

The Golden Shamrock

James couldn't remember how he got there. He remembered he'd been walking for miles and that he'd been really tired. He remembered closing his eyes, just for a moment.

That's when it must have happened.

He must have fallen asleep and slipped from the mountainside. That's how he ended up here, deep between the rocks.

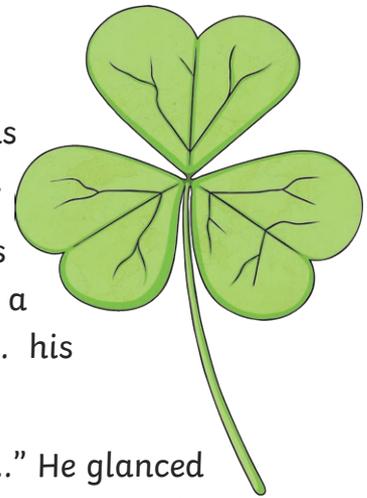
James tried moving his body. Aside from his head and hands, he was covered in armour. It seemed too big for him and the metal scratched and scraped as he moved. Everywhere ached but, luckily, nothing seemed to be broken.

He noticed something glinting in his hand.

He lifted it closer.

It was a shamrock. It was a greeny-gold colour and it was huge. The leaves seemed to sparkle. Strange, he thought...

James' memories suddenly came back. Visions of druids and knights and palaces filled his mind. There was a mission... something to do with the King of Ireland... his daughter...



"I am a knight," James whispered to himself. "I must be..." He glanced at the shamrock and carefully placed it inside a pouch he had hanging from his waist. "I must... continue," he muttered to himself. "The King is counting on me."

Before long, he had reached the summit from where he must have fallen. There was an old path that led through the mountains and James started on his way.

He had been walking all day and all night when he eventually came to the city walls. James staggered. He could see guards rushing towards him as he collapsed to the floor.

Then everything went black.

James woke up feeling cold and unwell. He was lying on the floor surrounded by pigs! He felt his body; the armour was gone! He was dressed in rags but he still had his pouch around his waist. Then he looked up and his heart sank. He was in a prison!

“Let me out!” he yelled, shaking the iron bars. “I am a knight of the King’s Court! The King’s daughter is in danger!”

From the darkness, an old man appeared. He was thin, with white hair and a fuzzy beard.

“We know she’s in danger,” the old man groaned. “The princess is very ill.”

“Who are you?” James said.

“Who am I?!” the old man spat. “Have you lost your mind? I am Anvir the druid, and you are my apprentice! You stole the King’s prize horse and scratched all his armour!”

“N... not... a knight?” James stuttered. Suddenly it all came back to him. It was true. He was a druid’s apprentice. He had needed the horse and armour to get past the forest beasts on his way to the mountains. That was where the golden shamrock grew. It was the only thing that could save the princess...

“...Hold on... I can save the princess!” James exclaimed.

“How, exactly? Nothing but the golden shamrock can save her now,” sighed the old man.

James pulled out the sparkling plant from his pouch.

The old man nearly fainted. “I don’t believe it...” he gasped. “The golden shamrock! Guards! Quick! We can save the princess!”

A few months later, Sir James stood in his armour, looking across his land. He tried to remember how all this had happened. Not only had he been given a full pardon for saving the princess’s life but he had also been knighted and given his own castle!

But what now? It was all a bit boring being a knight...

Sir James looked towards the mountains and his imagination ran wild.

“I think it’s time for another walk,” he smiled to himself.

Questions

1. Which of these best describes what a shamrock is? Tick **one**.

- a type of medicine
- a clover-like plant with leaves
- a form of animal
- a piece of jewellery

2. Which two things did James take from Sir Galway? Tick **two**.

- his prize horse
- his daughter
- his armour
- his guards

3. How did James end up between the rocks?

4. Find and copy a phrase from the first section of the story which shows that James was in pain.

5. Fill in the missing words.

James thought that he was a _____ but he was actually a _____.

6. Explain why the shamrock in this story is unusual.

7. **Then everything went black.** Why do you think this happened?

8. Summarise what James had intended to do in 20 words or less.

Answers

- Which of these best describes what a shamrock is? Tick **one**.
 - a type of medicine
 - a clover-like plant with leaves**
 - a form of animal
 - a piece of jewellery
- Which two things did James take from Sir Galway? Tick **two**.
 - his prize horse**
 - his daughter
 - his armour**
 - his guards
- How did James end up between the rocks?
James fell asleep and slipped from the mountainside.
- Find and copy a phrase from the first section of the story which shows that James was in pain.
everywhere ached
- Fill in the missing words.
James thought that he was a **knight** but he was actually a **druid's apprentice**.
- Explain why the shamrock in this story is unusual.
The shamrock in this story is unusual because it is golden in colour, its leaves seem to sparkle and it seems to have magical power which cures the King's daughter.
- Then everything went black.** Why do you think this happened?
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think everything went black because James was so tired when he arrived at the castle that he fell on to the floor and went to sleep straight away. When he went to sleep, he closed his eyes so he couldn't see anything anymore.
- Summarise what James had intended to do in 20 words or less.
Accept any suitable answer, such as: James had intended to save the King of Ireland's daughter by retrieving a shamrock which could cure her illness.

The Golden Shamrock

James couldn't remember how he got there. He remembered he'd been walking for miles and that he'd been overcome with tiredness. He remembered closing his eyes, just for a moment, as he continued to trudge across the rocky path.

That's when it must have happened.

He must have fallen asleep and slipped from the mountainside. That's how he ended up here, deep between the rocks.

James tried moving his body. Aside from his head and hands, he was covered in armour. It seemed too big for him and the metal clattered and scraped as he moved. Everywhere ached but, luckily, nothing seemed to be broken.

He noticed something glinting in his hand. It was half washed in sun, half shrouded in the shadows.

He lifted it closer.

It was a shamrock: greeny-gold in colour and huge. As he rubbed his fingers across the leaves, their heart-shaped outlines seemed to sparkle. Strange, he thought...

His eyes widened as the memories suddenly came back. Visions of druids and knights and palaces filled his mind. There was a mission... something to do with the King of Ireland... his daughter...

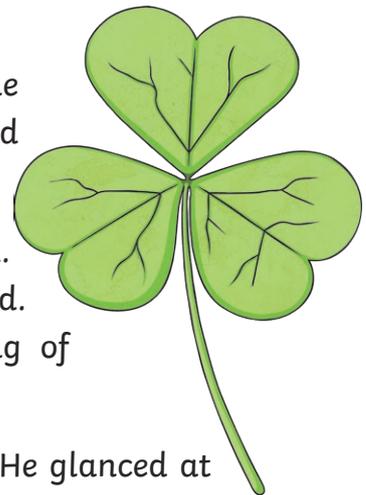
"I am a knight," he whispered to himself. "I must be..." He glanced at the shamrock and carefully placed it inside a pouch he had hanging from his waist. "I must... continue," he muttered to himself. "The King is counting on me."

James pulled himself from the rocks. The armour scratched and clanged, echoing loudly through the valleys.

Before long, he had reached the summit from where he must have fallen. There was an old path that led through the mountains and James began on his way.

He had been walking all day and all night when he eventually came to the city walls. James staggered. He could see guards rushing towards him as he collapsed to the floor.

Then everything went black.



James woke up feeling cold and unwell. He opened his eyes. He was lying on the floor surrounded by pigs! He jumped to his feet and instantly felt dizzy. He felt his body; the armour was gone! He was dressed in rags but still had his pouch around his waist. Then he looked up and his heart sank. He was in a prison!

“Let me out!” he yelled, shaking the iron bars. “I am a knight of the King’s Court! The King’s daughter is in danger!”

From the darkness, a familiar-looking face emerged. It was old and thin, with white hair and a fuzzy beard. “We know she’s in danger,” the old man replied. “The princess is very ill.”

“Who are you?” James said.

“Who am I?!” the old man spat. “Have you lost your mind? I am Anvir the druid, and you are my apprentice! You stole Sir Galway’s prize horse and scratched all his armour!”

“N... not... a knight?” James stuttered. Suddenly it all came back to him. It was true. He was a druid’s apprentice. He had needed the horse and armour to get beyond the forest beasts on his way to the mountains. That was where the golden shamrock grew. It was the only thing that could save the...

“...princess!” James screamed.

“Shame, nothing but the golden shamrock can save her now,” sighed the old man.

James pulled the sparkling plant from his pouch.

The old man gasped and, for a moment, he looked unsteady on his feet. “I don’t believe it...” he exclaimed. “Guards! Quick! We can save the princess!”

A few months later, Sir James stood in his armour looking out across his green land that rolled before him towards the horizon. He tried to remember how all this had happened. Not only had he been given a full pardon for saving the princess’s life but he had also been knighted and rewarded with his own castle!

But what now? It was becoming tedious being a knight...

Sir James looked towards the mountains and his imagination ran wild. “I think it’s time for another walk,” he smiled to himself.

Questions

1. **Not only had he been given a full pardon for saving the princess's life...**

Which of these best explains the meaning of the word **pardon**? Tick **one**.

- to forgive someone
- to let someone go past you
- to request someone's presence
- to punish someone for a crime

2. Number the events below to show they order in which they happen in the story. The first one has been done for you.

- Guards rushed towards James as he collapsed.
- James surveyed the land he now owned.
- 1 James awoke confused and dazed.
- James realised his true identity.
- James noticed the glistening shamrock in his hand.

3. Find and copy a phrase which shows that moving while wearing armour can be noisy.

4. **It was old and thin, with white hair and a fuzzy beard.**

What is the name of the character this sentence describes?

5. Fill in the missing words.

At the beginning of the story, James thinks that he is a _____ but he is actually a _____. By the end of the story, James is a _____.

6. Why do you think the shamrock's leaves began to sparkle?

7. Why do you think that James became Sir James at the end of the story?

8. Explain why the shamrock is important in this story.

9. What does the text imply about the beasts in the forest? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Answers

1. **Not only had he been given a full pardon for saving the princess's life...**

Which of these best explains the meaning of the word **pardon**? Tick **one**.

- to forgive someone**
- to let someone go past you
- to request someone's presence
- to punish someone for a crime

2. Number the events below to show they order in which they happen in the story. The first one has been done for you.

- Guards rushed towards James as he collapsed.
- James surveyed the land he now owned.
- James awoke confused and dazed.
- James realised his true identity.
- James noticed the glistening shamrock in his hand.

3. Find and copy a phrase which shows that moving while wearing armour can be noisy.
Accept either of the following: armour scratched and clanged; echoing loudly through the valleys.

4. **It was old and thin, with white hair and a fuzzy beard.** What is the name of the character this sentence describes?
Anvir the Druid.

5. Fill in the missing words.

At the beginning of the story, James thinks that he is a **knight** but he is actually a **druid's apprentice**. By the end of the story, James is a **knight**.

6. Why do you think the shamrock's leaves began to sparkle?

The shamrock's leaves began to sparkle because the shamrock had magical powers.

7. Why do you think that James became Sir James at the end of the story?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that James became Sir James at the end of the story because he was rewarded by the King of Ireland for making his daughter better by receiving a knighthood.

8. Explain why the shamrock is important in this story.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The shamrock is important in this story because it is the only item which can save the princess's life due to its antidotal powers.

9. What does the text imply about the beasts in the forest? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

The text implies that the beasts in the forest are dangerous because the story says that James 'needed the horse and the armour' to get beyond them. This implies that James would have been hurt without the armour because the beasts are dangerous.

The Golden Shamrock

James couldn't remember how he'd got there. He remembered he'd been walking for miles and that he'd been overwhelmingly tired. He knew that he needed to be somewhere important but he couldn't recollect where that was. He remembered closing his eyes, just for a moment, as he continued to trudge across the rocks and ledges.

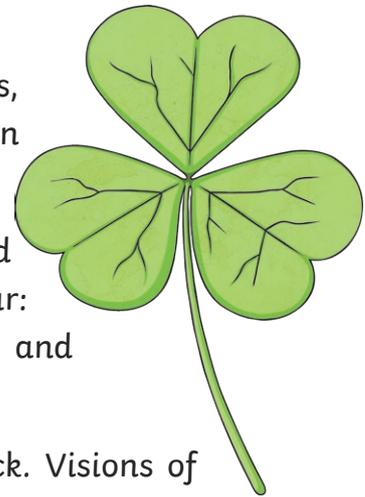
That's when it must have happened.

Half asleep, he must have drifted off into slumber and slipped off the edge of the mountainside. That's how he ended up here, deep between the rocks.

James raised his hand to his head. It was throbbing with pain. He tried moving his body. Aside from his head and hands, he was covered in armour. It seemed too big for him. The metal scraped and clattered, the valley resounding with the echoes of the noise as he moved. Everywhere ached but, luckily, nothing seemed to be broken.

A thin ray of sunlight pierced its way between the crags, warming his face when he noticed something glinting in his hand. He lifted it closer.

A shamrock. He turned it gently, rubbing the heart-shaped leaves between his fingers. They were two-toned in colour: greeny-gold with huge leaves which seemed to ripple and glitter. Strange, he thought...



His eyes widened as the memories suddenly surged back. Visions of druids and knights and palaces filled his mind. There was a mission... something to do with the King of Ireland... his daughter...

"I am a knight," he whispered to himself. "I must be..." He glanced at the shamrock and carefully placed it inside a pouch he had hanging from his waist. "I must... continue," he muttered to himself. "The King is counting on me."

With all his energy, James pulled himself from the rocks. The armour grinded and clanged, disturbing the unnerving silence of the valley. Before long, he had reached the summit from where he must have fallen. There was an old path that led through the mountains and James set on his way.

He had been walking all day and all night when he eventually came to the city walls. James staggered. He could see guards rushing towards him as he collapsed to the floor.

Then everything went black.

James awoke shivering and unwell. He opened his eyes. He was lying on the floor surrounded by pigs! He felt his body; the armour was gone! He was dressed in rags but he still had his pouch around his waist. Then he looked up and his heart sunk. He was in a prison!

“Let me out!” he yelled, rattling the iron bars. “I am a knight of the King’s Court! The King’s daughter – she’s in grave danger! You must listen to me!”

From the darkness, a familiar-looking face emerged. It was old and thin, with white hair and a fuzzy beard. “We know she’s in danger,” the old man uttered in a low voice. “The princess is very ill.”

“Who are you?” James said.

“Who am I?!” the old man spat. “Have you lost your mind? I am Anvir the druid, and you are my apprentice! You stole Sir Galway’s steed and armour! Something about a mission to save the princess! You were gone for days! You’ve lost Sir Galway’s prize horse and scratched all his armour!”

“N... not... a knight?” James stuttered. Suddenly it all came back to him. It was true. He was a druid’s apprentice. He had needed the horse and armour to defeat the forest beasts on his way to the mountains. That was where the golden shamrock grew. It was the only thing that could save the...

“...princess!” James said, crestfallen.

“Alas, nothing but the golden shamrock can save her now,” sighed the old man.

James fumbled inside his pouch and pulled out the sparkling plant.

The old man looked uncertainly at the object in James’ hand. “I don’t believe it...” he gasped. “Guards! Quick! We can save the princess.”

A few months later, Sir James stood in his armour, surveying his estate and the green hills that rolled before him towards the horizon. He tried to remember how all this had happened. Not only had he been given a full pardon for saving the princess’s life but he had also been knighted and rewarded with his own castle!

But what now? It was becoming unfulfilling being a knight...

Sir James looked towards the mountains and his imagination ran wild. “I think it’s time for another adventure,” he smiled to himself.

Questions

1. Which of these sentences best summarises the events of the third section of the story?
Tick **one**.

- James' efforts and valiance had been duly rewarded.
- James' opinion of imprisonment changed.
- James set out in an effort to discover a cure.
- James excelled within his role as an apprentice.

2. Match the section of the text to a summary of its contents.

Beginning: ●

● James came to a realisation about his true identity.

Middle: ●

● James reaped the reward of his endeavour.

End: ●

● James awoke disorientated and unwell.

3. Whose daughter required help?

4. **Not only had he been given a full pardon...**

Give another phrase the author could have used to convey the same meaning.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the story which explains the duration of James's journey.

6. **...he had reached the summit from where he must have fallen.**

What does this sentence imply about James's memory?

7. Explain how James' role within society develops as the story progresses.

8. Discuss the significance of the shamrock within the story.

9. How do you think James' relationship with the druid might have changed since he was made a knight?

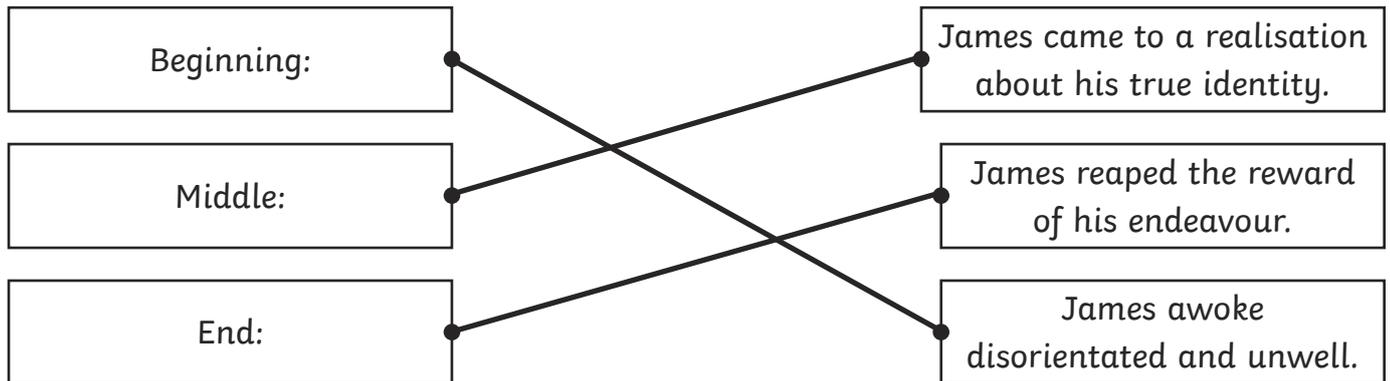
10. Summarise the plot of the story in 30 words or less.

Answers

1. Which of these sentences best summarises the events of the third section of the story?
Tick **one**.

- James' efforts and valiance had been duly rewarded.**
 James' opinion of imprisonment changed.
 James set out in an effort to discover a cure.
 James excelled within his role as an apprentice.

2. Match the section of the text to a summary of its contents.



3. Whose daughter required help?
The King of Ireland's daughter required help.
4. **Not only had he been given a full pardon...**
Give another phrase the author could have used to convey the same meaning.
Accept any suitable phrase, such as: Not only had he been completely forgiven...
5. Find and copy a phrase from the story which explains the duration of James's journey.
Accept either of the following: he had been walking all day and all night; you were gone for days.
6. **...he had reached the summit from where he must have fallen.**
What does this sentence imply about James's memory?
This sentence implies that James is struggling to remember things as he cannot recall where he fell from. He is making a presumption based on where he landed.
7. Explain how James' role within society develops as the story progresses.
Pupils' own responses, such as: At the beginning of the story, James is a druid's apprentice who wears rags and dreams of being a knight. He is imprisoned with pigs and holds a lowly place in society. By the end of the story, James is rewarded for his bravery and is given land and a title. He becomes a knight and now has higher esteem within society.

8. Discuss the significance of the shamrock within the story.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The shamrock is significant within the story because it is the only item which can save the princess's life due to its powers. It is also implied that the golden shamrock is magical.

9. How do you think James' relationship with the druid might have changed since he was made a knight?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think James would be grateful to the druid who taught him the skills that he needed to become successful but now that James is a knight, he is no longer the druid's pupil and has more independence.

10. Summarise the plot of the story in 30 words or less.

Pupils' own responses, such as: James is a druid's apprentice who steals a horse and armour in order to find a golden shamrock and save the life of the King of Ireland's daughter.