

Unlucky for Some

VIPERS worksheet

Before reading

- This is the title story of the collection. What do you think it might mean?

For the prediction questions, stop at the indicated point for each question.

Vocabulary

1. Explain what is meant by a 'bumper year'.
2. What is a 'calling'? Find another word in this paragraph that is close to this in meaning.
3. Define 'omen'.
4. Explain what a conspiracy is.
5. What does 'rogue' mean, in the context of 'rogue scientists'?
6. Give synonym for the word 'havoc'.
7. Define 'speculate'.
8. Find two verbs in the second paragraph of the newspaper report which mean the same thing as each other.
9. What does 'intercepted' mean?
10. Look at the differences in types of vocabulary between the main story and the newspaper article. How do they differ from each other and why?

Inference

1. Why has the storyteller marked her calendar with every Friday the thirteenth for every year?
2. Reread the two paragraphs that follow the line, '*Mine isn't, though.*' Are Mallory's beliefs about omens and her ability to recognise them sensible?
3. How do you think Mallory feels when she says, '*I just smiled to myself and let it go*'?
4. Why does Mallory think it's down to her to prevent all of the threats she's seen on the internet site?
5. At the end of the story, was Mallory right about her powers?

Prediction

- *Stop at the paragraph that finishes, ' "Just as well all that stuff's rubbish!" '* What do you think is going to happen?

- *Stop at the paragraph that finishes, '... all kinds of threats to the country!'*
Now, what do you think is going to happen?
- Stop before the newspaper article.
What do you think is going to happen to Mallory? Do you have any other predictions?

Explain

1. Why do superheroes and MI6 have a problem proving when they've succeeded?
2. Why does Mallory's mother actually drop the mirror? Whose version of events is right: Mallory's or her mum's?
3. Why did Mallory's dad shout at her after he knocked down the neighbour's wall?
4. Overall, how much of what Mallory says turned out to be reasonable or right, and how much was wrong?

Retrieval

1. What date was the storyteller born?
2. What is her name?
3. What year is MDCLXVI and what happened that year?
4. How many years of bad luck are you supposed to get for smashing a mirror?
5. What happened to Mallory's mum soon after she dropped the mirror?
6. Who lives next door to Mallory's family?
7. Where does Mallory first come across Chelsea?
8. Where are Mallory and Chelsea going to meet and why?
9. Which famous person survived a lightning strike?
10. What did Mallory and Chelsea use for their lightning conductor?
11. What was the man in the grounds of Buckingham Palace hoping to do?

Summarise

- Describe Mallory in three words. Explain your choices with evidence from the text.
- Summarise the story in no more than ten words.