



ABOUT YOU

Answer the questions and talk about your ideas.

- 1 Can you think of any stories where people are turned into animals?
- 2 Which animal would you like to be?
- 3 Some people think forests are scary places. Why do you think this is?

- 1 Read the text. As you read, think about this question.
Why do the king and then the queen go to the forest?

'The Six Swans'

edited by Andrew Lang

The king had seven children by his first wife – six boys and one girl. He loved them more than anything in the world. And now, because he was afraid that their **stepmother** might hurt them, he put them in a **lonely** castle in the middle of a wood. It was hidden, and the way to it was hard to find, but a **wise** woman gave him a ball of **thread** – it had a marvellous property: when he threw it before him it showed him the way. But the king went so often to his dear children that the queen was angry at his absence. She grew **curious**, and wanted to know what he did alone in the wood. She gave his **servants** a lot of money, and they told her, and also told her about the thread. She made some little white shirts, and put a **spell** in each of them.

One day she took the little shirts and went into the wood, and the thread showed her the way. The children, who saw someone coming in the distance, thought it was their dear father coming to them, and ran to meet him. Then she put a little shirt on each of them and when it touched their bodies it changed them into swans, and they flew away over the forest. The queen went home quite happy but the girl had not run to meet her with her brothers, and the queen knew nothing of her.

A king loses his way in the forest. He cannot find his way home and thinks he will die. However, he meets a woman who says she will show him the way home. The king must pay a price and the price is that the woman's daughter will become his wife. The king does not like the woman or the daughter but he has no choice – marry her daughter, or die! When they are married and living in his castle, the king begins to think his wife has evil, magical powers.



The next day the king came to visit his children, but only found the girl.

GLOSSARY

evil	very cruel and bad
stepmother	the woman who has married your father but is not your mother
lonely	sad because it is a long way from people
wise	a wise person is able to use their knowledge to make good decisions
thread	a long, thin piece of cotton, wool, etc. that is used for making clothes
curious	wanting to know or learn about something
servants	people who work and live in someone else's house
spell	a magical instruction

