

# Alexander and the Jewels

Alexander pushed with all his might against a huge stone. “I saw a wizard put jewels behind the stone. If we can move it, they’ll be ours. We’ll be rich.”

“It’s too heavy for us to move,” said Raja. He leaned against the rock and wiped his forehead.

“We can do this!” shouted Alexander.

The two friends pushed harder and harder.

“Did you feel that? It moved.” Alexander dug his heels into the ground and pushed even harder.

The stone shifted and a small opening into the cave appeared.

“Come on!” said Alexander.

Raja shook his head. “I’m not going in there. It’s dark and what if the stone moves back. We’d be stuck in there. I’ll stay here in case something goes wrong.”

“Have it your way.” Alexander squeezed through the opening. Once his eyes adjusted to the darkness, he walked deeper into the cave. Then he saw an entrance that opened into another section. This section had lights along the walls. Looking in, he saw treasure chests overflowing with jewels.

“Oh! It’s more riches than I ever imagined.” He unfastened a sack he had tied to his belt and shoved all different colored gems into it. When it was filled, he tied it closed and headed back to the opening.

“Did you find it?” said Raja when Alexander came out.

“It’s more than I could ever have hoped for. Look!” Alexander opened the sack.

Raja shook his head. “Oh! This is too much. The wizard will know someone took his jewels. I think this is a very bad idea.”

“Ha,” said Alexander. “I’ll bring this home then come back with more sacks. I’ll be the richest one in all of Arabia. Kings will bow down to me. And, I’ll marry the princess. Nothing will stop me.”

Just then, the sky darkened. A gigantic dragon blocked out the sun’s light. The wizard flew off the dragon’s back and floated down.

Raja shook from head to toe. Alexander threw his sack of jewels behind a bush.

“What are you doing here?” demanded the wizard.

Alexander put his hands on his waist. “We saw the stone here was moved and wondered what had happened.”

Raja just shook.

“So,” said the wizard, “you didn’t go into my cave?”

“Oh, no,” said Alexander. “We just got here.” He didn’t realize the sack of jewels had fallen out from behind the bush.

The wizard picked up the sack. “Where did this come from? Who has had the boldness to take my jewels?”

“It must have been the thieves who moved the stone,” said Alexander.

The wizard looked at Raja. “And, you. Do you agree with your friend? Why do you shake so?”

“I . . . I . . . I . . .” Raja could not find any other words.

“You may leave,” the wizard said to Raja.

Raja looked at Alexander then sped toward the village.

The wizard turned to Alexander. “I know your heart. Since you stole my jewels and lied about it, you will become a part of them.

In an instant, Alexander turned into a stone. The wizard threw him in the sack and carried it back into the cave.

“You will live in my cave as a stone until I am sure you are sorry for your deed. When your heart is pure, I’ll be back.”

**Questions**

1. Why did Alexander want to move the stone?
2. Compare Alexander's and Raja's feelings about taking the jewels.
3. Why did the wizard let Raja go?
4. What did the wizard do to Alexander?

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**Vocabulary List**

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. Might
2. Rich
3. Shifted
4. Unfastened
5. Gigantic
6. Demanded
7. Boldness
8. Deed

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**Context Clues**

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1) "Alexander pushed with all his **might** against a huge stone."

- a. ideas   b. strength   c. will power   d. effort

2) "I saw a wizard put jewels behind the stone. If we can move it, they'll be ours. We'll be **rich**."

- a. strong   b. powerful   c. popular   d. wealthy

3) "The stone **shifted** and a small opening into the cave appeared."

- a. moved   b. fell   c. rolled   d. broke

4) "He **unfastened** a sack he had tied to his belt..."

- a. opened   b. gathered   c. dropped   d. untied

5) Just then, the sky darkened. A **gigantic** dragon blocked out the sun's light. The wizard flew off the dragon's back and floated down.

- a. very scary   b. very big   c. very kind   d. very small

6) "What are you doing here?" **demanded** the wizard.

- a. ordered   b. wondered   c. imagined   d. whispered

7) "Where did this come from? Who has had the **boldness** to take my jewels?"

- a. desire   b. strength   c. carelessness   d. kindness

8) "You will live in my cave as a stone until I am sure you are sorry for your **deed**. When your heart is pure, I'll be back."

- a. theft   b. choice   c. action   d. mistake