Name: _____ Date: _____

The Hornbill Who Brought Figs to a Sealed Tree

Circle group

In a forest of tall trees, a hornbill named Ketu watched his mate, Almira, settle into a deep hollow in an old trunk. She laid her eggs there. Then she did something that surprised the young birds nearby. She sealed the opening with mud and bits of wood. She left only a narrow slit.

"Why would she shut herself in?" asked a young barbet with wide eyes. "It looks like a prison."

"It is a shelter," Ketu said. "While the eggs hatch and the chicks grow, she will be safe inside. I will feed her through the slit."

The barbet laughed. "That sounds like a lot of work for you, and nobody will notice."

Ketu did not mind. Every morning, he flew out through the cool mist and searched the treetops for ripe figs. He carried them back in his throat and passed them through the opening, one by one. The work was steady and quiet. No one cheered. Some days, the forest seemed to forget the nest was there.

Weeks passed. Then, one bright morning, the plaster cracked. Almira broke free, and two fluffy chicks peeked out behind her. The barbet stared.

"All that time," the young bird said softly, "and you never once stopped."

Ketu smiled and bobbed his big beak. "The best work is often the work nobody sees," he said. "It is still the reason the family is here."

Questions

1. What did Almira do after laying her eggs?

_____

_____

2. How did Ketu feed his mate?

_____

_____

3. What did the barbet think the nest looked like?

_____

_____

4. What came out of the nest at the end?

_____

_____

5. Why did Almira seal herself inside the tree?

_____

_____

6. What does Ketu mean about the best work?

_____

_____

Words to know

hollow: an empty space inside a tree trunk
sealed: closed up tightly so nothing gets through
steady: even and regular, without stopping or changing
plaster: a thick, sticky mix that hardens when it dries

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 Hornbill Who Brought Figs to a Sealed Tree

Triangle group

In a forest of towering trees, a hornbill named Ketu watched his mate, Almira, settle into a deep hollow in an old trunk. She laid her eggs there and then did something that surprised the young birds nearby, because she sealed the opening with mud and bits of wood and left only a narrow slit.

A young barbet who was watching with wide eyes wondered aloud why she would shut herself inside, since it looked like a prison. Ketu explained patiently that it was a shelter, because while the eggs hatched and the chicks grew she would be safe inside, and he would feed her through the slit. The barbet laughed and said that this sounded like a great deal of work, which nobody would ever notice.

Ketu did not mind. Every morning he flew out through the cool mist and searched the canopy for ripe figs, which he carried back in his throat and passed through the opening, one by one. The work was steady and quiet. No one cheered, no one sang about it, and on some days the forest seemed to forget that the nest existed at all.

Weeks passed. Then, one bright morning, the plaster cracked, and Almira broke free with a pair of fluffy chicks peering out behind her. The barbet gaped, and then said softly that Ketu had never once stopped in all that time.

Ketu smiled and bobbed his great beak. The best work is often the work that nobody sees, he replied, and it is still the reason that the whole family is here.

Questions

1. What did Almira do after laying her eggs?

_____

_____

2. How did Ketu feed his mate?

_____

_____

3. What did the barbet think the nest looked like?

_____

_____

4. What came out of the nest at the end?

_____

_____

5. Why did Almira seal herself inside the tree?

_____

_____

6. What does Ketu mean about the best work?

_____

_____

Words to know

hollow: an empty space inside a tree trunk
sealed: closed up tightly so nothing gets through
canopy: the top layer of branches and leaves in a forest
steady: even and regular, without stopping or changing
plaster: a thick, sticky mix that hardens when it dries

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 Hornbill Who Brought Figs to a Sealed Tree

Square group

In a forest of towering, ancient trees, a hornbill named Ketu watched his mate, Almira, settle into a deep hollow in an old trunk. She laid her eggs there and then did something that astonished the younger birds nearby, because she sealed the opening with mud and fragments of wood and left only a narrow slit.

A young barbet who was watching with enormous eyes wondered aloud why she would shut herself inside, since it looked like a prison. Ketu explained patiently that it was a shelter, because while the eggs hatched and the chicks grew she would be perfectly safe inside, and he would feed her through the slit. The barbet laughed and remarked that this sounded like a tremendous amount of work, which nobody would ever notice.

Ketu did not mind in the least. Every morning he flew out through the cool mist and searched the canopy for ripe figs, which he carried back in his throat and passed through the opening, one by one. The work was steady and quiet. No one cheered, no one sang about it, and on some days the forest seemed to forget that the nest existed at all.

Weeks passed. Then, one bright morning, the plaster cracked, and Almira broke free with a pair of fluffy chicks peering out behind her. The barbet gaped in amazement, and then observed softly that Ketu had never once stopped in all that time.

Ketu smiled and bobbed his great beak. The best work is often the work that nobody sees, he replied, and it is still the reason that the whole family is here today.

Questions

1. What did Almira do after laying her eggs?

_____

_____

2. How did Ketu feed his mate?

_____

_____

3. What did the barbet think the nest looked like?

_____

_____

4. What came out of the nest at the end?

_____

_____

5. Why did Almira seal herself inside the tree?

_____

_____

6. What does Ketu mean about the best work?

_____

_____

Words to know

hollow: an empty space inside a tree trunk
sealed: closed up tightly so nothing gets through
canopy: the top layer of branches and leaves in a forest
steady: even and regular, without stopping or changing
plaster: a thick, sticky mix that hardens when it dries

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 Hornbill Who Brought Figs to a Sealed Tree

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

Circle: The Hornbill Who Brought Figs to a Sealed Tree

Easier · 233 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.5

1. She sealed the hollow with mud and wood and left a narrow slit.
2. He carried figs in his throat and passed them through the slit.
3. A prison.
4. Almira and two fluffy chicks.
5. To stay safe while the eggs hatched and the chicks grew.
6. Important work may go unseen, but it still helps the whole family.

Triangle: The Hornbill Who Brought Figs to a Sealed Tree

This passage · 262 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.9

1. She sealed the opening of the hollow with mud and wood, leaving a narrow slit.
2. He carried figs in his throat and passed them through the slit.
3. A prison.
4. Almira and two fluffy chicks.
5. To stay safe while the eggs hatched and the chicks grew.
6. Important work may go unnoticed, but it still supports the whole family.

Square: The Hornbill Who Brought Figs to a Sealed Tree

Harder · 270 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.8

1. She sealed the opening of the hollow with mud and wood, leaving a narrow slit.
2. He carried figs in his throat and passed them through the slit.
3. A prison.
4. Almira and a pair of fluffy chicks.
5. To stay perfectly safe while the eggs hatched and the chicks grew.
6. Important work may go unnoticed, but it still supports the whole family.