

Kem's Good Luck

Kem was excited; so excited. It was to be Chinese New Year. She and her Mum and Dad were all getting ready for the big celebration and party. But one thing was bothering her, really bothering her. Just at the back of her mouth, one of her baby teeth was loose, and no matter how much she wiggled it with her tongue, it wouldn't come free,

The day started early; Kem was given a dustpan and brush and told her job was to sweep the stairs, to sweep up all the bad luck from last year so good luck could come in at New Year. Mum was busy with a broom in the kitchen and Dad was hoovering the front room. Kem started at the top of the stairs as she had been told but all the time, despite how excited she was, she kept having to stop to give that loose tooth a wiggle. So annoying and frustrating!

When all the bad luck had been swept away and put in the bin, it was time to help Mum in the kitchen cooking. Part of the feast tonight was to be traditional dumplings. These were called **Jiaozi** and Mum and Kem set about mixing the ingredients. They were meant to look like gold bars and Kem's job was to make the dumplings into bar shapes. But all the time, however much she was enjoying herself amongst all the smells and tastes in the kitchen; wiggle, wiggle, wiggle with no success.

Mum said, "I've just got to put a special, secret ingredient into one of the dumplings, you go and see how your Dad is getting on. It's a secret and I don't want you to see."

Kem was disappointed and excited but off she went to find Dad. Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle as she went.

Dad was standing at the front door busily doing another traditional New Year job. In one hand was a pot of red paint, in the other, a paint brush. "You know red is our lucky colour? Well, I've got to paint the front door red so good luck will be welcomed into our house. Do you want to help?"

Kem's Good Luck (continued)

"Yes please Dad." said Kem. He found another brush and told Kem to paint the bottom of the door. She loved this job, helping her Dad, the bright red paint, the smells of the kitchen but all the time...wiggle, wiggle, wiggle.

More preparations were done by the family in the afternoon. Red lanterns were put up all over for more good luck and Kem was getting very excited as the feast approached.

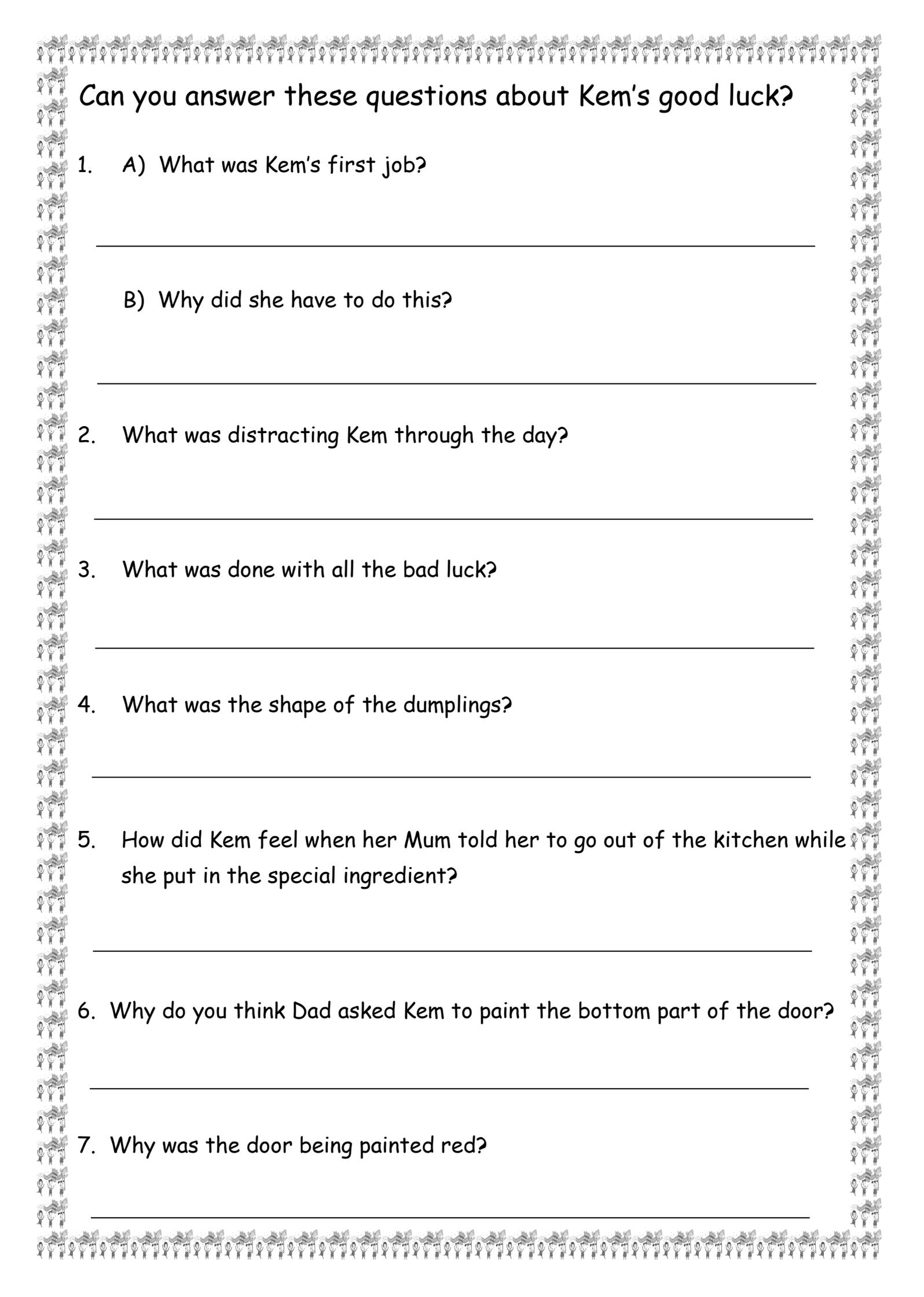
Eventually, they were all ready to sit down for their meal. Kem had hoped some of the food they ate would dislodge that tooth but still it hung on despite all her wiggling. At the end of the meal it was time for those **Jiaozi** dumplings and Mum's special secret ingredient! Kem was pleased with the shape and golden colour of the dumplings and when she took the first bite of hers, she was expecting that secret special ingredient to give the dumpling that extra taste.

"Mmm, " said Kem, "that's lovely!" but she was a bit disappointed really, it tasted like a normal dumpling and she couldn't notice anything different; no special taste but she was polite and didn't say anything to her Mum.

Her second bite was different though. Somewhere in the soft dumpling her teeth found something hard as she was chewing. She was a bit shocked, especially when she saw she had bitten into a coin! She took the coin out of her mouth but it wasn't the only thing that came out, there on the side of her plate was that tiny white tooth!

"Ah!" said Mum, "You found that secret ingredient." I put it in to bring good luck and it certainly seems to have worked." She said pointing at the tooth.

Kem was so pleased and relieved she gave her Mum and Dad a big hug. And started to wiggle at the hole where her tooth had been.



Can you answer these questions about Kem's good luck?

1. A) What was Kem's first job?

B) Why did she have to do this?

2. What was distracting Kem through the day?

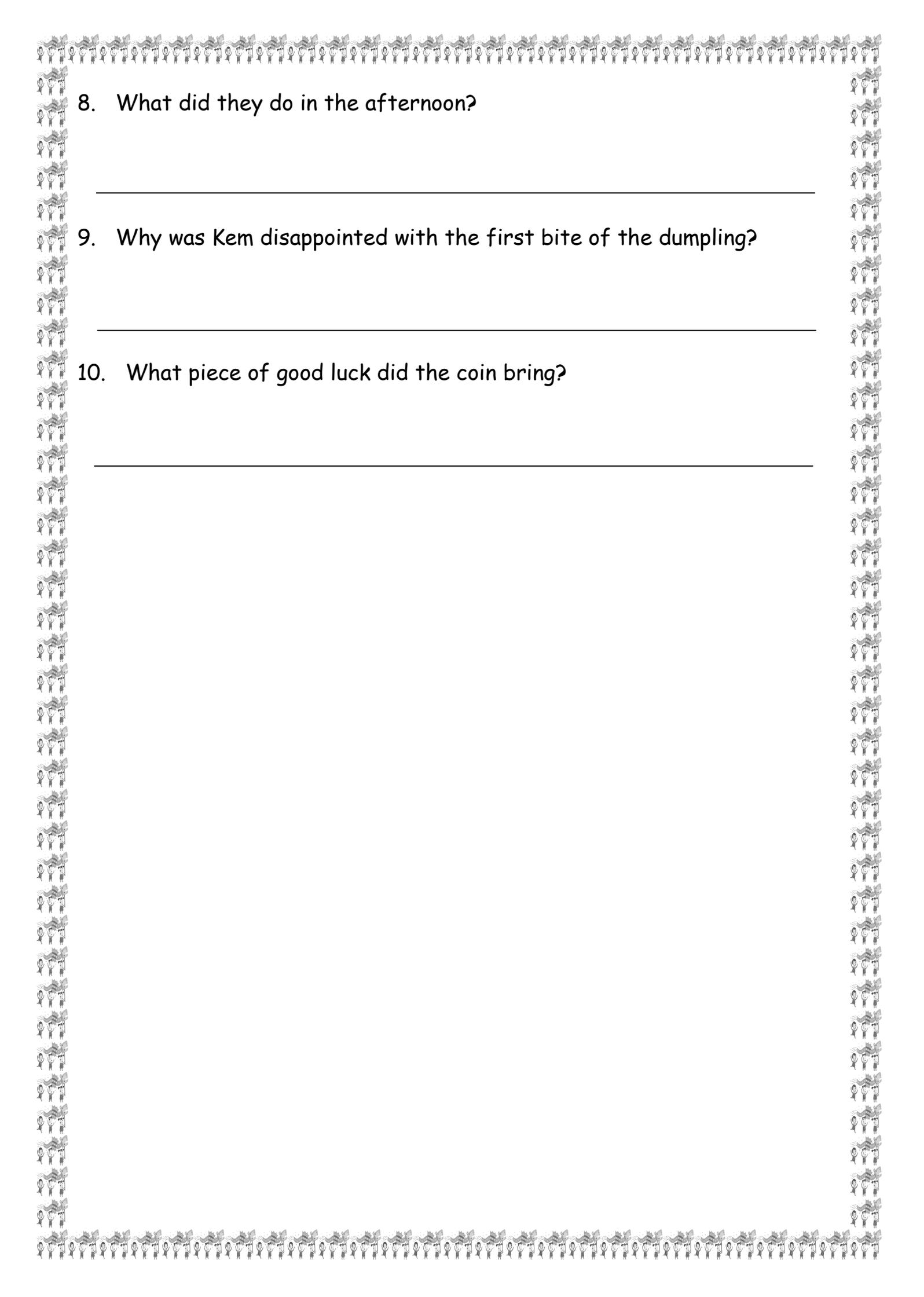
3. What was done with all the bad luck?

4. What was the shape of the dumplings?

5. How did Kem feel when her Mum told her to go out of the kitchen while she put in the special ingredient?

6. Why do you think Dad asked Kem to paint the bottom part of the door?

7. Why was the door being painted red?



8. What did they do in the afternoon?

9. Why was Kem disappointed with the first bite of the dumpling?

10. What piece of good luck did the coin bring?

Answer sheet

1. A) What was Kem's first job?

To brush the stairs.

B) Why did she have to do this?

To get rid of bad luck.

2. What was distracting Kem through the day?

Her loose tooth.

3. What was done with all the bad luck?

It was put in the bin.

4. What was the shape of the dumplings?

They were bar shaped.

5. How did Kem feel when her Mum told her to go out of the kitchen while she put in the special ingredient?

Disappointed and excited.

6. Why do you think Dad asked Kem to paint the bottom part of the door?

(Inference) She was small and Dad was more able to reach the top of the door.

7. Why was the door being painted red?

To bring in good luck.

8. What did they do in the afternoon?

They put up red lanterns.

9. Why was Kem disappointed with the first bite of the dumpling?

She could not taste any special ingredient.

10. What piece of good luck did the coin bring?

It dislodged Kem's loose tooth.