



Pre-reading work

Match the words to their closest synonym.

gouged

torn

tossed

scooped

clattered

snatched

thrown

carved out

rattled

picked

Skimming and scanning for information

Find the words **above** in the text below and **highlight** them.

The Visitor by Ian Serraillier

A crumbling churchyard, the sea and the moon;
The waves had gouged out grave and bone;
A man was walking, late and alone...

He saw a skeleton on the ground;
A ring on a bony finger he found.

He ran home to his wife and gave her the ring.
"Oh, where did you get it?" He said not a thing.

"It's the loveliest ring in the world," she said,
As it glowed on her finger. They slipped off to bed.

At midnight they woke. In the dark outside,
"Give me my ring!" a chill voice cried.

"What was that, William? What did it say?"
"Don't worry, my dear. It'll soon go away."

"I'm coming!" A skeleton opened the door.
"Give me my ring!" It was crossing the floor.

"What was that, William? What did it say?"
"Don't worry, my dear. It'll soon go away."

"I'm reaching you now! I'm climbing the bed."
The wife pulled the sheet right over her head.

It was torn from her grasp and tossed in the air:
"I'll drag you out of bed by the hair!"

"What was that, William? What did it say?"
"Throw the ring through the window! THROW IT
AWAY!"

She threw it. The skeleton leapt from the sill,
Scooped up the ring and clattered downhill,
Fainter... and fainter... Then all was still.

Summarise

Summarise the text in less than **15 words**.

1. What do you notice about the way the poem is organised?

2 marks

2. Compare the below two stanzas. What do you notice about the pace and rhythm?

Why do you think the poet has done this?

‘A crumbling churchyard, the sea and the moon; The waves had gouged out grave and bone;

A man was walking, late and alone...

It was torn from her grasp and tossed in the air.

“I’ll drag you out of bed by your hair!”

3 marks

3. What does the final line, ‘Then all was still.’ suggest about the skeleton?

2 marks

4. The house is at the top of a hill. Find evidence to support this statement.

1 mark

5. Why do you think the poet has used capitals for “THROW IT AWAY!”?

2 marks

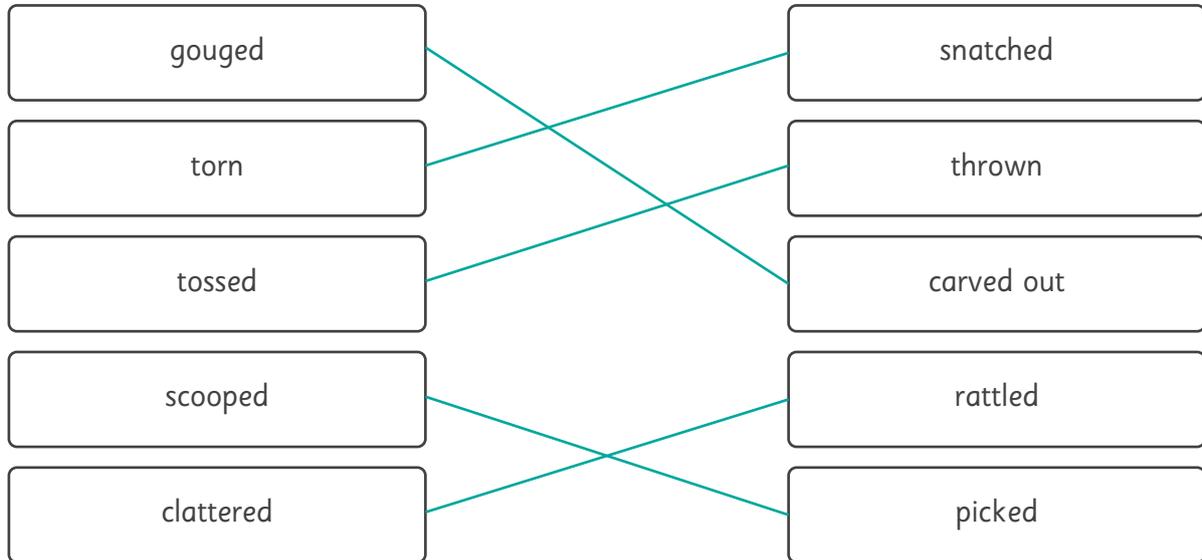
6. How do you know the wife is scared? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2 marks



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Scooped up the ring and clattered downhill,
Fainter... and fainter... Then all was still.

Summarise

Summarise the text in less than **15 words**.

A man steals a ring from a skeleton for his wife.

1. What do you notice about the way the poem is organised?

The first and final stanzas are three lines and the rest of the poem is rhyming couplets.

2. Compare the below two stanzas. What do you notice about the pace and rhythm?

Why do you think the poet has done this?

‘A crumbling churchyard, the sea and the moon; The waves had gouged out grave and bone;

A man was walking, late and alone...

It was torn from her grasp and tossed in the air.

“I’ll drag you out of bed by your hair!”

The first stanza is slow and calm and the stanza is fast and short. There are longer syllables in the first stanza which makes you read it slower. This is because the poet is trying to build tension and fear when the skeleton is in the room.

3. What does the final line, ‘Then all was still.’ suggest about the skeleton?

It suggests the skeleton has gone back to his grave and will not disturb the couple any more.

4. The house is at the top of a hill. Find evidence to support this statement.

It says the skeleton ‘clattered downhill’.

5. Why do you think the poet has used capitals for “THROW IT AWAY!”?

To show the man is shouting and to show that he is in a hurry to get the ring away because he is scared.

6. How do you know the wife is scared? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

She keeps asking her husband questions. In the poem there is repetition of “What was that, William? What did it say?” and she hides because it says ‘The wife pulled the sheet right over her head.’
