



Northern Isle of Dreams

There once lived a **wealthy** merchant who owned a grand house several **leagues** from the **Citadel** of Montsuelo, at the furthest tip of the Kingdom. One spring morning the whole household was **astir**, preparing for the merchant's journey to the Palace of the King.

"Another long journey," sighed his wife.

"How can you look so sad!" exclaimed the merchant. "This is the greatest honour! To receive a royal invitation to Court! Just think of it!"

"But, dearest, I've heard some disturbing **rumours**," whispered his wife.

"Rumours? What rumours?"

"They say that the King is preparing to **invade** the neighbouring Kingdom of Valerdia."

"Nonsense!" replied the merchant. "Wherever did you hear such nonsense?"

"All the richest merchants in the land have been invited to the Palace, you say. Perhaps the King is going to ask them to **furnish** the great army he needs."

"*Shush*, my dear lady," said the merchant, seeming a little **flustered**, "I beg you not to trouble your sweet, *sweet* head with such **weighty matters of state**."

"Well, why else must you travel to the Palace with your chest full of gold?"

"I have no time now, my dear!" said her husband, throwing up his hands impatiently. "**Make haste** with your preparations! I must leave at once, or I shall surely arrive too late."





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

1. (weighty matters of state)
important decisions of the
government
2. _____
enter and occupy a city by force
3. _____
a fortress defending a city
4. _____
a measure of about 3 miles
5. _____
give, provide
6. _____
whispered stories
7. _____
busy, active
8. _____
rich
9. _____
nervous
10. _____
Hurry up!

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 1

- a. Where is the merchant going?
- b. Why is he so pleased about the royal invitation?
- c. Is the merchant's wife pleased about it? Why or why not?
- d. Why doesn't the merchant want to listen to his wife's advice?
- e. Why is the merchant in such a hurry to leave?



Can you draw a picture of the merchant's grand house?



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





Within an hour the horses were **harnessed**. The merchant climbed into his carriage. It was richly **upholstered**, in purple and gold, and comfortable enough for long journeys. As they traveled across the countryside at great speed, the merchant began dreaming about the design of his new **coat of arms**. It must be covered with **prancing lions** and swords and **sundials**, and inscribed with a grand Latin **motto**. Yes, nothing else would do!

“Why are you slowing down?” he called to the carriage driver.

“There’s quite a **rabble** at the marketplace, Master, a crowd of lazy beggars. I’m afraid we might not get through at all.”

“Make haste, my good man! Oh, what ill luck to run into that vulgar mob. Look at them! Why, they take up the whole road! This is **scandalous**. I shall bring it to the attention of the King, I shall indeed!”

The carriage rolled slowly on amid the **clamour**. Some of the ragged ruffians ran alongside the wheels. Others **jeered** and shouted. They shook their fists threateningly at the carriage window.

There’s only one thing to be done, thought the merchant. He pushed open the carriage door a tiny crack. “Here, good people, accept this little gift. I would stop longer, but I do not have the time.” And so saying, he flung a handful of silver coins over the heads of the mob.

A great roar rose up from the crowd. The merchant smiled—a *secret smile*—as he watched the men pushing and **jostling** one another, eager to snatch up the coins from the ground. Urgently, he called to his driver.

“Quick, drive on! Let us be on our way as fast as we can!”





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

1. (**harnessed**) tied by leather straps (to the carriage)
2. _____
shield marked with a special design
3. _____
simple instrument for telling the time
4. _____
lions rising up on their hind legs
5. _____
padded and covered with material
6. _____
pushing (someone) out of the way
7. _____
wise saying, proverb
8. _____
noisy crowd of people
9. _____
made fun of, mocked
10. _____
shocking, disgraceful
11. _____
noise, uproar

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 2

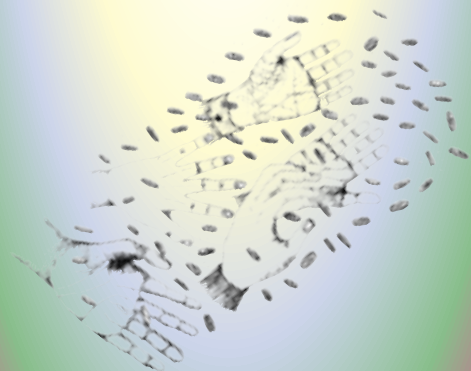
- a. Why do you think the merchant's new coat of arms is so important?
- b. Why can't the driver drive through the marketplace?
- c. Is it a good idea to toss money out of the carriage window?



Draw a picture of the crowd at the marketplace.



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





When they were safely out of the marketplace, the merchant mopped his damp **brow** and sighed in relief. He thought of his treasure chest tucked secretly under the seat.

What luck that I had those few loose coins in my pocket, he thought. He fell into a light doze; his dreams were full of knighthood and honours and favours from high places.

“**Eureka!** I’ve got it!” he shrieked, suddenly awakening with a jolt.

“Are you ill, Master?” called the driver.

“Drive on, drive on!” shouted the merchant, poking his head out of the carriage window. “I have just thought of the perfect motto for my coat of arms! *It is a wise Master who makes of his servant—Time.*”

“Yes, Master,” replied the driver, with a grin.

“*Tempus, er, er, tempus virum servum facit—*” But to tell the truth the merchant wasn’t quite sure. It was such a long time since he’d been to school. Besides, he had spent too much time watching the schoolroom clock to have remembered much of his Latin lessons. He pulled out his precious **timepiece** on its strong gold chain. “Can’t you drive a little faster, my man?” he **whined**.





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

1. **(Eureka!)** An expression that means: "Ah, I've got it; at last I understand!"
2. _____
(he) spoke in a complaining tone of voice
3. _____
watch, clock
4. _____
forehead

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 3

- a. What is the merchant's special wish or desire?
- b. What is your own special wish? How is it similar to or different from the merchant's special wish?
- c. What does the carriage driver think about the merchant's special wish?



Can you draw a picture of the merchant's hidden treasure chest?



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





For it was almost sunset, and they were traveling through a **sombre** part of the woods, branches scraping the roof of the carriage, tree shadows darkening the forest road.

Mercy! We shall soon have to stop for the night, thought the merchant, and our journey has hardly begun.

The moon rose. A raw unfriendly wind blew up. The merchant shivered in his fine robes as the rain beat over the roof of the carriage and trickled down the window pane. A low roll of thunder rumbled overhead; then the silver-streaked sky split open with a **tremendous** roar. The horses were terrified.

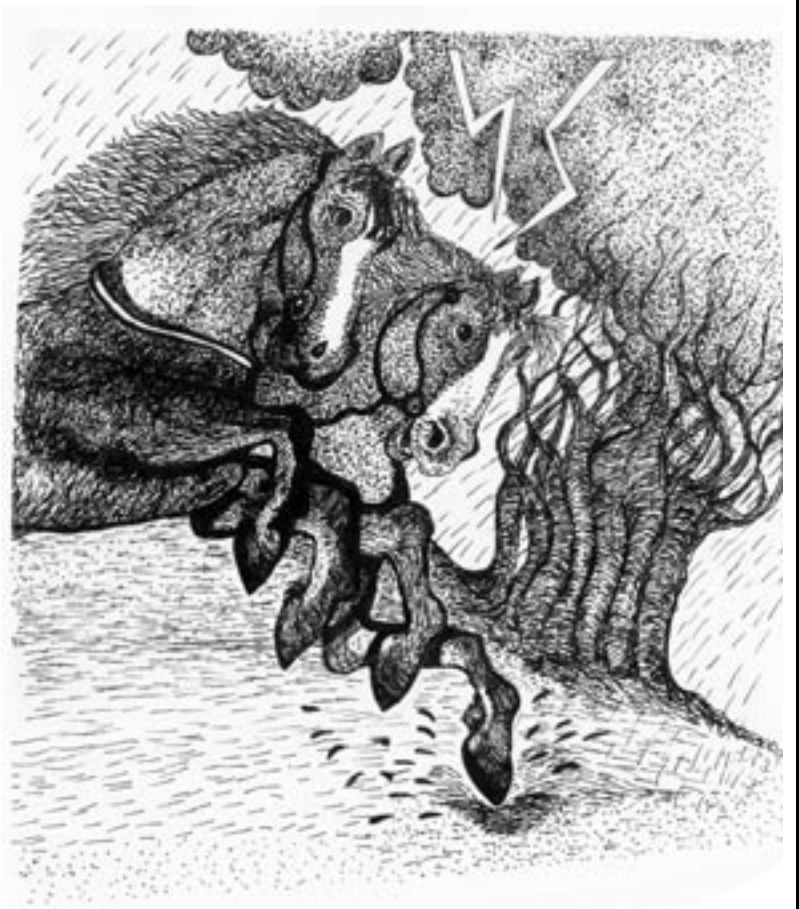
“Oh, no, just my luck to run into such **foul** weather!” grumbled the merchant. “Now we haven’t a hope of reaching the Palace in time.”

All through the night, he listened to the raindrops trickling steadily over the roof. But he was so impatient to reach the Palace that he hardly slept at all. And gradually the moon faded like a blown dandelion in the sky. The sun rose. As the carriage **trundled** out of the woods, they could actually see the Palace on the misty horizon.

“Faster! Faster!” screamed the merchant. “We’re nearing our journey’s end!”

“Yes, Master,” gasped the **exhausted** man.

“Don’t slow your pace now. As soon as we reach the Palace, I promise you shall dine on **mutton** and ale, then snore to your heart’s content in front of the fireplace but, for pity’s sake, **spur on** those wretched horses, before it’s too late.”





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

1. (trundled) (it) rolled along

2. _____
meat from an adult sheep

3. _____
very tired

4. _____
drive on

5. _____
dark

6. _____
great or huge

7. _____
bad



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 4

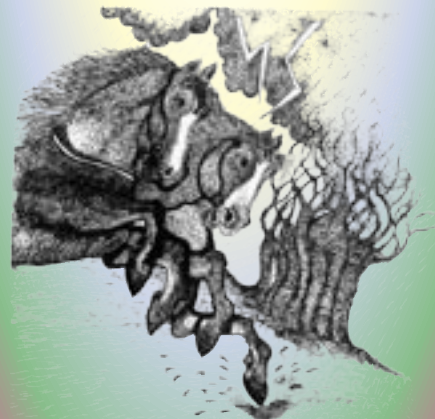
- What is the only thing the merchant can think of?
- Is the merchant worried about the horses getting wet in the rainstorm?
- Does the merchant care about the exhausted driver?
- What does the merchant promise the driver as a reward? Is that a fair reward for his service, do you think?



Can you draw a picture of the storm in the forest?



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





Yet, as they entered the Citadel of Montsuelo, no fanfare **heralded**

their arrival. Instead of a festive parade, a long funeral procession drifted by. The people's faces were grim with **mourning**.

"Our King is dead!" they cried. "A terrible **plague** is sweeping over the town like wildfire. Begone, Sir, if you value your life, although we fear—even for you—it is too late."

But then a Page hurried toward them. "Her Majesty, the Queen, wishes to speak with you at once, Sir," he said.

Now, although he was frightened, the merchant followed the Page into the Palace. The unhappy Queen sat alone in the draughty state room, beside the King's empty throne. The air was cold and mournful. A dense curtain of crawling ivy darkened the rose-stained window glass.

"Thank you for coming, good Sir," said the Queen, with a sad smile. "Alas, your **loyalty** to the King deserved a far happier welcome than this."

The merchant bowed his head, trying to **conceal** his terror.

"Therefore I shall **perform his last intention** myself," continued the Queen. With the point of the King's heavy sword she touched the merchant on the shoulder. "Welcome to the Court, Knight of the Royal Shield," she said.

The merchant feared to take a single breath. The **dreaded** plague seemed to **hover** like mist in the air. Cautiously, he **sidled** toward the door.

"Your Highness will kindly excuse me," he babbled. "I must leave now."

"Stay, gentle Knight," called the Queen. "In memory of your dead King, one last service I must beg of you."

"But I really must go at once, I—"

"A moment of your time, noble Sir, I have a tale to whisper in your ear."

"A *t-tale*, Your Majesty?" stammered the merchant.





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

1. (**mourning**) a feeling of sadness
2. _____
do what (the King) would have done
3. _____
being a true friend to someone
4. _____
announced (by the sound of trumpets)
5. _____
a widespread sickness that is catching
6. _____
slipped quietly away
7. _____
fearful, horrible
8. _____
hang in the air
9. _____
hide

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Page 5

- a. What has happened to the King of Montsuelo?
- b. Do you think the merchant is happy now to become a Knight of the Royal Shield?
- c. Why is the merchant so anxious to get away from the Palace?



Can you draw a picture of the merchant receiving his knighthood?



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

