Name: _____ Date: _____

The Nutcracker Who Forgot Her Pines

Circle group

High on a windy ridge, a nutcracker named Ferrule buried pine seeds every autumn. She pushed them into the gravel one at a time. There were hundreds of them, hidden all over the slope. She was proud of her work. She said that a careful bird never goes hungry.

Her neighbor, a gray jay named Orrin, watched her and smiled. "You will never find them all," he said. "Snow will cover the mountain, and you will be digging without a clue."

Ferrule shrugged. "The snow is deep, but my memory is good," she said.

Winter showed that they were both a little right. Ferrule found most of her seeds. She remembered the shape of the boulders and the lean of the old trees. But in spring, she learned that she had forgotten some. She felt embarrassed. She had always said she was never wrong.

Then the last snow melted, and she saw something odd. Where she had forgotten her seeds, small green shoots were growing up through the gravel. In a few years, a little grove of young pines stood there. Their shade kept other birds' chicks safe.

Orrin whistled. "Your mistakes are growing into a forest," he said.

Ferrule laughed at herself. A plan does not have to be perfect to do good. A few lost seeds had given the mountain something better than a tidy pantry. She no longer minded.

Questions

1. What did Ferrule do every autumn?

_____

_____

2. What did Orrin say the snow would do?

_____

_____

3. How did Ferrule find most of her seeds?

_____

_____

4. What did Ferrule see in the spring?

_____

_____

5. Why did Ferrule feel embarrassed?

_____

_____

6. What does the story teach?

_____

_____

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 Nutcracker Who Forgot Her Pines

Triangle group

High on a windswept ridge, a nutcracker named Ferrule spent every autumn burying pine seeds. She pressed them into the gravel one at a time, hundreds upon hundreds, in small hidden pockets scattered across the entire slope. She was enormously proud of this labor, and she liked to announce that a careful bird never goes hungry.

Her neighbor, a gray jay named Orrin, watched with considerable amusement. "You will never find them all," he remarked. "Winter will bury the whole mountain in snow, and you will be digging blindly."

Ferrule merely shrugged. "The snow is deep, but my memory is sharper," she answered.

Winter proved them both partly right. Ferrule located most of her stores by remembering the shape of certain boulders and the lean of the old, twisted trees. Yet when spring arrived, she discovered that a number of her caches had gone missing from her memory entirely. She felt embarrassed, because she had always boasted that she was never wrong.

Then, as the last snow melted, she noticed something peculiar. On the slope where she had forgotten her seeds, tiny green shoots were pushing up through the gravel. Within a few years, a small grove of young pines stood there, and their shade sheltered the chicks of other birds.

Orrin whistled softly. "Your mistakes are growing into a forest," he said.

For the first time that year, Ferrule laughed at herself. She understood that a good plan does not need to be flawless to do good in the world. A handful of lost seeds had given the mountain something far better than a tidy pantry, and she no longer minded being imperfect.

Questions

1. What did Ferrule do every autumn?

_____

_____

2. What did Orrin predict about the winter snow?

_____

_____

3. How did Ferrule find most of her stores?

_____

_____

4. What did Ferrule discover in the spring?

_____

_____

5. Why did Ferrule feel embarrassed at first?

_____

_____

6. What lesson does the story teach?

_____

_____

Words to know

windswept: open to strong winds and bare of shelter
labor: hard work that takes time and effort
caches: hidden stores of food kept for later
peculiar: strange or unusual in a way you notice
flawless: perfect, with no mistakes at all

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 Nutcracker Who Forgot Her Pines

Square group

High on a windswept ridge, a nutcracker named Ferrule devoted every autumn to burying pine seeds. She pressed them into the gravel one at a time, hundreds upon hundreds, in small hidden pockets scattered across the entire slope, and she was enormously proud of this painstaking labor. She liked to announce to anyone who would listen that a careful, hardworking bird never goes hungry.

Her neighbor, a gray jay named Orrin, observed all of this with considerable amusement. "You will never recover every one of them," he remarked. "Winter will bury the whole mountain beneath deep snow, and you will be digging blindly in the dark."

Ferrule merely shrugged. "The snow may be deep, but my memory is considerably sharper," she answered.

Winter proved them both partly right. Ferrule located most of her stores by recalling the shape of certain boulders and the lean of the old, twisted trees along the ridge. Yet when spring arrived, she discovered that a number of her caches had vanished from her memory entirely, and she felt embarrassed, because she had always boasted that she was never wrong.

Then, as the last of the snow melted, she noticed something peculiar. On the slope where she had forgotten her seeds, tiny green shoots were pushing up through the gravel. Within a few years, a small grove of young pines stood there, and their cool shade sheltered the chicks of many other birds.

Orrin whistled softly. "Your mistakes are growing into a forest," he said.

For the first time that year, Ferrule laughed at herself. She understood that a good plan does not need to be flawless in order to do good in the world. A handful of lost seeds had given the mountain something far better than a tidy pantry, and she no longer minded being imperfect.

Questions

1. What did Ferrule do every autumn?

_____

_____

2. What did Orrin predict about the winter snow?

_____

_____

3. How did Ferrule find most of her stores?

_____

_____

4. What did Ferrule discover in the spring?

_____

_____

5. Why did Ferrule feel embarrassed at first?

_____

_____

6. What lesson does the story teach?

_____

_____

Words to know

windswept: open to strong winds and bare of shelter
labor: hard work that takes time and effort
caches: hidden stores of food kept for later
peculiar: strange or unusual in a way you notice
flawless: perfect, with no mistakes at all

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 Nutcracker Who Forgot Her Pines

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

Circle: The Nutcracker Who Forgot Her Pines

Easier · 232 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.2

1. She buried pine seeds in the gravel.
2. It would cover the mountain, and she would be digging without a clue.
3. She remembered the shape of the boulders and the lean of the trees.
4. Small pine shoots growing where she had forgotten seeds.
5. She had always said she was never wrong, and she had forgotten some seeds.
6. A plan does not have to be perfect to do good, and mistakes can help.

Triangle: The Nutcracker Who Forgot Her Pines

This passage · 274 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.8

1. She buried pine seeds in the gravel across the slope.
2. That it would bury the mountain and she would be digging blindly.
3. She remembered the shape of boulders and the lean of old trees.
4. Young pine shoots were growing where she had forgotten seeds.
5. She had always boasted that she was never wrong, and she had missed some seeds.
6. A plan does not have to be flawless to do good, and mistakes can bring unexpected benefits.

Square: The Nutcracker Who Forgot Her Pines

Harder · 302 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.9

1. She buried pine seeds in the gravel across the slope.
2. That it would bury the mountain and she would be digging blindly.
3. She remembered the shape of boulders and the lean of old trees.
4. Young pine shoots were growing where she had forgotten seeds.
5. She had always boasted that she was never wrong, and she had missed some seeds.
6. A plan need not be flawless to do good, and mistakes can bring unexpected benefits.