

# The Girl Who Speaks Bear

Prologue and Yanka The Bear



heron



swallow



bullfinch

# Quick Start

- What is Yanka's foster mother called?
- Why do people call her 'Yanka the Bear'?
- How old is Yanka?
- What is the name of Yanka's best friend?
- What does Mamochka sell at the festival (Page 18)?
- What tells Yanka that she belongs in the forest?

# Vocabulary Check

- The Great Frozen River will thaw, and the Snow Forest will lose its blanket of white.
- I try slouching and bending my knees but I still don't fit into the group.
- Sasha loves to glide along the ice, graceful as a swallow in flight.
- The herbs are Mamochka's livelihood. She harvests them, dries them, grinds them up and makes all kinds of remedies.
- I whistle, low and mournful.
- I heard his words as birdsong, but they made sense in my mind.

# Individual Thinking

Look at the prologue.

Find a group of words that shows that the bear looked after Yanka.

# Partnered Talk

‘Mamochka looked in the cave for clues about who I was or who my parents might be, but an old female bear was hibernating inside. Not wanting to disturb her, Mamochka crept away’

Discuss these:

Why do you think Mamochka assumed the bear was not Yanka’s mother?

Why do you believe Mamochka did not disturb the bear?

Why do you think Mamochka took Yanka?

# Solo Work

Consider a response to this question:

**‘Do you believe that Mamochka made the right decision when she took Yanka from the cave?’**

You have one minute thinking time and three minutes to write your response.

# Partnered Discussion

What are the advantages of Yanka's size?

What are the disadvantages?

Do you believe it's more of an advantage or a disadvantage?

Do you and your partner agree? Can you convince them?

# Individual Thinking

Yanka does not feel like she belongs in the village. Why is this? Do you think the villagers are to blame?

## Partnered Discussion

‘The forest has moods and at this moment it feels restless’.

Can you explain what this means? Come up with a shared definition. What might be the characteristics of a restless forest?

# Individual Thinking

Mamochka makes and sells herbal remedies.

What might this tell you about her as a person?  
Can you find any other things she does or things  
you are told about her that support your  
judgement?

## Solo Work - Five Minutes

The bullfinch tells Yanka to come back to the forest. It says that she belongs there.

If you were Yanka, would you go back to the forest? Explain your answer and make sure to refer to the text to support your decision.