



“Is that thief still here?” hooted Count Owl of Kronenberg. As he perched on the lowest branch of the oak tree, his yellow eyes blinked **fiercely** at the woodsman. “Young **rogue**, give me back the forests you have stolen from my forefathers—”

At this, all the little mushrooms started giggling again.

“Pulp-brains!” said the Count, **indignantly**. “I meant **forefathers**, of course!”

“What have I stolen?” asked the woodsman, looking around. “This isn’t my forest. I have no riches. Some days, like today, I don’t even have a crust of bread for my breakfast.”

Master Stone then broke into the conversation. He pulled a stony face. “Don’t listen to Count Owl, young woodsman. He never stops complaining, and he’s driving us all stone-mad.”

Count Owl sniffed and wiped away a tear. “You have no feelings for anyone, Master Stone,” he said. “A long time ago, I was the Lord of all this forest. How can you expect me to forget the past?”

“The Past!” mimicked the Stone, **scornfully**. “Look here, Count Owl—*the Past, the Present, the Future*—it’s all the same to me. Once upon a time, I was a stone. A stone I am. A stone I shall forever be.”

“And what about me?” said the woodsman, taking great care not to step on little Marsha. “I was hungry yesterday. Today I’m even hungrier, and tomorrow—”

“Miss Marsha,” said the headmistress, “how many times have I reminded you never to talk to passing woodsmen?”

“Goodbye, I have to go now,” said Marsha, tugging at the **hem** of the woodsman’s breeches.

“Wait, little mushroom, you made me a promise,” he said.

“Come back at the Feast of the Midsummer Moon,” whispered Marsha. “I promise I shall be waiting for you.”





Can you write down the word that is missing on each line? If you don't remember, look back at the Midsummer Moon story. **Example number one is done for you.**

1. (**forefathers**) my family who lived a long time before me, my ancestors
2. _____
the sewn edge around a piece of clothing
3. _____
mockingly, making fun of someone
4. _____
in an annoyed manner
5. _____
in a very angry manner
6. _____
rascal

Midsummer Moon



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 6

- a. What are Count Owl and Master Stone always arguing about?
- b. Why doesn't Master Stone feel sorry for Count Owl?
- c. Why doesn't Master Stone care about the past or the future?
- d. When will Marsha Mushroom meet the woodsman again?



Can you draw a picture of Count Owl arguing with Master Stone?



Listen to the CD again and imagine what you might see.





And so the woodsman began to climb the long wooded slope which led to the village. By good luck, whom should he meet but the Baker pulling his empty cart behind him?

“Do you have your axe with you, young man?” he said. “Good, then help me cut some firewood. I have a hundred loaves of bread to bake today.”

“Hark!” **screached** Count Owl, watching furiously from the oak tree. “Look at him! That rogue of a woodcutter is still stealing my **timber!**”

But there was nothing he could do. The woodsman chopped down as much wood as the Baker needed. Together, they loaded the cart and dragged it into the village.

When most of the bread had been baked and sold, the woodsman received a shiny sixpence and a couple of leftover loaves for his **wages**. He thought he was going to faint from hunger but, just as he began to eat, the Cobbler poked his head through the door of the shop.

“Young man,” he said, “I need some maple wood. I have to carve a pair of clogs for Princess Sharma and deliver them to the Palace before sundown.”

“*Humph!* Princess or no Princess, she shall wait until I finish my breakfast.”

“No time! No time for breakfast!” said the Cobbler, staring at the woodsman’s old shoes. “Please bring me what I need, young man, and for your reward you’ll get a brand new pair of clogs, too.”

The woodsman didn’t want to go, but he did need new shoes; so he **trudged reluctantly** back into the forest.

“Here’s the best wood I could find, Master Cobbler,” he said, when he returned. Then he pulled out the loaf of bread from his pocket and began to eat.

“Young man!” called the Tailor from the shop next door. “My brother, the Baker, says you can get me some firewood from the forest.”

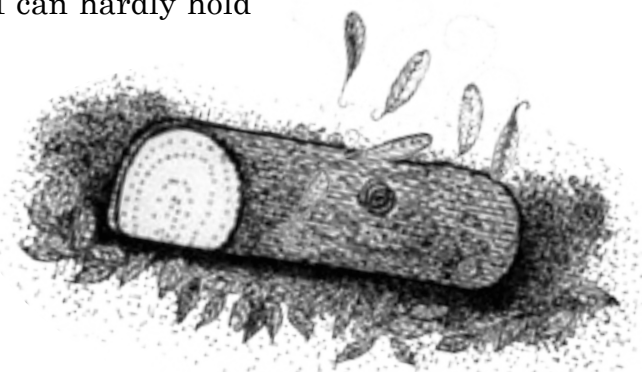
“No,” said the woodsman. “I can’t go.”

“But I promise to sew you some new clothes in return for your trouble.”

“Well, all right, but I must eat first. I’m feeling weak from hunger.”

“I cannot wait for you to eat,” said the Tailor. “My hands are so cold, I can hardly hold my—I can, I can hardly hold my sewing needle!”

He fumbled for his tape and measured the woodsman around the neck, the arm, the waist and the knee. “Please bring me back some firewood, young man, before my fingers freeze into icicles.”





Can you write down the word that is missing on each line? If you don't remember, look back at the Midsummer Moon story. **Example number one is done for you.**

1. (trudged) walked slowly
2. _____
not wanting to do something,
unwillingly
3. _____
made an ear-piercing sound
4. _____
payment for good work
5. _____
wooden logs



Midsummer Moon



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 7

- a. Who owns the forest? Do you think the forest belongs to Count Owl of the Transylvanian House of Kronenberg?
- b. Do you think the woodcutter really is a thief and a rogue? Why or why not?
- c. What reward does the woodcutter receive from the Baker? And from the Cobbler?
- d. Do you think that the three old brothers are also thieves and rogues? Why or why not?



Can you draw the woodsman cutting down maplewood for Master Cobbler?



Listen to the CD again and imagine what you might see.



So the woodsman returned to the forest for the third time. Just before sundown he dragged the Baker's cart, loaded with wood, into the village.

"Hurry up!" said the Cobbler, as soon as the woodsman **stumbled** into his shop. He handed him an **odd-looking** pair of **maple clogs** on a velvet cushion. "Take off those rags you're wearing and get dressed properly. You'll have to deliver these to the Palace before nightfall."

"Me?" **groaned** the woodsman. "But I'm too tired to go!"

"Oh, but you must go, you must!" said the Cobbler. "Quick! Put on your new shoes."

"Stand still," scolded the Tailor, **braiding** a **thin leather lacing** through the **eyelets** of the young man's breeches. He brushed the tiny **twigs** from his curly black hair. "There now, you're **presentable** enough to go to the Palace."

To the Palace? thought the woodsman, **catching a glimpse of his reflection** in the mirror. So the little mushroom in the forest did tell the truth after all. I really am as handsome as a king in my new clothes. **Haughtily** he stared at the three old men.

"Why do I have to go?" he said.

"Because the young men from the village are too afraid."

"*Shush!*" whispered one of the brothers.

"What are they afraid of?" said the woodsman.

"**Rumours**, gossip, fairy tales!" said the Cobbler. "Some fool says the Palace is surrounded by an enchanted forest that is too dangerous to pass through."

"And we've heard some silly stories about a **Sorceress**," muttered the Baker. "But that's all nonsense! There's nothing to fear. Now, if—I mean, as soon as you come back, young man, we promise to serve you a magnificent supper. A supper fit for a king!"

The woodsman stared **suspiciously** at the three old men. He wondered why they were so anxious to be rid of him. However, he was curious to see the Palace at the top of the mountain, and he had never seen a Princess before.

So, forgetting how hungry he was, the woodsman picked up the maple clogs and quickly **strode** away.





Can you write down the word that is missing on each line? If you don't remember, look back at the Midsummer Moon story. **Example number one is done for you.**

1. (strode) walked with long determined steps
2. _____
proudly
3. _____
a witch
4. _____
mistrustfully
5. _____
stories, gossip
6. _____
seeing himself
7. _____
walked clumsily
8. _____
not well matched
9. _____
complained loudly
10. _____
looking neat and tidy
11. _____
tiny branches of a tree
12. _____
narrow strip of leather
13. _____
small loops to hold a belt
14. _____
shoes made from maplewood
15. _____
twisting thin strips together

Midsummer Moon



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 8

- a. Do you think the three old men are trying to hide something from the woodsman?



- b. Does the woodsman trust the old men?
- c. How do you think the woodcutter feels when he sees his own handsome reflection in the mirror?
- d. Why do you think he decides to go to the Palace?



Can you draw a picture of the woodsman's reflection in the glass?



Listen to the CD again and imagine what you might see.



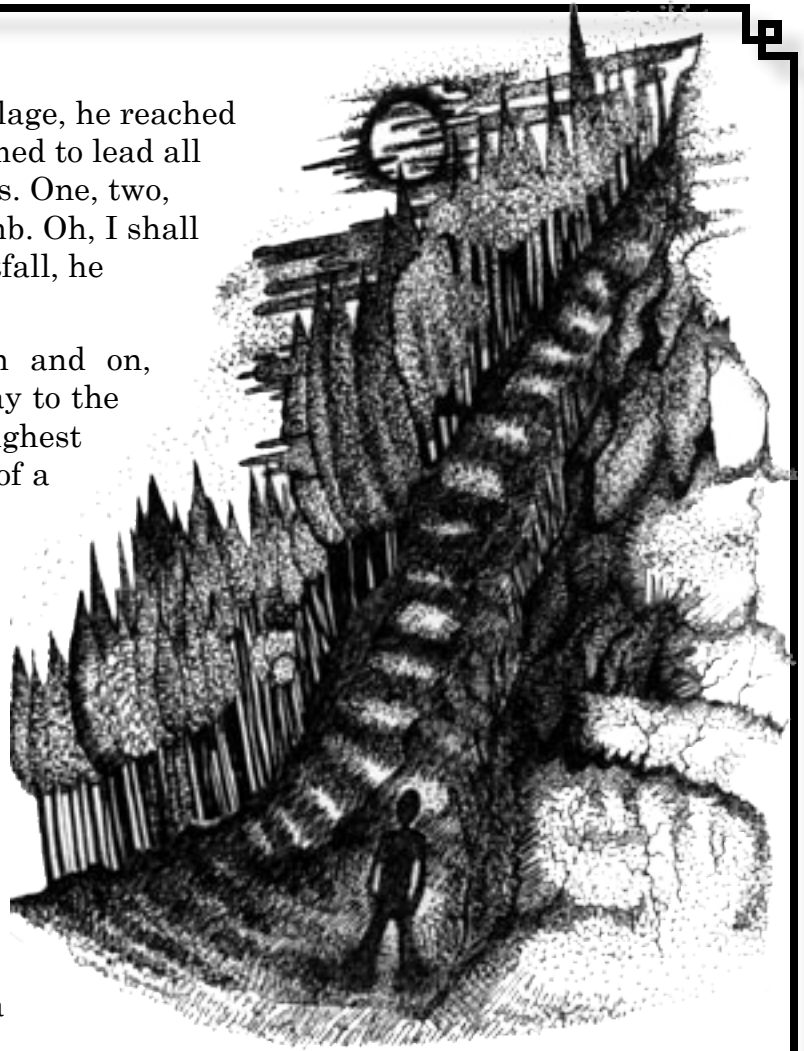


Some distance from the village, he reached the rock staircase. It seemed to lead all the way up into the clouds. One, two, three—the woodsman began to climb. Oh, I shall never reach the Palace before nightfall, he thought.

Nevertheless, he climbed on and on, while the moon rose to light his way to the top. When he reached the very highest step, he found himself at the edge of a moonlit forest.

What a strange forest it was! Not at all like his own forest, where he chopped down trees for firewood.

He touched a leaf. It was green and glossy, although frost still glittered on the ground. Waxy white blossoms, like giant teardrops, hung from the branches of trees. The trunks were twisted. Ribbons of mist drifted around them. Suddenly, Princess Sharma herself stepped from the **grove**.



“Your Highness,” said the woodsman nervously, recognizing her at once, although this was the first time he had ever seen a Princess. “Here are the new clogs you ordered from Master Cobbler.”

Princess Sharma **limped** slowly toward him. Her **hooped gown** of stiff brocade **ballooned** awkwardly before her. A stiff collar of lace and buttons **encased** her throat. Her smile was beautiful, but very sad.

“Thank you, Sir,” she said, “but these are just wooden clogs; not at all what I ordered.”

“What!” cried the woodsman in **dismay**.

“The King will be furious again. Haven’t you heard how he punishes all the young men who do not keep their promises?”

“What promises?”

“To bring the magic slippers for me to dance in.”

“But Master Cobbler sent me with these wooden clogs,” said the woodsman. “I’ve never even heard of magic slippers.”



Can you write down the word that is missing on each line? If you don't remember, look back at the Midsummer Moon story. **Example number one is done for you.**

1. (grove) a small forest
2. _____
a wide fluffy dress with a metal hoop inside
3. _____
floated around her like a balloon
4. _____
walked, dragging her hurt foot
5. _____
feeling upset, discouraged
6. _____
tightly covered up or enclosed
7. _____
anyway



Midsummer Moon



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 9

- a. What sort of forest does the woodsman find at the top of the mountain?
- b. Do you think it's an enchanted forest?
- c. Why do you think Master Cobbler sends the woodsman to the Palace with the wrong slippers?
- d. What is the King like? Do you think the villagers are afraid of the King? Why or why not?



Can you draw a picture of Princess Sharma in the Enchanted Forest?



Listen to the CD again and imagine what you might see.



Oh, don't say that!" said the Princess, squeezing one foot into her new maple clog. "I must have the magic dancing slippers, so that I can dance at the Midsummer Ball."

"But where can I find them, Your Highness? Tell me, and I'll bring them to you tomorrow, I promise."

"I'm not sure, but I think they must be hidden somewhere deep in the forest, where the Sorceress used to live."

The woodsman **shuddered**. A cold wind seemed to blow over his heart. "Who is this Sorceress that everyone's always talking about?"

"I will tell you, young man," said Princess Sharma, "just listen!

"Many years ago, a tiny **witch hazel seed** blew up from the forest. It took root beside the Palace wall and grew into a little tree. At first, the King thought that it was beautiful. He watered it and **tended** it and watched it spread around the walls. By Midsummer, the Palace had almost disappeared behind this creeping forest of witch hazel."

"Go on," said the woodsman.

"Well, on Midsummer **Eve**, my father had the **enormous** tree chopped down. He ordered its trunk to be carved into a magnificent throne and footstool. But that was wrong; he should never have done that."

"Why not?"

"Well, everyone knows that Midsummer Eve is a **sacred** night. Some people say the Forest Sorceress herself is still trapped inside the tree."

"But I don't understand," said the woodsman. "I've chopped down hundreds of trees and I've never once seen the Forest Sorceress."

"Of course not. She's a prisoner. She's been trapped for years inside the King's carved throne and footstool. But every year, on the Eve of the Feast of Midsummer, she longs to return into the forest; and so, she **conjures up a mighty tempest** that **rages** around the Palace, trying to set her free.

"When that happens, even the ground trembles. The wooden **shutters** rattle on their **hinges**, the window panes blow open and all the candles are blown out. My father's hair has turned snow white with fear."





Can you write down the word that is missing on each line? If you don't remember, look back at the Midsummer Moon story. **Example number one is done for you.**

1. (conjures up a mighty tempest)
makes a storm appear or happen,
like magic
2. _____
swinging doors, covering a
window
3. _____
storms around in a temper
4. _____
shivered with horror or fright
5. _____
took care of, fed and watered
6. _____
seed of the witch hazel tree
7. _____
wooden or metal joints
8. _____
the night before
9. _____
very big
10. _____
very special, holy



Midsummer Moon



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 10

- a. Is the witch hazel seed a special magic seed? How do you know?
- b. Why does the King have the witch hazel tree chopped down?
- c. What happens to the Forest Sorceress?
- d. Where are the magic slippers hidden now?



Can you draw a picture of the Forest Sorceress imprisoned in the King's throne?



Listen to the CD again and imagine what you might see.

