



Year 3 Guided Reading

The Curse of the Calcutta Diamond

"Ladies and gentlemen, put your hands together for the biggest diamond you have ever seen, the world famous Calcutta Diamond."

From the day it was found in 1934, bad luck had followed the diamond everywhere it went. Mrs Masood, who first spotted the diamond in a river when washing her clothes, was eaten by a crocodile. Then Mr Gates, the American who bought it from her, walked under a yellow New York cab. And its last owner, Mrs Peacock, fell off her horse and broke her neck. It was because of this that the diamond was now up for sale.

The people clapped and cheered. They took photographs and the flashes of light made the diamond sparkle even more.

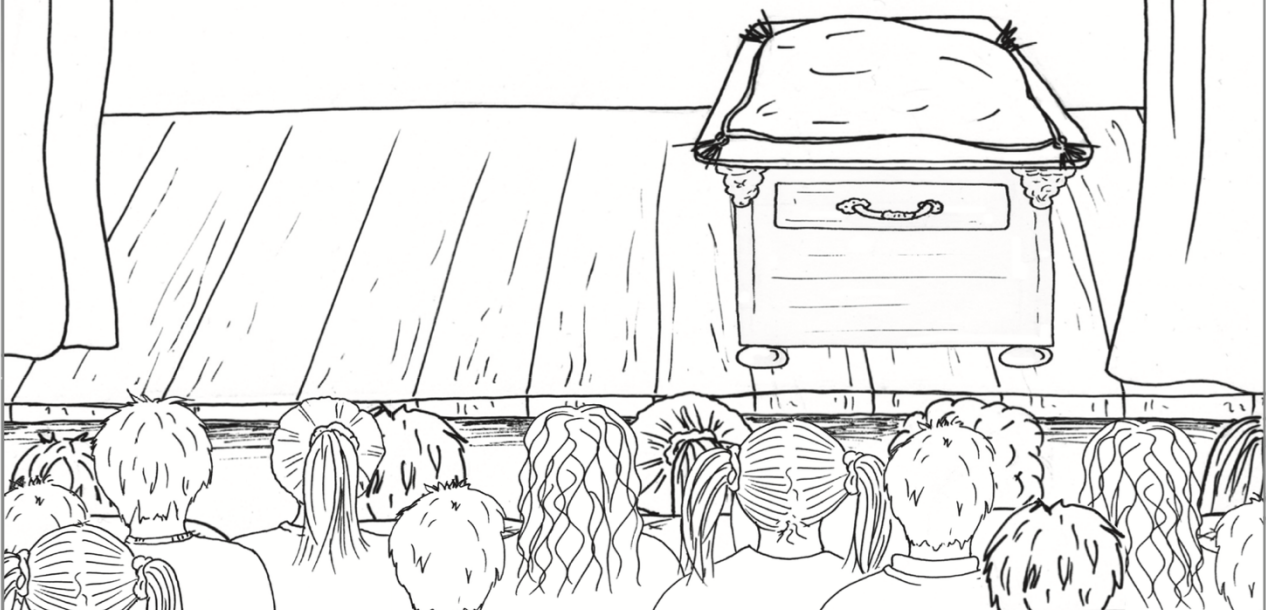
Rachael Langley was the best private detective around and she knew something was wrong. Pushing to the front of the crowd she tried to reach the diamond before it was too late. She picked up her radio:

'Matthew, don't let them get too close!'

The young and the old, the tall and the short, all pushed forward, trying hard to get a closer look. Children weaved in and out of legs like tiny bugs crawling through a forest.

Suddenly the lights went out and Rachael Langley, along with everyone else in the museum, was thrown into darkness. A woman screamed and a man shouted at people to stop pushing. Then, just as quickly as they had gone out, the lights came back on again.

Everybody stopped and stared – silence! The red velvet cushion which the diamond had been sitting on was empty. The diamond had gone!



Monday 8th June

Read through the text and answer the following questions.

1. Where do you think the diamond was found?
2. Look at the word 'curse'. Do you think this is a positive or negative word? Why?
3. What type of story do you think this is?
(a) Scary? (b) funny?
4. Why do you think that?

Tuesday 9th June

Read through the text and answer the following questions.

1. Look at the word 'weaved' in the story. What does this tell you about how the children moved?
2. Find a word in paragraph 1 that means 'very well known'.
3. Place names start with a capital letter. Can you spot two cities that are in the story?
4. What do you think the phrase 'put your hands together' means?
5. Reread how Mr Gates dies. Copy the American word for 'taxi'.

Wednesday 10th June

Use your text and answer the questions below.

1. In what year was the Calcutta diamond found?
2. Who found it? (a) Mrs Masood? (b) Mr Gates? (c) Mrs Peacock?
3. Where was the Calcutta diamond found?
4. How did Mrs Peacock die?
5. Where did Mr Gates die?

Thursday 11th June

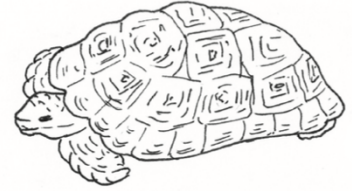
Use your text and answer the questions below.

1. Who do you think the main character of the story is: Rachael Langley or Mrs Masood? Why?
2. What is Rachael Langley's job?
3. How does Rachael speak to Matthew?
(a) Face to face? (b) by telephone? (c) by radio? (d) by letter?
4. What part of the story do you think this is: the start, the middle or the end? Why?
5. Why do you think the writer ends this part of the story at this point?

Friday 12th June

Comprehension. Read the text on the next page and answer the questions.

HOW THE TORTOISE GOT ITS SHELL



Have you ever wondered how the tortoise got her shell? Well, sit back, open your ears and I will tell you...

Long, long ago when time first began, the tortoise did not carry her shell upon her back as she does today.

She walked quickly from one place to the next and enjoyed dancing on warm summer days and cool autumn nights. And when it rained or when it was time for her to go to bed, she would simply return to her home sweet home and relax.

But all that changed when Jupiter (the king of the Roman gods) invited all the animals to his home for a feast. All the animals agreed to go and when the great day came, they all enjoyed the party...all, that is, except the tortoise who was nowhere to be seen.

Fearing she was ill, the next day Jupiter went to visit her.

'Are you all right tortoise? Why didn't you come to my celebration yesterday? Were you ill?'

'I was too busy tidying up my house. You know what a beautiful house I have. I have so much to do and not much time to do it in,' she yawned.

Jupiter grew hot with anger. His anger blazed like an angry fire.

'So your home is more important than mine is it? Well in that case, from this day onwards you shall carry it upon your back wherever you care to go.'

And with that, Jupiter turned her home into an ugly shell and placed it upon her back.

Never again will you see a tortoise walk quickly. And never again will you see her dance on a warm summer day or a cool autumn night.



Questions

1. Write down the names of the two main characters in this story.
2. Which character is the most powerful, the tortoise or Jupiter?
3. In the story, could the tortoise walk quickly in the past?
4. What else did the tortoise like to do?
5. Why did the tortoise not go to Jupiter's party?
6. What did Jupiter think was wrong with the tortoise?