**

- A. A small grassy area with a path running through it
- B. A large wooded area with a clearing
- C. A grassy area with a stream for catching fish

10

**Who is the new zookeeper in the brown hat?**

- A. Bolts
- B. Frances
- C. Alfie



- 1** Recap on the events of Chapter 4. Ask the children to describe how Bolts has behaved up until the end of the last chapter. (He has been mean, a bully, cruel, arrogant.) Ask: How do you think he feels now? (terrified, stupid, angry) Read up to *pulled any further downstream*. Ask the children to find words and phrases that capture the danger of the situation, for example, *desperately clinging*, *the river was even stronger*, *sank underwater*.
- 2** Read up to “*Bray, come.*” Ask: What is Frances’s plan? (To put a thick branch across the river.) What actions suggest that she might have been in the circus, too? (She balances like a tightrope walker and acts expertly on the branch.) Ask: How does the author create drama here? (Bolts is dangerously cold, the river is rushing, each step is described slowly creating tension. Point out the word ‘dangled’, which makes it sound as if Bolts is almost dead.)
- 3** Read up to “*He’ll be just fine.*” Ask: Why is Bolts jealous of Christian? (Christian has a real friend.) Why do you think that Bolts has been a bully? (He is unhappy with himself.) Discuss the behaviour of bullies and how they could be helped. Ask: Do you think that Bolts will change? Discuss how it might be difficult for Bolts to act differently. Ask: What do you think has caused Bolts to look into himself? (being frightened that he was going to die)
- 4** Read up to *...our secret life*. Ask: Why does Frances think that she needs to move? What problems might be caused by people who know about her and Bray? (Agree that some people might be frightened of Bray – quite reasonably – and complain to the police.) Discuss whether the children think that it is realistic for someone to live safely in the woods with a grizzly bear. Look at images of grizzly bears and find out how large and dangerous they are.
- 5** Read to the end of the story. Ask: Did you predict that Bray would end up at Christian’s dad’s zoo? (Agree that the story was leading to this conclusion.) Ask: How does the author show that Bray’s enclosure is a good place for him? (It is large, wooded and with a clearing, much like his woodland home, and he has fish to eat.) Ask: Do you think Bray should have been returned to the wild? (Agree that he has been looked after all his life and would not survive in the wild on his own.)
- 6** Ask: Who is the *familiar figure in a brown hat*? Agree that it is Frances. Ask: What is the relationship between Christian and Bolts? (not friends, but not enemies anymore) Ask the children for their final thoughts about the story. What did they like most about it? Who was their favourite character? Were they happy that Bolts learned his lesson? What has it made them think about? (perhaps bullies and friendships, perhaps being confident in yourself, perhaps animals in captivity)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**1**

Find and copy two phrases on the first page that tell you that the situation is dangerous.

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**2**

What impression do you get of Bolts from the word 'dangled'?

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**3**

Why did Bolts bully Christian?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why does Frances say that she and Bray will have to move?**

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**5** \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe Bray's enclosure at the zoo.**

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**6** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why might Frances want to work at the zoo?**

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Here is some of the challenging or potentially unfamiliar vocabulary used in chapter 5 of *The Longest Night*.

You may wish to explore this vocabulary, to improve children's understanding of the chapter, and inspire and enhance the quality of their own writing. You might like to display the words in the classroom, and encourage children to use new vocabulary as part of the Write! worksheet tasks.

appeared

crouched

jealous

pale

slippery

stern

trust

without  
hesitation



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Now it's your turn! Have a go at writing your own story including some of the themes from *The Longest Night*. Recap on the story's themes of bullying, a woodland rumour, animal welfare and water danger. It might be useful to write notes before you begin. Who will be your main character? Which animals will appear? Will you choose to have a happy ending, a sad one or a mysterious one? Continue your writing on another piece of paper if you need to.

A large rectangular area enclosed by a dashed blue border, containing ten horizontal solid black lines for writing.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Fronted adverbials are adverbs or adverbial phrases at the beginning of a sentence. They are usually separated from the rest of a sentence with a comma. For example: All of a sudden, there was a clap of thunder and it began to rain.

Rewrite these sentences so that the adverbial phrase is at the front, separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma.

1. Frances started to shimmy back along the branch holding Bolts with one hand.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Christian's class went on a trip to his dad's zoo the next month.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The group of children followed him through the foyer buzzing with excitement.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Frances climbed above the rushing water when Bray reached the middle of the river.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Frances would be instantly swept away if she fell in now.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Frances let go of the branch with one hand and held her arm down towards the water as they got nearer.

\_\_\_\_\_



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Now add in your own fronted adverbials to these sentences below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Bray struggled in the water.

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Bolts clung to Bray's cold, soggy fur.

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
the bear could hardly breathe.

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
the branch snapped.

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
Frances sighed.

6. \_\_\_\_\_  
the zoo was full of happy visitors.



## Discussion Activity

As a whole class, discuss your own story ideas. Talk about how the author's story has influenced your own writing. What parts of Christina's story inspired your own? When you were reading the author's story, was there any part of it that you disagreed with or didn't enjoy? Why? Maybe it was a voting outcome that you didn't want. Did this influence the journey your own characters went on in your story?

The setting of *The Longest Night* is a dark, mysterious and, at times, scary wood. It is full of wild creatures, including bears. What woodland animals did you choose to appear in your story and why?

In small groups, choose one of your story ideas and rewrite it as a play. Perform the play to the rest of the class.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Can you create a map of Christian's dad's zoo? Reread the chapter to help you plot where each animal enclosure could go, as well as the entrance and foyer. Don't forget to add a key and a compass to your map. Here is an example of a map to give you some ideas. Don't forget to name your zoo, too!



Write down three interesting pieces of information about your zoo, such as how many animals there are, an exciting new exhibit opening soon or how your zoo got its name.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**READ! Comprehension**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Why does Christian let Bray rescue Bolts?<br>B. Only Bray is strong enough  | 6. Who does Cathryn see coming up the path?<br>A. Bray                                      |
| 2. Why does Bray stop in the middle of the river?<br>C. He can't swim against the current                              | 7. Why will Frances and Bray have to leave the forest?<br>C. Because people know about them |
| 3. Why do the children think that Frances was in the circus?<br>A. She walks across the branch like a tightrope walker | 8. What does Bray do when he sees the children at the zoo?<br>C. Only glances at them       |
| 4. How does Frances rescue Bolts?<br>A. She pulls him through the water  | 9. What is Bray's enclosure like at the zoo?<br>B. A large wooded area with a clearing      |
| 5. Why is Bolts jealous of Christian?<br>B. Christian has a proper friend  | 10. Who is the new zookeeper in the brown hat?<br>B. Frances                                |

**READ! Written Response Worksheet examples**

1. For example: 'desperately clinging', 'the river was even stronger', 'being pulled along', 'clung', 'sank underwater'.
2. It makes it sound as if he is very weak and limp, and almost dead.
3. He was jealous that Christian had a real friend.
4. She feels that people won't be happy with Bray staying when they know about him.
5. It is a large wooded area with a clearing in the middle and a high fence.
6. To be close to Bray, she is good with animals.

**WRITE! Fronted adverbials to create flow**

1. With one hand, Frances started to shimmy back along the branch holding Bolts.
2. The next month, Christian's class went on a trip to his dad's zoo.
3. Buzzing with excitement, the group of children followed him through the foyer.
4. When Bray reached the middle of the river, Frances climbed above the rushing water.
5. If she fell in now, Frances would be instantly swept away.
6. As they got nearer, Frances let go of the branch with one hand and held her arm down towards the water.

Zoo map image © Freepik.com