

Watership Down

Student Reader's Companion

A Classroom Guide for Readers





PART THREE

The Shadow of Efrafa

Hazel's rabbits discover the totalitarian regime of Efrafa, ruled by General Woundwort. They must attempt a daring rescue of several does and outwit the Efrafan Owsla, facing their greatest and most dangerous challenge yet. Fiver's visions predict a storm of blood.

*Watership
Down*



Chapter 30: A New Journey

Vocabulary

- Exploit
- Stout
- Apprehension
- Stunner

Reading Questions

1. How much time has passed since the rabbits first fled Sandleford?
2. In what ways has the Down itself changed since their arrival?
3. How have the rabbits grown or altered as individuals and as a group?



Chapter 31: The Story of El-ahrairah & the Black Rabbit of Inle

Vocabulary

- Foe
- Avenge
- Lichen
- Resume
- Wager
- Impertinence

Reading Questions

1. What does the Black Rabbit of Inle represent in rabbit mythology, and why is he feared?
2. Why might the younger rabbits have little knowledge of past wars and suffering?
3. Why does Bigwig request this particular story at this point in the journey?



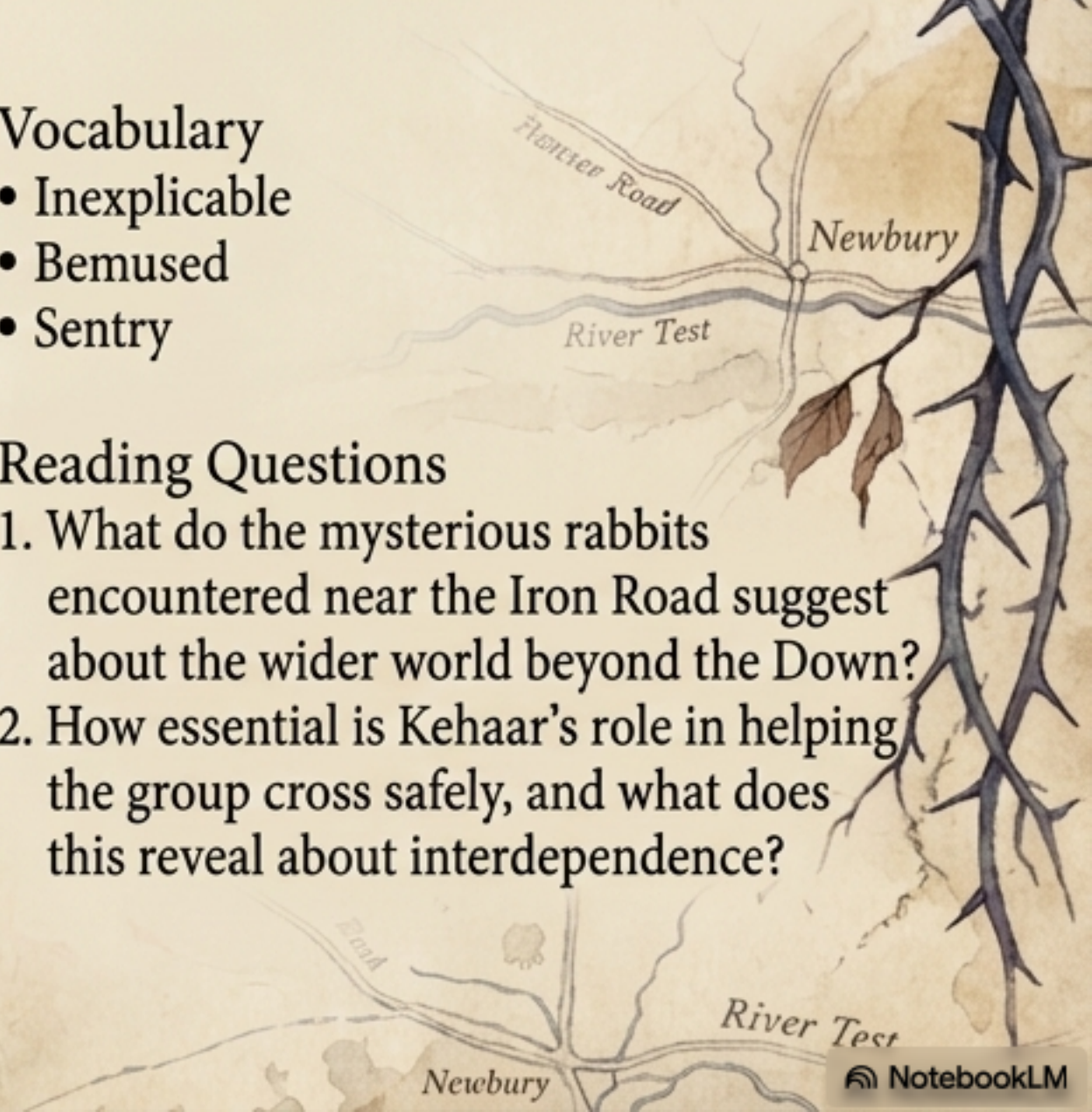
Chapter 32: Across the Iron Road

Vocabulary

- Inexplicable
- Bemused
- Sentry

Reading Questions

1. What do the mysterious rabbits encountered near the Iron Road suggest about the wider world beyond the Down?
2. How essential is Kehaar's role in helping the group cross safely, and what does this reveal about interdependence?

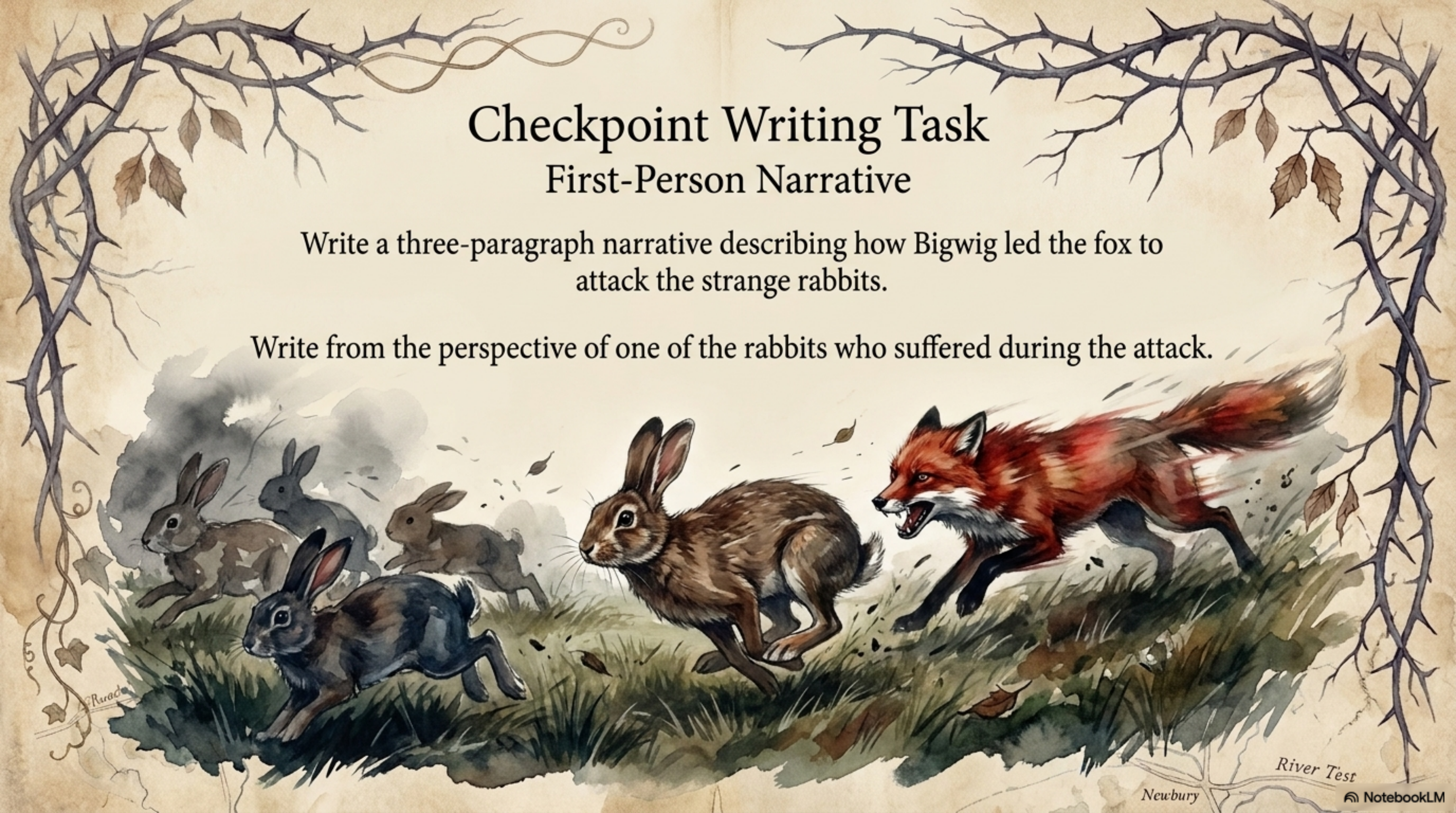


Checkpoint Writing Task

First-Person Narrative

Write a three-paragraph narrative describing how Bigwig led the fox to attack the strange rabbits.

Write from the perspective of one of the rabbits who suffered during the attack.



Road

Newbury

River Test

NotebookLM

Chapter 33: The Great River

Vocabulary

- Resin
- Dismal
- Perceive
- Paltry
- Inquisitive
- Coax
- Precarious
- Quench
- Dapple

Reading Questions

1. What discovery proves crucial to completing the rabbits' escape plan?
2. How does this discovery change the group's chances of success?
3. What mood does Adams create in the final moments of the chapter, and how?



Chapter 34: General Woundwort

Vocabulary

- Fascinate
- Zeal
- Persuade
- Conspiracy
- Emulation
- Petulant
- Prestige
- Dissension

Reading Questions

1. What combination of qualities makes General Woundwort both effective and terrifying as a leader?
2. How does Bigwig successfully enter Efrafa, and what risks does this decision carry?



Chapter 35: Groping

Vocabulary

- Keen
- Apathetic
- Torpid
- Intent
- Rapt

Reading Questions

1. What does the doe's story reveal about life under Woundwort's rule?
2. What qualities make Hyzenthlay a significant figure among the Efrafa does?
3. Why is Bigwig unwilling to abandon certain rabbits, and what does this show about his character?

Checkpoint Writing Task

Historical Connections

Throughout history, many civilizations have lived under oppressive governments.

Write a three-paragraph essay explaining which historical civilization or country Efrafa most resembles and why.

Support your ideas with examples from history and the novel.

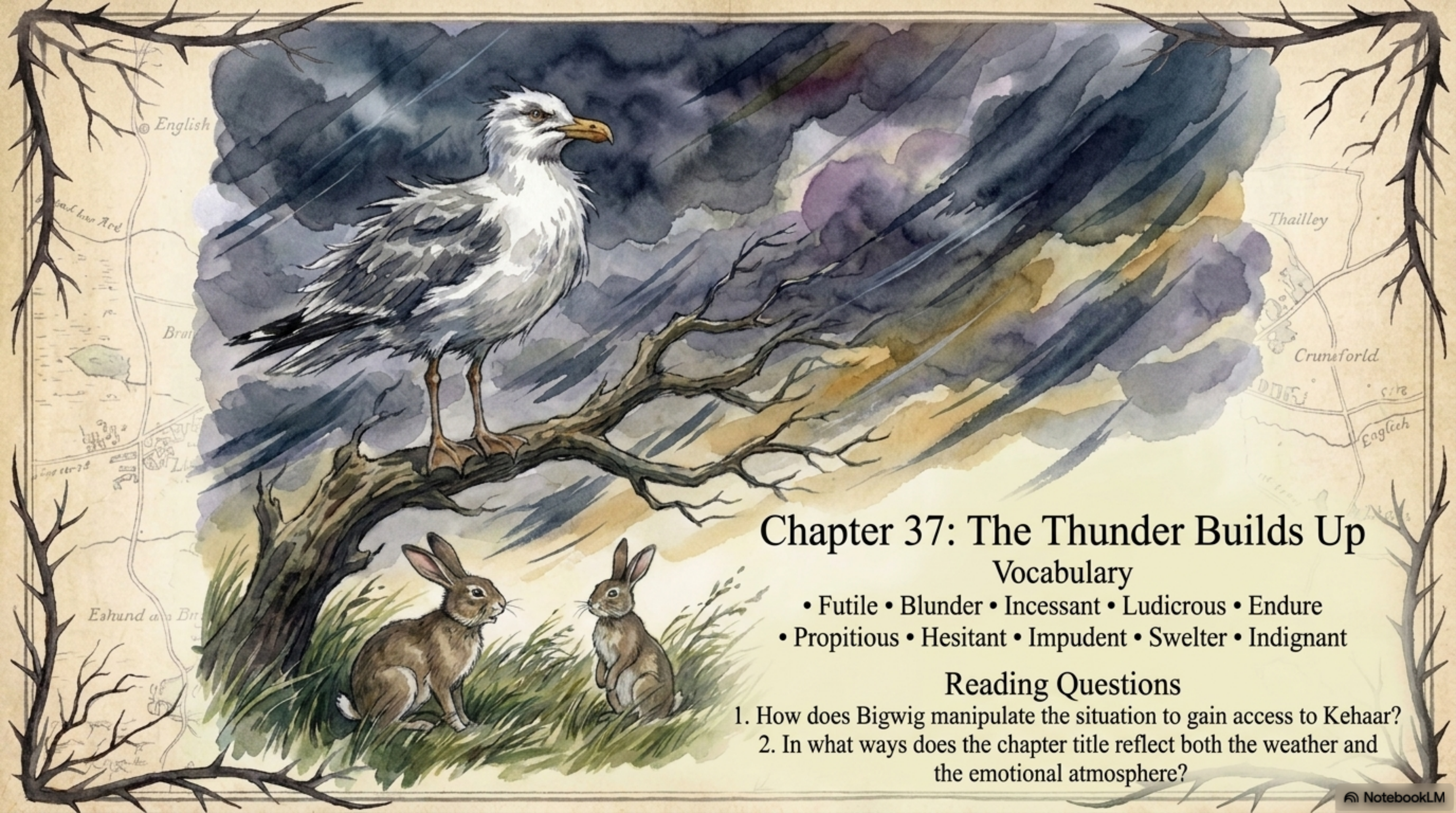


Chapter 36: Approaching Thunder

Vocabulary • Gradual • Trifle • Malice • Alcove • Dazzle

Reading Questions

1. How does Adams build a sense of mounting tension throughout this chapter?
2. What techniques does he use to make the reader feel that something dangerous is about to happen?



Chapter 37: The Thunder Builds Up

Vocabulary

- Futile • Blunder • Incessant • Ludicrous • Endure
- Propitious • Hesitant • Impudent • Swelter • Indignant

Reading Questions

1. How does Bigwig manipulate the situation to gain access to Kehaar?
2. In what ways does the chapter title reflect both the weather and the emotional atmosphere?

Chapter 38: The Thunder Breaks

Vocabulary

- Enormous
- Gnaw
- Clamor
- Oppressive
- Stupefaction
- Ocher
- Evade
- Myriad

Reading Questions

1. Which rabbit shows the greatest physical courage during the escape?
2. Who acts most selflessly, and what does this reveal about loyalty in the group?
3. How does leadership appear under extreme pressure in this chapter?
4. What role does Kehaar play in turning the escape into a success?



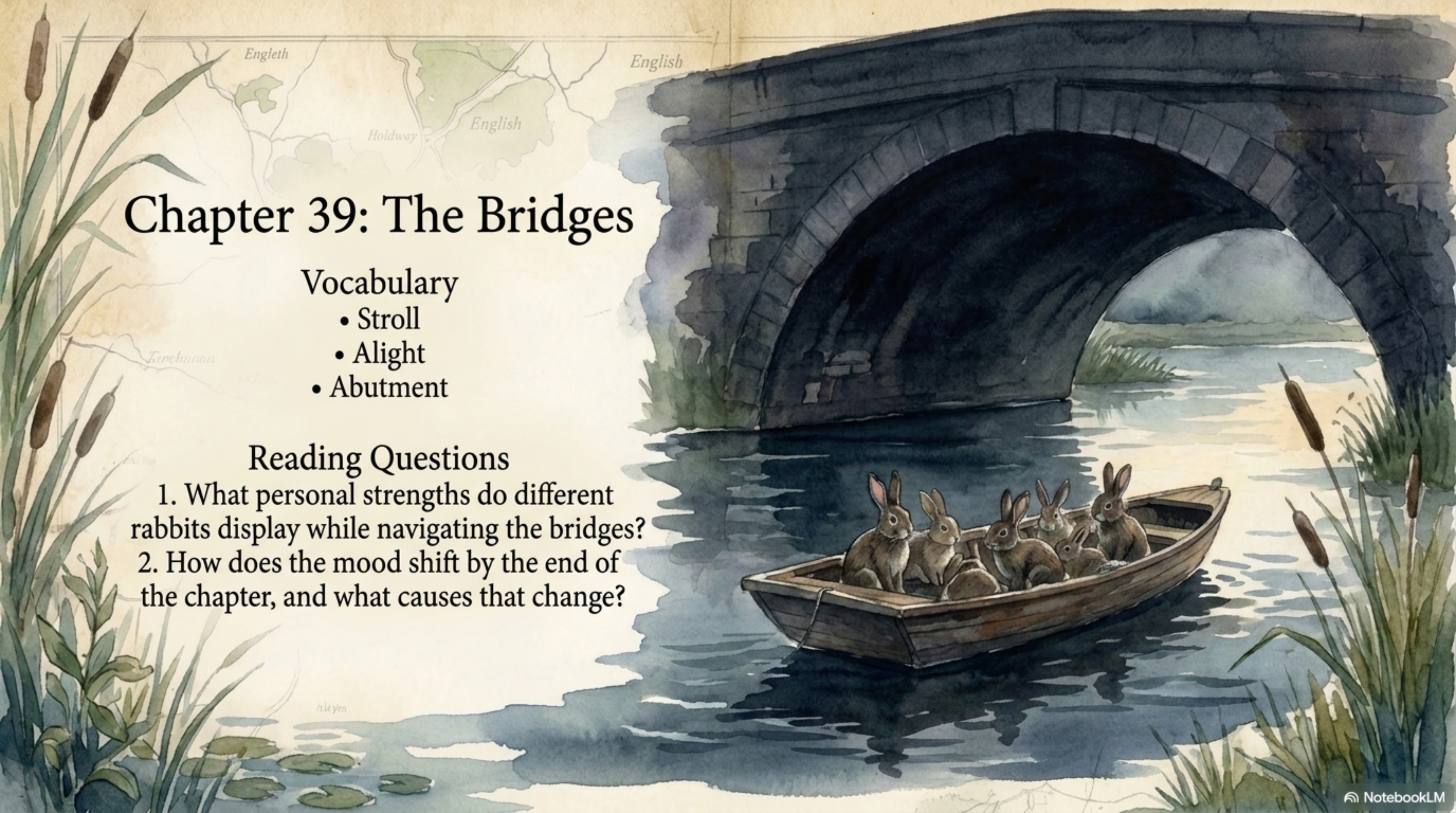


Checkpoint Writing Task

Personal Reflection

Kehaar is a completely different species from the rabbits. His speech, behavior, and customs are unfamiliar, yet he becomes one of their greatest allies.

Write a three-paragraph personal narrative describing a time when someone very different from you became important in your life. If you have never experienced this, describe what you think such an experience might be like.



Chapter 39: The Bridges

Vocabulary

- Stroll
- Alight
- Abutment

Reading Questions

1. What personal strengths do different rabbits display while navigating the bridges?
2. How does the mood shift by the end of the chapter, and what causes that change?



Chapter 40: The Way Back

Vocabulary

- Efficiency
- Inhospitable
- Paradox
- Prejudice
- Initiative
- Detestable
- Superlative

Reading Questions

1. What evidence suggests that the conflict with Efrafa is far from over?



Chapter 41: The Story of Rowsby Woof & the Fairy Wogdog

Vocabulary

- Basking
- Conceit

Reading Questions

1. How does this story reflect the rabbits' deeper attitudes toward dogs and other animals?



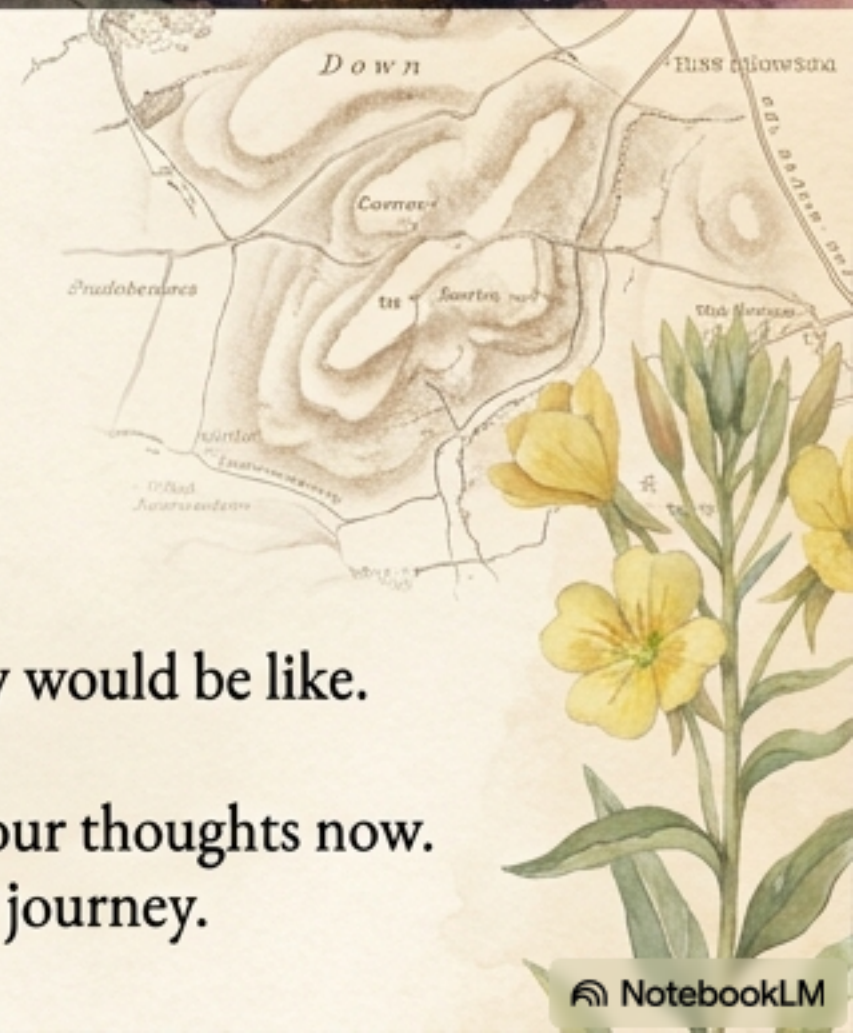
Checkpoint Writing Task

Personal Reflection

Congratulations! You are in the home stretch of Watership Down.

When you first received this novel, you probably had certain expectations about what the story would be like.

Write a three-paragraph personal reflection comparing your first impressions of the novel with your thoughts now. Explain how your opinions changed as you followed Hazel and his companions on their journey.



Chapter 42: News at Sunset

Vocabulary

- Effusive
- Inquisitive
- Catastrophe

Reading Questions

1. What motivates the Efrafans to appear at Watership Down?
2. How realistic is Hazel's hope of negotiating with Woundwort? Explain your view.



Chapter 43: The Great Patrol

Vocabulary

- Adversary
- Conspicuous
- Tyrant

Reading Questions

1. What is the core of Hazel's proposed plan when he meets Woundwort?
2. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Hazel's approach.
3. Why does Woundwort reject the offer so completely?
4. What clues suggest that Woundwort underestimates Hazel's true position?



Chapter 44: A Message from
El-ahrairah

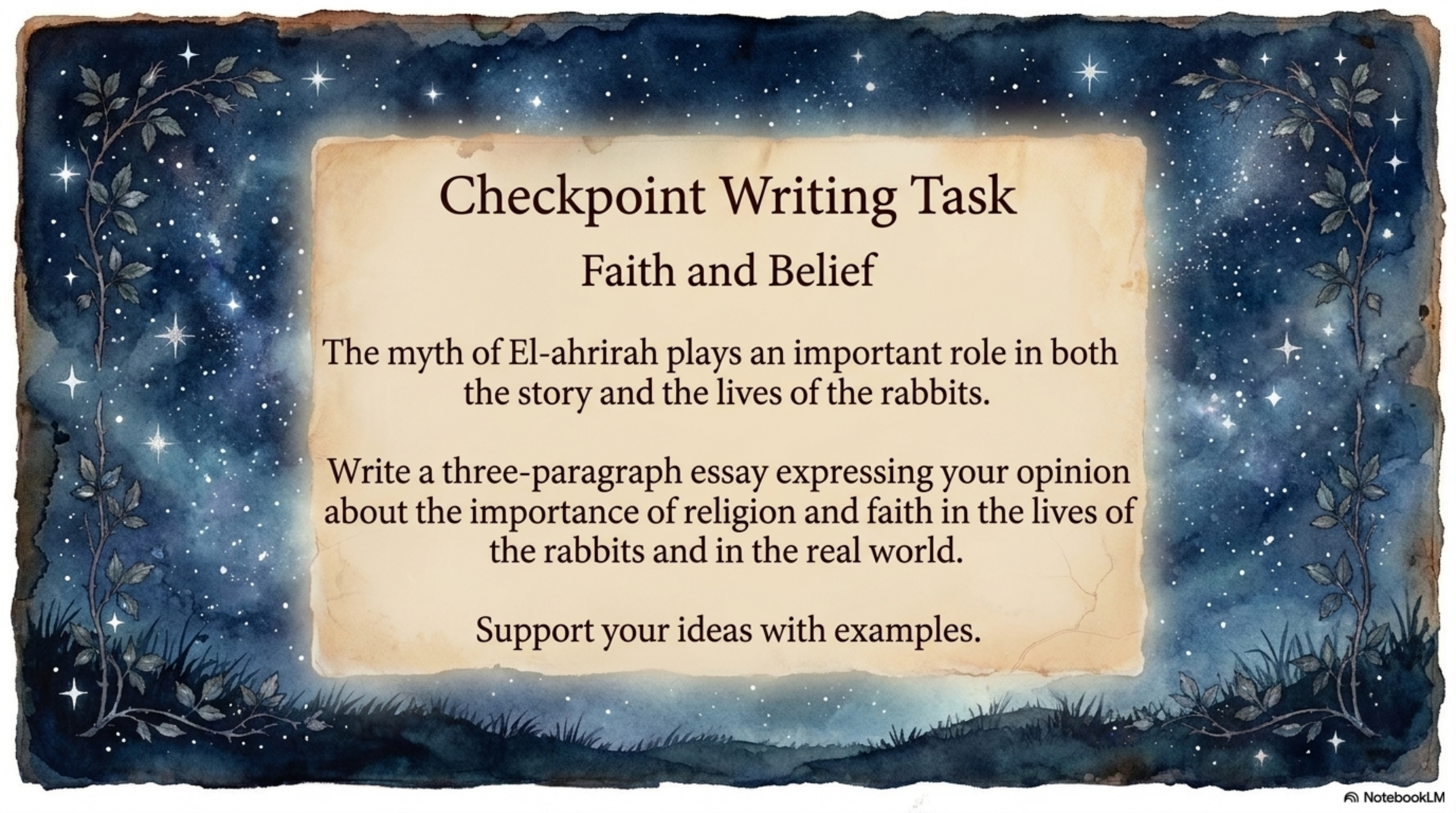
Vocabulary

- Ambush
- Cloister
- Dispel
- Scheme

Reading Questions

1. What is the deeper meaning of the message attributed to El-ahrairah?
2. How do the rabbits' reactions to the message reveal their current state of mind?





Checkpoint Writing Task

Faith and Belief

The myth of El-ahrirah plays an important role in both the story and the lives of the rabbits.

Write a three-paragraph essay expressing your opinion about the importance of religion and faith in the lives of the rabbits and in the real world.

Support your ideas with examples.

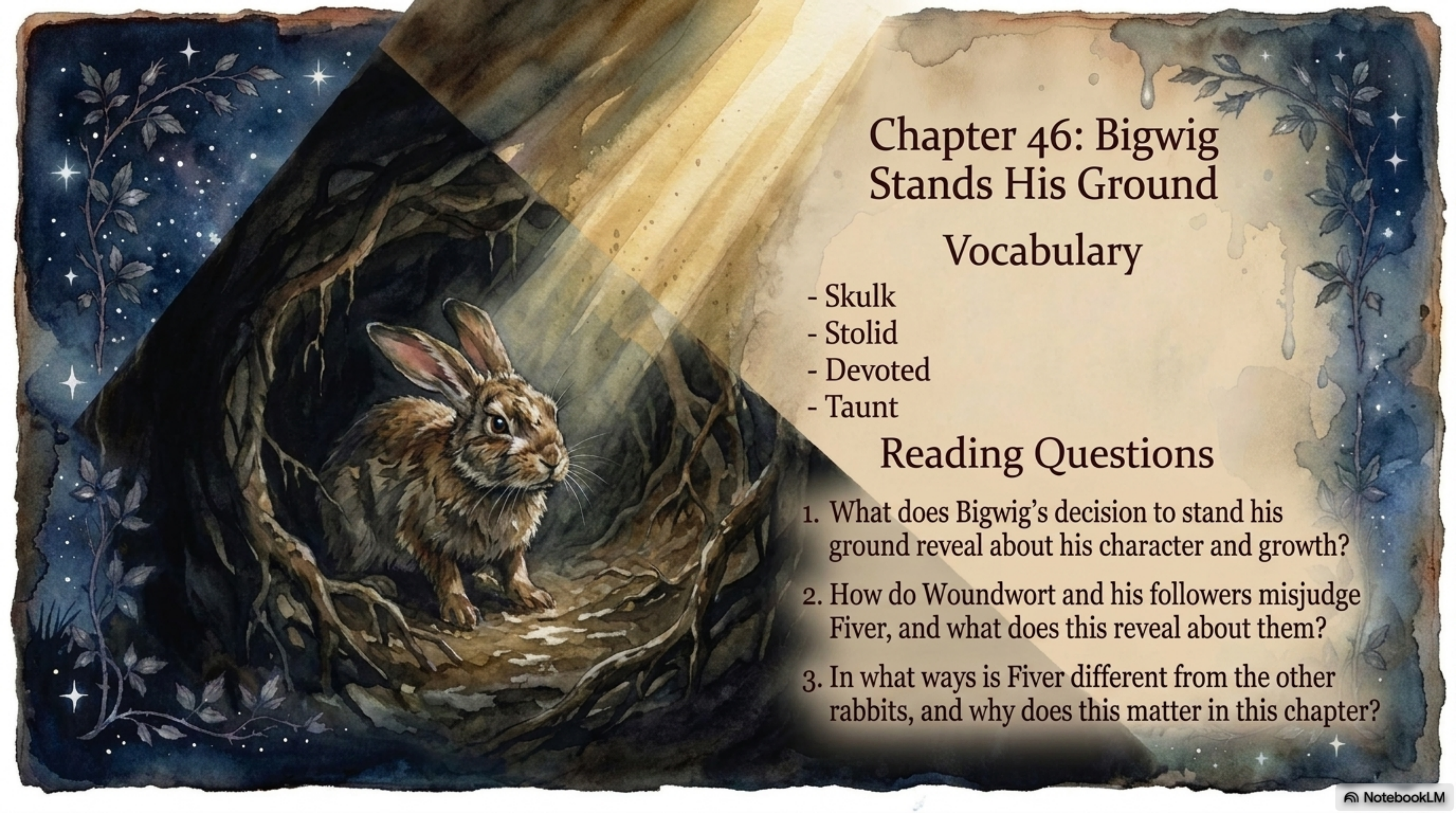


Chapter 45: Nuthanger Farm Again Vocabulary

- Querulously
- Tumult
- Stagnant

Reading Questions

1. How does Woundwort's treatment of his own rabbits reveal his leadership style?
2. Why do Hazel, Dandelion and Blackberry take the risk of returning to Nuthanger Farm?
3. To what extent does their plan achieve its goal?



Chapter 46: Bigwig Stands His Ground

Vocabulary

- Skulk
- Stolid
- Devoted
- Taunt

Reading Questions

1. What does Bigwig's decision to stand his ground reveal about his character and growth?
2. How do Woundwort and his followers misjudge Fiver, and what does this reveal about them?
3. In what ways is Fiver different from the other rabbits, and why does this matter in this chapter?

Chapter 47: *The Sky Suspended*

Vocabulary

- Stubble
- Obstacle
- Hindrance
- Conviction
- Derive
- Contemptuous
- Inexorable

Reading Questions

1. What combination of factors ultimately leads to Woundwort's downfall?
2. Why does Bigwig's statement have such a powerful effect on the remaining rabbits?



Chapter 48: *Dea ex Machina*

Vocabulary

- Astonishment
- Intervention
- Solace
- Compassion
- Reassurance

Reading Questions

1. What might Hazel be thinking as Lucy and the doctor examine him?
2. What, if anything, has Hazel come to understand about humans by this point in the story?



Chapter 49: Hazel Comes Home

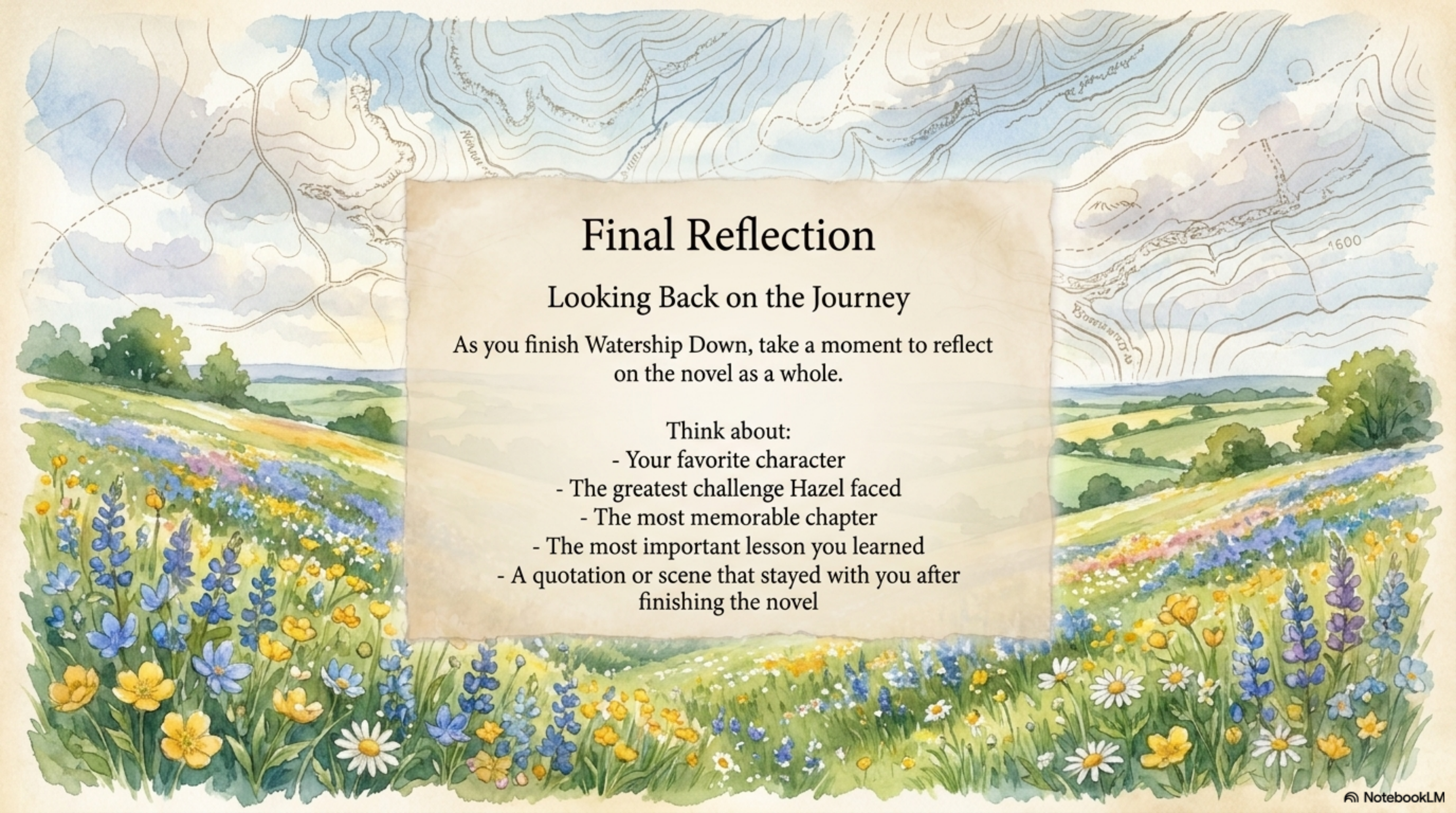
Vocabulary

- Fatigue
- Vigilant
- Collapse
- Trance
- Matted
- Totter
- Devastated

Reading Questions

1. What is likely to happen to Efrafa now that Woundwort is gone?
2. Summarize the key events that unfold at the Honeycomb after the dog is released.





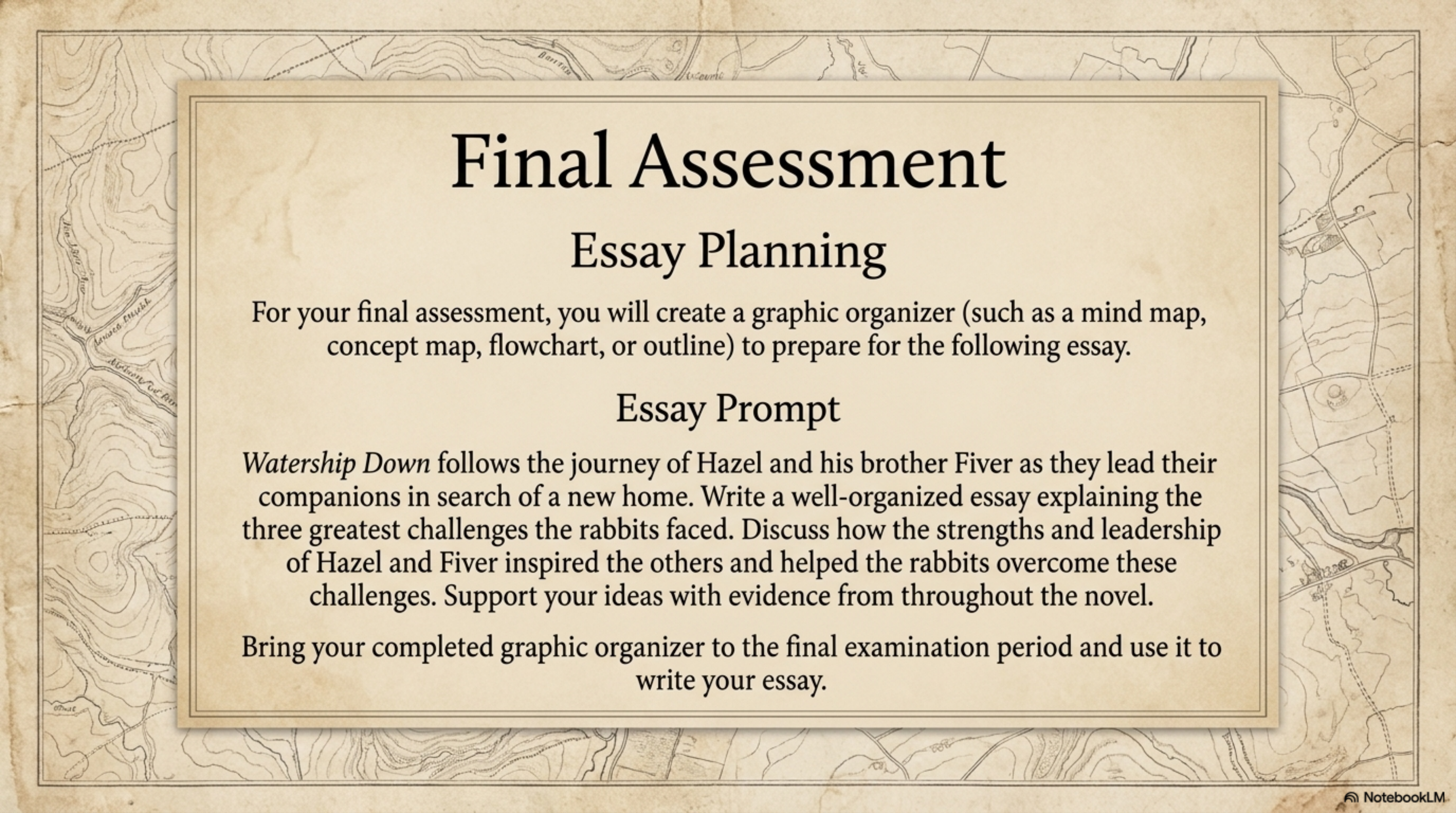
Final Reflection

Looking Back on the Journey

As you finish *Watership Down*, take a moment to reflect on the novel as a whole.

Think about:

- Your favorite character
- The greatest challenge Hazel faced
 - The most memorable chapter
- The most important lesson you learned
- A quotation or scene that stayed with you after finishing the novel



Final Assessment

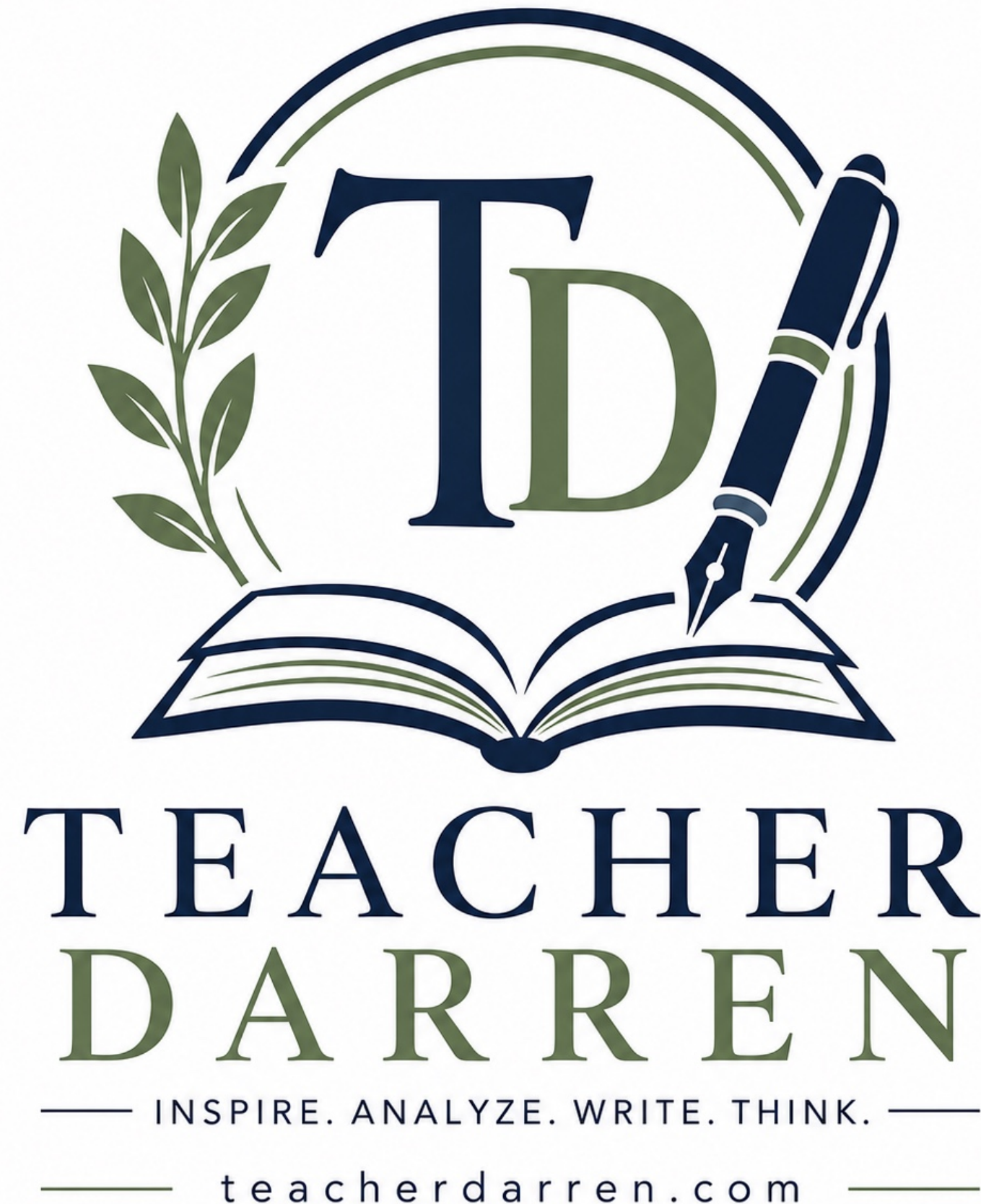
Essay Planning

For your final assessment, you will create a graphic organizer (such as a mind map, concept map, flowchart, or outline) to prepare for the following essay.

Essay Prompt

Watership Down follows the journey of Hazel and his brother Fiver as they lead their companions in search of a new home. Write a well-organized essay explaining the three greatest challenges the rabbits faced. Discuss how the strengths and leadership of Hazel and Fiver inspired the others and helped the rabbits overcome these challenges. Support your ideas with evidence from throughout the novel.

Bring your completed graphic organizer to the final examination period and use it to write your essay.



About the Author

Mitchell Darren Carter is an American international educator with more than a decade of experience teaching English, literature, debate, and critical thinking in Taiwan, Vietnam, and Indonesia. He currently teaches Cambridge IGCSE English at Springfield School in Jakarta, Indonesia, where he designs rigorous, engaging curriculum for multilingual learners.

Before entering education, Mitchell spent more than fifteen years in executive management before pursuing a career in ministry. These diverse professional experiences have shaped a teaching philosophy centered on critical thinking, authentic communication, and meaningful learning.

Mitchell holds a Bachelor of Arts in Pastoral Ministries, a Master of Arts in Theological Studies, and a Master of Education in Advanced Teaching and 21st Century Learning. His work focuses on designing scaffolded instructional resources that help students become thoughtful readers, confident writers, and independent analytical thinkers.

His classroom materials emphasize close reading, Writer's Effect, vocabulary development, and evidence-based literary analysis while remaining accessible to English language learners. Every resource is developed through classroom practice and refined to support student engagement and long-term learning.

When he is not teaching or writing curriculum, Mitchell enjoys classic literature, educational technology, travel throughout Asia, and spending time with his family and three cats.

For additional teaching resources, visit teacherdarren.com.



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