

Name: .....

Date: .....

The Fairies

Up the airy mountain,  
Down the rushy glen<sup>1</sup>,  
We daren't go-a-hunting,  
for fear of little men.  
Wee<sup>2</sup> folk, good folk<sup>3</sup>,  
Trooping<sup>4</sup> all together;  
Green jacket, red cap,  
And white owl's feather.



Down along the rocky shore  
Some make their home.  
They live on crispy pancakes  
Of yellow tide-foam<sup>5</sup>;  
Some in the reeds<sup>6</sup> of the black  
mountain lake,  
With frogs for their watchdogs<sup>7</sup>,  
All night awake.

William Allingham

Glossary

- <sup>1</sup> A narrow valley
- <sup>2</sup> Very small
- <sup>3</sup> People
- <sup>4</sup> Walking like soldiers
- <sup>5</sup> The seawater as it flows onto the beach
- <sup>6</sup> Thick grassy plant that grows near lakes and rivers
- <sup>7</sup> Guard dogs. Dogs that protect the owner.

Decide if the following sentences are true or false.

1. The poem is set in the mountains.
2. The people mentioned in the poem are tall.
3. The men are wearing green hats.
4. The little people are good folk.
5. There are more than one of these little people.
6. The little men could be gnomes, or elves, or dwarves or fairies. The poem doesn't say exactly.
7. They have white owl's feather.
8. None of the little men lives by a lake.
9. The frogs protect them.
10. The frogs keep them awake singing all night.

Answer the following questions using full sentences.

1. Who is saying 'We daren't go-a-hunting for fear of little men'? Why do you think this?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Can you describe the wee folk? What impression do you have of them? Are they good or bad in your opinion?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Why do you think the wee folk have frogs for watchdogs? Do you think a frog would make a good watchdog? Why or why not?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Who or what do you think the wee folk are?

.....

.....

.....

.....

The Fairies – answers

True or false

---

T, F, F, T, T, T, T, F, T, F

Reading comprehension

---

1. Humans 'daren't go-a-hunting' suggesting that there is something a little sinister about these small men.
2. The men's clothes are described in detail: green jacket red cap and white owl feather, and how they troop together suggests a sense of unity. However, where they live and the type of personality they have is mysterious. They could be thought of as 'good' if you enjoy nature or 'bad' if you consider how people are frightened of them.
3. A frog is a perfect watchdog for the wee folk because of their small size and large staring eyes. Also, they stay awake all night leaving the wee men free to rest and sleep.
4. The wee folk could be gnomes, elves, dwarves or fairies. It is left to the reader's imagination.