

Read the short story. Then answer each question.

## The Invisible Cargo

Once, long ago, there was a ferryman named Reimer. He worked carrying cargo across the Lim Fjord in Denmark. Reimer had traveled to Copenhagen, the biggest city in Denmark, to renew his ferry license. Renewing the license took a while, and it was Christmas Eve by the time he finished.

Reimer was sad as he walked along the streets of Copenhagen. Snow fell all around him, and the gas lamps flickered in the darkness. It was a long way home, and Reimer did not want to miss Christmas with his family. Reimer went into a small coffee shop to warm up a little.

A little man in a gray coat was already in the shop. When he saw Raimer's long face, the little man asked Raimer what was wrong. Raimer explained that he was far from home and was sad about missing Christmas with his family.

"Reimer, would you like to get home in one night?" the little man in a gray coat softly asked.

Reimer looked at the man. "Of course I would, but it is too far."

"Not for me," the man said. "I will get you home in one night if you will do me a service."



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“What kind of service?” Reimer asked.

“I would like you and your ferrymen to carry special cargo from the south side of the sound to the north side of the sound.”

Reimer agreed, and the little man led him to a small, black horse. Reimer climbed up behind the dwarf. The horse took off. They flew through the air more quickly than Reimer had ever imagined.



For several hours, Reimer and the dwarf rode through the air. At one point, Reimer heard the clink of iron on iron.

“What was that?” Reimer asked.

“Oh, nothing to worry about,” the little man said. “It’s just the horse’s hoof hitting the top of Viborg Cathedral.”

Before long, the horse stopped in front of Reimer’s house. Reimer couldn’t believe he had gotten home in one night. It just wasn’t possible.

Still, Reimer could not argue with results. He was home for Christmas!

Reimer stepped into the house and hugged his wife. He sat with his children in front of the fire and told ghost stories until late into the night.

“It’s time for bed, children,” Reimer said at last.

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The children went to bed, and Reimer and his family spent a wonderful Christmas together.

Life continued, and Reimer soon forgot about his promise to the dwarf.

One evening, just as the sun was setting, Reimer heard a knock at the door. He opened it to see the little man in the gray coat.



“It is time for you to fulfill your promise,” the dwarf said.

Reimer got his coat and kissed his wife and children. He gathered his crew and went to the sound where his ferry was.

The dwarf soon arrived. “Are you ready?” he asked.

Reimer nodded, took his place at the helm of the ferry and waited for the ferry to be loaded with the dwarf's cargo.

For a long while, Reimer heard the sound of footsteps. He watched and waited as the little man walked back and forth. However, Reimer saw no boxes loaded onto the ferry. He saw no crates loaded onto the ferry. He did not see anything loaded onto the ferry! Curiously though, he noticed that the ferry was now sitting much lower in the water than previously, as if some heavy weight was pushing it downwards.

“We're ready,” the little man said.

“But there's nothing there,” Reimer said. “I've been watching, and I have seen nothing.”

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“Just trust me,” the dwarf said.

All night long, Reimer and his crew carried loads of invisible cargo from the south side of the fjord to the north side of the fjord. The ferry lowered with the sound of footsteps on the south side. The ferry rose in the water with the sound of footsteps on the north side.

The sun was just beginning to rise when Reimer stopped on the north side with the last load. The dwarf got off the ferry and shook Reimer's hand.

“Would you like to know what you have carried this night?” the little man asked.

Reimer nodded. He was curious.

The dwarf handed Reimer his hat. “Put this on your head.”

Reimer put the little man's hat on his head. His eyes widened. His mouth dropped open. His heart beat against his rib cage. His hands grew clammy. Hundreds of dwarves stood on the beach with their belongings in bags and boxes.

“We are going north,” the dwarf said. “There is no longer room for us here.”

Reimer didn't know what to say.

“Thank you for your help,” the dwarf said.

Reimer just watched as the dwarves wandered away. By the time the sun fully rose, they were gone.



**Questions:**

1. What was Reimer's job?
  - a. Reimer was a ferryman.
  - b. Reimer was a cat herder.
  - c. Reimer was a butterfly farmer.
  - d. Reimer raised cattle.
  
2. When did the dwarf come to Reimer's house for him to fulfill his promise?
  - a. The dwarf came at sunrise.
  - b. The dwarf came at noon.
  - c. The dwarf came at midnight.
  - d. The dwarf came at sundown.
  
3. Which direction were the dwarves going?
  - a. The dwarves were going south.
  - b. The dwarves were going west.
  - c. The dwarves were going north.
  - d. The dwarves were going east.

4. What was the deal that Reimer made with the dwarf?

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5. The dwarf's cargo was invisible. If you were invisible for a day, what would you do?

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**Answers:**

1. What was Reimer's job?  
**a. Reimer was a ferryman.**
2. When did the dwarf come to Reimer's house for him to fulfill his promise?  
**d. The dwarf came at sundown.**
3. Which direction were the dwarves going?  
**c. The dwarves were going north.**
4. What was the deal that Reimer made with the dwarf?  
**The dwarf brought Reimer home in time for Christmas, and Reimer agreed to ferry his cargo across the sound.**
5. The dwarf's cargo was invisible. If you were invisible for a day, what would you do?

**Answers will vary.**