



## Hoot, the Silent Hunter of the Dark

*When the sun goes down and most animals sleep, one quiet bird opens its big eyes and begins to work.*

It is late at night. The town is quiet, and most people are in bed. But high in an old tree, one animal is wide awake. His name is Hoot, and he is an owl. Owls do not sleep at night like we do. The dark is their time. It is when they hunt.

Hoot sits very still on his branch. His round face turns slowly from left to right. He is looking down at the ground and the fields below him. To Hoot, the night is not really dark. His big yellow eyes can see very well in low light, much better than our eyes can. This is one reason why he is such a good hunter<sup>1</sup> after the sun goes down.

But eyes are not the only tool that Hoot has. He also has amazing ears. He cannot see them because they are hidden under his soft feathers, but they are very strong. Hoot can hear a tiny mouse moving in the wild<sup>2</sup> grass, far away and in the dark. He turns his head to listen, first this way, then that way. When he knows exactly where the little animal is, he is ready.

Then, suddenly<sup>3</sup>, Hoot opens his big wings and drops down from the tree. He flies straight to the mouse. And here is the most surprising thing of all: he makes almost no sound.

Other birds are loud when they fly, but not Hoot. His feathers are very special and soft, so the air moves quietly around them. The mouse does not hear him coming. This is why the owl is a silent hunter.

People have always thought that the owl is a very clever<sup>4</sup> bird. In many old stories, the owl is wise and knows many secrets. This idea probably comes from his calm face and his big, thinking eyes. In truth, Hoot is not thinking about big questions. He is only thinking about food and about staying safe from danger<sup>5</sup>.

Owls live in many parts of the world. Some live in cold places with snow, and some live in hot places. Many owls, like Hoot, live in the forest<sup>6</sup>, where there are lots of trees and lots of small animals to eat. They are an important part of nature, because they eat mice and other small animals that farmers do not want in their fields.

When the morning comes, Hoot's work is finished. The sky becomes light, and the other birds begin to sing. Hoot flies back to his tree, closes his big eyes, and goes to sleep. He will wait for the dark again. The night is his home.

### Listen to This Lesson

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### Shadowing Mode

Perfect your pronunciation with synchronized audio and word-by-word highlighting.

## VOCABULARY — KEY WORDS FROM THE STORY

#	WORD	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
1	<b>hunter</b> <i>noun</i>	an animal or person that catches other animals for food	"The lion is a strong hunter and catches other animals for its dinner."
2	<b>wild</b> <i>adjective</i>	living or growing in nature, not kept or controlled by people	"We saw many wild animals in the park, like deer and rabbits."
3	<b>suddenly</b> <i>adverb</i>	quickly and when you do not expect it	"We were walking in the rain when suddenly the sun came out."
4	<b>clever</b> <i>adjective</i>	able to learn and understand things quickly and easily	"My sister is very clever and always gets good marks at school."
5	<b>danger</b> <i>noun</i>	the chance that something bad or harmful may happen to you	"The sign says the water is deep, so there is danger for small children."
6	<b>forest</b> <i>noun</i>	a large area of land with many trees growing close together	"We took a long walk through the forest and heard many birds."

## COMPREHENSION — ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

### QUESTION 1 — MULTIPLE CHOICE

Why is the owl a good hunter at night?

- A-) Because he sleeps all day and is not tired
- B-) Because his eyes can see well in low light and his ears are very strong
- C-) Because he is bigger than all the other birds
- D-) Because he is louder than the other animals

### QUESTION 2 — MULTIPLE CHOICE

What is special about the way Hoot flies?

- A-) He flies very high in the sky
- B-) He flies faster than any other bird
- C-) He flies almost without any sound
- D-) He flies only when there is snow

### QUESTION 3 — SHORT ANSWER

The story says the owl is an important part of nature. Using your own words, explain how the owl helps farmers.

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## COMPREHENSION ANSWERS

My score today \_\_\_ / 3

**Q1** Because his eyes can see well in low light and his ears are very strong ✓ Correct (B)

The text says 'His big yellow eyes can see very well in low light' and later 'He also has amazing ears'. These two tools together help him find food in the dark, so this is the correct answer.

**Q2** He flies almost without any sound ✓ Correct (C)

The story says 'he makes almost no sound' and explains that 'His feathers are very special and soft'. This is why the mouse 'does not hear him coming', so a silent flight is the special thing.

**Q3** **Answer:** The owl helps farmers because it eats mice and other small animals. The text says farmers do not want these small animals in their fields. When the owl catches and eats them at night, there are fewer of them to eat or damage the farmers' plants. In this way, the owl does useful work for the farmers without them asking.

**Explanation:** A good answer must use the idea from the last-but-one paragraph that owls 'eat mice and other small animals that farmers do not want in their fields'. Look for a clear cause and effect: owls eat the small animals, so this helps the farmers. The student should use their own words and not only copy the sentence from the text.

## VOCABULARY — TRANSLATION & NOTES

### hunter

The verb is 'to hunt' and the activity is 'hunting'. We often say 'a good hunter' or 'a skilful hunter'.

### wild

Common phrases are 'wild animals', 'wild flowers', and 'in the wild', which means in nature.

### suddenly

'Suddenly' often starts a sentence to show a surprise. Do not confuse it with 'slowly', which means the opposite.

### clever

We say 'clever at' something, for example 'clever at maths'. 'Clever' is more common in British English; 'smart' is common in American English.

### danger

Useful phrases are 'in danger' and 'out of danger'. The adjective is 'dangerous', as in 'a dangerous road'.

### forest

We usually say 'in the forest'. A 'forest' is bigger than a 'wood'. Do not confuse it with 'desert', which has no trees.

### YOUR TURN — SENTENCE BUILDING

Mastery comes from practice. Write original sentences using today's target vocabulary.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

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