

An Odd Birthday Present

One fine morning, Mary the little duck was asked by her father, what she wanted for her birthday. Eagerly, she shouted that she wanted an umbrella. Her father was a little stunned, but he loved her too much and he would do anything for her.

Mrs. Hen who was sweeping her frontyard heard Mary's scream and bewildered, she thought to herself, "how could little Mary want an umbrella? She's a duck. She should not be afraid of rain!"

She could not contain her confusion so she told Mr. Rooster what she heard. He also felt it odd and told Mr. Wolf what he had heard from his wife. Mr. Wolf told Mrs. Canary what he heard and soon the whole neighborhood knew about Mary's wish for her own birthday.

Mr. Duck and Mrs. Duck felt a little ashamed by the gossip. They loved their daughter dearly but it was true that a duck should not be afraid of rain or water. What kind of duck didn't like water? Mary's siblings also mocked her. "Geez, Mary, what kind of duck are you?" teased Mary's brother.

Mary kept silent. It was her birthday and she wanted an umbrella. She didn't see anything wrong with that.

"Hush, you," lectured Mrs. Duck. "Let Mary have everything she wants."

Finally, the long awaited day was coming. It was Mary's birthday and it was raining! Mary jumped and hopped in joy. Everybody in the neighborhood waited in suspense, impatiently wanted to see a silly little duck wearing an umbrella under the rain.

However, nobody saw what was coming. Mary opened the umbrella and used it upside down. She stuck the umbrella to the ground and soon the water filled it up and it became a mini-pool. Mary screamed for her siblings to come out and play. "Come out and play. It's fun out here!" She said loudly, her tail wagged excitedly. Her siblings joined her immediately and everybody watched them in awe.

1. What did Mr. Duck feel when he heard Mary's wish for her birthday?

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| a. Terrified | c. Afraid |
| b. Speechless | d. Disappointed |

2. Who was Mr. Wolf told after he heard the news?

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| a. Mr. Rooster | c. Mr. Duck |
| b. Mrs. Hen | d. Mrs. Canary |

3. Mrs. Hen who was sweeping her front yard heard Mary's scream and bewildered, she... The underlined word has similar meaning with...

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| a. Helpless | c. Amazed |
| b. Puzzled | d. Sad |

4. What can you learn from the story?

- a. No pain no gain

- b. No crying over split milk
- c. Never underestimate someone
- d. We should judge others

How Long Will They Hatch?

Jack the Rooster finally became a father for the first time. He was so excited, so he checked his wife who was incubating their eggs. Slowly, he crept closer and cleared his throat. Rose the Hen woke up from her nap and stared at her husband angrily. "What?" she asked.

"I want to see my children," answered her husband.

Rose shook her head. "Can't you see? I'm sitting on them. Go look for food. I'm hungry." With a sigh of disappointment, Jack walked away to look for some food.

The next day, Jack kept coming back and faced the same answer. The eggs were not ready. But every day Jack kept asking and asking and asking and Rose had had enough. She got up angrily. "You watch them," she told him. "I'm going to look for food. You're driving me insane."

Minutes passed and Jack kept staring at their eggs. "Why does she have to sit on them? What if they're trapped and can't come out because she's selfish and wants to keep them to herself?"

Curiously, Jack pecked at one of the egg and *voila!* A chick came out. He couldn't believe his eyes. He pecked at other eggs and a clutch of chick chirped happily. "Ha!" Jack scoffed. "Why does Rose even bother to sit on them? I could just peck at them and here we are!"

When Rose came home, she was confused but happy. "Oh my goodness. They must be hungry. Let's get them some food."

"Next time," interrupted Jack. "Leave all the eggs up to me."

"Oh, rubbish." Rose said dismissively and walked away.

More than a month had passed and Rose laid eggs again. Jack said cockily, "You know, you don't need to sit on them. I can hatch them by pecking them with my beak."

"Don't talk nonsense," scolded his wife. "Now go away."

Jack waited until his wife went to look for food to peck at their egg. How strange! No chick came out but a yellow liquid instead. "This must be broken," thought he. So he pecked other eggs and resulted the same.

When Rose came back, her eyes went wide and she screamed in horror. "What did you do? What were you thinking?"

"I was just trying to help!" said Jack defensively. "It was not like this the last time!"

"It was because I had incubated them for 20 days and it was time for them to hatch anyway. These are new eggs and you murdered them!"

"I didn't know..." said Jack in deep regret and helplessly watch his wife wailed in agony.

1. How did Jack feel for having children for the first time?
 - a. Nervous
 - b. Happy
 - c. Afraid
 - d. Angry
2. What happened when Jack pecked at the eggs for the second time?
 - a. Chicks came out
 - b. Brown liquid came out
 - c. Nothing came out
 - d. Yellow liquid came out
3. Jack said cockily. The following has the similar meaning with the underlined word except...
 - a. Arrogant
 - b. Conceited
 - c. Humble
 - d. Smug
4. "Oh, rubbish." Rose said dismissively and walked away. What does the word dismissive mean?
 - a. showing that something is not thought worthy
 - b. showing that something is boring
 - c. showing that something is dangerous
 - d. showing that something is stupid

Home Sweet Home

Joey the little kangaroo held resentment for his mother. He was living in his mother's pouch but his mother kept inserting many kinds of stuff like a ball of yarn, a book, a bottle, or some socks into it. When she jumped, a bottle knocked into his head, or a sock smacked his eyes.

"I can't live like this anymore, mother," said Joey one day. "I will live with Mrs. Rabbit. She kindly let me live with her when I asked her." His mother was very sad but if that was what his boy wanted, she supported him.

Turned out, living with Mrs. Rabbit was no picnic after all. They lived in a hole inside a tree and Joey felt tired for he had to crouch all the time. Politely, he told Mrs. Rabbit that he could not live there anymore.

Then he asked Mrs. Crocodile if she was kind enough to let him live with her. Unfortunately, Mrs. Croc lives in a river and Joey could not breathe under water and he felt cold all the time. Joey said goodbye to Mrs. Croc and realized that even though his Mom didn't have the best house, she provided him the best home.

1. Why did Joey feel angry at his Mom?
 - a. She jumped all the time
 - b. She put many things into her pouch

- c. She didn't love her son
 - d. She didn't have the best home
2. Whose house was always cold?
- a. Mrs. Kangaroo's house
 - b. Mrs. Rabbit's house
 - c. Mrs. Crocodile's house
 - d. The tree house
3. Why did Joey leave Mrs. Rabbit's house?
- a. Living in a tree house is no picnic
 - b. Living in a tree house is cold
 - c. Joey missed her Mom
 - d. Joey wanted to live with Mrs. Croc
4. He had to crouch all the time. Which word has the same meaning with crouch?
- a. Sit up
 - b. Sit down
 - c. Hunker down
 - d. Straighten up