

Prologue

Malkin pressed his forepaws against the flight-deck window and peered out. The silver airship was still following; gaining on them. The purr of its propellers and the whoosh of its knife-sharp hull cutting through the air sent a shiver of terror through his clockwork innards.

The fox tore his eyes away and stared at his master. John's ship, *Dragonfly*, was fast but she had nothing in the way of firepower. The silver airship, by contrast, bristled with weapons. Sharp metal spikes stuck out from her hull, making her look like some sort of militarized porcupine.

Just then, *Dragonfly's* rudder shifted, and she pitched as John twisted the wheel into a one-eighty turn to swoop back past her pursuers.

The silver airship shrunk away, but within seconds she'd swung around to follow. She began closing in once more; her propellers chopping through the clouds, throwing dark shadows across their stern. When the two airships broke into a patch of blue, she fired.

A harpoon slashed across the sky and thudded into *Dragonfly's* hull, the point piercing her port side.

Thud! Another harpoon speared into the stern.



'Cogheart'

Peter Bunzl

1. What words and phrases in the first paragraph show you that Malkin isn't human?
2. What is the name of the ship and who is the captain?
3. What does '*bristled with weapons*' suggest about the ship and its weapons?
4. '*Sharp metal spikes stuck out from her hull, making her look like some sort of militarized porcupine.*' Look at the underlined section. What literary technique has been used?
5. How does the author make the start exciting?