Name: _____ Date: _____

The Snapped String

Circle group

Mara had practiced her solo for six weeks. The recital was at noon the next day. On Friday evening she played it one last time in her room. Near the end, the highest string on her violin snapped. It made a sharp twang. It curled up like a tiny silver spring.

Mara stared at it. The music shop closed at five. It was past six. She could not buy a new string. Her stomach dropped. She sat on her bed and tried not to cry. How could she play without a string?

Her mother tapped on the door. "Mr. Lund next door played in a band for forty years," she said. "Let's ask him."

Mara did not want to bother anyone. But she followed her mother across the yard. Mr. Lund listened. He chuckled. "Come in," he said. "A musician who never breaks a string has never played much."

He led them to a messy desk. He opened a drawer full of little paper envelopes. "I always kept spares," he said. He held up one with the right letter. He showed Mara how to put the new string on. She turned the peg slowly. The first notes sounded flat. They fixed it together until it rang clear.

The next afternoon, Mara walked on stage with a steady hand. When her last note faded, the crowd clapped. Mr. Lund sat in the third row. He clapped the loudest.

Questions

1. What went wrong when Mara practiced on Friday?

_____

_____

2. Why couldn't Mara buy a new string?

_____

_____

3. Who helped Mara, and what did he give her?

_____

_____

4. What did Mr. Lund mean when he said a musician who never breaks a string has never played much?

_____

_____

5. How did Mara feel at the end, and how do you know?

_____

_____

Words to know

recital: a show where musicians perform for an audience
solo: a piece played by one person alone
twang: a sharp ringing sound made by a stretched string
spares: extra things kept in case one breaks

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 Snapped String

Triangle group

Mara had practiced her solo for six weeks, and the recital was scheduled for noon the next day. On Friday evening she ran through it one last time in her bedroom, but halfway through the final line, the highest string on her violin snapped with a sharp twang and curled up like a tiny silver spring.

Mara stared at it in disbelief. The music shop closed at five, and it was already past six, so there was no way to buy a replacement. She felt her stomach drop, and she sank onto her bed and tried not to cry because she could not imagine performing without a string.

Her mother tapped on the door. "Mr. Lund next door played in a band for forty years," she said. "Why don't we ask him whether he can help?"

Mara did not want to bother anyone, but she followed her mother across the yard. Mr. Lund listened to the problem and chuckled. "Come in," he said. "A musician who never breaks a string has never played very much."

He led them to a cluttered desk and pulled open a drawer full of small paper envelopes. "I always kept spares," he said, holding up one marked with the right letter. Then he showed Mara how to thread the new string through the peg and turn it slowly, a little at a time. The first notes sounded flat, so they adjusted the string together until it rang clear.

The next afternoon, Mara walked onto the stage with a steady hand. When her last note faded, the audience applauded enthusiastically, and Mr. Lund, sitting in the third row, clapped the loudest of all.

Questions

1. What went wrong when Mara practiced on Friday evening?

_____

_____

2. Why couldn't Mara buy a new string right away?

_____

_____

3. Who helped Mara, and what did he give her?

_____

_____

4. What did Mr. Lund mean by saying a musician who never breaks a string has never played much?

_____

_____

5. How did Mara feel at the end of the story, and how do you know?

_____

_____

Words to know

recital: a show where musicians perform for an audience
solo: a piece played by one person alone
twang: a sharp ringing sound made by a stretched string
cluttered: covered with a messy pile of things
spares: extra things kept in case one breaks

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 Snapped String

Square group

Mara had practiced her solo diligently for six weeks, and the recital was scheduled for noon the following day. On Friday evening she ran through it one final time in her bedroom, but halfway through the last line, the highest string on her violin snapped with a sharp twang and curled up like a tiny silver spring.

Mara stared at it in utter disbelief. The music shop had closed at five o'clock, and it was already well past six, so there was no possible way to buy a replacement before the performance. She felt her stomach drop, and she sank onto her bed and struggled not to cry, because she could not imagine performing in front of an audience without a complete set of strings.

Her mother tapped gently on the door. "Mr. Lund next door played in a band for forty years," she said. "Why don't we ask him whether he can help?"

Mara did not want to impose on anyone, but she reluctantly followed her mother across the yard. Mr. Lund listened carefully to the problem and chuckled. "Come in," he said. "A musician who never breaks a string has never played very much."

He led them to a cluttered desk and pulled open a drawer crammed with small paper envelopes. "I always kept spares," he said, holding up one marked with the correct letter. Then he showed Mara how to thread the new string through the peg and turn it slowly, a little at a time. The first notes sounded flat, so the two of them adjusted the string patiently until it rang clear and bright.

The next afternoon, Mara walked onto the stage with a steady hand. When her final note faded away, the audience applauded enthusiastically, and Mr. Lund, sitting proudly in the third row, clapped the loudest of all.

Questions

1. What happened to Mara's violin during her final practice on Friday evening?

_____

_____

2. Why was it impossible for Mara to buy a replacement string before the performance?

_____

_____

3. Who helped Mara, and what did he provide?

_____

_____

4. What did Mr. Lund mean by saying that a musician who never breaks a string has never played very much?

_____

_____

5. How did Mara feel at the end of the story, and what evidence supports your answer?

_____

_____

Words to know

recital: a show where musicians perform for an audience
solo: a piece played by one person alone
twang: a sharp ringing sound made by a stretched string
cluttered: covered with a messy pile of things
spares: extra things kept in case one breaks

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 Snapped String

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

Circle: The Snapped String

Easier · 237 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.5

1. The highest string on her violin snapped.
2. The music shop closed at five, and it was past six.
3. Mr. Lund, her neighbor, gave her a spare string and showed her how to put it on.
4. Everyone who plays a lot breaks a string, so it is nothing to be ashamed of.
5. Confident and happy. She walked on stage with a steady hand and the crowd clapped.

Triangle: The Snapped String

This passage · 277 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.9

1. The highest string on her violin snapped.
2. The music shop had closed at five, and it was already past six.
3. Mr. Lund, her neighbor, gave her a spare string and showed her how to put it on.
4. Broken strings happen to everyone who plays a lot, so it is not something to be ashamed of.
5. Confident and happy. She walked on stage with a steady hand and the audience clapped.

Square: The Snapped String

Harder · 305 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.1

1. The highest string snapped.
2. The music shop had closed at five o'clock, and it was already well past six.
3. Her neighbor Mr. Lund provided a spare string and showed her how to put it on.
4. Anyone who plays often will eventually break a string, so it is normal and nothing to be ashamed of.
5. Confident and happy. She walked onstage with a steady hand and the audience applauded.