

Extract from Arthur: The Seeing Stone

by Kevin Crossley-Holland

Something very strange has happened.

I woke up at green dawn and I felt rinsed. I felt fresh. Yesterday's mud and blood and angry words and stony silences had all dissolved. Somehow, I felt ready. I felt as keen as the edge of my jack-knife when I have just ground it.

It was quite warm in the hall but it's cool in my writing-room, so I wrapped myself in my house-cloak and put on my rabbitskin cap, and then I crept upstairs. The fourth and fifth stairs always creak, and so do the ninth and tenth, so I haul myself up and over them.

Over my wind-eye a spider has woven its web, and it was trembling and shining. It was silver unless it was gold.

Extract from Arthur: The Seeing Stone

by Kevin Crossley-Holland



I reached into the dusty gap between the blocks of stone, and pulled out the saffron bundle. I've done that each day since Merlin gave it to me.

First, I warmed my obsidian between the palms of my hands. Then I scratched one of the white spots on the lumpen side, but I couldn't dig it out. The stone is very hard. I can't mark it at all.

Then I turned the stone over and stared into its dark shine. Its deep eye that never blinks. I stared into it and, after a while, I had a strange feeling that it was staring back at me.

At first, all I could see was what I've seen before. Me! My ears and my blob nose. My rabbitskin cap. But then my stone began to glow.

Focus words



dissolved

dawn

woven

rinsed

obsidian

malevolent

lumpen

Definitions



dissolved when a feeling or problem becomes weaker and disappears; when something becomes mixed in a liquid and disappears

woven the past tense of 'to weave': when a fabric or structure is made by crossing threads over and under each other

dawn when something develops over time; dawn is the time of day when the sun rises

Definitions



rinsed

washed in clean water to remove dirt or soap

obsidian

a dark glass-like rock made from lava; a black, gleaming object

malevolent

describing something or someone who deliberately wants to do harm or evil

lumpen

describes a large, heavy, lumpy object

Link to the story



rinsed	Arthur has a fight the day before this extract begins. He wakes up the morning after feeling washed clean.
dissolved	All the bad feelings for him have dissolved and feel invisible to him.
haul myself up	Arthur is creeping upstairs and doesn't want anyone to hear him, so he carefully hauls himself up over the creaky stairs.
woven	The spider had woven a gold and silver web in the window.
obsidian	Arthur gets out a dark rock called obsidian. He warms it up: he is going to look into it.
dawn	In the stone, Arthur sees an image develop: it is of early morning.
lumpen	The outside of the obsidian is not smooth and shiny – it is lumpy and heavy. It is strange that something so ugly on the outside hides such an amazing interior.
malevolent	When Arthur says the obsidian seems to stare back at him, it makes me think that the stone may want to do him harm. It may be malevolent.



stony silences

dark shine

haul myself up

green dawn

as keen as the edge
on my jack-knife