Name: _____ Date: _____

The Tuba Case That Would Not Stop Rattling

Circle group

The band bus rumbled down the highway to the regional concert. Every few seconds, Owen's tuba case let out a small, sharp rattle. Clink, clink, clink. He had rented the tuba just last week. He was sure he had broken something.

"It could be a loose valve," whispered Mei. She played the trumpet and sat behind him. "Or a screw."

Owen frowned. He could not open a tuba case on a moving bus. So for forty minutes he pictured everything that might be wrong. Every bump in the road made his stomach tight.

At the concert hall, he put the case on the floor of the band room and flipped the latches. Mr. Bell, the director, leaned over his shoulder. The big brass horn gleamed. It was not damaged. Owen tipped the bell, and something rolled out of the horn across the floor.

It was a glass marble. It was deep blue with white swirls. A tiny folded note was taped to it. Owen read it out loud: "For luck. Play loud. Love, Nora."

His little sister had slipped it into the bell that morning. "She must have been up early," he said. Mr. Bell chuckled.

Owen put the marble in his shirt pocket. That evening, on the stage, he played the loudest, cleanest low notes of his life.

Questions

1. What did Owen hear from his tuba case on the bus?

_____

_____

2. What did Owen worry the sound meant?

_____

_____

3. What rolled out of the tuba's bell?

_____

_____

4. Who hid the marble in the horn?

_____

_____

5. Why could Owen not look inside the case on the bus?

_____

_____

6. How did the marble change how Owen felt about the concert?

_____

_____

Words to know

rattle: a quick series of short, hard knocking sounds
regional: having to do with a large area of the country
latch: a fastener that holds a lid or door shut
gleamed: shone brightly
director: the person who leads a band or an orchestra

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 Tuba Case That Would Not Stop Rattling

Triangle group

The band bus rumbled down the highway toward the regional concert, and every few seconds Owen's tuba case let out a small, sharp rattle. Clink, clink, clink. He had rented the instrument only the week before, and he was convinced that he had already managed to break something inside it.

"It could be a loose valve," whispered Mei, who played the trumpet in the seat behind him. "Or possibly a screw."

Owen frowned. Since he could not open a tuba case on a moving bus, he spent forty minutes imagining everything that might be wrong, and every bump in the road made his stomach tighten a little more.

At the concert hall, he laid the case on the floor of the band room and flipped open the latches while Mr. Bell, the director, leaned over his shoulder. The enormous brass horn gleamed, completely undamaged. Owen tipped the bell gently, and something rolled out of the horn and across the floor.

It was a glass marble, deep blue and swirled with white, and a tiny folded note was taped to its side. Owen unfolded it and read aloud: "For luck. Play loud. Love, Nora."

His little sister had slipped it into the bell before he left that morning. "She must have gotten up awfully early to do it," he said, and Mr. Bell chuckled. Owen tucked the marble into his shirt pocket, and when he stepped onto the stage that evening, he played the loudest and cleanest low notes of his entire life.

Questions

1. What did Owen hear coming from his tuba case on the bus?

_____

_____

2. What did Owen worry the sound meant?

_____

_____

3. What rolled out of the tuba's bell?

_____

_____

4. Who had hidden the marble in the horn?

_____

_____

5. Why couldn't Owen look inside the case on the bus?

_____

_____

6. How did the marble change the way Owen felt about the concert?

_____

_____

Words to know

rattle: a quick series of short, hard knocking sounds
regional: having to do with a large area of the country
latch: a fastener that holds a lid or door shut
gleamed: shone brightly
director: the person who leads a band or an orchestra

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 Tuba Case That Would Not Stop Rattling

Square group

The band bus rumbled steadily down the highway toward the regional concert, and every few seconds Owen's tuba case produced a small, sharp rattle. Clink, clink, clink. He had rented the instrument only the previous week, and he was absolutely convinced that he had already managed to damage something important inside it.

"It could be a loose valve," whispered Mei, who played the trumpet in the seat directly behind him. "Or possibly a screw."

Owen frowned. Because he could not open a tuba case on a moving bus, he spent forty miserable minutes imagining every possible thing that might be wrong, and each bump in the road made his stomach tighten a little more.

At the concert hall, he laid the case on the floor of the crowded band room and flipped open the latches while Mr. Bell, the director, leaned curiously over his shoulder. The enormous brass horn gleamed, completely undamaged. Owen tipped the bell gently, and something rolled out of the horn and across the polished floor.

It was a glass marble, deep blue and swirled with white, and a tiny folded note had been taped to its side. Owen unfolded it carefully and read aloud: "For luck. Play loud. Love, Nora."

His little sister had secretly slipped it into the bell before he left that morning. "She must have gotten up awfully early to do it," he said, and Mr. Bell chuckled warmly. Owen tucked the marble into his shirt pocket, and when he stepped onto the stage that evening, he played the loudest and cleanest low notes of his entire life.

Questions

1. What sound did Owen hear coming from his tuba case on the bus?

_____

_____

2. What did Owen fear the sound meant?

_____

_____

3. What rolled out of the tuba's bell?

_____

_____

4. Who had hidden the marble inside the horn?

_____

_____

5. Why was Owen unable to look inside the case on the bus?

_____

_____

6. How did the marble change the way Owen felt about the concert?

_____

_____

Words to know

rattle: a quick series of short, hard knocking sounds
regional: having to do with a large area of the country
latch: a fastener that holds a lid or door shut
gleamed: shone brightly
director: the person who leads a band or an orchestra

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 Tuba Case That Would Not Stop Rattling

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

Circle: The Tuba Case That Would Not Stop Rattling

Easier · 219 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.4

1. A small, sharp rattle.
2. That he had broken something on the rented tuba.
3. A blue and white glass marble.
4. Owen's little sister, Nora.
5. He could not open a tuba case safely while the bus was moving.
6. It showed his sister believed in him, so he felt confident enough to play well.

Triangle: The Tuba Case That Would Not Stop Rattling

This passage · 252 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.3

1. A small, sharp rattle.
2. That he had broken something on the rented tuba.
3. A blue and white glass marble.
4. Owen's little sister, Nora.
5. He could not open a tuba case safely while the bus was moving.
6. It showed that his sister believed in him, which made him confident enough to play well.

Square: The Tuba Case That Would Not Stop Rattling

Harder · 265 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.5

1. A small, sharp rattle.
2. That he had broken something on the rented tuba.
3. A blue and white glass marble.
4. Owen's little sister, Nora.
5. He could not safely open a tuba case while the bus was moving.
6. It showed that his sister believed in him, which gave him the confidence to play well.