Name: _____ Date: _____

Danny Is Careful

Reading level 8 (4th grade) · 457 words

Danny Meadow Mouse sat on his doorstep in the sun, and Old Mr. Toad sat beside him. They were not the best of friends, but they were good company. "I will tell you something," said Danny. "I am a timid fellow. I am afraid of nearly everything, and I do not mind who knows it."

Old Mr. Toad blinked his gold eyes. "Afraid?" he said. "I never feel afraid. I mind my own business and go wherever I like." Danny smiled a small smile. "That is a fine way to be," he said, "but I am not made that way, and I have never found out how to change."

"Being afraid keeps me careful," Danny went on. "I look up, I look down, and I look behind me. I listen to every rustle in the grass. That is how a small mouse gets to be an old one. If I stopped being careful, who knows what might happen?"

Mr. Toad shifted on his seat. "It sounds a great bother," he said, "to have so many things in the world that you must watch out for." "It is," said Danny cheerfully. "But I do not know any other way, and I have found that it suits me very well indeed."

"Now and then I wish I were big and strong, like Old Man Coyote, or swift like Skimmer the Swallow," said Danny. "But it is no use wishing, because I am a small mouse, and a small mouse must be wise." Old Mr. Toad grunted. He looked as though he were thinking it over, and he did not say a word.

Just then, the grass at the edge of the meadow began to wave, though there was no wind. "Mr. Blacksnake is out for a walk," said Danny calmly. He had been watching him all along. Mr. Blacksnake was a long way down the path, and he was going the other way.

Old Mr. Toad turned pale. He looked right and left and over his shoulder. "Dear me, I just remembered," he said, scrambling up and nearly tripping over his own feet. "I promised to visit my cousin Grandfather Frog. I am late. Good day!"

And off he went, hop, hop, tumble, hop, all the way down the path. Danny watched him go. He laughed until his whiskers shook. Old Mr. Toad had said he never felt afraid, and he had run off faster than any mouse.

Danny sat alone on his doorstep, warm in the sun, and was happy. "It is better to say so," he thought, "than to pretend. At least I know why I am careful." He looked up, he looked down, and he looked behind him. Then he settled back to enjoy the afternoon.

Questions

1. What did Danny say he was?

A. Timid
B. Hungry
C. Brave

2. Why did Danny say he stayed careful?

A. He liked to look around
B. He could not sleep
C. He was afraid of the dark

3. What made the grass wave?

A. The wind
B. Mr. Blacksnake
C. Reddy Fox

4. What does "timid" mean in this story?

A. Quick and loud
B. Easily scared
C. Very old

5. What is funny about Mr. Toad?

A. He said he was never afraid, and then he ran off
B. He ate a mouse
C. He sang a song

Words to know

timid: easily scared
rustle: soft noise
careful: watching out
pretend: act as if

Answer key: Danny Is Careful

1. A. Timid
2. A. He liked to look around
3. B. Mr. Blacksnake
4. B. Easily scared
5. A. He said he was never afraid, and then he ran off