

The Mole



“Hello!” came a cheerful voice as the ground stirred, and with a little hop, a mole emerged from the earth. It blinked up at them, its bright, intelligent eyes gleaming as it brushed soil off its tiny snout.

Staring down at the creature, Orin froze. He half turned to Lyra, and whispered sideways. “There appears to be a mole...

saying hello to me.”

Lyra raised an eyebrow. “Well, don’t be rude. Say hello back.”

Returning his attention to the mole, Orin reciprocated. “Hello,” he said cautiously.

Lyra leaned around him, offering the mole a small wave. “Hello, Mr Mole.”

Zia peered over Lyra’s shoulder. “Hello, Mole,” she said, giving a casual salute, as though talking moles were the norm.

The mole blinked up at them, tilting its head curiously. “What are you doing?” it asked intrusively, its tiny voice carrying an unexpected tone of authority.

Lyra paused before answering. “Good question. We’re not entirely sure, but the Great Spirit has... well, apparently, a job for us.”

The mole’s eyes widened. “Oh, gosh. The Great Spirit, you say? You must be important, then.”

Lyra smiled awkwardly, not quite sure how to respond.

“How about you, Mr Mole?” she asked, crouching slightly to get a better look at the tiny, animated creature.

“I’m off to the pond for a think,” the mole replied, waving a tiny paw dismissively.

“A think?” Zia asked. “About what?”

“Oh, you know,” the mole said. “Troubles on my mind. Care to join me? I’ll fill you in on the way.”

The trio exchanged glances, unsure of what to make of the situation. The mole seemed slightly strange but nice enough, its cheerful demeanour oddly comforting. Gryphon, perched on a nearby rock, glanced over at them and gave a subtle nod.

“We’d be delighted,” Lyra said warmly.

The mole perked up, its tiny paws clapping together with enthusiasm. “All right, then. I’ll lead the way!” it declared,

turning sharply and waddling forward with surprising determination.

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Time passed as the group moved through the vegetation, walking in relative silence while trying to keep up with the mole. The forest around them seemed to buzz with a gentle rhythm. Zia shifted restlessly, her curiosity bubbling over until she could hold it in no longer. "What are you going to think about?" she blurted out, crouching down to get closer to the mole.

The mole sighed deeply, brushing a paw over its snout. "Well, Mrs Mole is awfully angry with me."

Lyra stopped and looked directly at him. "Why is that?"

The mole's whiskers twitched as it looked around conspiratorially. "Well, she was out with her friends last night, and I... I may have rearranged the tunnels while she was gone."

Zia tried her best not to laugh. "Rearranged the tunnels?"

"Nothing major!" the mole protested, raising its tiny paws defensively. "Just a little optimisation. You know, better flow, more efficient worm storage, that kind of thing."

"And she didn't appreciate your... improvements?" Lyra asked.

"Apparently not," the mole said with a dramatic sigh. "On the way home, she took one wrong turn... ended up back where she started four hours later. Fuming she was. You'd think she'd be grateful for a better system, but no," the mole continued, clearly indignant. "She even started calling me names."

Orin, barely hiding his amusement, asked, "What did she call you?"

The mole's whiskers twitched as he replied, clearly affronted.

“She said, ‘You’re a control freak, Melvyn.’”

Zia burst out laughing, and even Orin cracked a smile. “I see why you might need to think your way out of this one,” Orin said dryly.

“Exactly!” the mole replied, nodding earnestly. “Hence the pond. Nothing like a good old think by the water. Never fails to deliver. My brain has gotten me out of far bigger pickles than this, like that time I accidentally woke a hibernating bear and had to convince him it was still winter. Took some quick thinking and a lot of whispering, but it worked!”

“Why the pond, though, Mr Mole?” Lyra asked curiously.

The mole paused for a moment and placed a tiny paw on its chin, tilting its head thoughtfully as its small eyes glinted in the sunlight. “I don’t know,” it admitted. “It’s something about the water—the ripples and then the stillness, I suppose. The way everything just... settles. It helps me think.”

Zia, now fully intrigued, leaned even closer. “Do you do this often, then?”

“Oh, yes. I have my own little ritual,” the mole said with a grin. “I’ll show you when we get there. You’ll see—it’s rather calming, even if I do say so myself.”

* * *

Ahead, a small, serene pond came into view, its surface so smooth it mirrored the surrounding trees like glass. At its centre, a lone frog sat on a lily pad, its bulbous eyes watching the world with quiet indifference. Its peace was disturbed by rustling in the grass as the mole appeared, followed closely by the crackling of bushes as the trio pushed through. Moments later, the crunching of branches announced Gryphon’s presence

as he emerged from the trees last.

The frog blinked, unimpressed, as the group gathered by the edge of the pond. It croaked once more, as if acknowledging their arrival, before returning its gaze to the stillness of the water.

Zia plopped herself down on a perfectly positioned rock by the pond, stretching out her legs contentedly.

The mole froze, its tiny eyes narrowing as it glared at Zia. "You're sitting on my thinking rock," it said pointedly.

"Oh, I'm sorry!" Zia said, quickly hopping down and brushing off the rock with exaggerated care.

The mole gave a small, approving nod and climbed up onto the rock, settling itself with a satisfied little sigh. "Thank you," it said, patting the smooth surface. "It's just the right height for pondering."

Gryphon perched gracefully on a boulder nearby while Lyra and Orin exchanged amused glances and found their own far less comfortable rocks around the pond.

"This one's a bit lumpy," Orin muttered, shifting awkwardly.

"Mine's damp," Lyra added, wrinkling her nose.

"How unfortunate," the mole remarked, settling deeper into its cosy perch, obviously indifferent to their complaints.

"Must be nice to have the perfect thinking rock," Zia quipped, earning a smug glance from the mole as it adjusted its position.

"It's lovely," the mole said shortly. "All right," the mole continued, rubbing its tiny paws together. "Let me show you how it's done."

The trio watched as the mole sifted through the stones surrounding its thinking rock, its small paws delicately inspecting each one like a jeweller examining precious gems. Finally, it settled on a smooth, round pebble.

"This one," the mole declared with satisfaction. It stood up, carefully balanced on the rock, and threw the pebble into the air. The pebble arced gracefully before plopping into the still pond, sending out perfect ripples of concentric circles across the water.

The trio stared in quiet awe as the ripples expanded, their symmetry mesmerizing against the glassy surface.

The mole watched the ripples fade, the pond slowly returning to its pristine stillness. "By the time the pond becomes still again, it'll come to—" He suddenly perked up, eyes alight. "A-ha! There you go!"

Without missing a beat, the mole clambered down from his thinking rock, talking out loud of his revelation. "I need a one-way system," he declared with conviction. "Just move the west tunnel, put a roundabout in the left wing, demolish the old burrow by the oak roots..." He trailed off, muttering an increasingly intricate plan as he waddled back towards the bushes.

"It was nice to meet you, Mr Mole," Lyra called after him, her tone both amused and affectionate.

The mole stopped as if suddenly remembering their presence. "Oh, yes, how rude of me! Nice to meet you all," he said, giving a polite little bow. "Good luck with your... Great Spirit business."

"Thank you, Mr Mole," Lyra said warmly. "Say hello to Mrs Mole for us. Maybe pick her some flowers on the way home."

"Good idea," the mole replied, nodding thoughtfully. "Oh, and don't forget, the answer is always in the stillness."

"Where was I? Ah, yes, the west tunnel," the mole continued, already drifting back into his thoughts. "Mrs Mole will definitely be pleased with this," he said, his tiny chest puffing out with pride as he continued on his way. "Shouldn't take me longer

than a year. Maybe two.”

The trio exchanged amused glances, stifling laughter as the mole vanished into the undergrowth, still mumbling plans for his grand redesign.

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“Shall we give it a go, then?” Lyra asked, glancing at the serene pond.

“Sure,” Zia replied, already scanning the ground. “What are we supposed to think about?”

“Well,” Gryphon chimed in, “more of your emblem wouldn’t hurt, would it?”

“True,” Lyra admitted. “Okay, who wants to go first?”

“Why don’t we all go together?” Orin suggested. Lyra nodded, and the three of them began sifting through the pebbles, searching for the smoothest ones they could find.

“All right,” Lyra said, holding hers steady. “On three. One... two...”

“Whoa, cool! A dead rat!” Zia interrupted, pointing towards the undergrowth.

“Three,” Lyra continued, ignoring the distraction. Both she and Orin rolled their eyes and tossed their pebbles anyway. They arched gracefully through the air before landing in the water with a soft *plop*.

Two perfect circles of ripples spread across the pond, meeting in the centre. Lyra leaned forward, her eyes widening. “Hey, look.”

The overlapping ripples formed a new pattern, its elegant shape floating momentarily on the pond’s surface. Where the circles intersected, the form appeared perfectly balanced—half

inside, half outside.

Lyra stared at it, a spark of realisation lighting up her eyes. “That’s it. That’s the next part of the emblem.”

“Well, well,” said Gryphon, his tone both impressed and amused. “The *vesica piscis*.”

“The what, now?” Zia asked, her attention snapping back to the task at hand.

“The *vesica piscis*,” Gryphon repeated, enunciating each syllable with theatrical flair. “An ancient and powerful symbol. It represents balance, unity, and the coming together of two worlds. Quite fitting, wouldn’t you say?”

Lyra flipped open her sketchbook.

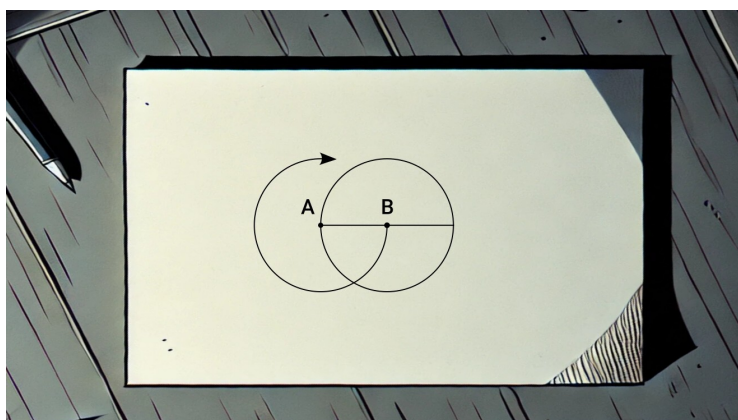
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Task

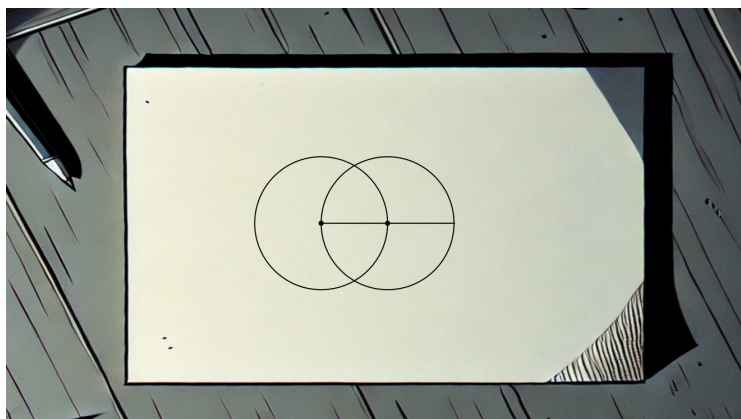
Can you help them recreate the *vesica piscis*? They’ve already drawn one perfect circle—now it’s time to add a second to form the iconic overlapping shape. Think carefully: Where should the second circle go? Once you’ve figured it out, give it a try yourself! Use your compass and imagination to map it out. Focus on symmetry and balance as you work.

SOLUTION

1. **Mark the second centre:** Locate the point where the horizontal line intersects the edge of the first circle (**Point A**).
2. **Draw the second circle:** Place the compass point at **Point A** and set the **radius** to match the centre of the first circle (**Point B**). Draw the second circle so it overlaps with the first, ensuring both centres lie on the same horizontal line.



The overlapping area between the two circles forms the almond-shaped *vesica piscis*. This elegant shape is central to sacred geometry. Great job!



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The trio pressed on, leaving the bullfrog to his peace, his contented croaks fading behind them. The pond's surface still rippled, not yet calm, but the group had moved on long before it settled. The path ahead stretched endlessly, winding through dense foliage and into the unknown. *The answer is in the stillness...* Lyra thought to herself, Mr Mole's words echoing in her mind. *But we didn't wait for the stillness, did we? Ah well, no turning back now.*