

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 driver's seat. He stroked his horse's neck and 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 mysterious liquids. Some glowed gently, some fizzed furiously and some bubbled like saucepans on the verge of boiling over.



The man pulled half a dozen dangerous-looking containers from their shelves and placed them beside the candle on a round table. Under its light, the bottles and their concoctions seemed to come alive. He 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 of the trunk.

Click.

It opened with a groan.

"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.



With a touch as light as a feather, he opened the box and his eyes lit up with wonder. He plucked out an unusual item and held it up against the flame.

It was a delicate, crystalline skull.

The man uncorked the first of the concoctions and tipped a single drop onto the skull. It fizzed and a cloud of toxic, green mist filled the room. He breathed deeply and a sinister smile stretched across his face.



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 to 5 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.
- The man poured a potion onto the skull.

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

toxic

valley

crystalline

scheme

windswept

skull

sinister

mist

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

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6. Find and copy a **simile** that describes the brass key.

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

Why do you think the man is treating the box so carefully?

8. What impression do you get of this man? Copy down the words or phrases that create this effect.
