Name: _____ Date: _____

The Mule at the Flooded Ford

Circle group

Marrow was a gray mule. She carried baskets of apples from the orchard to the town market. People said she was stubborn, because she sometimes stopped and would not move. The farmer's daughter, Ines, just waited.

One morning, after heavy rain, they came to a ford where the road crossed a stream. The water looked calm and not deep. A traveler on a fast horse rode up and laughed. "Is your mule afraid of a puddle? Push her, or you will be late."

Ines pulled the rope, but Marrow would not move. She stared at the brown water. Ines felt embarrassed.

Then she saw a small log float by. Then a whole branch rolled fast along the bottom. The calm water hid a strong current. The traveler's horse stepped in, slipped, and ran back to the bank, wet and shaking.

Ines patted Marrow. They waited an hour for the stream to settle. Then they crossed with no trouble.

After that, Ines called her careful, not stubborn. Sometimes a refusal is wisdom.

Questions

1. What did Marrow carry to the market?

_____

_____

2. Why did the traveler laugh at Marrow?

_____

_____

3. What did Ines see in the stream?

_____

_____

4. What happened to the traveler's horse?

_____

_____

5. What was the calm water hiding?

_____

_____

6. Why did Ines call Marrow careful instead of stubborn?

_____

_____

Words to know

stubborn: unwilling to change your mind or move
ford: a shallow place where people can cross a stream
current: water that flows in one direction
wisdom: good sense that comes from understanding things

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 Mule at the Flooded Ford

Triangle group

Marrow was a gray mule who carried baskets of apples from the orchard to the town market. Everyone said she was stubborn, because she sometimes planted her hooves and refused to move. The farmer's daughter, Ines, usually just sighed and waited.

One morning, after a night of heavy rain, they came to the shallow ford where the road crossed a stream. The water looked calm and only ankle deep. A traveler with a fast horse trotted up behind them and laughed. "Is that animal afraid of a puddle? Push her along, girl, or you will be late."

Ines tugged the rope, but Marrow would not budge. She stared at the brown water and flicked her long ears. Ines was embarrassed, and she almost tugged harder.

Then she noticed a small log drifting by, then a whole branch, rolling fast along the bottom of the stream. The shallow water was hiding a strong current. The traveler's smile faded as his horse stepped in, slipped, and scrambled back to the bank, soaked and shaking.

Ines patted Marrow's neck. They waited an hour until the stream settled, and then they crossed together without trouble.

From that day, Ines never called the mule stubborn. She called her careful. Sometimes a refusal is not laziness at all, but wisdom that is waiting to be understood.

Questions

1. What did Marrow carry to the market?

_____

_____

2. Why did the traveler laugh at Marrow?

_____

_____

3. What did Ines notice floating in the stream?

_____

_____

4. What happened to the traveler's horse?

_____

_____

5. What was the shallow water hiding?

_____

_____

6. Why did Ines start calling Marrow careful instead of stubborn?

_____

_____

Words to know

stubborn: unwilling to change your mind or move
ford: a shallow place where people can cross a stream
budge: to move even a little bit
current: water that flows in one direction
wisdom: good sense that comes from understanding things

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 Mule at the Flooded Ford

Square group

Marrow was a gray mule who hauled baskets of apples from the orchard to the town market. Everyone in the valley considered her stubborn, because she occasionally planted her hooves and refused to take another step. The farmer's daughter, Ines, usually just sighed and waited patiently.

One morning, after a night of heavy rain, they arrived at the shallow ford where the road crossed a stream. The water appeared calm and scarcely ankle deep. A traveler on a fast horse trotted up behind them and laughed. "Is that animal frightened of a puddle? Push her along, girl, or you will be late for the market."

Ines tugged the rope, but Marrow would not budge. She stared at the muddy water and flicked her long ears. Ines felt embarrassed, and she very nearly pulled harder.

Then she noticed a small log drifting past, followed by an entire branch tumbling swiftly along the bottom of the stream. The shallow surface was concealing a powerful current. The traveler's smile faded as his horse stepped in, lost its footing, and scrambled back to the bank, drenched and trembling.

Ines patted Marrow's neck. They waited for an hour until the stream had settled, and then they crossed together without any trouble.

From that day forward, Ines never described the mule as stubborn. She called her careful. Sometimes a refusal is not laziness at all, but wisdom that is simply waiting to be understood.

Questions

1. What did Marrow haul to the town market?

_____

_____

2. Why did the traveler laugh at Marrow?

_____

_____

3. What did Ines notice drifting and tumbling in the stream?

_____

_____

4. What happened to the traveler's horse when it stepped in?

_____

_____

5. What was the shallow surface concealing?

_____

_____

6. Why did Ines begin to call Marrow careful instead of stubborn?

_____

_____

Words to know

stubborn: unwilling to change your mind or move
ford: a shallow place where people can cross a stream
budge: to move even a little bit
current: water that flows in one direction
wisdom: good sense that comes from understanding things

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 Mule at the Flooded Ford

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

Circle: The Mule at the Flooded Ford

Easier · 171 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.9

1. Baskets of apples.
2. He thought she was afraid of a puddle.
3. A small log and then a whole branch rolling fast along the bottom.
4. It slipped in the water and ran back to the bank, wet and shaking.
5. A strong current.
6. Marrow's refusal kept them safe from a danger Ines had not seen.

Triangle: The Mule at the Flooded Ford

This passage · 220 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.1

1. Baskets of apples.
2. He thought she was afraid of a puddle.
3. A small log and then a whole branch rolling fast along the bottom.
4. It slipped in the water and scrambled back to the bank, soaked and shaking.
5. A strong current.
6. Marrow's refusal had kept them safe from a danger that Ines had not seen.

Square: The Mule at the Flooded Ford

Harder · 238 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.3

1. Baskets of apples from the orchard.
2. He thought she was frightened of a puddle.
3. A small log and then an entire branch moving swiftly along the bottom.
4. It lost its footing and scrambled back to the bank, drenched and trembling.
5. A powerful current.
6. Marrow's refusal had protected them from a danger Ines had not been able to see.