

Rory the Reflective Owl



Rory the Reflective Owl is a thinker. He loves to plan and reflect. He thinks carefully about what he needs to learn, any obstacles and what he needs to be successful. Rory is a flexible learner who asks himself questions about how well things are going and he isn't afraid to change his plan when necessary. Rory can look back on his learning and tell others how he learned. He watches other owls carefully and helps them to be reflective too.

Rory the Reflective Owl like his father, grandfather and great-grandfather before him was one of life's great planners. He never acted on a whim, or did anything spontaneously. Everything had to be meticulously planned, executed and evaluated perfectly.

So, one Christmas Eve, Rory the Reflective Owl found himself in a pickle.

Around Rory, a storm raged. Rain lashed down and bounced off the roof, thunder claps erupted from above, and silver shards of lightning pointed down to earth, illuminating the sky behind the Malvern Hills in the most spectacular fashion.

The small town of Great Malvern had lost all its electrical power and a diesel train had broken down just one mile away from Great Malvern train station. Rory, on a late night flight for food, witnessed the chaos and he knew he must do something. In the train carriages below him, children were crying, teenagers were huffing and parents were frantically shushing. Christmas Day was just hours away and everyone knew that if all children were not safely tucked up in their beds, Father Christmas would not come.

Nonetheless, in the pitch black and with the weather whipping around him, how could he help? What could he plan? How could he get these people to the safety of the station? There was no time to lose. Something needed to be done, and fast!

Rory collected his thoughts. A flight around the area and down to the station, to get a full picture of the situation, was the next logical step.

He arrived at Great Malvern to find the station in complete darkness. Without being able to spot anyone around to help him, he decided to continue on to Malvern Link. Perhaps someone at the other station would be able to help?

As he flew to other side of town, he saw people lighting candles, burning fires to keep warm and singing Christmas Carols to keep the spirit of the festival alive. But the warm sense of joy didn't last long. Disappointment spread from his talons through to his wings as he reached the other train station – it, too, was without any power.

More determined than ever to help the passengers, Rory changed direction and headed for Worcester. He hoped that the big city hadn't lost its power, and that someone, anyone, would be able to help.

Finally, for the first time that evening, luck was on Rory's side.

The lights were on and, luckily, someone was at home. Sitting in the ticket office at Worcester Foregate Station was a round, jolly-faced man with a curly moustache.

In his joy at finding someone, and in his haste to recruit help as quickly as possible, Rory forgot one very important thing. The station master, a man called Shaun, who had worked at Foregate Street station for 35 years, had never come across a talking owl before.

'Please be quick - you have to come to Malvern and help! A train has broken down and we have no power and we need to get all the boys and girls home before Father Christmas comes!'

Shaun was shocked. So shocked in fact, he fainted.

'For goodness sake! Is it really such a surprise that, in this day and age, animals can talk too?' Rory, once again, had to readjust his plan. It was clear that, without their precious electricity, human help was now out of the question.

On his flight back to Great Malvern, the answer came to him. There was a big group of volunteers within his reach: ones who didn't need light to see and who were used to battling all types of weather – his fellow owls.

So, as he flew, he shouted. 'CALLING ALL OWLS! Emergency, emergency! Urgent help needed just beyond Great Malvern station! Red alert, red alert!'

Rory's cries of desperation awoke owls all over Worcestershire. Barn owls, tawny owls and little owls all heard Rory's SOS cries.

'Was that Rory?'

'He sounds like he's in trouble!'

'We should go and help him – he'd help us!'

Rory heard the flutter of wings behind him as he flew back to the broken down train but it wasn't until he landed that he dared to turn around and see how many had answered his plea for help.

To his sheer delight, hundreds of owls landed in front of him but to his distress, all started talking at once.

'What's going on mate?'

'Are you OK, Rory?'

'You aren't hurt, are you?'

'What's happening then?'

'EVERYONE QUIET!' Rory shouted above the crowd of hooting birds.

'Thank you all so much for coming. I'm fine, but I desperately need your help. This train has broken down, and without any power in the town, I can't get any of the people to help.' Rory the Reflective Owl continued. 'It's Christmas Day tomorrow, and we need to get these children and their parents home as quickly as possible.'

'Of course we'll help, Rory! What do you need us to do?'

'I need some of you to fly to the school with me and get all of their skipping ropes. We can then tie the skipping ropes to the front of the train and pull it into the station!'

To the amazement of the train driver – that’s exactly what the owls, led by Rory, did.

After all the passengers were safely off the train, and the other owls had flown home, Rory the Reflective Owl found himself sitting on his favourite spot on the station roof, thinking about the night he saved Christmas for the children of Malvern. He reflected on the ‘ups’ and ‘downs’ of his plan.