

Improving Your Reading with Cassie the Commentator : 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. How does Catanna's mood change from the beginning to the end of the extract?

2a. Find and copy the group of words from the text which show that Catanna's health changes during this extract.

b. Comment on the change to Catanna's health.

3a. How are the characters of Catanna and the guard different?

b. How are they similar?

4. Why might someone choose to read this story?

5. Who has the author written this text for? Why did they write it?

6. What was the most enjoyable moment of the extract? Explain why you chose this part.

7. How is this extract similar to another story that you have read.

8. Compare Catanna to Katka. Give one similarity and one difference.

Similarity: _____

Difference: _____

Answers

1. How does Catanna's mood change from the beginning to the end of the extract?

Pupils' own responses, such as: At the beginning of the extract, Catanna is brave and determined whereas at the end of the extract she is injured and intimidated.

2a. Find and copy the group of words from the text which show that Catanna's health changes during this extract.

Accept any one of the following: 'her health was critical'; 'her health bar blinking a warning'; 'her health bar climbed above the danger zone'.

b. Comment on the change to Catanna's health.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Catanna's health was fine at the beginning of the extract but she was hit by arrows whilst in the White Desert and her health dived to critical levels.

3a. How are the characters of Catanna and the guard different?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Catanna and the guard are different because the guard is much taller than Catanna. I know this because the text says that he 'loomed down at Catanna'.

b. How are they similar?

Pupils' own responses, such as: They are similar because they are both at the gates of the Silken City during the extract.

4. Why might someone choose to read this story?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Someone may choose to read this story because they enjoy playing computer games and want to read a book which involves them.

Answers

5. Who has the author written this text for? Why did they write it?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The author has written this book for children who enjoy adventure stories because they wanted to entertain their reader.

6. What was the most enjoyable moment of the extract? Explain why you chose this part.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The most enjoyable moment of the extract was when Catanna was trying to defend herself against the flaming arrows in the White Desert. I enjoyed this bit as it gripped my interest and I wanted to know what happened next.

7. How is this extract similar to another story that you have read.

Pupils' own responses, such as: This extract is similar to Robin Hood because arrows are used as weapons in both stories.

8. Compare Catanna to Katka. Give one similarity and one difference.

Similarity: Pupils' own responses, such as: Catanna and Katka think the same thoughts and make the same decisions because Katka is in control of Catanna.

Difference: Pupils' own responses, such as: The two characters differ because Catanna takes risks within her world that Katka could never take in hers.