

Collecting Ingredients for Wands

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Duncan and his magician teacher, Meerfus, were at the market. They went to the market several times a month, especially for fresh vegetables or ingredients for wands. One never could tell what would be useful in a wand.

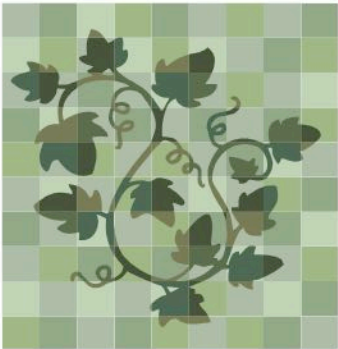
Meerfus lingered by some cages of various birds. He eyed a few chickens critically, and Duncan watched, trying to guess the reasoning behind Meerfus' interest. "Will we make a wand that helps you fly?" Asked Duncan excitedly. Flying seemed pretty fun, after all.

Meerfus raised an eyebrow at him, as if he were crazy. "I'm thinking about dinner, Duncan."

"Oh." Duncan said lamely, crestfallen that it was something as simple as that.

Meerfus selected a chicken in a wicker cage, paid for it, and handed the cage to Duncan to carry. The white bird squawked loudly and pecked at his fingers through the cage. Duncan carried it dutifully, feeling foolish.

Next, they stopped by some farmers' tables. Meerfus selected some cucumbers, a sack of potatoes, which they put in their rolling cart, and some tomatoes on the vine. "Will those vines help up make a magic wand that tangles up people's feet?" Duncan inquired.

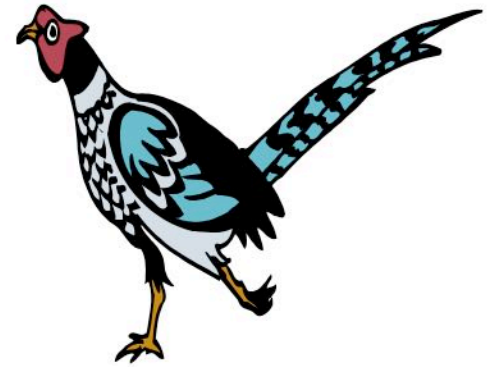


Meerfus eyed his apprentice again. "No, they're for a salad. We need something to eat with our chicken."

Duncan sighed, wrong again, and trudged alongside his master. They went next to a booth that sold fishing supplies. There were all manners of hooks, lures, and fishing implements. Meerfus seemed particularly interested in the little fishing flies, ones that looked almost like butterflies or mayflies with hidden hooks.

"Are we going to make a wand that helps you catch fish with those flies?" Duncan asked worriedly. He'd already been wrong twice. Could his intuitions be so wrong?

Meerfus laughed. "No, I actually enjoy fishing. I was thinking about going again in the river down the road."



Duncan groaned in frustration. “How am I so wrong today? I cannot believe you are not trying to get things for wands! How am I so clueless?”

Meerfus laughed, shaking his head. “You are not as wrong as you think, just distracted. You didn’t notice me pick up pheasant feathers while you handled the chicken. Those *are* for a wand of slow descent, which helps people fall without getting hurt. That is something like flying, right?”

“And the vegetables?” Duncan asked suspiciously.

“The flowers from cucumber vines are not only pretty, but they do help in a wand of colored lights, a wand of plant growth, or a wand of dazzling.”

“Was there anything at the fishing booth? There had to be.”

Meerfus winked at his student. “What do you think?”

Duncan thought hard, trying to remember what else Meerfus had touched or bought. “Was it the fishing line that you bought?”

“Exactly; it *does* make for a great wand of fish catching once we get some fish scales!”

Duncan laughed in relief. His instincts were not so wrong – he just had to be more observant. It was all in the details!



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. Where are Duncan and Meerfus?
 - A. at a store
 - B. at the market
 - C. at a carnival
 - D. at a garage sale

2. What is the first item Meerfus buys?
 - A. a pheasant
 - B. a duck
 - C. a goose
 - D. a chicken

3. TRUE OR FALSE: Duncan correctly guesses Meerfus' reason for buying a chicken.
 - A. True
 - B. False

4. Why does Duncan get upset?
 - A. He can't seem to find anything to buy.
 - B. He lost his money.
 - C. He can't figure out why Meerfus is buying things.
 - D. He doesn't like to carry heavy stuff.

5. How would you best describe Duncan's understanding of Meerfus' doings?
 - A. Duncan has no clue what is going on.
 - B. Duncan had some good guesses, but missed some hints and clues.
 - C. Duncan is a horrible student.
 - D. Duncan knows exactly what Meerfus is doing all the time.

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