

MARK RANDLE

The Forest of Shapes

An Interactive Adventure in Sacred Geometry

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First edition

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You have what it takes... and what it
takes is you.

—Gryphon

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Welcome

Welcome to *An Interactive Adventure in Sacred Geometry*! This is more than just a book—it's an adventure into the hidden secrets and timeless beauty of geometric patterns. Through step-by-step instructions and creative tasks, you'll uncover the profound connections between shapes, symbols, and the world around us.

To join this journey, you'll need:

- **A blank sketchbook** – your canvas for creation
- **A ruler** – to guide your hand
- **A compass** – to draw perfect circles
- **A pencil** – to bring your visions to life
- **A pencil sharpener** – to keep your ideas sharp
- **A rubber** – to refine and perfect

With these tools in hand, you'll explore the ancient wisdom of sacred geometry, one design at a time. If you ever struggle with a word or phrase—and don't know what it means—you can find a **glossary** at the back of the book to guide you.

Let the journey begin!

1

Lyra



The city stretched on endlessly, a patchwork of tilted buildings and uneven streets. It was a place where nothing seemed to fit quite right—angles clashed, walls leaned, and windows gaped like missing teeth in a crooked smile. The roads below buzzed with people in a hurry, each moving as if the world might collapse if they stopped. Sometimes, it felt like it did.

From her window, Lyra watched the chaos unfold. A cart rattled by, its wheels wobbling as if deciding whether to obey gravity. Beyond it, a vendor's crooked stall collapsed under its own weight, scattering fruit across the cracked pavement. No one stopped to help; they just stepped over the mess and carried on.

Lyra sighed and pulled her sketchbook closer. With a soft pencil, she traced the beginnings of a circle. She tried to see beauty in the city, but nothing quite came together. There wasn't any... harmony, I guess you'd say. No matter how hard she tried to put pencil to paper and draw her vision of a better way, the lines wavered, the edges didn't quite meet, and symmetry was nowhere to be found. She could never make her visions real.

Her pencil hovered over the page as she stared at the unfinished circle. The image in her mind wasn't just a fantasy—it felt like a memory she couldn't quite place. Somewhere, somehow, she was certain such harmony existed. It wasn't just a dream; it was a promise the world had made and forgotten to keep.

Lyra closed her eyes, letting the noise of the city fade into the background. In her mind, the world was whole. The city and nature were one. Gardens unfurled in perfect spirals, each flower petal a perfect echo of the one that came before. Lakes shimmered with rippling patterns, and the city rose like an intricate puzzle, each piece fitting flawlessly into the next. The city didn't seem to start anywhere because nature never ended. The integration was beautiful in itself.

She could almost feel the warmth of this imagined world—a place where harmony wasn't just possible; it was inevitable. In this world, everything was bound as one, every form had intent, and every soul had a calling.

But then she opened her eyes, and the dream evaporated. The

sketchbook on her lap looked pitiful by comparison. Her circle was uneven, her lines wobbly. She felt the frustration. She felt it deeply.

“I’ll get it right one day,” she whispered.

Bang! The door to her room burst open without warning. “One day? You’ve been saying that for years,” came a sharp voice.

Lyra groaned. “Hello, Eryx,” she said without looking up.

Her brother strode in, his movements precise and deliberate. He counted out loud the exact number of steps to reach her desk—twelve, no more, no less. He peered over her shoulder at the sketchbook, his brow furrowing. “What’s this supposed to be?” he asked, pointing to her imperfect circle. “An oval convention?”

Lyra turned in her chair, glaring at him. “What do you want, Eryx?”

Eryx didn’t answer immediately. Instead, he began rearranging her desk, lining up pencils and erasers with mechanical precision. “Honestly, Lyra, it’s a wonder you get anything done in this chaos.”

Chaos, she thought. The world seemed to be run by the likes of Eryx—perfect know-it-alls. But if they were as brilliant as they claimed, why wasn’t the world just as perfect?

“It’s my desk,” Lyra snapped, snatching a pencil from his hand. “I like it the way it is.”

He ignored her protest, picking up the sketchbook to examine her work more closely. “If you’re trying to fix the world with circles, you might want to start by drawing them properly.”

Lyra crossed her arms, biting back a retort. She knew better than to argue with Eryx—his logical superiority was his favourite weapon, and he was an argumentative so-and-so, too.

“Do you need something, or are you just here to critique my

life?” she asked.

Eryx smirked. “Can’t I do both?”

Before Lyra could reply, the doorbell rang. “I’ll get it!” she said, leaping to her feet—any excuse to get away from this dingbat.

“I’ll save your sketchbook from more crimes against geometry while you’re gone,” Eryx called after her.

Lyra ignored him, bounding down the stairs two at a time. *Big head*, she thought. Whoever was at the door couldn’t possibly be worse company than her brother.

As she reached the door, a strange feeling settled over her—an unusual but familiar flicker of hope she couldn’t explain. It was as though the universe itself had paused, holding its breath. She didn’t know how or why, but for the first time in a long while, she felt it: the promise of something new, something extraordinary.

* * *

Task

Lyra’s city is far from perfect. Just like her sketches, things don’t always line up as they should. What follows are two images of her crooked city—but something’s changed. There are five differences between the two images. Can you spot them all?

Look closely... In a world of tilting buildings and missing pieces, can you find what’s out of place?



SOLUTION



Did you notice the subtle shifts? The missing details? If you found all five, congratulations—you've got an eye for detail! If not, don't worry. Even the best of us miss a thing or two in a world this crooked.

Orin



“Oh, it’s just you,” Lyra said as she opened the door, finding Orin standing on the stoop with his satchel slung neatly over one shoulder.

Rude, Orin thought, arching a single eyebrow. “Nice to see you too, Lyra,” he replied dryly.

Orin was one of Lyra’s oldest friends, a constant presence in

her life since they were young. They loved each other dearly, but frank expressions were the norm.

“Sorry, Orin,” Lyra said. “I was just interacting with my darling brother.”

“I thought you might want to see something interesting,” Orin said, patting his satchel—the faint clink of tools inside catching Lyra’s attention.

“Do come in, good sir,” Lyra said, stepping aside.

“Don’t mind if I do.” Orin strode past her, his blond hair perfectly groomed, his white shirt crisp and freshly ironed. Everything about him screamed precision—not in an annoying way like Eryx, though. Orin’s orderliness was fussy but endearing.

“Let’s see it, then,” Lyra said, following him into the kitchen. She gestured to the table where one of her many sketchbooks lay open. “I’ve been working on some more patterns, as usual.”

Orin set his satchel down and carefully flipped through the pages. He looked at Lyra and nodded approvingly. “You’ve definitely got talent... and you’re getting better, too. They just need a little... refinement.”

Lyra chuckled. “Let me guess. You brought a ruler?”

“Of course.” Orin beamed, unbuckling his satchel. Inside were a variety of scholarly items, including the mystery object, a compass, a piece of string, and, naturally, a ruler. “Never leave home without it.”

“Well, if it isn’t the great Orin,” Eryx interrupted, leaning against the kitchen doorway. “What’s today’s exciting discovery? A perfectly square haircut?”

Rude, Orin thought to himself again. Why is everyone so rude today? He wouldn’t be so rude if I jabbed him in the eye with my ruler.

Lyra shot him a pointed look, the kind that said, *Be nice, Orin*. She knew exactly what he was thinking.

“Nice to see you too, Eryx,” Orin said after a restrained pause.

Eryx sauntered into the room, crossing his arms as he surveyed the table.

“What are you two doing, then? Fixing the world with wonky lines and doodles?”

“Something like that,” Orin replied. “Want to help?”

Eryx smirked. “I’ll pass. I’ve got better things to do.” He reached out to shuffle Lyra’s pencils, but she swatted his hand away.

“Don’t you have somewhere else to be?” she asked, exasperated.

“Okay, okay,” Eryx said, retreating. “Misshapen circles aren’t my thing anyway.”

Lyra sighed as he disappeared back down the hallway. “Sorry about him,” she muttered, shaking her head.

Orin smiled, brushing off the interruption. “No worries. Now, where was I?” He continued rummaging through his satchel with deliberate flair, glancing at Lyra with a sparkle of mystery in his eyes.

He thinks he’s a magician, Lyra thought to herself. What is it this time?

Orin pulled out a nondescript notebook, followed by a ruler, and finally a pencil. He placed each item methodically on the table, ensuring they were perfectly parallel and orderly, as if the alignment itself was part of the presentation.

Lyra crossed her arms, unimpressed. “A pencil? Groundbreaking, Orin. Groundbreaking.”

“Patience,” Orin said, clearly enjoying himself. He paused, drawing out the moment, his hand hovering in the satchel.

“Prepare to be... amazed,” he declared, his voice brimming with anticipation. With a theatrical flourish, he finally revealed his *pièce de résistance*: a gleaming, brand-new protractor.

Lyra blinked, staring blankly at it. Even Boris, the family dog lounging in the corner, rolled his eyes and huffed.

“Behold!” Orin held the protractor aloft like a trophy, grinning and looking extraordinarily pleased with himself. “Well? What do you think?”

Lyra stifled a laugh, shaking her head. “Wow, Orin. Really pushing the boundaries there.”

“Angles are exciting!” he replied.

“Well,” Lyra said with a smirk, “maybe we can measure some angles later. Make a day of it.”

Orin’s grin faded slightly as his gaze fell back on her sketchbook. His brow furrowed as the perfectionist in him took over. “Honestly, Lyra, you’ll never get these designs right without accuracy. Geometry is about precision, not just imagination. It might start in the mind, but what’s the point if that’s where it stays?”

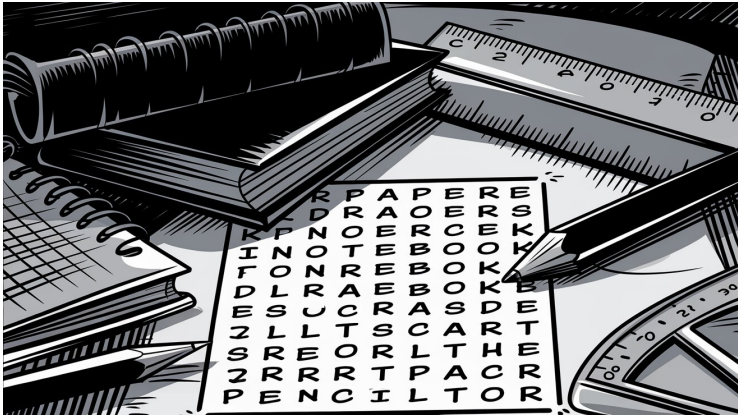
Lyra knew he was right and was just about to admit it when the doorbell rang again. “Wait here, Orin. I’ll be right back.”

* * *

Task

Orin’s satchel is filled with essential items—far more than just a protractor. But even with his meticulous organization, things can still get lost in the shuffle! Can you find six crucial items hidden in the word search below? Look closely... precision is

key!



Hint

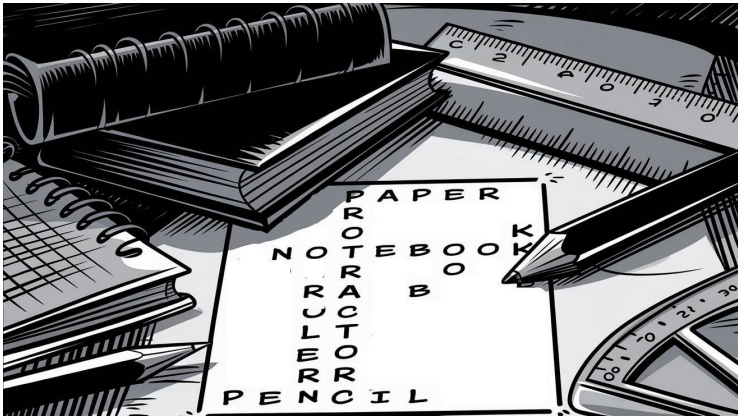
You're looking for the following six items:

- Paper
- Protractor
- Notebook
- Book
- Ruler
- Pencil

ORIN

SOLUTION

Did you discover them all? Here are the six crucial items nestled in Orin's satchel. Could you have packed it any better?



3

Zia



“Want to see something cool?” Zia blurted out as Lyra opened the door, skipping over any sort of greeting.

“Oh, here we go again,” Lyra muttered under her breath. Knowing Zia, it was far more likely to be something disgusting than boring. “It had better not be a dead rat again,” she said aloud. *Please don’t let it be a dead thing*, she thought to herself.

Zia was a relatively new addition to their circle, having moved into the neighbourhood only a few months before. She brought her own brand of chaos, but in a way that was also oddly endearing. Even as the newcomer, Zia had fit right in, and the three of them were now practically inseparable.

Without further ado, Zia bustled past Lyra, down the hallway, and into the kitchen, barely stopping to take off her shoes. “Nice hair, Orin,” she said with a cheeky wink.

Orin’s hand moved towards his ruler. Lyra gave him *the look* again—*Don’t even think about it.*

“Thanks, Zia,” Orin replied dryly as he lowered his hand.

Before Zia could say another word, Eryx appeared in the doorway yet again.

“Well, if it isn’t the new gal,” Eryx said with a smirk. “Made any friends yet?”

Zia raised an eyebrow, unimpressed. “If only I had your personality, Eryx.”

Lyra stifled a laugh. Orin couldn’t quite manage the same as he sputtered out a mouthful of apple he’d commandeered while Lyra was at the door.

The cogs were visibly turning in Eryx’s head as he tried to think of a comeback. “Whatever,” he muttered as he retreated back down the hallway in defeat.

Zia plopped into a chair and slung her overstuffed backpack onto the table. A faint rattling sound came from within as it landed with a dull thud. As always, it was stuffed with the most random of objects, bulging at odd angles.

Lyra leaned towards Orin with a mischievous smile. “Orin, Zia has something exciting to show us.”

“Oh,” Orin responded, leaning forward expectantly, “what is it, then? Some ancient treasure? A secret map? A time-

travelling compass?”

Zia’s enthusiasm wavered as she scratched the back of her head, suddenly looking awkward. *Oh no*, she thought. *I think I might’ve built this up a bit too much.*

“Oh, uh... it’s not that big of a deal, really,” she mumbled, eyes darting to her bag as she began backpedalling. “Definitely nothing amazing. I mean... it’s not, like, better than a dead rat or anything.”

Orin raised an eyebrow. “Encouraging.”

Ignoring him, Zia leaned over her bag and began rifling through it. Papers crumpled, something metallic clattered, and Lyra thought she heard the faint squeak of something rubbery.

“Let’s see... nope, not that.” She pulled out a half-eaten sandwich, sniffed it, and shrugged before tossing it onto the table.

“Ew, Zia,” Lyra groaned.

“What? It’s just cheese.”

“Green cheese, Zia? Really?”

Orin looked on in disgust. “How do you even live like this?”

Zia dove back into her bag, emerging moments later with an odd sock, a set of dice, and what looked like a little log.

“I won’t ask,” said Lyra, as Zia glanced up from her bag briefly.

I’ve definitely built this up too much, Zia thought as she continued rummaging. *It’s nowhere near as cool as that rusty spork I found last week. Spoon and fork at the same time. I mean... come on, man.*

Her hand paused for a moment as she finally found what she was looking for. *Oh, gosh. Am I about to bomb on stage here?* She winced at the thought, then shook her head, determined to make the best of it—whatever “it” turned out to be.

I know! I’ll say “ta-da” when I pull it out. That’ll get ‘em. Taking

a deep breath, she psyched herself up. *Okay, ready... 1, 2, 3...*

“Ta-da!” Zia exclaimed, holding up her discovery with questionable enthusiasm.

Silence.

“Guys?”

More silence. The only sounds were the faint ticking of the clock on the wall and the occasional whoosh of cars passing outside.

“Guys... are you going to say something?” she asked, glancing back and forth between Lyra and Orin as she placed it on the kitchen table.

Yet more silence.

“Oh, come on. It’s not that bad!” Zia protested, her voice rising slightly.

Still silence. Even Boris, lounging in the corner, stared at her with his mouth slightly open. Zia’s shoulders slumped in capitulation. “Tough crowd,” she muttered.

The mystery object was a small, stone tile—pale, whitish, and intricate. It was shaped like a hexagon and engraved with a perfect circle. Their silence was due to its splendour and mystery rather than disappointment.

Lyra finally broke her silent shock and leaned in. “Wh... where did you get that?”

“Found it in a place,” Zia said casually.

Orin frowned. “What kind of place?”

“The kind where you find cool stuff,” Zia replied, slightly relieved they now seemed interested. “What matters is that it’s here, and it’s... awesome?” Zia puffed out her chest as if she’d never doubted it for a second.

Orin’s gaze flicked to Lyra. “It looks like it fits...” he said.

“Fits? Fits what?” Zia asked, looking between them in

confusion.

Lyra and Orin didn't have to say anything else to each other. They knew. They both knew.

"Let's go," Lyra said as she snatched the tile from the table and headed for the door.

* * *

Task

Zia's bag is packed with oddities, gadgets, and... well, things we won't ask about. That's why it took her so long to find what she was looking for. Could you do it faster? Hidden somewhere in the mess is the hexagonal tile engraved with a perfect circle. Can you spot it among the clutter?



SOLUTION

Did you find it? There it is—in the bottom left corner, nestled among the clutter! It might have been tricky to spot amidst Zia's chaotic collection of odds and ends, but patience and hard work always pay off. Great work!



Playdate



The car door creaked as Lyra climbed into the back seat, her small legs swinging awkwardly over the edge. She glanced nervously at the boy sitting beside her, his blond hair neatly combed, his hands folded in his lap as though he were already a mini-adult.

“This is Lyra,” Orin’s mum said warmly, glancing at her son

in the rearview mirror. “Are you going to say hello?”

Orin looked up, his expression reserved. “Hello,” he said flatly, though a flicker of curiosity danced in his dark eyes.

Lyra shifted uncomfortably, brushing a strand of her tangled hair from her face. “Hi.”

And just like that, the introductions were over. Orin’s mum sighed softly, hoping for a bit more enthusiasm, then started the car.

Lyra had been left in Orin’s mum’s care for the day, a favour for Lyra’s parents, who had an emergency to attend to. She was quiet but observant, taking in the unfamiliar surroundings of the car interior and the boy sitting beside her. Orin, for his part, didn’t quite know what to make of this sudden addition to his day. But one thing was clear—this was going to be an interesting afternoon.

* * *

The trip was a short one, barely long enough for Lyra to decide whether Orin was boring or mysterious. She didn’t quite have time to make up her mind before the car pulled into a gravel car park, a sign reading “Emerald Forest Nature Reserve” standing crookedly at the entrance.

“We’re here to do some tree rubbings,” Orin’s mum explained cheerfully, stepping out of the car. She handed each child a stack of paper and a bundle of crayons. “Go on, find the biggest, most interesting tree you can!”

Orin walked ahead, his strides purposeful even at his young age. Lyra lagged behind, looking around at the towering trees. The air smelled damp and earthy, and sunlight trickled through the leaves, painting the ground in shifting patches of gold.

“You’re supposed to pick a tree,” Orin called back, his tone already edging on instructive.

“I’m looking,” Lyra replied, sticking out her tongue when he turned away.

After wandering a bit further, her eyes landed on a particularly odd-looking tree. Its trunk twisted dramatically to one side before straightening out, as though it had changed its mind halfway through growing.

“I like this big wonky one,” Lyra declared, grinning as she placed her hand on its gnarled bark.

Orin glanced over, raising an eyebrow. “Wonky’s an understatement.”

“Exactly why it’s perfect,” Lyra said with a satisfied nod.

The big, crooked tree stood out starkly among its straight-limbed neighbours, its uniqueness hinting at some kind of greater significance.

Lyra positioned her paper and began rubbing furiously, the crayon moving erratically over the bark contours beneath the paper.

“You’re meant to press evenly,” Orin said, glancing over at her. “That’s how you get a proper imprint.”

Lyra rolled her eyes. “It’s fine.”

Still, she slowed down, adjusting her pressure as Orin moved to a tree with intricate bark patterns.

For a while, the two worked in relative silence, their papers slowly filling with impressions. Satisfied with her work, Lyra stood back and took a look at the tree in its entirety. Its twisted branches seemed to stretch deliberately, almost as if pointing the way forward.

Curious, Lyra tilted her head and squinted along the direction the branches seemed to gesture. “Huh,” she murmured, taking

a tentative step towards the path they suggested.

“Lyra! What are you doing now?” Orin called, watching her wander off.

“Following the tree,” she called back.

The twisting path beneath her feet led her through a narrow gap in the foliage. Moments later, she stepped into a circular clearing bathed in soft, dappled sunlight. The air felt still here, almost expectant, as though this place had been waiting for her. More importantly, that’s where she found it.

Lyra looked back towards the crooked tree and smiled.

“Orin! Orin!” she called, her voice tinged with excitement.

He glanced up from his papers, frowning slightly. “What?”

“Over here!” Lyra urged, waving him over.

Orin hesitated, clutching his neatly stacked papers, but her tone piqued his curiosity. With a resigned sigh, he reluctantly followed.

What Lyra had found was unlike anything he’d seen before—a large white stone, about waist-high, perfectly smooth and symmetrical. It stood in stark contrast to the rugged stones scattered throughout the forest.

“What is it?” Lyra asked, running her fingers along its surface.

“I don’t know,” Orin admitted, stepping closer. His hand hovered over the stone, almost afraid to touch it.

The stone’s smoothness was uncanny, as though it had been polished by hand, not nature. At its centre was an indentation—a perfect hexagon etched into the surface, its edges sharp and precise, with a circle nestled within it.

“It’s... so perfect,” Lyra murmured, her voice filled with awe.

Orin reached into his bundle of paper and grabbed a blank sheet. “Let’s make a rubbing,” he said, his excitement finally breaking through his usual composure.

In turns, they pressed their paper against the hexagonal indentation, carefully rubbing over the edges to capture its shape.

When they finished, they stood back, comparing their work. “Amazing,” Orin said, mesmerised as he studied the clean lines of the curious shape. Lyra nodded, seemingly speechless—yet her unusual silence spoke volumes.

They left the forest that day with their rubbings in hand, but only this one mattered. For both of them, that single discovery sparked a fascination with shapes, symmetry, and patterns that would stay with them for years to come.

As the car rumbled back towards town, Lyra glanced over at Orin. “Do you think we’ll ever find out what it is?”

Orin shrugged, but his fingers clutched his paper a little tighter. “Maybe... Someday.”

* * *

Task

After their tree rubbing adventure, Orin and Lyra returned home, their minds buzzing with inspiration. The hexagonal pattern they discovered had sparked their curiosity even further, and they were eager to find more shapes hidden in the world around them. Can you help them out and find some in your environment?

1. **Find a geometric shape:** Look around for interesting natural or man-made shapes. Geometric patterns might include spirals, triangles, squares, and circles.

2. **Prepare your materials:** Grab a piece of paper and your chosen rubbing tool (charcoal, pencil, crayon, etc.).
3. **Start rubbing:** Place your paper over the object and gently rub the side of your tool to capture the shape and texture.
4. **Focus on detail:** Observe the patterns and textures closely. How do the shapes interact? What hidden designs can you uncover?
5. **Share your findings:** After collecting a few rubbings, compare them with your friends and discover the patterns you've found!

Can you use separate rubbings together to make a greater creation? Experiment by overlapping or arranging your rubbings to form a new pattern, image, or design. Let your creativity flow!



Back Again



Zia stood alone in the kitchen as the front door clicked shut behind her friends. She blinked, staring at the empty space where they had just been.

“What on earth was that all about?” she muttered to herself. “They’ll be back in a minute, I bet. They wouldn’t just go off and leave me.”

She waited, glancing expectantly towards the door.

“Any minute now,” Zia said, glancing at her watch.

The silence stretched as her confidence began to waver.

“They’re not coming back, are they?” she whispered, her voice tinged with disbelief. “They’ve left me, haven’t they?”

“Yep,” came a smug voice from the doorway.

Zia spun around to see Eryx leaning casually against the frame, arms crossed and a smirk plastered across his face.

“Just saw them from upstairs,” Eryx continued. “Running down the road. Looked very determined. Guess they didn’t need you.”

Zia’s face dropped as she turned back to her bag, hurriedly stuffing her belongings back inside. “Never showed any appreciation for my spork,” she grumbled under her breath. She grabbed the rest of her things and carried what she could under her arms.

“Better hurry,” Eryx called after her as she bolted for the door, stumbling slightly on the way out. “Don’t want to miss out on the dynamic duo’s latest hijinks.”

Zia didn’t reply, too focussed on catching up as she tore out of the house and down the road.

Eryx paused. His smirk slowly faded, replaced by a flicker of curiosity. *Wait a second*, he thought. *What are they all excited and in such a rush about?*

* * *

“I hope it’s still there,” said Lyra as they hurried down the street.

“Why wouldn’t it be?” Orin asked, trying to keep up without breaking into a run.

“I dunno,” Lyra replied. “What if they built something over

it? Or someone moved it?"

"Moved it?" Orin repeated with a small laugh. "Good luck with that. It's massive."

"And what if it doesn't fit?" she asked out loud, more to herself than anyone else.

"It'll fit," Orin said firmly. "It's too perfect not to."

Lyra's concern lingered, but before she could reply, a voice rang out from across the road.

"Ooh, 'ello! Fancy seeing you two here!"

They turned to see Mrs Bottom, an elderly woman in a green cardigan and matching skirt, shuffling towards them with a warm smile.

"How are you both?" she asked brightly, not waiting for a response. "I was just watching a programme about Mars. Fascinating, it was. Though I have to say, ever so red it is. Not really my colour. I prefer a nice moss green, I do."

Lyra and Orin exchanged a quick glance.

Mrs Bottom, the narrator in Lyra's head chimed in. A beloved babysitter from their childhood—always cheerful, always kind. They loved her dearly, but now wasn't the best time.

Mrs Bottom carried on. "If I were to visit Mars, I'd have to get a whole new frock. Red and green must never be seen, you know."

Orin managed a polite smile. "I think it's a while before you need to worry about that, Mrs Bottom."

Lyra stepped forward, her tone apologetic. "I'm so sorry, Mrs Bottom, but we're in a bit of a rush."

"Oh, don't let me stop you, dear," Mrs Bottom said with a wave of her hand. "Off you pop. Say hello to your mum for me, won't you?"

"Will do, Mrs Bottom. Nice to see you," Lyra said, already

stepping backward.

“Ta-ra!” Mrs Bottom called, turning to shuffle down the road. She muttered to herself as she walked away, her voice just loud enough to catch snippets. “Young ones. So full of energy. That’s the spirit. That’s the spirit, indeed.”

* * *

“Wait up!”

Lyra and Orin turned just in time to see Zia hurtling towards them, her backpack bouncing wildly and random items tumbling out as she ran. Just before she could catch up with them, distraction caught up with her as she skidded to a halt. She stooped to grab something, then straightened, holding it aloft by the tail.

“Whoa—cool! A dead rat!”

“Zia!” Lyra exclaimed, half-groaning, half-laughing.

“What?” she said defensively, tossing it back to the ground as she jogged up to them. “Why didn’t you wait for me? I’d never have caught up with you if it weren’t for Mrs B.”

“Sorry, Zia,” Orin said. “We were just... excited.”

“Excited? About what?” Zia looked between them, her eyes narrowing suspiciously.

Lyra sighed, already turning to walk ahead. “Come on, we’ll explain on the way.”

“You’d better,” Zia grumbled, stuffing half a chocolate bar into her mouth. She broke the other half in two and gave Lyra and Orin a quarter each. Zia was kind like that—even if she did get the biggest piece.

* * *

The three of them left behind the uneven, bustling streets of the city. Gradually, the towering buildings gave way to smaller, scattered structures, their height and numbers dwindling as the landscape shifted. Shortly after, they found themselves enveloped by the quiet, tangled embrace of the forest. Lyra felt herself relax as the air grew cooler and fresher, her sketchbook in hand.

They slowed to a walk, the city fading away as the sounds of rustling leaves and chirping birds took over. The air felt cleaner here, as if the forest was breathing with them. The dirt path meandered through the trees, sunlight casting shifting patterns on the ground.

“Okay, spill it now. What’s going on?” Zia demanded.

Lyra shot Orin a quick look, silently asking where to begin. “The thing,” she said simply. “We think we know where it goes.”

Zia’s earlier grumpiness evaporated, replaced by wide-eyed curiosity. “The weird hexagon thingy?”

“Correct,” Orin replied, his tone very matter-of-fact.

“And?” Zia pressed, nearly bouncing with excitement.

“And we’re going to find out whether it does,” Lyra said, her voice firm with determination as she quickened her pace.

“And where exactly does it go?” Zia asked, panting slightly as she tried to keep up.

Lyra didn’t answer. Her attention was already elsewhere. Without explanation, she sprinted ahead before stopping suddenly. Placing a hand on the rough bark of the wonky tree, she gazed beyond it and shouted back, “Just over there.”

* * *

Task

Lyra and Orin found their way back to Emerald Forest with surprising ease, following the winding forest paths and maze-like trails. It wasn't as daunting as it had seemed, but would you be able to do the same? The paths are tricky, and the dead ends many—can you navigate from the city to Emerald Forest, just as they did?



SOLUTION

BACK AGAIN

Did you find your way? Navigating the maze of forest paths can be tricky, but if you stayed sharp and avoided the dead ends, you should have arrived safely. Well done for making it through! If you didn't quite get it, try again—you'll get there!



The Glow



“Who’s going to try it?” Zia asked, shifting her weight impatiently as she eyed the stone. True to form, Zia had appointed herself leader despite her involvement being counted in minutes.

“You should do it, Lyra,” Orin said steadily. “You found this place.”

The clearing was just as they remembered—bathed in dappled sunlight, still and expectant. At its centre stood the smooth, waist-high, whitish stone, its symmetry striking against the rugged forest around it.

Lyra took a deep breath and leaned in towards the stone. Clutching the hexagonal tile tightly, she paused for a moment before saying, “Okay, let’s do this.”

Carefully, Lyra placed the tile into the matching indentation on the stone. It slid in effortlessly, fitting with precise perfection—tight, seamless, as if it had always belonged there.

“Well, it certainly fits,” she said, stepping back. “Why, or for what... I have no idea.”

“Me neither,” Orin admitted.

Zia glanced between them. “So... what now then?”

Lyra and Orin exchanged uncertain looks. Whatever they were expecting, they weren’t expecting nothing. No grand reveal, no sudden transformation. It was an anticlimax, and neither of them knew quite what to make of it.

Lyra sighed and reached out to take the tile back—but something inside made her hesitate. Just as she withdrew her hand, nothing became something.

Faintly at first, the tile began to glow—a soft, pulsing green. The light deepened, growing steadily brighter, casting the surroundings in an otherworldly glow. Shadows danced and twisted, and the forest around them seemed to lean in.

“Whoa,” Zia whispered, shielding her eyes slightly as the glow spread from the tile to the entire stone, its surface glistening like liquid emerald. It seemed both natural and technological at the same time—magical yet intentional.

Just as its splendour seemed to resonate with ultimate brilliance, its magnificence reaching an unsurpassable peak, some-

thing else happened: it stopped. Like someone had pulled the plug, the glowing light drained away, leaving the stone as lifeless and dull as it began.

Orin and Zia exchanged glances once again.

“What on earth was that?” Zia asked, her voice tinged with a hint of unease.

Orin shrugged, his expression blank. “No idea,” he muttered before turning to Lyra. “Lyra—what was that?”

Fixated by something else, Lyra didn’t respond. Orin turned to her, but she was standing a few steps back, her gaze fixed not on the stone or the tile—but on the sky above.

“Lyra?” Orin called softly.

Again, she didn’t respond right away, her eyes lost in an apparently empty sky. It wasn’t until Zia nudged her shoulder gently that she blinked, snapping out of her trance.

“Lyra?” Orin repeated, his tone now firmer and more insistent.

Lyra shook her head slightly, as though clearing her thoughts. “Sorry... I just—there was something... up there,” she murmured, pointing skyward.

* * *

While Orin and Zia were intently focussed on the tile, Lyra’s eye had been caught by something else—a beam of green light in the sky, projecting a radiating emblem in the distance. The emblem was intricate and mesmerising—a pattern of overlapping circles, pulsing softly as if alive. Whatever it was, Lyra couldn’t take her eyes off it.

“Didn’t you see it?” she asked, her voice trembling as she pointed to the sky again.

“See what?” Zia asked.

“The emblem,” Lyra said. “In the sky. Over there, in the distance.”

Zia and Orin both shook their heads. “I was looking at the stone,” Orin said, pointing at it.

“Me too,” Zia added.

“What?” Lyra’s mind raced. “How could you possibly have not seen the massive green swirly thing beamed into the sky?”

“Well, sorry,” Zia said defensively, crossing her arms. “I was a little busy staring at the magical green stone thingy right in front of me... You know, as one does.”

Thud! Zia kicked the stone.

“Zia!” Lyra snapped. “What are you doing?”

“Thought it might need a little kickstart,” Zia shrugged.

“Have you tried switching it on and off?” Orin chimed in. “Or rather... taking the tile out and putting it back in?”

Lyra gave him a look but decided to humour the idea. She carefully removed the tile and then slid it back into place. Nothing. Still dead.

The trio stood in silence, the lifeless stone before them, its once otherworldly glow slowly becoming a distant memory.

“Here, let me try,” Orin said as he took the tile from Lyra. He turned it over carefully, scrutinising every detail, before giving it a rub and a blow for good measure.

Lyra raised an eyebrow. *He really does think he’s a magician.* Orin tried the tile again with unwavering focus.

Nothing.

“It must’ve run out of energy,” Orin concluded, his voice thick with frustration as he set the tile back down.

“It’s... dead,” Lyra conceded, her voice trailing off. Then, as though struck by a sudden thought, she perked up, her eyes

alight with urgency.

“I need to show you what I saw,” she said, quickly pulling her sketchbook from her satchel. “Orin, you hold on to the tile, and I’ll draw it. Maybe if we figure out what it was...”

Orin popped the tile in his pocket as he stood back to give her some room.

Lyra sat beside the stone, her sketchbook balanced carefully on her knees. She flipped to a blank page, and with a determined posture, her pencil flew across the page in a flurry of lines and shapes. The emblem she had glimpsed in the sky was blurry in her mind, but she could feel its importance. Every curve and line felt like it carried weight, like it mattered.

“Almost there,” she muttered under her breath as she neared the final touches. She glanced up briefly at Orin and Zia, who were watching her with curiosity. “Okay, are you ready?”

Zia leaned forward. “Show us what you’ve got.”

Task

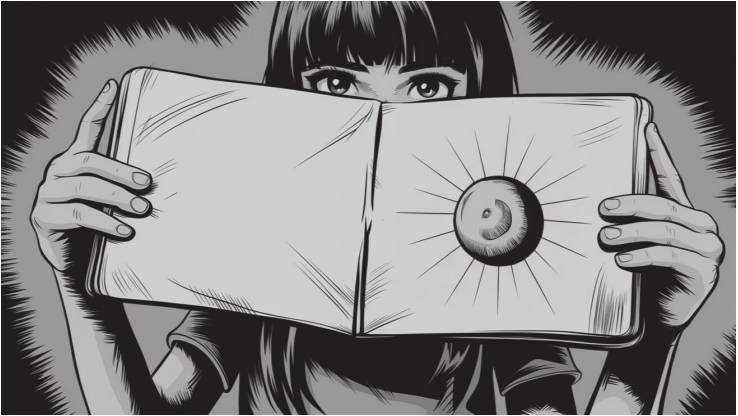
Lyra caught a glimpse of something extraordinary—a glowing emblem, intricate and alive with meaning. But it vanished before she could truly take it in, leaving only a blurry memory. Now it’s your turn to help.

Your task is to draw what you think the emblem might have been. Use your imagination and creativity! Was it made up of circles, patterns, or something entirely different?

Later in the story, when the emblem’s true form is revealed, you can compare your drawing with it. How close will your version be to the real thing?

Take your time, and remember: the beauty of the emblem lies in its harmony and balance. Good luck!

A New Friend



“Ooo, ooo! I know!” the voice exclaimed. “It’s an omelette! Are we guessing? We’re guessing, aren’t we? Tomato omelette, come on? Onion?”

The trio froze, stunned into silence. Lyra’s sketchbook faltered in her hands as her eyes darted around, searching for the source of the voice.

Above them, perched on one of the tree branches, sat a magnificent creature. A lion's body, sleek and golden, flowed seamlessly into wings that shimmered with streaks of silver and gold. Its sharp, golden eyes sparkled with mockery as it stared at them, clearly enjoying their shock.

"Well?" the creature said, feigning impatience.

Lyra's mouth opened, then closed, then opened again, words failing her.

"Who... who are you?" Orin finally managed, his voice breaking the silence.

"Ah," the creature said, straightening with an air of theatrical importance. "I am Aegion, the Wise Gryphon. Guardian of this forest, representative of the Great Spirit, and an unfortunate witness to your drawing of an omelette." He gestured graciously at Lyra's sketchbook. "But you can just call me... Gryphon."

The trio exchanged bewildered glances, each at a loss for words, thoughts, or actions. In mere moments, the situation had shifted from odd to strange, and now teetered on the edge of outright surreal.

"It's not an omelette!" Lyra protested, finally snapping out of her daze.

"I know," Gryphon said, nodding solemnly. "I was teasing. I'm such a tease. I really shouldn't, but I just can't help myself."

As the tension began to ease somewhat, Gryphon's acerbic nature shifted from cutting to comical. Lyra, now growing accustomed to conversing with a mystical winged lion, regained her composure and replied firmly, "It's the emblem in the sky."

"Ooo. Right. Fail," Gryphon replied smoothly, his eyes twinkling.

"It's not that bad!" Lyra protested half-heartedly, clutching the sketchbook defensively.

The emblem was already blurry in her mind, fading more with each passing moment. She wanted to deny Gryphon's accusation, but deep down, she knew he was right. "I'm doing my best, okay?"

"And that," Gryphon said, spreading his wings dramatically, "is the good news."

"The good news, dear Lyra," he said with a dramatic flourish, "is that you have what it takes. And what it takes... is you. The Great Spirit isn't expecting you to get it right the first time."

Lyra's expression shifted back to hope, her mind now racing with questions. *The emblem, the glow, the stone—what did it all mean? And who, exactly, was the Great Spirit?* She paused, then narrowed her eyes. "How do you know my name?"

Gryphon tilted his head, a glimmer of amusement in his eyes. "Ah, questions, questions. Always digging for answers. You remind me of myself, Lyra—except for my devilishly high IQ. Not everyone is gifted like Gryphon," he quipped, suddenly talking about himself in the third person.

Lyra bit her lip to hide a smile while Zia snickered openly.

"Well? Lyra pressed. What—"

"All in good time," Gryphon interrupted, cutting off the rest of her unspoken questions with a knowing flick of his tail. "But first," he continued, "you'll need to prove yourselves worthy. And at the very least... the very, very least, you'll need to draw a perfect circle. Like this..."

Gryphon raised one massive claw, tracing a perfect circle in the dirt. Effortlessly.

Impressed but not deterred, Orin stepped forward, pulling a pencil and compass from his satchel. "I can do that."

Gryphon chuckled, a deep, resonant sound. "A big one. I like them big. Your little compass won't cut it here, I'm afraid."

“We can’t do it without a compass,” Orin said, shaking his head. “That’s impossible.”

Gryphon, now lounging on a nearby rock with his wings casually draped over the edges, let out a low, rumbling chuckle. “Nothing is impossible, Orin,” he said. “Nature provides everything you could ever need—and more.”

* * *

Task

How would *you* approach this task? A perfect circle with no compass—how can it be done? Take a moment to think. What tools and materials are available in the middle of the forest? What are the trio carrying with them?

Write down your answer or even try drawing one yourself before turning the page. See if your solution matches theirs!

A NEW FRIEND

SOLUTION

After some time to think, Orin stepped forward confidently, holding up a piece of string. “Piece of cake,” he declared. “Zia, grab a stake and plant it firmly into the ground. That will be the **centre**.”

Zia, already anticipating Orin’s plan, nodded and found a sturdy stake. Lyra crouched beside them, picking up a sharp stick from the ground. “I’ll use this to mark the **circumference**, the total distance around the edge of a circle,” she said, dragging the stick lightly through the gravel as a demonstration.

Working together, they brought the plan to life. Orin tied one end of the string to the stake, anchoring it securely, while Lyra held the other end taut with the sharp stick. This formed the **radius**—the distance from the **centre** to the **circumference**. Zia ensured the stake stayed steady as Lyra carefully walked in a circle around the centre, the string maintaining constant tension to guide her.

The result was a flawless circle etched into the ground—a simple but effective solution born from teamwork and ingenuity.

* * *

“Again!” Zia cheered, clearly enjoying herself as they set up for another attempt.

Lyra, caught up in the excitement, adjusted the string to a shorter length. “Let’s make a smaller one this time,” she said, already pacing around the stake with precision.

“Bigger next!” Zia declared as Lyra made the string even longer.

Before long, the trio was caught in a whirlwind of creativity,

making circles of all sizes. Orin meticulously ensured each one was perfect, Lyra made it a game to stretch the limits of the string, and Zia couldn't help but laugh as the shapes multiplied around them.

"Again!" Zia shouted enthusiastically.

"Guys, I think I'm getting a little dizzy," Lyra said, stumbling slightly as she completed yet another rotation.

The clearing was soon filled with a collection of perfect circles. The trio stood back, admiring their work with breathless pride.

"How do you like these, Mr Gryphon?" Lyra asked as she gestured towards their handiwork.



Gryphon raised an eyebrow, clearly impressed. "I like them. I like them a lot."

Before anyone could bask in the compliment, Lyra squinted at Orin. "Orin, what's happening to your shorts?"

Orin froze. "What?"

"Are your shorts glowing?" Zia asked quizzically, leaning in

for a closer look.

Orin glanced down and yelped. “Er... yes. Yes, they are.”

The faint green light was unmistakable, seeping through the fabric of his pocket. The tile was glowing.

The Way



“What did you do to it, Orin?” Lyra demanded, stepping closer.

“I didn’t do anything!” Orin protested, raising his hands defensively. “It just... happened!”

Orin and Lyra looked over at Zia. “Don’t look at me,” she said defensively. “Not guilty.”

With no one else present, all three turned to Gryphon, eyes

narrowing.

“Did you do this?” Orin asked suspiciously.

“Me?” Gryphon blinked innocently, inspecting his claws as if noticing them for the first time. “Nah-ah.”

The trio exchanged a look—none of them were buying it.

“You know though, don’t you?” Lyra pressed, arms crossed.

Gryphon feigned deafness, his gaze fixed on some distant point as though the conversation simply wasn’t happening. Every so often, his eyes flicked back to the trio, checking if they had given up on their line of questioning. When it became clear his strategy had failed, he let out an exaggerated sigh, his wings drooping in defeat. “Oh, all right. Yes, I know.” He flicked an imaginary speck of dust from his wing and added, “I’ve never been one for keeping secrets.”

“So, would you like to explain why my shorts are glowing, Mr Gryphon?” Orin asked, his voice edged with concern.

“It’s on a need-to-know basis,” Gryphon replied.

“They’re my shorts!” Orin shot back.

“Good point,” Gryphon admitted with a slight nod. “But still—need-to-know.”

Lyra stepped forward, frustration bubbling over. “Actually, I think you need to come clean—and not just about Orin’s shorts. What on earth is going on? We have wonky trees, glowing tiles, polished stones in the middle of the forest, magical emblems in the sky... and then you turn up.” She gestured pointedly at him. “A mythical creature who talks... with suspiciously perfect eyebrows.”

“Why, thank you,” Gryphon said, smoothing his already pristine feathers. He straightened up, his tone shifting to something slightly more serious. “Listen, I could tell you everything, but you wouldn’t understand. It’s complicated, multi-dimensional,

and quite honestly—I'd need a whiteboard.”

The trio stared at him, unimpressed.

“All right, all right,” he conceded, raising a claw. “How about the TL;DR¹ version?”

“Okay,” Lyra said, arms still folded. “Let’s start with who you really are.”

Gryphon glanced sideways, a playful gleam in his eyes. “Ah, straight to the point—I like that. Who am I? Well, as I said, I’m Gryphon, the wise and esteemed guardian.”

“You don’t seem that wise,” Zia muttered, raising an eyebrow.

“How very dare you?” Gryphon gasped, placing a dramatic oversized paw over his heart.

“And guardian of what, exactly?” Orin pressed.

“Patience, young one,” Gryphon replied. “Let’s just say, for now, that I’m here to guide you through something very important—something the Great Spirit has deemed... well, vital.”

Lyra looked puzzled. “The Great Spirit? And what exactly is so vital?”

Gryphon gave a knowing smile. “That, my dear Lyra, is the journey you’re about to embark on.”

Orin, ever the pragmatist, pulled the tile from his pocket. “Right. But what does any of this have to do with my glowing shorts?”

Gryphon flicked his tail. “Ah, that, Orin, is a Workstone.”

“A Workstone?” Orin repeated.

“Yes, a Workstone,” Gryphon confirmed. “It glows because it’s capturing the circle work the three of you have been doing. You work, the Workstone captures it. Simple.”

¹ Too Long; Didn’t Read

“Captures it for what?” Zia asked, arms folded, not one to entertain nonsense.

“For later,” Gryphon replied nonchalantly.

“For later?” Lyra echoed, her brow furrowed. “Why would it do that?”

“Well,” Gryphon said, with a regal air, “in case you want to use it, of course. You’d probably say spend it in the city, but that’s not entirely accurate.”

“Spend it on what?” Zia asked.

“Whatever you like,” Gryphon said with a knowing smile, nodding towards the stone. “The Wayfinder, for one.”

“The Wayfinder?” Zia repeated, squinting at the stone.

“Yes, that’s what it is,” Gryphon affirmed. “Try it again if you don’t believe me.”

Zia took a few moments to process the Gryphon’s words, then looked over to Orin, gesturing for him to go ahead.

Hesitantly, Orin stepped forward, gripping the Workstone tightly. Reaching over, he carefully placed it back into the Wayfinder’s hexagonal indentation.

Once again, the entire structure lit up, a brilliant green glow spreading across its surface. And once more, the Wayfinder projected the intricate emblem into the sky in the distance. This time, though, all three of them saw it.

“Lyra...” Orin whispered, his voice full of awe as they took in the pulsing pattern of overlapping circles. Then, just as quickly as it appeared, the light dimmed, and the emblem vanished.

“Hey! Where did it go?” Orin asked, stepping back in frustration.

“You’re out of energy, I’m afraid,” Gryphon explained with a casual shrug. “A few circles are valuable, but they won’t keep the lights on all night.”

“So, what’s the emblem in the sky for?” Orin asked, still staring at where it had been.

“Well,” Gryphon said, “that’s the way, of course.”

* * *

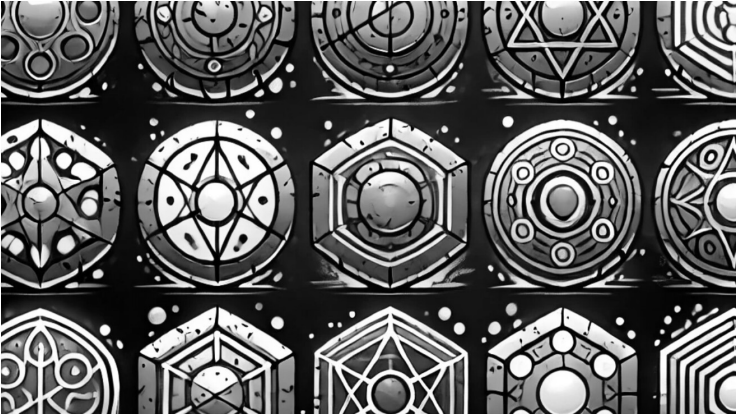
Task

Gryphon has revealed the purpose of the Workstone, but what if you had to design your own? Sketch your own version of a Workstone. Consider how it might channel, store, or harness energy. Be creative and think about its shape, materials, and functionality! It’s entirely yours, so anything goes!

SOLUTION

THE WAY

Here are some example designs for inspiration. How does your creation compare?



The Sign



Without further explanation, Gryphon turned on his heels and headed in the direction of the emblem.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa—hold on,” Zia objected, raising a hand. “The way?”

“The way to what?” Lyra pressed, hurrying after him.

“That,” Gryphon replied, “is definitely on a need-to-know

basis.”

Lyra frowned. “And what’s *there*?”

“Need-to-know.”

“And why would we go?” Zia interjected, arms folded.

“Need-to-know.”

“And why should we trust you?” Lyra’s voice sharpened.

Gryphon stopped abruptly and turned to face them. His playful demeanour melted away, replaced by one of seriousness.

“The Great Spirit needs you,” he said, his voice resonating with an undeniable authority. “Things in your world have gone awry—out of balance, you might say. It hasn’t always been this way, and it’s time to restore order.”

He fixed each of them with a piercing gaze. “It’s time for you to restore order.”

“Us!? Why us?” Lyra asked, bewildered.

Gryphon’s expression shifted again, returning to his usual casual self. “That’s a question I can’t answer. Quite frankly, I have no idea. But for some reason, you’re the ones.”

“Think of it as a journey—an adventure,” he added, his tone almost cheerful.

Lyra raised an eyebrow. “An adventure? What kind of adventure?”

“An adventure in sacred geometry,” Gryphon replied with a smile. “The Great Spirit always delivers. Puts on quite a show, don’t you know.”

Gryphon nodded thoughtfully. “By the time you get there, you’ll be able to create the emblem yourselves. Perfectly. You’ll need to.”

Lyra blinked in disbelief. “*Ourselves*? How could we possibly do that? We only glimpsed it! I can barely remember what it looks like.”

“Don’t worry,” Gryphon said reassuringly. “You’ll piece it together as you go. The answers are out there, waiting. Listen to nature. Pay attention to everything around you, and it’ll come to you, bit by bit. And no, you don’t have to use strings and sticks.”

Gryphon nodded towards Orin. “Orin has everything you need.”

Orin patted his satchel proudly. “Yes, sir.”

Gryphon paused, letting his words settle before adding with a playful smirk, “But—” his claw pointed dramatically upward, “nothing in this world is free. You’ll have to earn it.”

“Earn it?” Zia asked sceptically. “How exactly are we supposed to do that?”

“That’s for you to figure out,” Gryphon replied, a mischievous twinkle in his eye. “Trust me—it’ll be very entertaining.”

“We’ve only known you for a few minutes,” Plus, you’re not exactly... normal.”

“Fair point,” Gryphon said, giving a mock solemn nod. “Stranger danger and all that. But I work for the Great Spirit. Think of me as... a very underpaid tour guide.”

The trio exchanged wary glances.

“Okay, okay,” Gryphon continued, raising a claw again. “I get it. I’d be wary of myself, too. But listen—if you don’t trust me, maybe you’ll trust *the boss*.”

“The boss?” Lyra asked bluntly.

Gryphon inhaled deeply. “The Great Spirit...”

Without further explanation, and before the trio could question him, Gryphon closed his eyes. His feathers began to glow faintly, as though drawing energy from the very air around him. The trio exchanged bemused glances as Gryphon seemed to drift into some kind of trance.

Minutes passed. Nothing happened. They looked at each

other, puzzled and confused, unsure of what to do. The forest grew eerily quiet, too, the stillness stretching on for what felt like forever.

Zia tapped her chin impatiently, waiting for something—anything—to happen.

Suddenly, Gryphon let out a loud, snore-like snort.

“Is he...?” Orin asked hesitantly.

“Asleep?” Zia finished, squinting at Gryphon. “He looks like he’s asleep.”

“He is!” Orin concluded in disbelief.

“Unbelievable!” Zia exclaimed.

Unsure of what else to do, the three of them tiptoed forward cautiously.

“Do you think we should wake him up?” Lyra whispered.

“Prod him,” Zia suggested.

“You prod him!” Orin hissed.

“No, you!” Zia countered, prodding Orin.

Their argument fizzled as they leaned closer, their faces inches from Gryphon’s. Orin cautiously extended a finger, about to poke Gryphon’s shoulder.

Suddenly, without warning, Gryphon’s eyes flew open. “*All right!*” he barked.

“Ah!” Orin yelped, stumbling back and clutching his chest like he’d been struck by lightning.

Zia stifled a laugh, though her wide eyes betrayed her own shock. “Gryphon! Don’t do that!”

“Apologies,” Gryphon replied, still half-dazed. He stretched, shaking his wings as though he’d just awoken from a satisfying nap. “All done. He’ll be with you shortly,” he said nonchalantly, ignoring their startled expressions. He turned on his claws and strode towards the trees. “I’ll meet you by the ravine,” he called

over his shoulder.

“Oh, and by the way,” Gryphon added, pausing just long enough to glance back, “he talks in symbols, not words.” With one last dramatic flick of his tail, he disappeared into the trees.

The trio stood frozen, staring after him as the forest seemed to swallow him whole, leaving them just as they had started—alone.

* * *

“What just happened exactly?” Zia muttered, breaking the silence.

Orin adjusted his satchel, his brow furrowed. “I think we were just... scheduled a meeting with the Great Spirit? Totally normal. Nothing weird about any of this,” he added sarcastically, his eyes flicking nervously towards the direction Gryphon had vanished.

Lyra remained silent. Gryphon’s words echoed in her mind. *Symbols? Words? How will we know?*

They waited in the clearing, the silence stretching awkwardly between them. Orin adjusted his satchel for the third time, Zia tapped her foot impatiently, and Lyra fidgeted with the edge of her sketchbook.

Minutes passed. Nothing happened.

“Maybe we should just—” Zia began, but her words faltered as something did indeed begin to happen—a strange shadow began creeping across the clearing. It was slow at first but soon gathered pace.

Above them, the sky shifted. A dark disc slowly slid across the sun, swallowing its light and casting an eerie twilight over the trees. The trio watched in stunned silence as a solar eclipse

formed, leaving only a blazing ring of fire encircling the moon—a perfect circle of golden light against the darkened sky.

“What’s happening?” Zia whispered, barely audible.

Before anyone could answer, the eclipse began to recede, the sunlight returning in a single, piercing beam. It cut through the canopy and fell directly on Lyra.

Lyra blinked, shielding her eyes as the warmth of the light washed over her. But it wasn’t just light—it felt like something more, something alive.

Zia and Orin stared at her, wide-eyed, as if waiting for her to say something.

Lyra didn’t quite know what to say, but she knew what to do. She straightened, her breath steady, her mind clear. She turned to Orin, her voice unwavering. “Orin, give me your compass.”

Orin, without hesitation, reached into his satchel and handed it over.

With careful precision, she adjusted the compass, placed it firmly on her sketchbook, and drew a perfect circle at the first attempt—smooth, flawless, unwavering. “Let’s go,” she said.

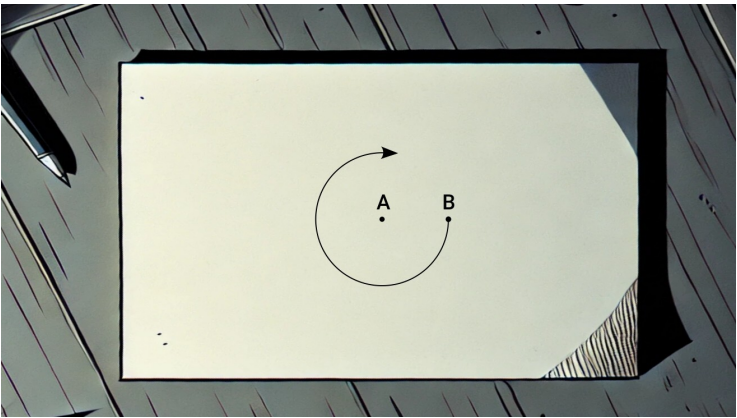
* * *

Task

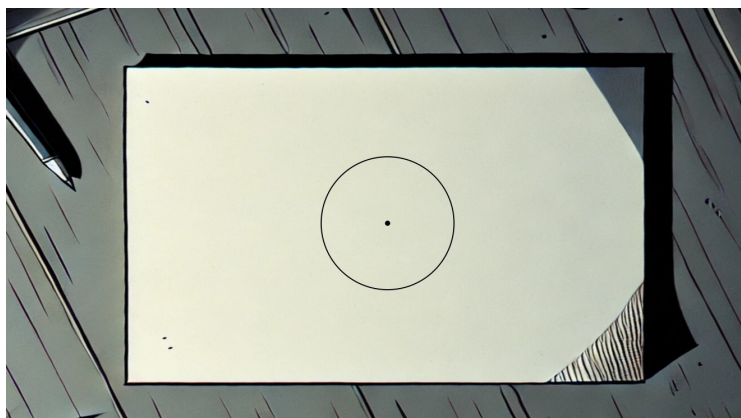
If Lyra can master drawing a perfect circle, so can you! Grab your sketchbook, a pencil, and a compass, and draw a small, flawless circle in the centre of the page. Make sure to leave plenty of space around it—this is just the start of something much bigger. And if you don’t get it right the first time, that’s what your rubber is for. Practice makes perfect!

SOLUTION

1. **Mark the centre:** Use a pencil to make a small point (**Point A**) in the centre of the page.
2. **Set the compass:** Place the pointed end of the compass on **Point A**, ensuring it's firmly anchored.
3. **Draw the circle:** Carefully trace a circle by rotating the compass, letting the pencil guide the path (**Line B**) smoothly and evenly.



When you've finished your circle, take a moment to compare it to Lyra's. Does it look the same? Is it perfectly round and centred?



Precision is key, so if your circle isn't quite right, don't worry—try again! Every attempt brings you closer to mastering the art of drawing a perfect circle.

The Drop



“There he is!” Zia announced, pointing ahead to where Gryphon lounged on a large rock on the far side of the ravine. His wings were folded neatly, golden feathers catching the sunlight with a faint shimmer.

The trio halted, their eyes drawn to the sheer drop before them—a dizzying plunge that made their stomachs churn. On

the far side, Gryphon watched them with a bemused expression, his wings half-extended as if ready to take flight.

“Ah, perfect timing!” he called, stretching lazily, yet making no move to help. “We’d better get going and make up for lost time.”

Orin frowned, staring at the wide ravine. “How are we supposed to get across this?”

Gryphon stroked his chin with a giant paw. “Right. No wings. I see your problem.”

Zia let out a frustrated sigh, grabbing a stick and tossing it into the ravine. It spun end over end before vanishing into the shadows below. “You could just fly over and help us, you know.”

Gryphon let out an exaggerated huff, his feathers ruffling slightly. “I’m not a taxi service, Zia. Besides, where’s the fun in that?”

Lyra’s gaze wandered, landing on Orin’s untied shoelace. *Too short... too weak... but maybe... something else?* “What about a vine?” she suggested. “We could tie it to a rock, throw it across, and set up a tightrope. Would you catch it for us, Gryphon?”

His eyes sparkled with approval. “I’d be honoured to catch your rock,” Gryphon confirmed with a slight bow.

Zia flashed a sly smile, already hoisting a hefty rock and a vine she’d yanked from a nearby tree. “I’ve got this.”

Orin responded with a sceptical look, arms crossed. “Maybe something a bit smaller, Zia? Like this,” he said, holding up a more manageable rock.

Zia huffed but relented. “Fine.” She swapped the boulder for Orin’s choice and tied the vine securely around it. After a few steps back, she wound up and launched the rock across the ravine with impressive precision. It landed just short of Gryphon and tumbled into the abyss. Undeterred, Zia reeled it back in.

“All right, take two.”

This time, her throw was spot-on. The rock sailed cleanly across, and Gryphon snatched the vine mid-air with effortless grace. In one swift motion, he tied it to a sturdy tree on the far side. “There. One high wire, courtesy of everyone’s favourite mythical creature.”

Zia swept into a dramatic bow, her arm arcing gracefully as she gestured for the others to proceed.

Lyra and Orin exchanged hesitant glances, neither eager to go first. Finally, Orin nudged Lyra forward. “Ladies first,” he said with a small nod.

Lyra rolled her eyes and stepped up to the vine. She tested it one last time, her confidence evident as she placed one foot on the narrow line and began inching her way across. “See? Easy,” she called over her shoulder.

* * *

Halfway across, everything appeared to be going smoothly—her progress was steady, her movements confident. But then, something unexpected happened. A subtle tremor rippled through the vine, followed by a faint, mischievous giggle. She froze mid-step, her eyes narrowing as she scanned the far side for answers.

“Wobble. Wobble,” came Gryphon’s smooth voice.

“Gryphon?” Lyra asked, her tone wary.

His eyes gleamed with mischief as he gently flicked the vine with his claw, sending another ripple down its length.

“Gryphon, stop it!” Lyra shouted, her voice sharp as she stopped in place.

“Oh, come on,” he replied, his tone teasing. “You don’t think

I'd let you fall, do you?"

Her glare didn't waver. "I'm not really sure, but that's certainly not helping. I thought you were here to be our guardian?"

"I am," he said, his feathers ruffling slightly, "but I'm also here for the drama. Imagine you just crossed confidently with no issues... snooze. Everybody's safe, and nothing happens. Who's interested in that?"

"Me!" Lyra fired back.

"Hmm, yes. I see what you mean. I do apologise," he said, his voice not sounding entirely convincing. "Do carry on."

"Unbelievable," Lyra muttered, refocusing as she carefully prepared to continue. She steadied herself, took a deep breath, and resumed crossing.

"Wobble. Wob—"

"Gryphon!" Lyra shouted, her voice a mix of exasperation and laughter.

"Sorry. I couldn't help myself!" he replied, laughing outright now. "No more," he said, holding his wings up in surrender.

Lyra shook her head, her lips twitching as she fought back a smile. "You'd think the Great Spirit would run background checks on you people," Lyra added, finally giving in to laughter as she hopped confidently onto the solid ground of the other side.

* * *

Pushing past Orin, Zia stepped up to the vine, shaking out her hands as though preparing for a grand performance. "Right, my turn," she declared, planting herself on the vine with exaggerated flair.

“No funny business from you, please,” she warned, narrowing her eyes at Gryphon as she took her first cautious step.

“As if I would,” he replied, his voice a little too innocent to be believable. “Just remember,” Gryphon called out, “whatever you do, don’t look down.”

Zia froze mid-step, her eyes darting nervously towards him.

“And if you do look down,” Gryphon continued, “definitely don’t look at the little skeletons at the bottom.”

“Skeletons!?” Zia yelped, a bead of sweat forming on her brow.

“Relax, relax. I’m joking... There are no little skeletons.” Gryphon replied, his voice thick with playful sarcasm. “They’re medium-sized skeletons.”

Before Gryphon could fully revel in his own joke, Lyra stepped forward and delivered a sharp kick to his shin.

“Ouch!” Gryphon yelped, hopping on his other legs and glaring at her. “What was that for?”

“Ignore him. You’re doing great,” Lyra called out encouragingly.

Zia glanced over at Lyra, her nerves easing slightly at the show of support. With renewed focus, she inched her way across the vine, her movements steady but cautious. When she finally reached the other side, her legs wobbling slightly, she turned to Gryphon with narrowed eyes. “Medium-sized skeletons, indeed.”

* * *

Orin stood at the edge of the ravine, staring at the vine stretched taut before him. His heart raced as he peered down at the dizzying drop below, the ground seeming to sway beneath him.

“You’ve got this,” Lyra called from the other side, her voice calm and steady.

Orin took a deep breath, his gaze flickering between the vine and the chasm. His hands clenched and unclenched at his sides, betraying his nerves.

“Take your time,” Gryphon said, his usual playful tone replaced by uncharacteristic seriousness. “Focus. Breathe.”

Orin glanced up, surprised by the encouragement.

“One step at a time,” Gryphon reassured.

Orin nodded, swallowing hard. He placed one foot on the vine, then the other. The vine swayed slightly beneath him, and he froze, arms flailing as he fought to steady himself. He began to make progress, but the progress was slow and clunky.

“Careful,” Lyra said, her voice tense.

“I’m fine,” Orin muttered, though his clenched jaw said otherwise. He managed a few more unsteady steps before his balance faltered completely. His arms flailed, windmilling wildly. Despite his desperate efforts to steady himself, it was no use. And just like that—Orin was gone.

Bamboo



As Orin fell, the lace of his boot snagged on a twist of the vine, jerking him to an abrupt halt. For a moment, he dangled helplessly, upside down, the world spinning below him. *This was unplanned*, Orin thought.

Gritting his teeth, he reached up, gripping the vine with trembling hands. With a grunt of effort, he hauled himself

upward and backwards, inch by inch, until he finally collapsed back onto solid ground. Breathing heavily, he lay there for a moment, staring at the sky—exactly where he began.

“Orin!” Lyra called, stepping closer to the edge. “Are you all right?”

“I’m fine,” he stammered, struggling to get his words out as he dragged himself up. Dejected and scared, he turned away, shoulders slumping. “I can’t do this, Lyra.”

“Yes, you can,” Lyra insisted, her voice firm but encouraging. “Have a moment, rest, and then try again.”

Orin shot her a sceptical look but nodded reluctantly. “Give me a moment.” He wiped the sweat from his brow and took a few steadying breaths, his gaze fixed on the vine as if daring it to defy him. He wasn’t going to let Lyra down like this.

* * *

“Maybe you need a little help,” Gryphon suggested, gesturing toward a cluster of bamboo. His tone was light, but there was a glint of practicality in his eyes. “You could use it to steady your balance. No shame in a bit of assistance, you know.”

Orin pondered Gryphon’s words, glancing between the vine and the bamboo. Pride warred with practicality, but the thought of another humiliating stumble decided it for him.

He strode over to the bamboo and kicked a few pieces, selecting the longest, straightest piece. He tested its weight and gave a nod of approval. “This’ll work,” he said, more to himself than anyone else.

Positioning the bamboo across his shoulders, he gripped it firmly with both hands, adjusting it until each side was perfectly balanced—half to the left, half to the right. Once satisfied, he

paced back and forth, testing its stability. A flicker of confidence crossed his face as he turned back to the vine and tentatively placed his foot on it.

The difference was immediate. The bamboo acted as a stabiliser, countering his movements. Step by step, he edged forward, his breathing steadying and his focus sharpening. The fear in his eyes gave way to determination as he closed the distance.

“He’s doing it!” Zia whispered excitedly, careful not to disturb him.

“Keep going, Orin,” Lyra called, her voice brimming with encouragement.

When Orin finally reached the other side, he stepped off the vine and lowered the bamboo, exhaling deeply. A small, triumphant smile tugged at his lips.

Orin barely had time to savour his victory before Zia pointed at his shorts. “You’re glowing again,” she said.

Lyra’s eyes widened. “The Workstone,” she whispered, her attention switching to her sketchbook.

The glow wasn’t random—it meant something, and Lyra knew it. But what?

“Is it something to do with balance?” Lyra wondered softly, almost to herself. “Balance is everywhere in nature, right? So it must be in the emblem too.”

Before anyone could respond, Lyra’s pencil was already poised for action.

“We need to split the circle,” she said, looking up with steely determination. “Perfectly—into two equal halves.”

* * *

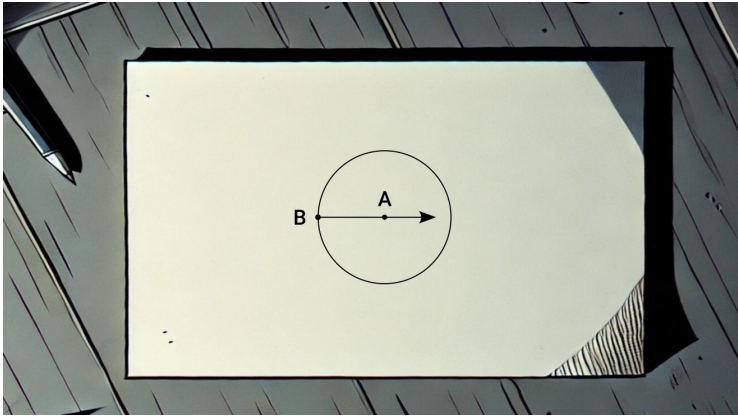
Task

Can you help Lyra achieve perfect balance? You already have a circle, but can you divide it into two equal halves with a single **horizontal** line? You'll need your pencil and a ruler. Make it precise—balance is crucial!

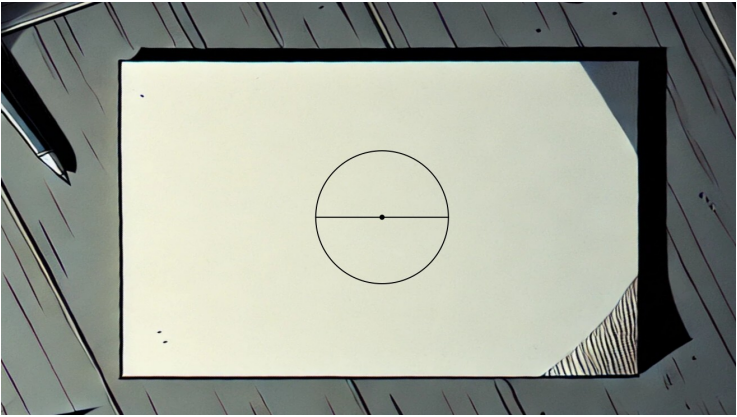
BAMBOO

SOLUTION

1. **Align the ruler:** Place your ruler horizontally across the page, ensuring it's perfectly aligned with the centre of the circle (**Point A**).
2. **Draw the line:** Using your pencil, draw a straight horizontal line (**Line B**) through the centre.



When you've finished, you should have something looking like this: a circle with a perfectly centred horizontal line. Great job!



This line represents the **diameter** of the circle, stretching from one side, passing through the circle's centre, and extending all the way to the opposite side. Remember, the **diameter** is exactly twice the length of the **radius**.

* * *

With all three of them safely back on solid ground and the next piece of their emblem secured, the trio—alongside Gryphon—pressed forward, their energy renewed. The path ahead wound through the dense forest, a labyrinth of twisting roots and towering trees.

Excitement buzzed between them, unspoken but palpable. Every step felt like progress, every turn held the promise of something new—another clue, another discovery. The deeper they ventured, the more the air itself seemed to hum with anticipation, as if the forest recognised their purpose and was guiding them towards it. Whatever lay ahead, they were ready.