

The Missing Gnomes



Mrs Frost stared hard at the garden. All the garden gnomes had completely disappeared. She gasped in shock. Someone had come into her garden and stolen her gnomes.

'Francie!' she shrieked. 'Francie! They've all gone!'

Francie Frost poked her head around the kitchen door.

'What's gone?'

'My gnomes ... they've vanished!'

Francie frowned. 'They were here this morning,' she said, looking puzzled. 'I saw them when I put the rubbish out.'

'Well they're not here now. I'm going to call the police.' Francie

wondered what the police would be able to do. Searching for three garden gnomes, when there were murderers and bank robbers to be caught, would not be top of their list of things to do.

'I'd forget about it if I were you, Mum,' she said. 'They're only plastic garden gnomes. The police have got better things to do than look for gnomes. Let's buy some more.' Mrs Frost turned sharply and glared at her.

'That's not the point!' she snapped. 'It's theft and I want them back.' Mrs Frost stomped into the house and picked up the telephone. She was just about to dial 999 when she heard singing coming from upstairs. She stopped and listened. For a brief moment there was silence, then the sound of voices was there again. There was definitely singing coming from one of the rooms upstairs.

Mrs Frost put down the telephone and made her way upstairs. Perhaps Francie had left the radio on in her bedroom. But the bedroom was quiet. Only Marmalade the cat was lying on the bed in a pool of sunlight. Mrs Frost frowned. How very strange. Then she froze. The singing was much louder now and seemed to be coming from the bathroom. Suddenly there was the sound of breaking glass, a high-pitched squeal and then excited laughter. Mrs Frost's face turned white. Plucking up her courage, she crept towards the bathroom and pushed open the door. Her eyes opened wide in shock.

A pool of pink bubble bath lay on the floor amongst pieces of broken glass. There, swimming in the bath and relaxing in the basin, were her gnomes.

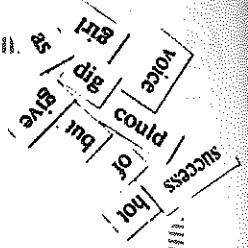


Questions

Answer the following questions with a full sentence:

1. What has gone missing from Mrs Frost's garden?
2. Where was Francie when Mrs Frost discovered her things were missing?
3. What is the relationship between Francie and Mrs Frost?
4. What does Mrs Frost think has happened to her gnomes?
5. What are the gnomes made from?
6. How many gnomes are missing?
7. What job did Francie do earlier that day?
8. In your own words explain what Francie means when she thinks:
'Searching for three garden gnomes when there were murderers and bank robbers to be caught, would not be top of their list of things to do.'
9. What does Mrs Frost intend to do about the missing gnomes?
10. What stops her from putting her plans into action?
11. How do we know that the weather is fine?
12. What tells Mrs Frost that there is something going on in the bathroom?
13. Describe what has been going on in the bathroom.

Word work



1. Give the meaning of the following words:

vanished

theft

excited

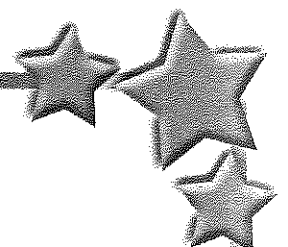
relaxing

squeal

pool of sunlight

2. List the words in the passage which tell us that Mrs Frost is not happy about her gnomes going missing.

Extension work



1. How do you think Francie feels about the missing gnomes?
2. Imagine you are Mrs Frost and you *have* called the police. What do you think you might say to them?
3. What do you think the police might say to Mrs Frost about her robbery?
4. What do you think happened to the bottle of bubble bath?
5. Imagine you are one of the gnomes. You are being questioned by Mrs Frost. Explain why you left the garden and went up to the bathroom.
6. Now Mrs Frost has discovered the gnomes in the bathroom, what do you think she might do next?

This page may be photocopied for use by the purchasing institution only.