

The Tinderbox

Summary of the story

A poor soldier is approached by an old woman. She asks him to go into a tree and get her an old tinderbox. In the tree there are three rooms, with a chest of money and a dog. Each room he goes into, the dogs are bigger and their eyes are bigger than the one before. The soldier collects lots of money and keeps the tinderbox. He is now rich and he hears of a poor princess who is unhappy in the castle. He uses the magic tinderbox to see the princess. The princess tells her parents about the soldier and they catch the soldier. When they go to chop off his head he uses the tinderbox to call the dogs. The dogs chase the king and queen away. The soldier marries the princess and lives in a castle with her and the three dogs.



Background to the story

The Tinderbox, a Hans Christian Andersen story, was one of four fairy stories which was first published in 1835 in *Fairy Tales told for Children*. They were written for a little girl, Ida Thiele, the daughter of the secretary of the Academy of Art in Denmark. A tinderbox was used to make fire before the invention of matches.

Topics and themes

Animals. Dogs are part of this story. The theme could develop into the themes of the use of dogs, for rescue, police work or on farms.

Numbers. There are three dogs in this story. What other stories can the pupils think of with three things in them? (Goldilocks; the Three Billy Goats).

Magic. The tinderbox is magic. Why do you

think it is magic and where does it come from? Ask the pupils if they believe in magic and why.

Shapes. The shapes of the dogs' eyes is a feature of the story. This could lead into a discovery of shapes of parts of people's faces, head, ears for example.

Size. Comparisons of size, big, bigger, biggest, is clearly illustrated on page 13 of the Reader.

Making use of the Reader

Who is the old woman? Ask the pupils to work in groups and decide what her story is. Where did she come from? Is she a good/bad old woman? Is she a witch? How old is she? Discuss what the pupils think of her. Talk about what she would have done after the soldier ran off with the tinder box.

Talk about pets that frighten people such as snakes, fish, hamsters, rabbits, mice, insects, spiders. Do any of the pupils own these sorts of pets? Is it a good idea to have a pet like this? What animals make good pets and why?

Look at pages 6 & 7. Ask the pupils to describe the soldier when he is rich and when he is poor. What are the differences e.g. drink, food, clean clothes, happy, sad, poor, rich, alone, hungry .

Using the accompanying video or audio cassette

Watching or listening for specific information/post-reading/whole class.

Before watching or listening to the cassette (if the pupils have already read the book) elicit the names of the main characters from the story and write them on the board.

Tell the children to stand up, for example, when they see the soldier or when he speaks, to clap, and so on with all the characters. This will result in very energetic and active viewing or listening.



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During watching and listening – whole class prediction.

Play the video or audio cassette story through in its entirety. The second time through, stop

just before a dramatic event in the story, for example when the soldier runs away with the tinderbox, on page 5, and ask the children to tell you what happens next, then view or listen to see if they were right.

Simultaneous reading and listening in groups will help the pupils with pronunciation and intonation. They may like to repeat the words 'woosh, bang woof' whenever they appear in the story.

Record the pupils dramatizing the story on audio or video cassette. There could be a narrator, the soldier, the old woman and the princess to speak the words.

Notes on the activities in the factsheet

Activity 1. This is a survey. Pupils should be in groups of four. They should draw their face in the first circle and then the faces of the three other people in the group in the other circles. Then they ask each other if they have pets and if so which pets they have. They tick in the box under the pets that they have or leave it empty. They should then look to see if their group has any pets. If they do, which are they? The group should give this information to the teacher who should write it on the board and then the whole class can see which pets are owned by pupils in the class.

Activity 2. This uses pages 6 & 7 of the Reader.

Activity 3. Talk to pupils about things they would want from the Tinderbox. Pupils can either write a sentence or a word on the line in the activity. They should also draw a picture of what they want.

Activity 4. You will probably want to show pupils how to do this type of activity before they do it.

Answers to the activities

In the back of the Reader

Before you read

The pupils may write down some of the following words: *Chest, box, gold, leaves, cloth, soldier, hat, boots, dog.*

After you read

1. False, 2. False, 3. False, 4. True, 5. False, 6. False, 7. False 8. False.

In the factsheet

Activity 2

a. Page 7, b. page 6, c. page 6, d. page 7, e. page 7

Activity 4

- The soldier climbed into the tree.
- The princess's father is the king.
- The soldier wanted to marry the princess.
- The old woman asked the soldier.
- The king's wife was the queen.
- A friend told the soldier about the princess.
- The rice was in the bag.
- Woosh, bang woof!
- The old woman did not get the Tinderbox.
- Tinderbox



The Tinderbox

Name.....

Activity 1

Our pets.

pet 1

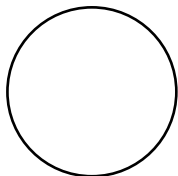
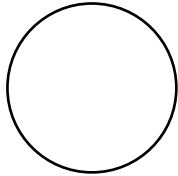
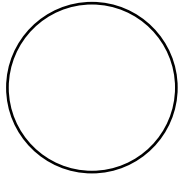
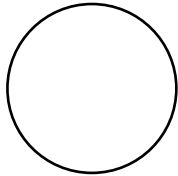
pet 2

pet 3

pet 4

Names:

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Activity 2

Look at pages 6 and 7 of the Reader. Finish the sentences.

- a. The soldier is poorer on page
- b. The soldier is richer on page
- c. The soldier is happier on page
- d. The soldier is hungrier on page
- e. The soldier is dirtier on page



The Tinderbox

Name.....

Activity 3

Open the tinderbox. What do you want? Write them here and draw the pictures.

1.

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2.

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3.

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Activity 4

Find the answers, then write the words in the crossword.

- The soldier climbed into the _?
- The princess's father is the _?
- The soldier wanted to marry the _?
- The old woman asked the _?
- The king's wife was the _?
- A _ told the soldier about the princess?
- The rice was in the _?
- Woosh, bang _!
- The old woman didn't get the Tinder_?
- What does it say down the middle of the crossword?

