

Oak and Reed

A French Fable

One day Oak said to Reed, "I am sorry for you. You are so weak that the hummingbird that lights on your blade lowers you to the ground. Even a gentle breeze that scarcely ripples the water in the pond has power to bend your head."

Oak continued, "My proud oak head rises like a mountain and provides shade for the creatures below me. The wind that to you is a hurricane is to me but a soft breeze. If only you could have grown in shelter beneath my leafy canopy, I would have saved you from those storms that cause you suffering. But, alas, you grow along the pond's marshy borders. Truly, Nature has been unfair to you."

"I know your pity comes because of your kind nature, but don't worry about me," said Reed. "For you the winds hold far more danger. I bend, but I do not break. Until now, you have withstood their power, but life is not over yet."

As gentle Reed finished her words, a mighty north wind rushed down through the mountain canyon with great fury. Reed, as always, bent low before it. Mighty Oak defied the angry blast and proudly held her head up high. But the furious wind inhaled. With double the force it made a rush for the tree and tore it up by its great roots.

As the wind left behind a quiet calm, Reed raised up her head and looked with sad eyes upon the scene. There lay majestic Oak—her stately crown in the waters of the pond. "Pride goes before the fall."

Reading Comprehension

1. Which of the following best describes Oak?
 - A. angry
 - B. proud
 - C. kind
2. Which of the following best describes Reed?
 - A. gentle
 - B. bent
 - C. sad
3. In the last paragraph, *crown* refers to
 - A. the gold metal Oak wore on her head.
 - B. the fact that Oak was a queen.
 - C. Oak's leafy treetop.
4. Which of these could not really happen?
 - A. A hummingbird lands on Reed and bends her.
 - B. A great wind rushes down the canyon.
 - C. Oak and Reed talk to each other.
5. The moral, "Pride goes before the fall," probably means
 - A. if you are proud, it might cause you trouble.
 - B. being proud might make you clumsy.
 - C. the proud always take the first turn.

I Sometimes Think I'd Rather Crow

I sometimes think I'd rather crow
And be a rooster than to roost
And be a crow. But, I dunno.

A rooster he can roost also
Which don't seem fair when crows can't crow
Which may help some. Still I dunno.

Crows should be glad of one thing though;
Nobody thinks of eating crow,
While roosters they are good enough
For anyone unless they're tough.

There's lots of tough old roosters though,
And anyway a crow can't crow,
So mebbly roosters stand more show,
It looks that way. But I dunno.

Anonymous

Reading Comprehension

1. The poem tells the reader a crow can _____.
 - A. crow
 - B. roost
 - C. eat
2. What is one thing a crow can't do?
 - A. crow
 - B. roost
 - C. eat
3. What is something a crow should be glad about?
 - A. "A rooster he can roost also."
 - B. "While roosters they are good enough."
 - C. "Nobody thinks of eating crow."
4. In stanza four, "roosters stand more show" might mean
 - A. roosters stand more than they roost.
 - B. a rooster has more going for it.
 - C. roosters are tough because they stand.
5. What can you tell about the poem's narrator?
 - A. The narrator doesn't like crows.
 - B. The narrator has a hard time making a decision.
 - C. The narrator wants to be a rooster.

Journal Entry

July 4, 1986

Today my family and I visited the Statue of Liberty to celebrate her 100th birthday. We have gone to concerts, festivals, and fantastic fireworks! We saw the swearing-in of 5,000 new citizens on Ellis Island.

I have learned so much about the statue given to the United States by France to celebrate our independence. She is sometimes called Lady Liberty, and she is located at the gateway to New York Harbor. She was designed by French sculptor Frédéric Bartholdi. The frame was built by Gustave Eiffel, who built the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Liberty was shipped in 350 pieces and assembled like a giant jigsaw puzzle! She was dedicated in 1886.

I didn't know that the Statue of Liberty is one of the largest statues in the world. She rises 305 feet from the bottom of the pedestal to the tip of her torch and weighs 204 tons. Inside we could climb stairs or ride the elevator to her head. Dad said the stairs were much better exercise—ha, ha! Only thirty of us could stand inside her head, but we could see all of the glorious New York Harbor.

The Statue of Liberty looks like a proud woman holding a torch high with her right arm, and in her left hand is a book. Written on it is MDCCLXXVI—that means 1776 in Roman numerals.

A sonnet by poet Emma Lazarus is written on a tablet in the main entrance to the pedestal. Its last lines read:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless tempest-tost, to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

I won't forget the sight out the plane window that night as we flew home. Lady Liberty—a glowing silhouette against the sky.

Reading Comprehension

1. The main idea in paragraph three is
 - A. you can go inside the statue.
 - B. the Statue of Liberty is very big.
 - C. climbing stairs is good exercise.
 - D. from the top of the statue you can see New York Harbor.
2. "Gateway to New York Harbor" is _____.
 - A. a metaphor
 - B. a silly expression
 - C. a simile
 - D. the gate that ships go through to pay admission
3. In Emma Lazarus's poem, in the line "I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" *golden door* refers to _____.
 - A. the statue's hand
 - B. the exit to the harbor
 - C. opportunity in a new country
 - D. none of the above
4. The best title for this journal entry would be
 - A. "The United States Centennial"
 - B. "My Family's New York Trip"
 - C. "The Statue of Liberty"
 - D. "New York Harbor"

Student Book Review

The Trouble with Terry, by Joan Lexau, is a book every fifth-grade tomboy should read. I was amazed that the author knew exactly how it feels to want to do boy things when you're a girl. Teresa Seth—Terry—experiences things a lot of tomboys do.

The book starts off with one more thing going wrong. Terry gets an F in math on the last day of school. Of course she is worried what her mom will say. Terry lives with her mom and older brother, Tommy, in a two-room apartment. Terry hangs out with Tommy and his friends. Her mom is always scolding her for something. "Why can't you be a young lady?" But Terry hates being a girl. It's not like she asked for it.

One day she cuts off her braid because she thinks it will save her mom time. Then she accidentally waxes herself into a corner in the kitchen when she is trying to help. But my favorite is when she is helping cook dinner and decides to make boiled eggs. They explode all over the kitchen.

Her mom keeps telling Terry that her main trouble is that she is too impulsive. She needs to think before she acts. I think that's definitely true. One day she is helping with a paper route. A little boy named Soupy, who lives in her apartment building, wants to go with her. Terry is trying really hard to get each newspaper on the porch. Sometimes, when one doesn't make it, Terry tells Soupy to go pick it up. She means for him to put it on the porch. When they are done with the route, Terry turns around to tell Soupy they have finished.

Well, I guess you'll have to read the book to find out what happens next. I loved *The Trouble with Terry*. I think anyone who has ever been in trouble can really relate.

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Reading Comprehension

1. Which of these is a fact?
 - A. *The Trouble with Terry*, by Joan Lexau, is a book every fifth-grade tomboy should read.
 - B. The book starts off with one more thing going wrong.
 - C. I think anyone who has ever been in trouble can really relate.
2. In paragraph four, *impulsive* probably means _____.
 - A. thoughtless
 - B. messy
 - C. helpful
3. Predict what probably happens when Terry turns around to talk to Soupy.
 - A. She is lost and can't get home.
 - B. Soupy has disappeared.
 - C. Terry sees Soupy with an armful of papers.
4. The writer of the book report probably is
 - A. a trouble maker.
 - B. a tomboy herself.
 - C. an adult.

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