

The Underside of the Table

Eight activities

Activity 1: The job and the event

The caretaker says, "the barbecue isn't the job. The job is every summer after this one." In your own words, what is the difference between doing the event and doing the job? Why does hidden work belong to the job? Two or three sentences.

Activity 2: The three parts

List the three parts of Elimelech's under-the-table reasoning (hands, time, and the third), and explain each in one line. Which one does he admit only to himself, and why? Short answers.

Activity 3: Order the repair

Put these in the story's order, and say why the order matters: (a) the caretaker's fall inspection; (b) the split - tops together, undersides alone; (c) the caretaker's permission; (d) the barbecue; (e) the stool. One sentence on why the order matters.

Activity 4: The bolt math - a made-up set of numbers

The numbers in this activity are made up for practice. A picnic table takes 25 minutes to assemble with every bolt in the sheet - not optional, so it sits in both columns. Underside finishing (sand and wipe) adds 10 minutes a table. Skipped finishing means refinishing later: each table needs a one-hour refinish at the end of seasons 2 and 4 to stay decent. (a) For 6 tables over 6 seasons, which path costs fewer total work-hours? (b) The story's arithmetic is not only hours - what does the visible math leave out? Show your steps.

Activity 5: "Tables don't know which side faces up."

What does the caretaker mean? Why is the hidden part the one that has to be right the FIRST time? Two or three sentences.

Activity 6: Draw the underside

Draw the underside of the first table as Chapters 2 and 4 give it: the seat supports, the diagonal braces, and the bolts - where they go and how many. Only what the story tells you. Caption it with one line from the story.

Activity 7: Emuna's scenery - a fictional case

A girl named Emuna paints scenery for her school's production, and the stage manager tells her the back of the flats doesn't need the second coat - "the audience only sees the front." Write the reason the back might still be the job, the sentence Emuna says that holds her standard without making the stage manager wrong, and what she actually does. One sentence each, with names.

Activity 8: Word grid

Find the eight words in the grid. They all go left to right, one per row.

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T A B L E V W F G H
B E N C H W F G H U
B O L T S F G H U P
H I D D E N H U P M
U N D E R S I D E N
T I G H T E N M N O
S T E A D Y M N O R
S U M M E R N O R S
G H U P M N O R S T
H U P M N O R S T D

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The eight words: TABLE, BENCH, BOLTS, HIDDEN, UNDERSIDE, TIGHTEN, STEADY, SUMMER. Which word names the part nobody sees, and which word names how the tables held at the barbecue - the best review hidden work ever gets?