



Oxford  
Reading  
Tree

# The Quest



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### **What's this story about?**

Wilma is writing a story about a quest for the golden bell of Ulm. When the key glows, Wilma becomes part of her own story. On her journey she meets several characters who give her something to help her quest.

### **Talk together**

Explain that a quest is a search for something that is lost. Look at the cover and ask, "What help do you think a mirror might be to Wilma?" Look at the pictures to see what happens.

### **Read the story**

**W** = Word recognition    **G** = Language comprehension

- Listen as they read. Praise confident reading.
- G** Pages 2–6, ask, "What is the artist trying to show by putting the illustrations inside a curvy frame?"
- G** Page 11, ask, "Why did Wilma think it safe to tell an old woman?"
- W** Page 22, point out the word 'basilisk'. Remind the children to sound out the phonemes all through the word to read it (b-a-s-i-l-i-s-k).
- G** Page 23, ask, "In what ways do you think the gnome will help Wilma?"
- G** Page 32, ask, "Why didn't Wilma want to answer Biff's question?"



"I'm writing a story about a quest," said Wilma, "but I'm stuck. I don't know what to put next."

"I don't know what a quest is," said Biff, "so I don't think I can help you."

"It's a journey that someone makes to look for something that's been lost," said Wilma.





Biff still didn't understand what Wilma meant, so Wilma read the story to her.

"Long ago, and far away, there was a beautiful land called Ulm. Flowers grew everywhere. Animals lived in the woods and forests. Everyone was happy there.



“In a big cave, deep underground, was the crystal bell of Ulm. It was very beautiful. Even in the dark cave, it glowed like fire.

When it rang, its note was like music. The sound of the bell told every animal, every plant and every tree when it was spring or summer.





“The evil Grimlock lived outside Ulm. He lived in the cold, black mountains of Grim. He wanted the crystal bell of Ulm, and he spent years looking for it.

At last, Grimlock found the bell.

‘Now it will be mine for ever!’ he said.



“Grimlock took the bell back to the land of Grim. He carried it through the forest. Then he crossed the rocky desert. At last, he reached his castle high in the mountains.

In the sunlight, the bell looked so beautiful that Grimlock could not bear to look at it.



“Without the bell, the land of Ulm became dark and grey. Flowers grew in the winter and were killed by the frost. Snow fell in the summer.

The people of Ulm were sad and unhappy. All the beauty had gone from the land and the days were cold and long.”





Wilma looked at Biff.

"That is as far as I've got," she said. "What do you think?"

"It's brilliant!" said Biff. "So will someone go on a quest to try to get the bell back?"

"That's right," said Wilma. "But it will have to be someone brave, like a knight."



Dad came into Biff's room. Biff and Chip had to go to the dentist for a check-up.

"I don't know how long I'll be at the dentist," said Biff. "Do you want to go home, Wilma?"

"Do you mind if I stay and get on with my story?" asked Wilma. "I've got an idea."



Wilma and the gnome didn't see anyone in the castle. At last, they came to the room where the crystal bell was hanging.

Wilma gasped when she saw it. She couldn't believe how beautiful it was.

"I've been expecting you," said Grimlock.





"You can spend the night here," hissed Grimlock.  
"Tomorrow, I'll feed you both to the dragon."

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" said the gnome. "What shall we do now?"

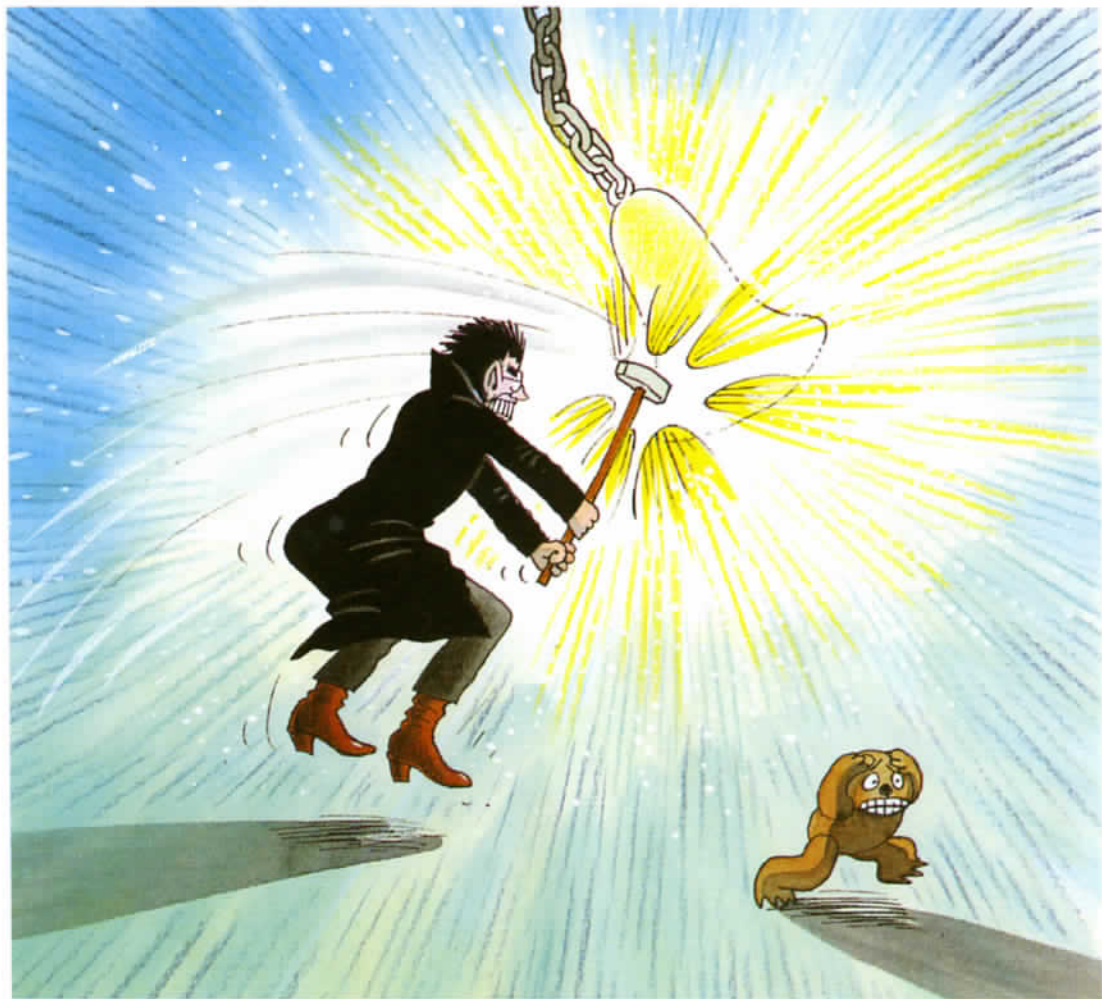
Wilma looked at the magic ring.

"It's time I made my wish," she said.



Wilma's wish started to work. The bell began to ring. Its sound grew louder and louder. It rang so loudly through the castle that cups and saucers broke, and the glass in the windows cracked.

Hour after hour, the bell rang. Grimlock's ears hurt as the bell grew louder and louder.



Grimlock could not bear the noise any longer. He tried to smash the bell with a hammer, but it wouldn't break.

"Stop it! Stop it!" cried Grimlock. "I can't stand it. The sound of the bell will kill me. I think my ears will burst."





At last, Grimlock asked Wilma if she could make the bell stop ringing.

"I can," said Wilma. "But you must let me take it back to Ulm. If you don't, it will begin to ring again, and it will never stop."

"Take it!" said Grimlock. "Take it back to Ulm."



So Wilma and the gnome took the bell back to Ulm and the quest was over.

When the bell returned, beauty came back to the land of Ulm again. Birds sang, flowers bloomed and new leaves grew on the branches of the trees.

Everyone cheered Wilma and the gnome.





The magic key began to glow.

"It's time for me to go," said Wilma. She gave the ring to the gnome.

"The magic is used up," she said. "But keep the ring to remember the quest."

The gnome's eyes filled with tears. "Thank you!" he said. "I shall never forget you."





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Biff came back from the dentist. "Sorry I was a long time," she said. "Did you finish your story? Did they get the bell back?"

Wilma gave Biff her book.

"Why don't you find out?" said Wilma. "You can read it if you like."





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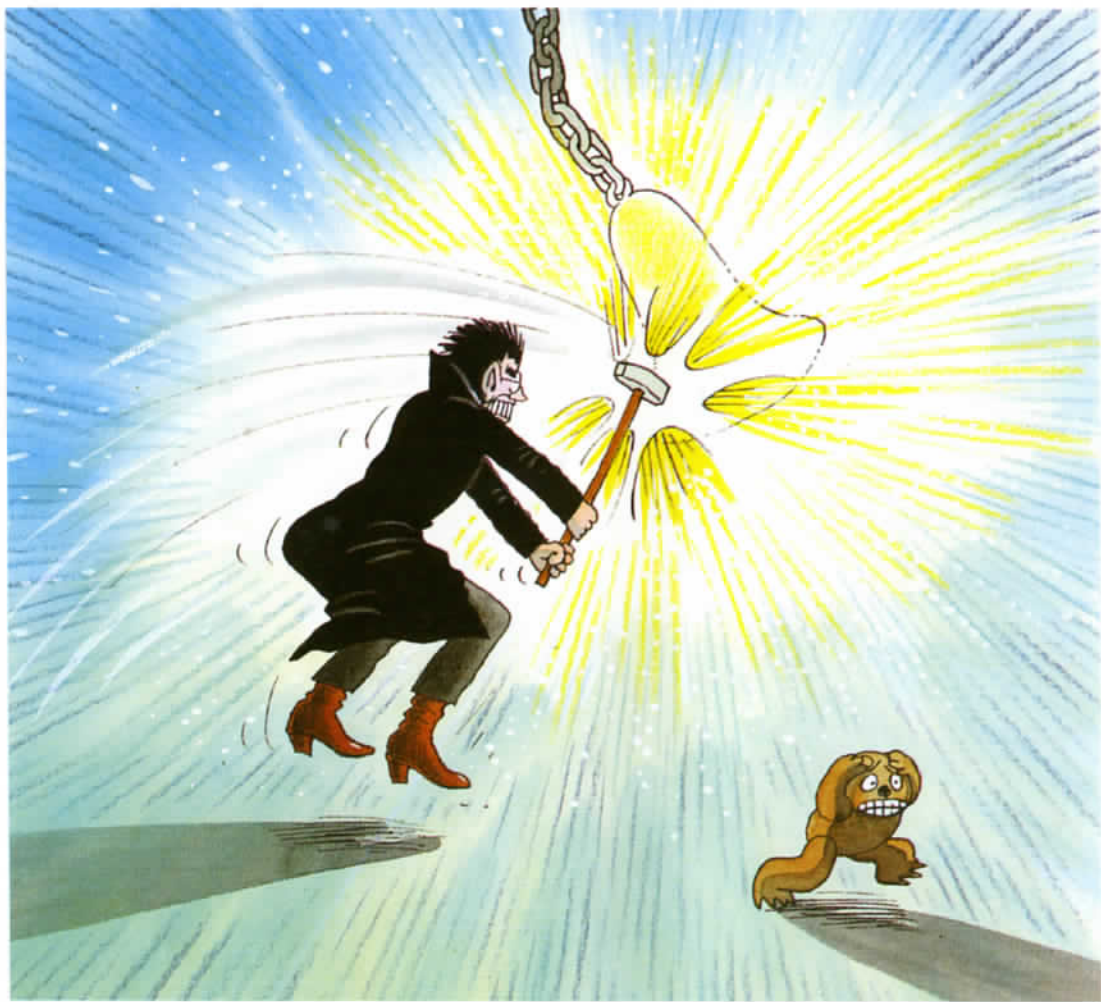
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## ***Play a game***

### ***Beat the dangers***

***To help remember events.***

- Choose one of the dangers. Ask children how Wilma overcame it.
- Children then ask you how Wilma overcame another danger.
- Repeat several times.

## ***Other ideas***

***You can use these ideas straight away, or on another day.***

- Look for adjectives in the story. Find words to describe the swamp (muddy), the desert (rocky) and Wilma (brave, good).
- Think of more dangers for Wilma and suggest ways she could get past them.

# The Quest

Can Wilma save the land of Ulm from ice and snow? Only if she goes on a quest to rescue the crystal bell from the evil Grimlock.



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