

A SPY ON MALIA

Chapter 2

BEFORE READING

Prepare to read

At the end of the first chapter, Anya was trapped. Can you remember how that happened? Where was Anya's brother?

Use the expert tips:

- **Predict** What do you know about Sami? Look back at pages 39 and 41 to find out about Sami's character. What do you think Sami might do?
- **Make connections - search for clues** What do you think the Zilean man is planning to do?

Challenge word

grimaced

Find the word on page 49. Can you work out what it means?

Chapter 2

I struggled, trying to to free my ankles from the silver thread, but it was impossible.

"I'd give up if I were you," the man said. "It's Zilean thread. You can't untie it or snap it."

"Let me go!" I cried angrily. "We helped you. Why are you doing this?"



Just then, I saw Sami in the distance coming back towards the river, his pockets crammed with berries and fruit. The Zilean man hadn't noticed him. *Don't come close, I thought. He'll trap you, too!*

Sometimes, Sami and I understand each other's thoughts without having to speak out loud – but not this time. Sami came bounding up to us and, in a split second, the man shot out another thread and Sami was trapped too.



Sami was pale with shock and I could see the fear in his eyes. Yet he took a few deep breaths and began talking to the man in a calm voice.

"You might as well let us go," Sami began. "You won't be able to walk on that leg for a while ... and Anya will need to find more leaves to change your dressing."

The man tried to move his leg and grimaced in pain. "I can't let you go," he said, almost sadly. "Eat your berries. It's going to be a long day."



I struggled against the thread again. What were the Zileans planning to do? I was restless and angry but all through that long day, Sami stayed calm.

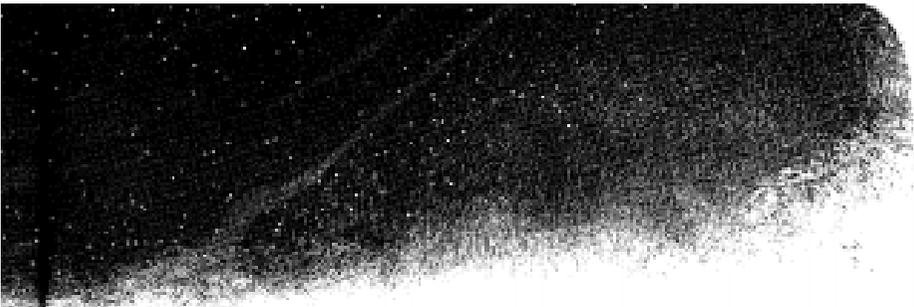
"How did you hurt your leg?" Sami asked, after a while.

"Our plan went wrong," the man replied. "The shuttle was supposed to fly low enough to drop me safely but I fell when I landed."

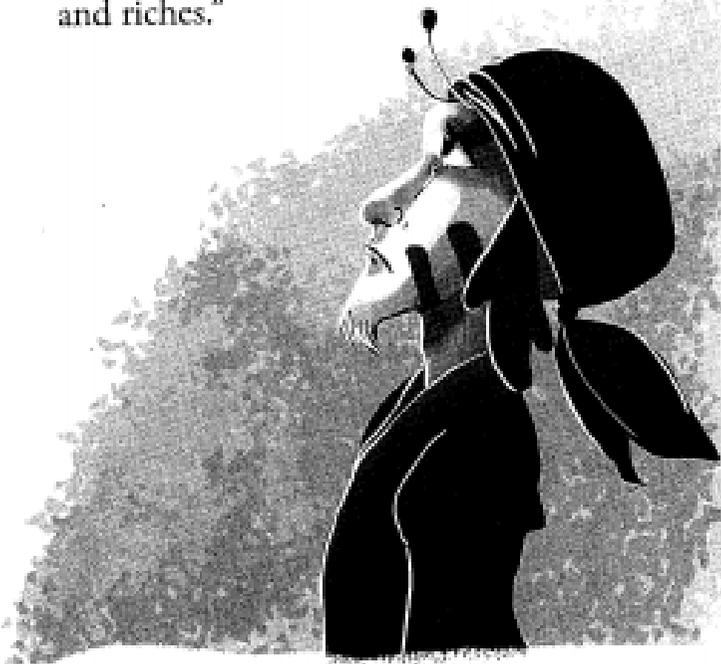
"What were you planning to do?" Sami asked. The man shook his head. "It's secret," he said.

As the evening shadows lengthened, we noticed the man staring up into the sky towards Planet Zilea.

"Are you thinking about home?" Sami asked.



The man sighed deeply, then began to speak. "Things are very bad on Zileca," he said. "There is little food and no work. No one visits us – everyone comes to Malia. We thought that if we spoiled your planet, people would visit us instead, bringing us food and riches."



"That hasn't worked, has it?" said Sami. "So what's your plan now?"

"Exactly what I'm doing," the man replied. "I'm to find children and hold them prisoner until you Malians agree to help us."

"You don't need to do this!" I cried. "Our people will help Zileca anyway. All you need to do is ask!"

Just then, we heard a babble of voices approaching the river. I knew it was a search party, coming to find us. I could hear our mum and dad among the crowd. The Zilecan man looked startled.



"Trust us," said Sami. "We Malians will help you."

The man hesitated.

"It's OK," I said softly.

The Zilean man nodded and pressed the button on his ring. The silver thread unwound from our ankles.

I sighed with relief just as Mum came rushing towards us.

"We've been looking for you everywhere!" she said.



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Sami stood up. "We need to help the Zileans," he said. "It's a long story. Let me explain ..."

The search party fell silent, waiting for Sami to speak further. I stood up, too, and smiled. I knew our people would forgive the Zileans and help when they heard their story. Everything was going to be all right – for all of us.



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