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Christina Soontornvat

Christina Soontornvat is an award-winning author and educator from a small town in Texas. Born in 1980, she is the daughter of a business owner from Thailand and the granddaughter of Thai broadcasting executive Saengchai Sunthornvat. Christina grew up behind the counter of her parents Thai restaurant. She could always be seen with a book in her hands. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and a Master's degree in Science Education. She spent 10 years working at a science museum before becoming an author. She designed programs and museum exhibits to get kids passionate about the science field.



Since becoming an author, she has won two Newbery Honors in 2021 for the books *A Wish in the Dark* and *All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team*. She most recently won a Newbery Honor in 2023 for the novel *The Last Mapmaker*. She is the first author to win two Newbery awards in the same year for both fiction and nonfiction titles. Christina Soontornvat also helped organize the *Everywhere Book Fest* in 2020.

This was created due to the book festival cancellations from the Covid-19 pandemic. Christina still lives in Texas, but with her husband and two children.

Did You Know?

- Before her career as an author, Christina Soontornvat worked at a science museum.
- She has a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering.
- Christina is very passionate about STEM science and loves learning new things.



Chapters Six to Ten

Answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. At the end of Chapter 5, Pong escapes the prison. He leaves Somkit behind. Do you think he will come back for him? If you were Pong would you leave without your friend?

Vocabulary With a straight line, connect each word on the left with its meaning on the right.

1	Exhausted	To try and get a better deal.	A
2	Haggling	Something unfamiliar or odd.	B
3	Impenetrable	To be very tired.	C
4	Entranced	To capture someone's attention and fill them with wonder.	D
5	Teetered	To fall away from something.	E
6	Tumbled	To keep something hidden.	F
7	Clustered	Impossible to pass through a thing.	G
8	Outlandish	A feeling of closeness to other people.	H
9	Concealed	People in a group standing close together.	I
10	Kinship	To sway back and forth.	J



Chapters Eleven to Fifteen

1. Fill in each blank with the correct word from these Chapters.

- a) "And our village does have a _____ in this area for taking in orphans"
- b) He belonged behind a desk, not running a big _____ like a prison.
- c) "Everyone in the province uses orbs. I'm afraid I can't make an _____ just for you."
- d) It was long enough for her to see a _____ of defiance in his eyes.
- e) The old monk raised his hand and _____ it over Pong's left wrist, on top of the bracelets.

2. Complete each sentence with a word from the list.

cooed creased clacked
linger plopped

- a) The girl would _____ in the door so she could hear her parents talking.
- b) The little baby was content in her crib and _____ softly.
- c) The horses walked on the path and their hooves _____ on the hard ground.
- d) The man did not iron his pants and they were _____.
- e) The boy was tired so he _____ himself on the ground to rest.



Chapters Twenty-One to Twenty-Five

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

1. Before it was The Mud House, what was the building used for?

2. In Chapter Twenty-Two, what lie did Nok tell the monk?

3. What is Ampai's rule?

4. What is Somkit's job in the Mud House?

5. What disguise does Pong wear to visit The Light Market?

6. What is the disappointing news Somkit gets at The Light Market?



Journaling Prompt

Pong's disguise has badges all over the pockets. Have you ever received a badge or an award for a job well done? Write about a time this happened to you.



Chapter 2

Interview with the Governor

In Chapter 2 we find out that Pong has a secret wish. Pong wants to work for The Governor. He wants to be his assistant or an adviser.

Get into pairs. You and your partner will do a mock job interview. One student will be Pong. The other student will be the Governor. The Governor will ask Pong questions to see if he will be a good fit for the job. Write down your interview questions. Record all of Pong's answers. You can go on the Internet to look up some job interview questions.

After the interview, write down if you think Pong will get the job!



Chapter 5

Durian Fruit

In Chapter 5 we are introduced to Durian. Durian is called the King of Fruits. It is a round spiky fruit. The inside is creamy and tastes like custard or pudding. The prisoners of Namwon say it tastes like heaven.

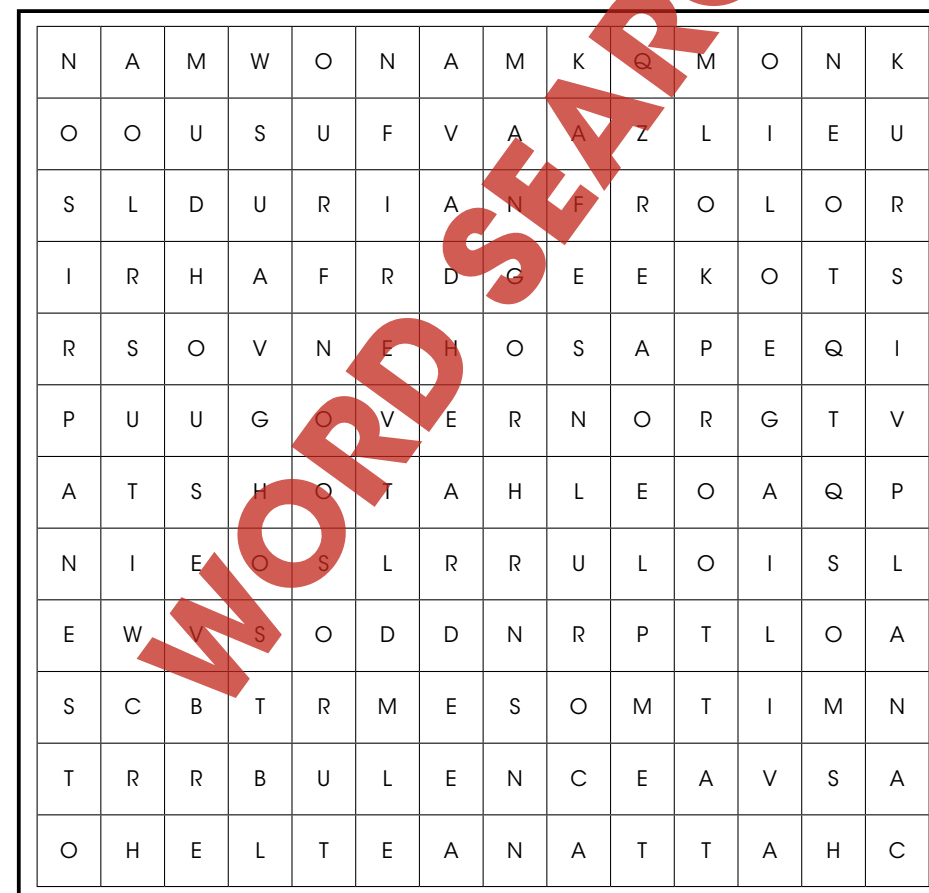
It is also considered the world's smelliest fruit. It has been banned in some hotels and public transportation. Go on the Internet and look up Durian fruit that grows in Southeast Asia. Find out how and where it grows. Are there different types of Durian fruit? Find out why it is banned in some areas. Is the fruit healthy for you? Do you think you are brave enough to try it? Write a short paragraph and then draw and color a picture of the Durian fruit.



Word Search Puzzle

Find the words from the story. The words are written across, down, on an angle, and some are written backwards.

canal	gold	monk	prison
chattana	governor	mud house	tattoo
durian	mango	namwon	temple
fire	market	orbs	village



Comprehension Quiz

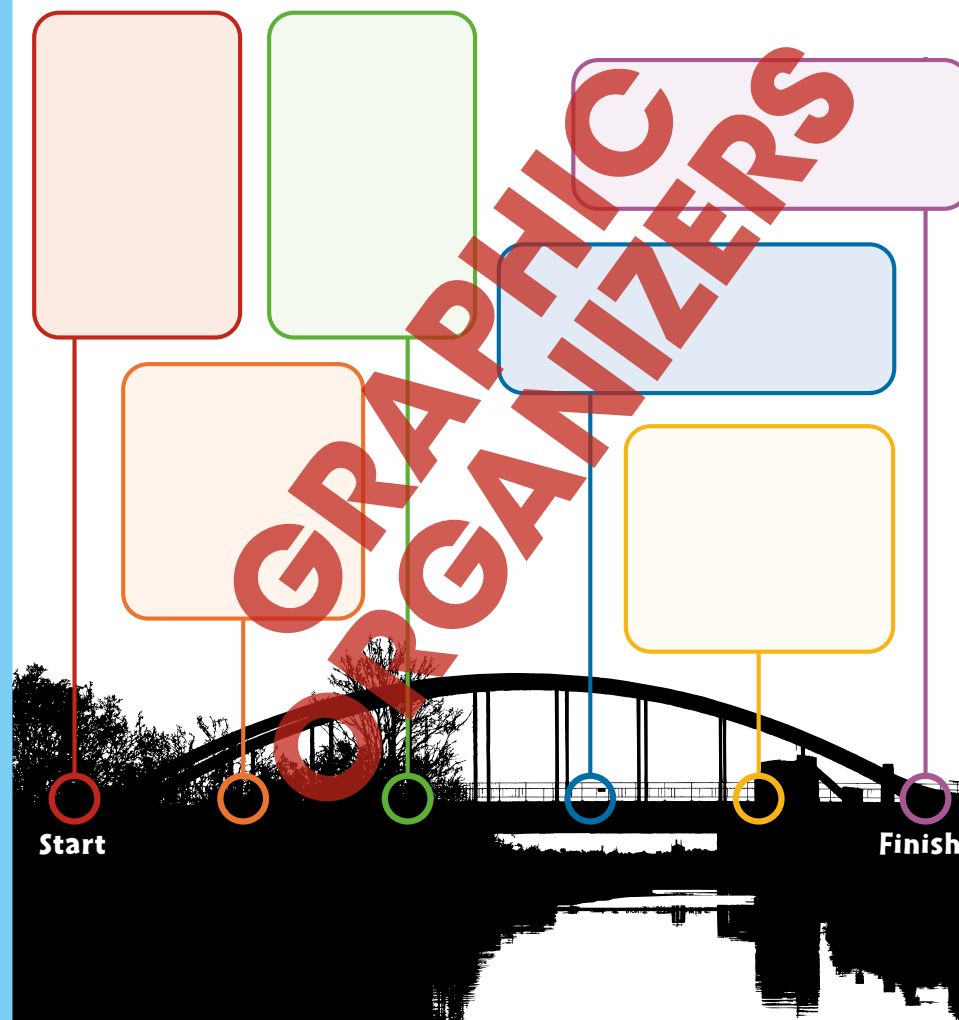
Answer each question with a complete sentence.

- What happened to the city after The Great Fire? 33
- When the Governor first visits Namwon, he tells Pong something that haunts him for a very long time. What does the Governor say to Pong? 2
- In Chapter 10, Pong lists the bad things he has done. What are they? 1
- What is Father Cham's blessing for the orphan baby? 3
- Why does Mrs. Viboon think Pong died after jumping from the cave? 1
- Describe what the Mud House looks like. 2
- Why does Somkit say to never buy orbs at a discount? 4

SUBTOTAL: /15

Nok Over Time

Nok is an important person in *A Wish in the Dark*. Her character changes a lot throughout the book. Fill out the chart below with how she changes over time. Write down how she felt at the start of the book. How did these things change near the end?



NAME: _____

After You Read 



Chapters Forty-One to Forty-Five

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

- Why does Nok feel like her entire world has shifted?

- What does Nok's father say his biggest mistake has been?

- Why did all of the shutters close on the West Side?

- How does Pong get through the police barricade?

- The Governor holds up a document to show the crowd, what does it say?

- Why is it a big deal that Nok showed support for the marchers?



Journaling Prompt

Nok has a lot of hard decisions to make in these Chapters. Write about a time when you had to make a hard choice about something. Was it the right one in the end? Explain.

37

1.
Nok feels like her world has shifted because nothing she had been told about the Governor, the law, or herself is true.

2.
His biggest mistake is not telling his daughter the truth.

3.
The shutters are closed because no one on the West Side wants to see what is happening on the bridge.

4.
Pong tells an officer that he is a runaway from Namwon Prison and is hiding himself in. He will only turn himself in to Officer Manit. He explains everything to Officer Manit and he takes Pong through the barricade.

5.
The document says that any demonstration against the Governor is a threat to the city. Those who participate will be punished with the harshest sentence.

6.
It is important because the Governor tells the crowd that no one worthy is standing with them. Nok proves him wrong by standing with the marchers on the bridge. She is the Commissioner's daughter.

37

1.
Answers will vary.

2.
Answers will vary.

Vocabulary

1. tremor

2. fury

3. delight

4. wails

5. fleeing

6. strike

7. distraught

8. hurl

38

1.

a) **T**

b) **F**

c) **F**

d) **T**

e) **F**

f) **T**

2.

a) **2**

b) **5**

c) **6**

d) **1**

e) **4**

f) **3**

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1.

When Pong grabbed his wrist, the light coming from the Governor's hand went out. The light started going into Pong's hand and arm instead. The gold light started to glow through the letters of Pong's tattoo.

2.

Pong thinks of the times that he and Somkit would watch an old man and his grandson. They were crabbing in the deep waters of the river.

3.

The first time Pong almost drowned, he woke up to see a chicken. The second time he was saved by the wide-grinning moon. The third time he woke up to see the black eyes of a bird.

4.

Manit and his wife are adopting both Pong and Somkit.

5.

Nok likes that everyone can afford gold light now. She misses seeing the rainbow of different colored lights.

6.

Pong visits Namwon twice a week so that he can walk out on his own two feet.

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A Wish in the Dark

- **RSL.3.1** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- **RSL.3.2** Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
- **RSL.3.3** Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- **RSL.3.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from non-literal language.
- **RSL.3.5** Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
- **RSL.3.6** Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
- **RSL.3.7** Explain how specific aspects of a text’s illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story.
- **RSL.3.10** By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- **RSL.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RSL.4.2** Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- **RSL.4.3** Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.
- **RSL.4.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology.
- **RSL.4.6** Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.
- **RSL.4.10** By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- **RSFS.3.3** Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. **A)** Identify and know the meaning of the most common prefixes and derivational suffixes. **B)** Decode words with common Latin suffixes. **C)** Decode multi-syllable words. **d.** Read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.
- **RSFS.3.4** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. **A)** Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. **B)** Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings **C)** Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- **RSFS.4.3** Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. **A)** Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.
- **RSFS.4.4** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. **A)** Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. **B)** Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings. **C)** Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- **WS.3.1** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons. **A)** Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons. **B)** Provide reasons that support the opinion. **C)** Use linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons. **D)** Provide a concluding statement or section.
- **WS.3.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. **A)** Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension. **B)** Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. **C)** Use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information. **D)** Provide a concluding statement or section.
- **WS.3.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. **A)** Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally. **B)** Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations. **C)** Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order. **D)** Provide a sense of closure.
- **WS.3.4** With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- **WS.3.7** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
- **WS.3.8** Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
- **WS.4.1** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. **A)** Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose. **B)** Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details. **C)** Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases. **D)** Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.
- **WS.4.3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. **A)** Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally. **B)** Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations. **C)** Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events. **D)** Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely. **E)** Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- **WS.4.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **WS.4.7** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- **WS.4.8** Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.
- **WS.4.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. **A)** Apply *grade 4 Reading standards* to literature. **B)** Apply *grade 4 Reading standards* to informational texts.



Chapters Eleven to Fifteen

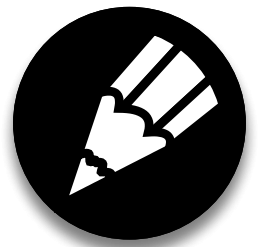
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