



A Unique Delivery

Heavy flakes fell from the sky like white rocks. There was no sign of the soft, fluffy snow that Tariq knew from his childhood. These were sharp crystals of ice that stung wherever they hit. He removed his glasses from his nose and wiped them clean. As soon as he replaced them, the snow began its ceaseless task of obscuring his vision.

He pushed forward. The thick fur coat his father had given him offered some protection against the worst of the cold, but the wind still bit hard. It stalked his every step like the wolves that he kept at bay with fire in the night. The flames offered little respite from the weather, though.

The comforting weight of the package bounced against his chest. It wasn't large, perhaps no bigger than a small notebook, but it was heavy. Whatever was wrapped in the wax paper felt valuable. Tariq was being paid a considerable sum to deliver it safely to the old Fahr on the other side of the forest. She was wise in the ways of the magic of the world and fierce if she felt she had been wronged. He didn't want to let her down.

Overhead, the weak winter sun completed its short daily journey and disappeared quickly behind the towering pines. Tariq wouldn't see it again for another twenty hours. He pushed on, desperate to reach the old woman's house before the wolves closed in.

He'd been trekking through the forest for almost a week, spending the dark hours trying to cover as much ground as possible and the lighter ones eating what little food he could find. He didn't want to be sat around when the wolves prowled.

Somewhere amongst the trees, he heard the familiar rustle of a wolf getting close. He knew what to expect next, but the howl still sent shivers down his spine. The beast closest started the cry before it was taken up by the rest of the pack dotted around the forest. He'd learned to work out where they were, or at least how far away. It sounded like most of them were further afield tonight. He couldn't bank on it, though.

Tariq sped up, pushing his feed through the thick crust with every step. By his own calculations, he reckoned he was no more than a few hundred metres from the Fahr's cabin, but he couldn't see it anywhere.

Suddenly, the wolf broke through the ranks of the trees and began to charge at him. Another joined from the east, trying to head him off. Instinctively, he urged his legs to move faster, and the snow began to thin. He glanced up and saw the flickering light of fire between a strand of trees. He raced forward and crashed through the door of the cabin just as the wolves lunged to nip at his heels.

Staring up from the floor, he glanced into the wild orange eyes of the Fahr. He offered her the package and relaxed. She peeled back the wax paper, and a warm golden glow filled the room.

1

What impression do you get of the weather?

Give **two** impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. _____

2. _____

3 marks

2

Look at the entire text.

Complete the table below with **one** piece of evidence from the text to support each statement.

	Evidence
Tariq grew up in a cold place.	
Tariq was familiar with wolves and the way they acted.	

2 marks

3

What was the parcel wrapped in?

1 mark

4

Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	True	False
Tariq is dressed appropriately for the weather.		
He delivers the parcel successfully.		
The wolves manage to catch and attack Tariq.		
The story reveals what the parcel is.		

2 marks**5**

Look at the paragraph that begins: ***The comforting weight of the package.***

Find and **copy one** phrase that tells you how much he was paid.

1 mark**6**

What did Tariq do each day as soon as it grew dark?

1 mark

