

# Alfred the Great - Diary Entry

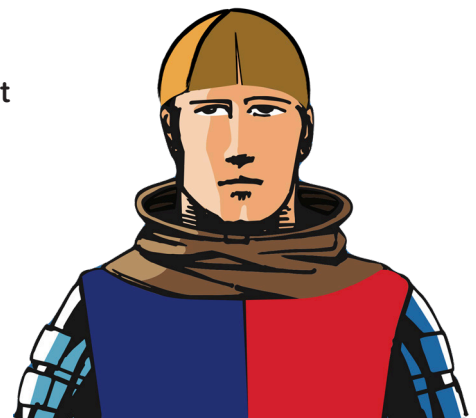
Today everything fell apart. The Viking army has shown their true power and we can no longer fight back. Given the size of their army and their weapons, we have no chance. Our army is already far smaller than theirs and we cannot afford to lose any more men. To survive, we had no choice but to run. As I watched my soldiers scatter, I feared for their lives but also my own. I hope my people won't think of me as a coward. We will fight back but I need time to think of a better plan. I will not send my men to their deaths.

I ran south to the marshes and trudged through the reeds, stumbling from one bog to the next. I tore off my armour and threw down my crown. I stood there and watched them sink into the thick black water. No one could know that I was the king, especially not the king who had ordered their men to run for their lives.

I was safe in the marshes but I needed to keep moving forward. I came to a clearing and spotted smoke rising from a chimney in the distance. By this time, I was exhausted. I needed a rest and some food, so that I could focus on what I needed to do next. I walked towards the smoke. It was coming from a small cottage on the edge of the woods.

Nervously, I knocked on the door. As a king, I could walk into any house, but as a king in disguise, who'd just emerged from a bog, I certainly couldn't. An old woman came to the door. She looked me up and down, wrinkled her nose, and said nothing. I asked if I could come in and have some food. Once again, she looked me up and down, stepped aside and pointed to a wooden chair by the stove. I took this as a "Yes," and tiptoed in, not wanting to leave any dirty footprints.

As I sat down, I could smell that the old woman had been baking and the cakes were slowly rising in the oven. She asked me to watch them while she milked the cow. At last I was warm again. I was



safe and I could think of a plan. So many thoughts and ideas were rushing around in my head. How was I going to get the army back together? How would anyone be able to trust me again? However, there was one question I should have asked myself that I didn't: how long does it take to bake a cake?

When the old woman came back in, she was furious. I was so deep in thought, I hadn't noticed the burning smell until she gave me a cold, hard stare and ran to the oven. I'd ruined the cakes. They were completely black. I felt very embarrassed and apologised to the old woman.

I may not be a very good baker but I'm determined to protect my people and fight the Viking army. Tomorrow I will find a way.



# Questions

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- 1** What do we know about Alfred the Great from the first paragraph of this diary extract?

- ☐ He is a Viking.
- ☐ He is a soldier.
- ☐ He is the best fighter in the world.
- ☐ He is the leader of an army.

- 2** Which fact is true about Alfred the Great's army?

- ☐ It was larger than the Viking army.
- ☐ They were winning the battle.
- ☐ It was smaller than the Viking army.
- ☐ It had more weapons than the Viking army.

- 3** In which direction did Alfred the Great run?

- ☐ South
- ☐ East
- ☐ North
- ☐ West

- 4** Why did Alfred the Great throw his crown into the bog?

- ☐ He was tired of being the king.
- ☐ The crown was hurting his head.
- ☐ He didn't want anyone to recognise him.
- ☐ He didn't want to be a king ever again.

- 5** Which word is used to show that Alfred saw smoke?
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**6** Where was the cottage?

- ☐ in the woods
- ☐ in the clearing
- ☐ on the edge of the woods
- ☐ in the distant woods

**7** 'She looked me up and down, wrinkled her nose, and said nothing.'

What does this line suggest?

- ☐ The old woman had a twitch.
- ☐ The old woman knew Alfred was the king.
- ☐ The old woman was pleased to have a visitor.
- ☐ The old woman thought Alfred smelled bad.

**8** What was the old woman doing while Alfred thought of a plan?

- ☐ baking cakes
- ☐ helping Alfred get his army back together
- ☐ sitting by the fire
- ☐ milking the cow

**9** Which word is used to show that the woman was angry?

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**10** When did Alfred realise that he had burnt the cakes?

- ☐ when he smelt a burning smell
- ☐ when he saw that the cakes were black
- ☐ as soon as the woman came in the door
- ☐ when he saw the look on the old woman's face

Score:

# Answers

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- 1** What do we know about Alfred the Great from the first paragraph of this diary extract? ☒ He is the leader of an army.
- 2** Which fact is true about Alfred the Great's army? ☒ It was smaller than the Viking army.
- 3** In which direction did Alfred the Great run? ☒ South
- 4** Why did Alfred the Great throw his crown into the bog? ☒ He didn't want anyone to recognise him.
- 5** Which word is used to show that Alfred saw smoke? spotted
- 6** Where was the cottage? ☒ on the edge of the woods
- 7** 'She looked me up and down, wrinkled her nose, and said nothing.'
- What does this line suggest? ☒ The old woman thought Alfred smelled bad.
- 8** What was the old woman doing while Alfred thought of a plan? ☒ milking the cow
- 9** Which word is used to show that the woman was angry? furious
- 10** When did Alfred realise that he had burnt the cakes? ☒ when he saw the look on the old woman's face