

The Quest of the Senses

Mouth-Watering Delights

Long, long ago in a distant land, on a Wednesday, the queen was quite enjoying herself.

‘You all know how this works by now,’ she said to her children. ‘Can anyone guess today’s quest?’

The youngest raised her hand. ‘Are we looking for the tastiest thing in the world?’

‘That’s right! A tasty treat to tickle my taste buds. None of your usual champagne on cornflakes or caviar on toast. I’m looking for something that really makes my mouth water. See you all later tonight.’

They all scurried off to seek out recipe books and celebrity chefs. The queen went back to watching morning television.



Later that evening, they met back in the royal dining room. The butler placed three dishes in front of the queen, each covered with a silver dome.

‘We thought it would work if you sampled each delicacy without knowing—’

‘—who it belongs to. I know, I know... I’ve seen all the shows,’ said the queen, settling back into her throne.

The butler whisked off the first dome.

‘A chocolate truffle made with 114 percent cocoa solids,’ she read from the card. ‘114 percent? Is that even possible?’

‘No, completely impossible,’ said the butler, ‘but I believe that’s what makes it so rare and delicious.’

The queen popped the truffle into her mouth and munched, looking at the three faces before her. ‘Mmmm, that is good. . . ’ she said.

Her son grinned. So much for keeping a straight face.

‘. . .But it’s too tiny,’ continued the queen. ‘I would require at least twelve of these with my afternoon cuppa. Next!’

The butler whisked off the next dome.

‘A fruitcake made with succulent fruits, swathed in marzipan and decorated with two hundred tiny diamonds.’

The queen looked at the exquisite decorations and wrinkled her nose. ‘It’s got raisins in it. I never eat raisins.’

The older sister pouted as the queen moved onto the next dish.

The butler read from the card. ‘A fish finger, crisp and cheese sandwich made with fluffy white bread and a light drizzle of ketchup.’

The queen took a large bite and chewed. ‘Now, that is what you call a proper snack,’ she said, wiping a crumb from the corner of her mouth. ‘We have found our winner. Now please leave me to finish my meal.’

The youngest child coughed.

‘Of course, prizes. You may have my silver dinner service. Grab it on the way out.’

The princess skipped off with it, and her older sister sighed ostentatiously.

‘Is there a problem?’ asked the queen.

‘Well, yes, there is... actually. Every time you set a challenge, I try my best to find something extra special. She brings you any old thing from around the palace and wins every time!’

The queen chewed and swallowed. ‘Yes, but she thinks outside the box. She’s been quite clever about it all.’

‘Clever... or lazy?’ asked the older princess.

The queen took another bite. ‘Time will tell,’ she said, with her mouth full. ‘See you again tomorrow!’

INFERENCE FOCUS

1. What evidence is there that they normally eat very posh things?
2. Why do you think the queen might be enjoying herself?
3. How might the queen have worked out who made the truffle?
4. Why was the older sister's cake not very good?
5. Why is the older sister upset by the end of the text?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

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| R | Who guessed what the challenge was? |
| S | Why was the chocolate truffle so rare? |
| V | Which word in the text means somebody did something in a showy way that was designed to get attention? |
| R | Which precious jewels were mentioned in the text? |
| P | If you had to give the queen the tastiest thing ever, what would you give her, and why? |