

Night of the Perigee Moon

Author: Juliet Jacka

Synopsis

Tilly Angelica is a normal girl but she knows that when she turns 13 this will change. As a member of the magical Angelica family she will inherit a power or a talent on her 13th birthday. Tilly has no control over what this power will be and she is terrified! Tradition dictates that the whole Angelica family must gather at Ariel Manor for the birthday celebrations. Long running feuds between the family members from the North and South are reignited and soon the whole house is in chaos. Among all the disorder Tilly discovers that her creepy cousin Prosper is plotting to take over ownership of Ariel Manor. His sinister plan involves harnessing the energy of the Perigee moon and bewitching the Angelica family into signing over the manor. Tilly is determined that Prosper's plan will fail and she enlists the help of her brother, cousins, her best friend Olivia and her cat Kitsalano. But will she be able to outsmart Prosper when he is using the power of the Perigee moon?

Text Type

Night of the Perigee Moon by Juliet Jacka is the winner of the 2013 Tom Fitzgibbon Award for a previously unpublished author.

Night of the Perigee Moon is a fast-paced magical adventure about Tilly Angelica, a girl on the brink of becoming a teenager and discovering her magical talent. This is not something Tilly is looking forward to because she enjoys a normal, quiet life. However, the changeover is inevitable. On the morning of her thirteenth birthday Tilly discovers that she can now communicate with animals. As far as talents go, this one is probably not too bad, especially since she can now talk to her cat Kit.

Night of the Perigee Moon is a highly engaging text with short, titled chapters. Action-packed enough to keep even the most reluctant reader engaged, the story will appeal to boys and girls who enjoy the fantasy genre.

Sharing the Novel

The novel has been divided up as follows: Chapter 1 and 2 (pp. 11–17), Chapters 3–16 (pp. 18–120) and Chapters 17–21 (pp. 121–201).

During the shared sessions encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding of words and ideas presented in the novel. Have them describe the setting of the story and identify elements that help categorise the novel as a fantasy. Encourage students to make predictions about what will happen next and identify important themes and ideas.

Introducing the Novel

Have students study the front cover of the novel and read the blurb.

- Who is the main character in the story?
- What kind of novel is this? How do you know? What do you expect from a novel of this genre?
- What is a Perigee moon?
- What talent do you think Tilly might inherit?
- Who is Prosper?

Teacher reads Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 11–17) aloud. Students follow along in their books.

Comprehension Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 11–17)

- Why is Tilly hiding in the turret?
- Why does Tilly think the Angelicas are ‘weirdos’? Why does she hope that she takes after her father’s side of the family?
- Where is Tilly’s favourite place in the manor?
- Why do Tilly’s parents think she is lucky to be part of the Angelica dynasty? How does Tilly feel about her family?
- Why does Tilly’s father think that it is amazing Phoebe married him?
- What is Phoebe’s talent?
- What does Tilly enjoy about her ‘normal’ life?
- How long does a changeover party unusually last for?
- Who is Fergal?

Discussion

- What do we find out about Tilly and her family from these chapters?
- If you could choose a talent what would it be and why?
- What do you think might happen at a changeover party?
- What do you think will happen in the story next?

Students read Chapters 3–16 (pp. 18–120) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 3–16 (pp. 18–120)

- Why is Tilly envious of Olivia’s family?
- What does Olivia like about Tilly’s family?
- Why do you think Tilly is reluctant for Olivia to find out that she might inherit a magical talent?
- Who are the Aunty P’s and what are their special talents?
- Why does Tilly lie to her mother about wanting a talent?
- What is La Maison Dieu?
- Who is coming to Tilly’s party?
- Why do the Northern and Southern Angelicas have to sleep on opposite sides of the manor?
- Who is Prosper? What is his talent?
- Why does Fergal think there is such interest in Tilly’s changeover?
- What does Tilly plan to do if she discovers she has a talent?
- Who are Ninette and Pippi? How old are they? Why does Fergal approve of them?
- Why is a performance by Alfonso and Clytie something to look forward to?
- Why is Phedre’s entrance into the dining room so dramatic?
- What happens to the rose that Phedre gives Tilly?
- Why is Tilly apprehensive about her talent?
- What is Tilly’s magical ability? How does she feel about this?
- Who does Kit warn Tilly about?
- What does Kit mean when he says that Prosper has a ‘honeyed tongue’?
- Why does Kit suggest that Tilly keep her talent a secret? What does he want her help with?
- Why is Tilly anxious about Olivia finding out about her talent?
- Why is Tilly the ‘talk of the town’?
- Who is Bob? Why does he think that humans need a ‘right telling off’?
- Who is Mr Woofington? What message does he want Tilly to pass on to Olivia?
- Why is Tilly dreading the class trip?
- Why is Tilly annoyed with Kit?

- Why is Kit proud of Tilly?
- How does Kit know that Prosper is up to something? What does he suggest that Tilly do to find out more information? What excuse does Tilly use for going upstairs?
- What does Tilly find hidden in Prosper's book? What is the significance of the perigee moon? What document does Tilly find that alarms her?
- Why does Tilly suspect that her mother may be under a spell?
- What does Tilly find out about the Perigee moon from the encyclopaedia? When is the next one occurring?
- What does Kit think that Prosper wants the moon energy for?
- Why does Tilly grab the large leather book?
- Which animal greets Tilly at the entrance to the monkey enclosures? What does he go off to tell everyone? How do the other animals react when they see Tilly?
- Why does Tilly punch Silas? What punishment does Mrs Pinching give her? Why doesn't Tilly wait at the ticket shop?
- Who are Simeon and Yvette? Why is Tilly so pleased to see them?
- What advice does Yvette give Tilly about her talent?
- How does Phoebe react when she learns that Tilly punched someone?
- Why does Tilly decide to tell Olivia about her talent? How does Olivia react to this news? How does Tilly feel after she confides in her friend?
- Who does Olivia think should be involved in the Council of War? When do they agree to meet?

Discussion

- Describe Prosper. What sort of effect does he have on people and animals? Why do you think this is?
- What would be the advantages and disadvantages of being able to talk to animals?
- In what ways is Olivia a good friend to Tilly? What qualities does a good friend possess?
- If you were in Tilly's position how would you deal with Prosper?
- Make a prediction about what will happen next in the story.

Students read Chapters 17–21 (pp. 121–201) independently before the next shared session.

Comprehension Chapters 17–21 (pp. 121–201)

- How does Fergal react to the news about Tilly's talent?
- Who gate-crashes the council of war meeting?
- What does Tilly find out about enchanters from the book? What are some methods to avoid enchantment?
- Why will Kit be helpful when it comes to carrying out the plan? What is Fergal's role? How will the others help?
- Describe the order of proceedings for Tilly's changeover.
- Why do Tilly and Olivia envy each other's lives?
- What amazing presents does Tilly receive for her birthday?
- Why does a fight erupt at the party? Why does Tilly note down some of the choicest insults? How does Freddy distract them from the fight?
- Why does Tilly ask her father what Aunt Ethel would say about Fergal riding his scooter into her statue?
- Why does Tilly think that Prosper is priming up the guests for tomorrow's spell?
- What phrase do the guests keep repeating when speaking about Prosper?
- What do Suzette and Phoebe provide the guests to cure their hangovers?
- How does Kit interrupt Prosper when he is trying to enchant Tilly? What does Tilly say to Prosper to convince him that his spell worked?
- Why won't Fergal tell Tilly what the distraction is? Why is Tilly apprehensive about Fergal's involvement in the plan?
- Where does Kit hide? Why does he think it is best to remain out of sight?
- Why is it so important that Tilly's plan works? Why is she worried that Fergal and the twins may not be taking the job seriously?
- Describe the hats that Olivia has organised. Why is Tilly so happy with hers?
- What does Prosper give Tilly for her birthday? Why does Tilly think his gift seems ominous?
- Why does Tilly think the twins went overboard with the soup?
- How does Tilly know that Prosper is about to begin his enchantment? What thoughts run through her head as he begins to speak? What sound distracts her from Prosper's words?
- Why does Prosper believe that he deserves the manor?

- Where does Kit escape from? How does he break the enchantment on Tilly? How does Tilly get Fergal's attention?
- What is Fergal's distraction? How effective is it?
- How does Prosper gain his audience's attention again? Why do you think the spell doesn't work on Tilly anymore? What is the third phase of Tilly's plan? How does Tilly know that it isn't working? What does she decide to do instead?
- Why is Prosper unable to move out of the moonlight?
- How do Tilly and the others break the enchantment?
- How does Phoebe react when she wakes up from her trance?
- What does Simeon mean when he says that Prosper 'always had a chip on his shoulder'?
- Who rescues the room from chaos? What does she say that captures Phoebe's attention?
- Why do Petula and Phedre argue?
- Why can't Phoebe serve the food that she cooked? Who comes up with a solution?
- How does Prosper escape?
- How do Tilly's family react to the news of her talent? How does Tilly feel about finally telling the truth?
- Why is Tilly so grateful to Fergal and Kit?
- How did Kit end up in the sideboard?
- Why is Phoebe relieved to find that the twins sabotaged her food?
- Why isn't the Angelica family looking forward to Fergal's changeover?

Discussion

- Identify the climax of the story. Why is this event important?
- How do you know that Tilly gains self-acceptance and learns to appreciate her family at the end of the story?
- What lessons do you think Tilly has learnt from her experiences?

Activities

Writing – Rewrite a Chapter in the novel from Prosper's point of view.

Writing – Write an epilogue for the novel dated one year after the original story takes place.

Plot – Choose 15 important events from the story and create a flow diagram that shows the order in which they occur.

Theme – Identify an important theme in the novel. Write several paragraphs explaining how the theme is developed by the author. Back up your ideas with evidence and quotes from the text.

Character – Describe Tilly’s character. What qualities and attributes does she possess? How does she develop and change as the story progresses?

Soundtrack – Imagine that *Night of the Perigee Moon* is being made into a movie. Your job is to choose 5 songs for the soundtrack. List the songs that you choose along with where they will be played in the film and why they are appropriate.

Writing – Write a letter to a friend explaining what you liked about the novel and why you would recommend them to read it.

Static Image – Design a poster advertising *Night of the Perigee Moon* that could be displayed in your school library.

Writing – Write an alternative ending for the novel.

Play – Choose an exciting event that occurs in the story and write a script for it. Include a list of characters and stage directions. Practise your play and present it to the class.

Notes written by Vicki Ladd