

So much has happened!



Let's retell the entire story so far...



Our target
this half term
is...





Think... is reading
aloud and reading
together helping to
improve your
fluency?
How?





Today, you will be
continuing to
develop your
fluency.

1. Listen to me model
reading the chapter
aloud.

2. Rereading parts of the chapter to
practise your fluency for a selected
part of the chapter.





1. Listen to me model reading much of the chapter aloud.

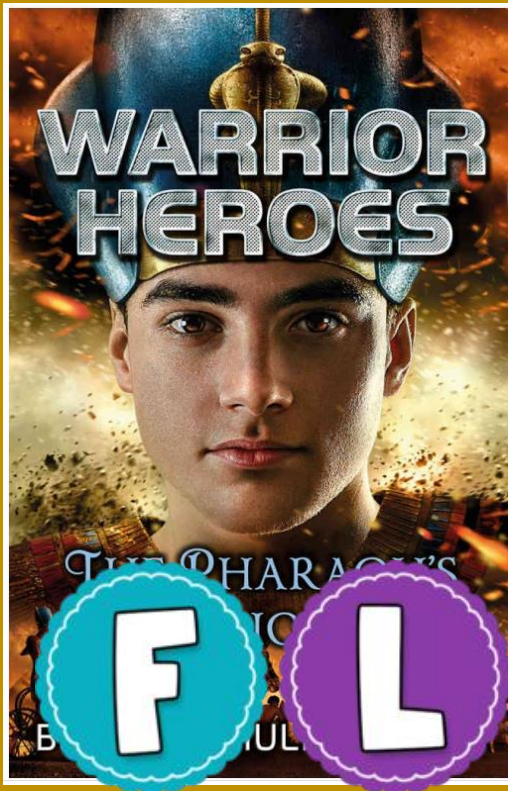
2. Use 'echo reading' to practise your fluency for selected parts of the chapter.

Then, impress me by performing the extract of the chapter!

3. Perform an extract.



1. Listen to me read.



Remember, to follow the text with your finger as I read and keep up. I may be stopping at certain parts of the chapter and asking questions so you need to be listening carefully.

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1. Listen to me read.

CHAPTER 8



They veered away from the lake, staying close to the line of hills that Finn and Nefi had ridden along the top of. Shaharqo explained that the hills would guide them most of the way to Thebes, and that a steady trot through the night should be enough to get them across the desert before dawn. Arthur suggested that they take shifts driving the horses while the others slept but Shaharqo told them to stay awake for now. This seemed odd to Arthur, but the reason soon became clear. Barely five minutes after leaving the lake, Shaharqo brought the cart to a stop and sent out another low whistle.

A young boy emerged from behind a boulder, beckoning to somebody behind him. Two cloaked, shadowy figures followed the boy towards the cart, one hobbling badly and leaning on a shepherd's crook. Arthur and Thami trusted Shaharqo but still they tensed as the strangers approached.

"Thami!" one of them called out softly in a familiar voice. "Help your sister up, you lazy old donkey!" The two hobbling figures stopped behind the cart and pulled their hoods back. To Arthur and Thami's utter delight, they found themselves staring down at Nefi and Finn.

"I told you I had a surprise for you!" said Shaharqo as the siblings hugged one another. "But hurry! We must get to Thebes undetected, and we must stop this war before it has started."

"Yes, we must go!" said Thami.



“Goodbye, Caro!” Nefi called as the cart began rolling. “Thank you.” But the boy had already disappeared and everyone settled down in the back of the cart. Thami told his sister and Finn about all that had happened since their capture, and about their plan to expose the high priest.

“But what about you?” Arthur asked when Thami had finished. “How did you end up here?”

Finn told the story of their overnight journey along the hilltops, pausing, embarrassed, at the part where the horses bolted.

“So I carried him down to the water’s edge,” said Nefi, picking up the story much to Arthur’s amusement. She soon had the whole cart laughing with her exaggerated impressions of Finn’s yelps and moans.



ECHO!

“But how did you find us?” Arthur asked eventually. Nefi replied that Caro’s father had assumed they were all part of the same hunting party as he had heard from soldier friends of two hostages being brought in from the desert the night before they arrived. Shaharqo had asked the soldier who had tracked Nefi and Finn to put out word on the quiet that he was looking for a boy and a girl from the hills, and they had soon been tracked down. Then when the escape was set, Shaharqo had sent a message to Caro’s father that his guests were in danger and would be taken away to safety if they met him by the side of the road at the appointed time.

ECHO!

Conversation soon turned to the group's plans for Thebes. It was agreed that they would all need to enter the palace in secret. In order to benefit from the element of surprise it was crucial that the high priest should not know they had returned until the moment of confrontation. This would be challenging as the temple guards, who operated throughout the palace and temple complex, would be sure to report back to the high priest as soon as either Thami or Nefi was recognised.

After much deliberation, it was decided that they would lay their trap in the Valley of the Kings, where the pharaoh's tomb was being hewn into the rocks. Work had been going on for several years, but the pharaoh took every opportunity to check on its progress, and Thami felt sure that if war was imminent then a visit to the tomb would be on the pharaoh's mind.



ECHO!

They agreed that Finn, Thami and Shaharqo would hide in the valley while Arthur and Nefi continued to the palace to try and reach the queen. They would tell the queen everything, and enlist her help in persuading the pharaoh to bring the high priest to the tomb, where they would confront him.

Plans thus outlined, they settled down beneath blankets in the back of the cart, with Shaharqo promising to wake Thami and change places with him midway through the journey.

Arthur, for one, did not feel tired. He was all too aware that the whole plan relied on him and Nefi getting into the palace undetected by the temple guards. Also, he was troubled by the very idea of the high priest, a man he had never met, yet one who was pulling the strings of two kingdoms and steering them towards a war that could cost thousands of lives. The prospect of meeting such a man, let alone confronting and defeating him, was daunting indeed and when he finally drifted away his sleep was darkly restless.

Arthur jolted awake to the sound of raised Egyptian voices.

“And where have you come from?” someone demanded.

“We were separated from my master, an oil merchant, travelling along the oasis route,” Shahrqo replied. Arthur pulled the blanket down off his face and noticed that the sky was beginning to pale. “We hope to rejoin my master at Thebes.”

“You are a Nubian!” said somebody else. “And your general holds captive one of the pharaoh’s sons and has killed one of his daughters. Why should we not kill you now, just as we will kill your brothers on the battlefield?”

So they think Nefi was killed in the raid... thought Arthur.

“Sirs, please!” Shahrqo whined. “I am my master’s slave. You have many Nubians in Thebes, no? What the general does has nothing to do with the rest of us.”

“He’s right!” said Thami, sitting up in the back of the cart. “This man belongs to my father, who we are hoping to meet in Thebes. You are soldiers. You must see that we are not soldiers!”



"And what about this pale creature?" said one of the men, gesturing in Arthur's direction as he too sat up.

"My father adopted him on his travels," Thami lied smoothly. There were four soldiers standing at the front of the cart, but looking around Arthur could see they were in big trouble. Their route had taken them into a valley, bounded on one side by the line of hills they had been following from the oasis, and on the other by a second, converging ridge. The men questioning them were Egyptian sentries, behind whom were row upon row of tents. Looking up to the ridge lines on either side of them, Arthur could see more tents along the tops of the hills. Shahrqo had driven the cart straight into the middle of an Egyptian army camp!

The soldiers whispered to one another. Finn and Nefi were awake too by this time, and all five of the travellers were now sitting up in the cart, waiting nervously to learn their fate. Finally one of the sentries ordered them down from the cart.

"You will wait until after sunrise when we will speak to our captain."

Thami began to protest but was cut short.

"Do as you are commanded, or it will be worse for you!" There was little choice but to obey, so they climbed down from the cart and allowed two of the sentries to steer them into a large, empty tent. The guards remained outside, and the five travellers were forced to accept the possibility that their adventure might be over.

"I am sorry," said Shaharqo, slumping down on the floor. Thami was unforgiving.

"How did you not see the danger?" he hissed. "And why didn't you wake me in the night as we agreed?"

"I did not realise it was so late," Shaharqo replied gloomily. "Suddenly it was almost dawn and the camp was right there in front of us..."

"It would have happened whoever had been driving," said Nefi. "We picked the straightest route from the oasis to Thebes. We should have known our father might already have posted his advance guard here."

Thami relented, although Shaharqo remained disconsolate. Soon the sounds of the rest of the camp beginning to wake up drifted in through the walls of the tent.

"We should be quiet in case anyone overhears us," said Finn. "And we should listen to the soldiers' conversations. We may learn something useful about what is going on in Thebes."

"Yes," Thami agreed, nodding enthusiastically. "That is a very good suggestion." Finn soaked up the praise. It was the first time he had felt useful since falling off his horse.

They lay down as if resting, and listened attentively to the chatter of the wakening camp. In amongst the coarse joking and practical communication they gleaned three valuable pieces of information. First, an army of nearly five thousand men had already been mustered from Thebes and the surrounding farmland. Second, the pharaoh himself had decided to lead his army into battle. And third, later that day the high priest would conduct sacred rites in the palace temple in Thebes before blessing the pharaoh and his army. In hushed whispers, the group changed their plans to focus instead on the blessing ceremony.

Without warning, a lean, grizzled man entered the tent followed by the sentry who had detained them. He cast an irritated eye over the group on the floor of the tent.

"Idiot!" he barked at the sentry. "Is this what a Nubian attack looks like? Let them go at once."

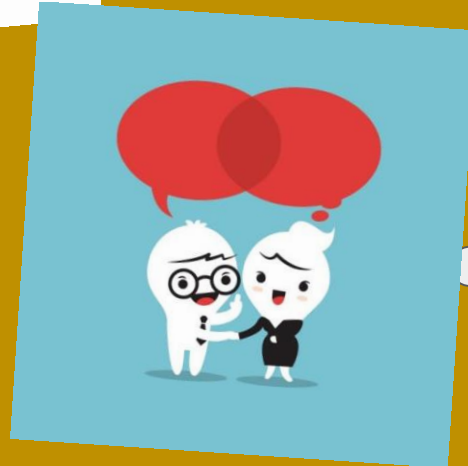


PLOT

Let's discuss what we have read.

Jot down a story map or tell someone what has happened in this chapter.

Themes



Characters

2. Rereading an extract to practise your fluency for a selected part of the chapter.



ECHO!

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Now reread the extract 3 times, each time thinking carefully about how to improve your fluency...

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Think about..



Pacing

Work on your pacing by reading the passage three times.

- Decode unfamiliar words.
- Ask questions to clarify the meaning of the story.
- Read the words correctly.
- Improve your pace each time.

x3

3. Perform an extract from the chapter.



It's time to perform!

Perform the extract to someone or to the class.
Remember to use the strategies we have been thinking about over the last two weeks.