



THE DARK DUNGEON

- 1 No one in living memory had ever climbed Black Mountain and returned. Sir Anthony led the way, pointing his trusty spear into the gloom above, while Peter followed. It was Peter's duty to carry both his and Sir Anthony's bags. If there were any monsters on the mountain it would be important that Sir Anthony not be weighed down with cooking pans and blankets.
- 2 As night fell, they found a tiny cave in the mountainside where they could rest. Young Peter sat at the front of the cave, keeping watch while Sir Anthony slept. His master needed the most rest so he could fight monsters to the best of his ability. Peter couldn't argue with that, after all, Sir Anthony was the bravest adventurer in the land.

- 3 Soon Sir Anthony's snores were growling throughout the cave. Peter did his best to ignore the rumble as he read his book on astronomy. He loved light, the way it could warm you up with a glimmer, and stars were the most beautiful form of light in the world. Peter hoped that one day his adventuring would give him enough money to buy his own telescope; then he could look at the stars whenever he wanted.
- 4 Peter was so engrossed in his book; he didn't notice the dark shadow crawling down the mountain. Nor did he hear its sloppy breathing over Sir Anthony's snoring. Peter was reading a fascinating chapter on constellations, when a slimy claw smacked the book from his hands. The smallest, peeping

yelp was all that Peter could make before the claw knocked him into black unconsciousness.

- 5 When Peter woke, he found himself hanging next to a very pale-looking Sir Anthony. They were in a large chamber made with walls oozing a dirty-smelling liquid. Peter shuddered; it felt too sticky to be water. A light wind whistled through a small window high above them.
- 6 A door clanged open at the opposite end of the chamber. A tall shadow entered, followed by a hunched figure, lumbering along on all fours. The taller of the two was a man who looked like he was over a hundred years old. He wore black and red robes, and had a dirty white beard that twisted all the way to the ground. Beside him was a horrendous beast, a cross between a gorilla and a poodle. Its beady eyes squinted up at Peter as it licked its greasy lips.
- 7 The old man pointed a gnarled finger straight at Sir Anthony and hissed, "You are trespassers on my mountain! I should keep you locked away in here forever. Or maybe I'll feed you to my pet, Gargle, just for the fun of it."

Sir Anthony tried to mumble something, but his teeth were chattering too violently. Peter simply swallowed. He didn't know how to speak like a hero.

"However, because I get so awfully lonely and bored up here on this mountain, I have an idea for making things more interesting. We will play a little game, and depending on how you play, I'll let one of you go free. What say you to that?"

- 8 Sir Anthony nodded frantically.

"Very well. I shall let both of you walk into the next room. It is my vault, filled with all of the treasures that I've collected over the years. Your job is to

take as much as you can carry from the vault and bring it in here. I want you to use whatever you have to fill this chamber as much as possible."

- 9 The old man clapped his hands and the chains holding Sir Anthony and Peter vanished, sending the two adventurers tumbling onto the gooeey floor. The beast, Gargle, growled wetly at them.

"Don't get any silly ideas while you're in my vault, otherwise I will let Gargle do whatever he likes with you. The poor thing hasn't eaten properly in years," the old man said, then smiled just enough to allow a single green tooth to poke out from between his wrinkled lips.

- 10 The two adventurers walked through the door and into a gigantic vault. Peter's eyes boggled. He could buy the world's biggest telescope with all of the glittering treasure it contained. Meanwhile, Sir Anthony was doing his best to grab as much treasure as possible, piling chalices upon chests upon trays and lifting it all with his strong, heroic muscles. Peter could never hope to carry that much with his flabby assistant's arms.

- 11 Finally the old man called out to the pair, telling them their time was up. Sir Anthony returned first, the veins in his head quivering with the strain of all the treasure in his arms. He let out a pained bellow as he threw the treasure into the dungeon. Coins scattered everywhere, making a sound like metallic rainfall. Treasure chests cracked open, spilling more riches. Huffing and red-faced, Sir Anthony ran around the room, spreading out the treasure as best he could to fill the dungeon like a very expensive carpet. It barely covered the slimy floor. Gargle barked out what might have been a bubble of laughter.

- 12 It was Peter's turn. He only had one clear crystal and a curved mirror. Ignoring Gargle's wet noises, Peter walked around the dungeon, taking great care where he placed the curved mirror. He then stood next to the old man, holding the crystal in

his hand. Peter didn't say anything; he just looked up at the tiny window. Outside the sky was turning pink as morning approached.

13 The first rays of sunlight pierced through the bars of the window. Peter held up the crystal in his hand and caught a ray of light. The shape of the crystal caused the light to come out the other end in a beam of many colours. This rainbow sprayed straight into the curved mirror. An explosion of shimmering sunlight filled the dark dungeon. Walls that had never seen such light shone brilliantly as the glistening liquid picked up the sun's reflected rays.

14 The old man clapped. "Well done, you have indeed filled the room with such colourful light. It would be a shame for someone as smart as you to be simple pet food. No, you shall stay here and keep me company, having all my wealth when I am gone." The old man turned to Sir Anthony, who was still puffed with exhaustion. "As for this fool,

I'll set him free to make the most of his muscles in the world outside. They seem to be the only things he has going for him."

15 Peter gaped in shock. Surely he should have been freed for his cleverness. Sir Anthony, not one to argue against such wisdom, whooped for joy and ran out of the dungeon, full of energy once again. The old man turned back to Peter with a single-toothed grin.

"Don't worry about him boy, he'll be fine. But as for yourself ... well, you look like the kind of person who knows a thing or two about fixing broken telescopes. Follow me." Peter beamed. "You have a telescope?"

The old man hobbled out of the dungeon, followed by a still smiling Peter. Gargle bounded after the two, slobbering friendly saliva all over Peter's back. Life on Black Mountain might not be so bad after all.

Questions

1 Peter was reading a book about
a mountains.
b monsters.
c astronomy.

2 The beast was
a friendly.
b a cross between a gorilla and a poodle.
c afraid of Sir Anthony.

3 Sir Anthony and Peter had to
a use treasure to fill the room as much as possible.
b fight Gargle to the death.
c take whatever treasure they liked as a reward.



4 What items of treasure did Peter pick?
a chalices and chests
b a crystal and a chalice
c a crystal and a mirror

5 How do we know that Sir Anthony wasn't really a hero?
a he was not brave
b he was not kind
c both of the above

6 Why did Peter look like someone who could fix a broken telescope?
a He was good at assisting people.
b He demonstrated his knowledge of light, which is important for telescopes.
c He wanted to buy his own telescope one day.



Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- 7 To faintly shine (3)
- 8 Completely occupied your attention (4)
- 9 Large goblets (10)
- 10 Tubes that carry blood (11)
- 11 Taking no notice of (12)

Alphabetical Order

The following words appear in the text. When placed in alphabetical order, which one would be **first**?

- 12 greasy, gorilla, gloom, give
- 13 black, bravest, best, book
- 14 cave, climbed, could, chattering
- 15 would, weighed, window, whenever

Back To The Text...

- 16 Black Mountain often had visitors.
a true b false
- 17 In which part of the library would you find this text?
a fiction b non-fiction
- 18 Prediction: What is likely to happen in the future?
a Sir Anthony would be given more treasure.
b Peter would inherit Black Mountain.

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19 a Peter carried the cooking pans.
b Peter kept watch at the front of the cave.
- 20 a The adventurers were offered a game.
b The adventurers were threatened with imprisonment.
- 21 a Sir Anthony covered the floor with treasure.
b Peter adjusted the curved mirror.

Think About This

- 22 What is the most important thing we learn in section 3?
a Sir Anthony snored a lot.
b The pair were in a cave.
c Peter had a love of astronomy.
- 23 What words best describe Sir Anthony?
a strong and scholarly
b brawny and self-absorbed
c powerful and intelligent

Challenge Option

Drawing: Try to imagine the telescope Peter would use. Draw it.

