

Scare at Shadow Fair

As the night turned dead, a noise crept along the windswept valley. Led by a horse-drawn wagon, a string of lurching, wheeled giants trundled and tracked its way across the uneven ground. In the centre of the field, the vehicles stopped and a man leapt down from the front of the wagon. He stroked his horse's neck, then strode to the rear of the wagon. He slid a thick, iron latch across the door and pulled down a set of rickety, wooden steps before climbing them, one shrieking creak at a time, and beginning his sinister scheme.

"What a night for a Halloween fright," said the stranger to himself.

Inside the wagon, he clicked his fingers and a candle burst into life. Firelight oozed from the wick and cast shadows onto the wooden walls, which were lined with shelves of glass bottles containing strange, mysterious liquids. Some glowed gently, some fizzed furiously and some bubbled like saucepans on the verge of boiling over.

The stranger pulled half a dozen dangerous-looking containers from their shelves and placed them beside the candle on the small table. Under its light, the bottles seemed to come alive. The man turned, his red coat swishing behind him, and pulled an iron-rimmed trunk from underneath a cloaked shelf.

He reached into his coat and removed a brass key. It was long and twisted, like a skeleton's finger. He placed it into the lock and – click – the trunk opened.

"Ah. There you are," he murmured, and he ran his tongue across his bottom lip. His gnarled fingers flexed around a small, highly-polished mahogany box and prised it free. He placed it onto the table extremely carefully, as though cradling an old friend... or a sleeping monster.



Questions

1. What was pulling the wagon? Tick **one**.

- a man
- a horse
- giants
- wheels

2. What was the man wearing? Tick **one**.

- a long scarf
- a black hat
- a red coat
- a cloak

3. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order in which they occur in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- The man took a small box out of the trunk.
- 1 The wagon stopped in the field.
- The man chose some bottles of liquid.
- The man lit a candle inside the wagon.

4. Draw **four** lines and match each object to its describing adjective.

uneven

rickety

windswept

sinister

ground

scheme

steps

valley

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5. Find and copy **one** word which shows that man's fingers were old and crooked.

6. How did the man open the trunk?

7. **He placed it onto the table extremely carefully, as though cradling an old friend... or a sleeping monster.**

What do you think might be in the mahogany box? Why?

Answers

1. What was pulling the wagon? Tick **one**.

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- giants
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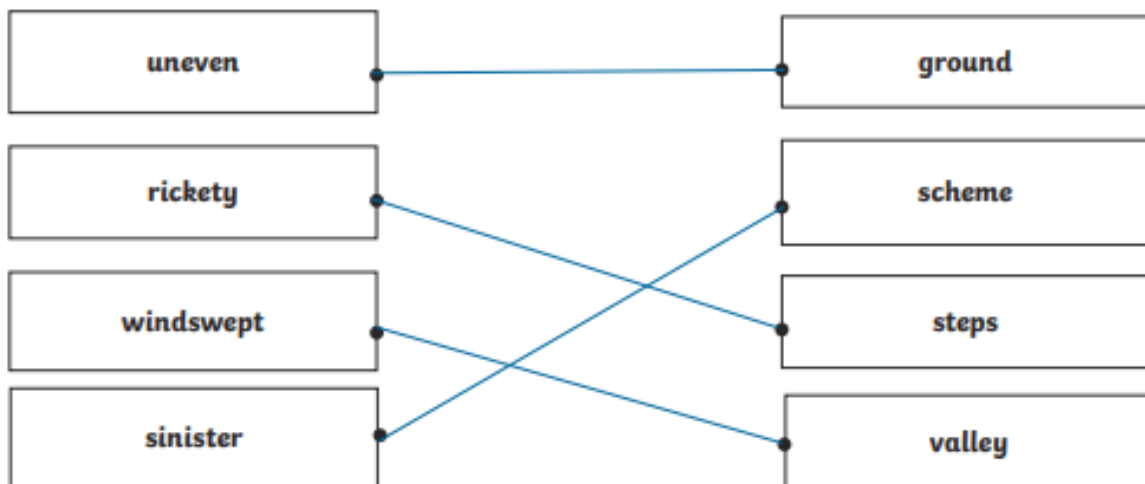
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- 4** The man took a small box out of the trunk.
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- 2** The man lit a candle inside the wagon.

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5. Find and copy one word which shows that man's fingers were old and crooked.

gnarled

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6. How did the man open the trunk?
with a brass key
7. **He placed it onto the table extremely carefully, as though cradling an old friend... or a sleeping monster.**

What do you think might be in the mahogany box? Why?

Children's own responses which refer to something that would need to be handled carefully, such as: a living creature; a prized possession; something dangerous.