Name: _____ Date: _____

The Heron Who Never Asked

Circle group

At the edge of a marsh, a tall gray heron named Alder stood still in the shallows. He was a very good fisher, but he had one problem. He never asked anyone for anything. He thought that asking made a bird look weak.

One spring, a thick mat of floating weeds covered his favorite fishing spot. Alder could not see the water, and the fish stayed hidden. He stood there for three days and caught nothing. His stomach growled, and his feathers grew dull.

A beaver named Maple swam by. "You look hungry, Alder. Is something wrong?"

"Not at all," Alder said. "I am just resting."

Maple raised an eyebrow. He had seen the heron in the same place for three days. But he said nothing and swam on.

By the fourth day, Alder was so weak that he wobbled. A small frog on a lily pad spoke up. "If you want help, say so. Nobody here can read your mind."

The words stung, but they were true. Alder called, "I need help with these weeds!"

Soon Maple and three muskrats were pulling the weeds to shore. Alder caught a fat perch before sunset and shared it with them.

He still found asking hard. But he never again thought it was weakness.

Questions

1. Why did Alder never ask anyone for anything?

_____

_____

2. What covered Alder's favorite fishing spot?

_____

_____

3. What did Alder tell Maple when Maple asked what was wrong?

_____

_____

4. Who told Alder to say what he needed?

_____

_____

5. Why did Maple say nothing more even though he doubted Alder?

_____

_____

6. What lesson does the story teach?

_____

_____

Words to know

marsh: a soft, wet area of land with grasses and shallow water
shallows: the shallow parts of a body of water
wobbled: moved unsteadily from side to side

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Heron Who Never Asked

Triangle group

At the edge of a marsh, a tall gray heron named Alder stood very still in the shallows. He was an excellent fisher. But he had one problem: he never asked anyone for anything, because he believed that asking made a bird look weak.

One spring, a thick mat of floating weeds spread across his favorite fishing spot, and Alder could not see the water beneath it. The fish stayed hidden, and he stood there for three days without a single catch while his stomach growled and his feathers grew dull. A beaver named Maple swam past and asked whether something was wrong. But Alder said stiffly that he was simply resting. Maple raised an eyebrow, since he had watched the heron standing in the same place for three days, yet he said nothing and swam on.

By the fourth day, Alder was so weak that he wobbled. A small frog on a lily pad finally spoke up and told him that if he wanted help he should say so, because nobody in the marsh could read his mind. The words stung. But Alder knew they were true, and he called across the water that he needed help clearing the weeds. Within an hour, Maple and three muskrats were towing the weeds to the shore. Alder caught a fat perch before sunset and shared it with all of them. He still found asking hard, but he never again confused it with weakness.

Questions

1. Why did Alder never ask anyone for anything?

_____

_____

2. What covered Alder's favorite fishing spot?

_____

_____

3. What did Alder tell Maple when Maple asked if something was wrong?

_____

_____

4. Who finally told Alder to say what he needed?

_____

_____

5. Why did Maple say nothing more even though he doubted Alder?

_____

_____

6. What lesson does the story teach?

_____

_____

Words to know

marsh: a soft, wet area of land with grasses and shallow water
shallows: the shallow parts of a body of water
stiffly: in a cold, formal way
wobbled: moved unsteadily from side to side
towing: pulling something along behind you

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Heron Who Never Asked

Square group

At the edge of a sprawling marsh, a tall gray heron named Alder stood motionless in the shallows. He was an exceptional fisher. But he suffered from one persistent flaw: he never asked anyone for anything, because he was convinced that asking made a bird appear weak.

One spring, a dense mat of floating weeds drifted across his favorite fishing spot, and Alder could no longer see the water beneath it. The fish remained out of sight, and he stood there for three whole days without a single catch while his stomach growled and his feathers grew dull and ragged. A beaver named Maple swam past and inquired whether something was the matter. But Alder replied stiffly that he was merely resting. Maple raised an eyebrow, since he had watched the heron standing in exactly the same place for three days, yet he said nothing more and paddled on.

By the fourth day, Alder was so feeble that he wobbled. A small frog perched on a lily pad finally spoke up and told him that if he wanted help he ought to say so, because nobody in the marsh could possibly read his mind. The words stung. But Alder recognized the truth in them, and he called across the water that he needed help clearing the weeds. Within an hour, Maple and three muskrats were towing the weeds toward the shore. Alder caught a plump perch before sunset and shared it with every one of them. He still found asking difficult, but he never again mistook it for weakness.

Questions

1. Why did Alder never ask anyone for anything?

_____

_____

2. What drifted across Alder's favorite fishing spot?

_____

_____

3. What did Alder reply when Maple asked whether something was the matter?

_____

_____

4. Who finally told Alder to say what he needed?

_____

_____

5. Why did Maple say nothing more even though he doubted Alder's answer?

_____

_____

6. What lesson does the story teach about asking for help?

_____

_____

Words to know

marsh: a soft, wet area of land with grasses and shallow water
shallows: the shallow parts of a body of water
stiffly: in a cold, formal way
wobbled: moved unsteadily from side to side
towing: pulling something along behind you

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Heron Who Never Asked

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Heron Who Never Asked

Easier · 212 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.1

1. He thought that asking made a bird look weak.
2. A thick mat of floating weeds.
3. That he was just resting.
4. A small frog on a lily pad.
5. Alder said he did not need help, so Maple did not push him.
6. Asking for help is not weak, and others cannot help if you do not say what you need.

Triangle: The Heron Who Never Asked

This passage · 242 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.8

1. He believed that asking made a bird look weak.
2. A thick mat of floating weeds.
3. That he was simply resting.
4. A small frog on a lily pad.
5. Alder had said he did not need help, so Maple did not push him.
6. Asking for help is not a weakness, and others cannot help if you do not say what you need.

Square: The Heron Who Never Asked

Harder · 259 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.2

1. He was convinced that asking made a bird appear weak.
2. A dense mat of floating weeds.
3. That he was merely resting.
4. A small frog perched on a lily pad.
5. Alder had claimed he needed no help, so Maple did not press him.
6. Asking is not a weakness, and others cannot help unless you tell them what you need.