

# THE SHORT KNIFE

By

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I WALK BACK down the rabbit path alone. The stars and pale moon show the way. And there is bonfire light from the village. I don't think about what's burning. My feet are grey on the rocks. I might be the only person left in the whole world. It might belong to me. Foolish thoughts. Childish thoughts. The hills are full of hunters, even if I can't see them in the dark. My walk quickens. The village at the bottom is nearing empty. Still, as I get closer to our barn, and hear moans, I wish my sister would suffer with less noise. She is too loud. I want to gag her mouth and push the sounds back down where they come from. Safer that way. Safe is all that matters. As I pull open the flapping leather door, I stop and look back at the hill. The path is bone white in the black before dawn. I see no people, no movement. I stand on the threshold. It isn't too late to turn back. To follow the path, if that's what I choose. 'Close that, Mai!' Sara snaps. 'Where have you been? Get in here and help.'

## TASKS

TASK 1: Read the extract. Try and visualise the story as you read, thinking about the description given by the author.

TASK 2: Draw the picture that came in to your head as you read. Use phrases/sentences from the story to label your picture, like we do in shared reading.

TASK 3: Imagine you are a teacher. Create 5 questions related to the text that you could ask your pupils.