

# The Shadow in the Snow

Monday morning dawned bright and frosty, the sun glittering on the icicles above the barn door when Jodie went to collect the eggs before breakfast.

She used to hate mornings. The farm was always a hive of activity as soon as the sun crept above the horizon. Her father and the farmhands would be out in the milking sheds, the humming and hissing of machines carrying right across the yard to Jodie's bedroom. Her mother would be downstairs, clattering and banging about as she made breakfast for everyone and sooner or later, the baby would start crying at the top of her lungs for attention.

Even before Emma came along, Jodie used to spend the first ten minutes in bed with the covers over her head, trying to shut out the noise. Caitlin, on the other hand, would jump straight out of bed and disappear into the barn to gather the eggs. Jodie used to think it was just another sign that Caitlin was more mature and responsible than her messy little sister.

Now that she'd taken over the job of egg collection, she understood why Caitlin had been so eager to come here. The barn was an oasis of calm amid the waves of motion sweeping across the farm. Collecting the eggs wasn't a chore: it was a welcome escape.

Not that the chickens were silent – they clucked and pecked their way across the barn with as much bustle and self-importance as if they were laying eggs for royalty instead of Jodie's breakfast. But there was something satisfying about hunting for eggs in the straw, setting them carefully in the baskets and counting the totals for the record book. Once she was sure she'd got them all, Jodie would sit for a moment on the seed bin and watch the sun rise in the sky through the high window.

This morning, its rays were stronger, making the frost patterns on the glass sparkle and glinting off the cobwebs the spiders had strung across the corners of the barn. The sun wasn't warm enough to melt the thick layer of snow that coated the ground outside, but it lit up the barn's straw, hens and wood in shades of yellow, orange and honey brown.

Jodie couldn't help smiling as the golden rays surrounded her, wrapping her in a glowing blanket of light. For a long moment, she felt at peace, as though the bright sunrise had chased away the shadows from her mind.

Hopeful thoughts filled her head instead, ways to make things better suggesting themselves one after the other.

'I could ask Aunt Sandra to make a cake with me,' she thought, looking down at the eggs in her basket. 'We always had fun baking together. It would make up for her having to sleep on the couch.'



More images flashed before her: pictures of the cake she could bake for Lin to apologise for ignoring her. She could bring it over one day with a birthday present. She could buy a new keyring for Lin – one that wouldn't remind Jodie of horses and riding but one that might be a replacement lucky charm to help Lin win the competition.



'I could buy one in the shape of a snowman,' Jodie thought, grinning now as she thought of the giant figure the girls had built together in the back field the previous winter. 'It could remind her that she's a champion at building snow sculptures. Maybe that would give her confidence for her competitions.'



# Questions

1. Summarise why Jodie used to hate mornings.

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2. Who is older, Jodie or Caitlin?

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3. Underline one word in the quotation below that means the same as 'keen'.

*Now that she'd taken over the job of egg collection, she understood why Caitlin had been so eager to come here.*

4. 'The barn was an oasis of calm amid the waves of motion sweeping across the farm.'

What do you think the author means by 'an oasis of calm'?

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5. Where does Jodie sit to watch the sun rise?

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6. What colours are included in the paragraph beginning 'This morning, its rays were stronger...'?

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7. Explain why Jodie feels at peace in the barn.

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8. Draw **four** lines to match the person to what Jodie says about them.

Caitlin	•
Aunt Sandra	•
Lin	•
Emma	•

champion at building snow sculptures
crying at the top of her lungs
always had fun baking together
mature and responsible

9. What season do you think this extract takes place in? Give reasons for your answer, using evidence from the text.

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# Answers

1. Summarise why Jodie used to hate mornings.

**It was very noisy – the farm machines would be humming and hissing, her mother would be clattering and banging about as she made breakfast and the baby would be crying.**

2. Who is older, Jodie or Caitlin?

**Caitlin**

3. Underline one word in the quotation below that means the same as 'keen'.

*Now that she'd taken over the job of egg collection, she understood why Caitlin had been so eager to come here.*

4. 'The barn was an oasis of calm amid the waves of motion sweeping across the farm.'

What do you think the author means by 'an oasis of calm'?

**An oasis is something that provides refuge, relief or a pleasant contrast. Therefore, the barn being an 'oasis of calm' means that, compared to the noisy farm and house, it is a place of peace and quiet for Jodie.**

5. Where does Jodie sit to watch the sun rise?

**the seed bin**

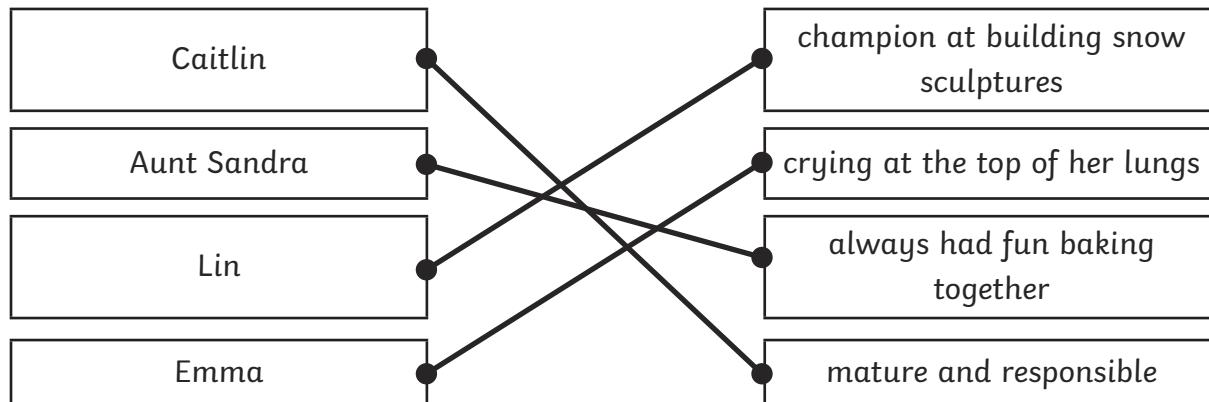
6. What colours are included in the paragraph beginning 'This morning, its rays were stronger...'?

**yellow, orange and honey brown**

7. Explain why Jodie feels at peace in the barn.

**Accept references to the following: The barn was an oasis of calm amid the waves of motion sweeping across the farm; the golden rays surrounded her, wrapping her in a glowing blanket of light; the bright sunrise had chased away the shadows from her mind.**

8. Draw **four** lines to match the person to what Jodie says about them.



9. What season do you think this extract takes place in? Give reasons for your answer, using evidence from the text.

**It is winter:**

- The morning is described as 'bright and frosty' with icicles above the barn door.
- There were 'frost patterns on the glass', sparkling and glinting off the cobwebs.
- 'The sun wasn't warm enough to melt the thick layer of snow that coated the ground outside'.