

Improving Your Reading with Vocabulary Victor: Raider's Peril



Catanna ran through the darkness of the White Desert night. She rarely ventured to the Silken City, and never alone. Despite its soft-sounding name, it was a cut-throat place.

Katka's thumb ached from pressing the forward button as hard as she could. It wouldn't make Catanna move any faster – Katka knew that – but her thumbs wouldn't listen to reason right now. She had to find Xandon and discover what the Gutvines were up to, before they tricked her into destroying her own guild.

The hazy light of the distant city grew brighter by degrees. Catanna didn't look to the left or right; she just ran – over dunes, through tented encampments, under the shadows of enemy strongholds. She even splashed through an oasis without swerving; her eyes never left that hazy light.

That was how the bandits got her.

Suddenly, flaming arrows rained down from the sky. Her vision flashed red and she staggered as her health bar dropped. She'd been hit. Unfamiliar voices jumbled on her headset.

"Taste it!"

"One more hit."

"Grab the bag."

Too late, Catanna readied her spear. But Katka couldn't see who to aim at, and the spear flew, glittering, into the night, landing uselessly in the sand ahead. Catanna tried to follow it, but she was knocked to the ground by another blow. Her health was critical.



"She's out."

"Taste it!"

"Shut up and search the bag."

"Topaz, nice."

"Who uses spears anyway?"

All Katka could see was black. She pressed every button on the controller, but Catanna just lay there, her health bar blinking a warning. She was helpless as her lootbag was snatched away and the unseen assailants emptied its contents and flung it onto the sand. She heard every thud as they ran away across the desert.

Eventually, her health bar climbed above the danger zone and stopped blinking. Katka let out a breath that she didn't know she'd been holding. Catanna stood, picked up her lootbag, and looked at the contents. Just some useless armour, precision gloves, and something called an ice cloak.

Great.

Catanna shouldered the bag. All that Gutvine loot, gone in seconds because of Katka's own stupidity. Fantastic.

Catanna limped in circles, searching for her topaz spear. She remembered the exact spot it had landed in, but it wasn't there. The further that Catanna limped, the deeper her heart sank until it dropped right into her stomach. Her spear was gone.

Katka flopped back on her cool pillows. She stared at the ceiling, at the crack that wriggled across it like a road on a map. She was the leader of the Brittlestar guild; despair was not an option. She had to find Xandon and get back what she had lost. With a sigh, she sat upright.

Catanna joined a crowd of raiders, merchants and warriors as she limped closer to the Silken City gates. Guards stood on either side, their formidable weapons ready in case of trouble. Catanna stayed to the middle of the crowd, who jostled and slowed as they reached the bottleneck.

As the bustling chatter and hanging silks of the city came into focus, Catanna was snatched to the side by a guard. The guard's animated face loomed down at Catanna, grinning. His teeth were black.

1. **Find and copy** one word from the first paragraph which shows that Catanna does not usually visit the Silken City.

2. *That's how the bandits got her.*

Which of these words is closest in meaning to the word **bandits**? Circle **one**.

missiles

thieves

dressings

infantry

3. *Catanna readied her spear*

What does **readied her spear** mean in this sentence? Tick **one**.

- she managed to find her spear
 she sharpened her spear
 she prepared for action
 she withdrew from battle

4. *Her health was critical*

How else could the author have written this phrase?

5. Find and copy two different words from the text which mean the same as *attacker*.

1. _____

2. _____

6. In the text, Catanna has precision gloves. Given the meaning of the word precision, what do you think these gloves help her to do? Tick one.

- keep warm
 work accurately
 hold heavy items
 protect her fingers

7. *Catanna shouldered the bag*

What do you think this phrase means?

8. How does the author create an effective description of the crack on Katka's ceiling?

9. *their formidable weapons ready in case of trouble*

What do you think is meant by the word **formidable** in this sentence?

10. **Find and copy** one word from the text which shows that the guard's face was full of life.

Answers

1. Find and copy one word from the first paragraph which shows that Catanna does not usually visit the Silken City.

rarely

2. *That's how the bandits got her.*

Which of these words is closest in meaning to the word bandits? Circle **one**.

missiles

thieves

dressings

infantry

3. *Catanna readied her spear*

What does **readied her spear** mean in this sentence? Tick **one**.

- she managed to find her spear
- she sharpened her spear
- she prepared for action**
- she withdrew from battle

4. *Her health was critical*

How else could the author have written this phrase?

Pupils' own responses, such as: She was feeling really unwell.

5. Find and copy two different words from the text which mean the same as 'attacker'.

Accept any two of the following: enemy; bandits; assailants; raiders.

6. In the text, Catanna has precision gloves. Given the meaning of the word **precision**, what do you think these gloves help her to do? Tick **one**.

- keep warm
- work accurately**
- hold heavy items
- protect her fingers

7. *Catanna shouldered the bag*

What do you think this phrase means?

Pupils' own responses, such as 'she put the bag on her shoulder'.

8. How does the author create an effective description of the crack on Katka's ceiling?

Pupils' own responses, such as: 'The author describes the crack on the ceiling as 'wiggling like a road map'. This helps the reader to picture exactly what the crack looks like and lets them really understand what Katka is looking at'.

9. *their formidable weapons ready in case of trouble*

What do you think is meant by the word **formidable** in this sentence?

Pupils' own responses, such as: 'I think it means deadly' or 'I think formidable might mean dangerous'.

10. Find and copy one word from the text which shows that the guard's face was full of life.
animated