

Bram hissed as they checked the last of the traps. Empty.

Dory knew better than to correct his little brother's anger. They would need some of that fire to warm them in the coming winter and Dory had none to spare. What Dory felt most was tired.

Tired, on seeing silvery clouds weaving together to block out the light of the moon. Tired, on finding that the water was higher and closer than expected and moving at an alarming pace.

Since Dory had learned about the so-called adventurers who were draining the fens for their own profit, he was no longer surprised to find water appearing in places it shouldn't, while in other places water-plants had been exposed and lay rotting and malarial in the early autumn heat.

For now, they would have to make their way quickly back to their dwelling by what little light remained, wasting precious energy.

Bram started to whistle. Dory trudged alongside in silence. The wind picked up, carrying Bram's whistle over the low marshland.

But the whistle the wind carried back to them belonged to someone else.

'Look, Dory!'

Dory looked back. In the near distance was a flickering light. This strange lantern swayed as if from a weary traveller's hand.