Name: _____ Date: _____

Eeyore's Birthday

Reading level 8 (4th grade) · 815 words

Eeyore, the old grey donkey, stood by a stream and looked at himself in the water. "Pathetic," he said. "That is what it is. Pathetic." Just then Pooh came out of the bracken, and said good morning. "Good morning, Pooh Bear," said Eeyore gloomily. "If it is a good morning. Which I doubt."

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Pooh. "Nothing, Pooh Bear, nothing. We cannot all be gay and sing and dance, and some of us do not." Pooh thought about this for a long time. It sounded like a riddle, and he was not good at riddles, so he sang a little humming song instead.

"You seem unhappy, Eeyore," said Pooh at last. "Unhappy? Why should I be unhappy? It is my birthday, the happiest day of the year. Look at all my presents, and look at my birthday cake, with candles and pink sugar." Pooh looked to the right and to the left. "Where?" "Can't you see them? Neither can I. Joke. Ha ha!"

Pooh felt terribly sorry. "Many happy returns of the day, Eeyore," he said. "I have no presents, and no cake, and no candles," said Eeyore, "and nobody is taking proper notice of me at all. But if everyone else is going to be miserable too--" That was too much for Pooh. "Stay there!" he cried, and he hurried home.

Outside his house was Piglet, jumping up and down, trying to reach the knocker. "Poor Eeyore has a birthday, and nobody has remembered," Pooh told him. "I must find him a present." Pooh took a small jar of honey down from his cupboard and said that he would give Eeyore that. Piglet said that he would give him a balloon.

So Piglet trotted off to fetch his balloon, and Pooh set off with the honey, feeling very important. It was a warm afternoon, and he had a long way to travel. Halfway there, a peculiar feeling crept over him, from his nose to his feet, as if someone inside him were saying, "Time for a little something."

So Pooh sat down and opened the jar, just to see if the honey was all right. It was, and he ate it, and licked out the very last drop. Then he remembered. "Bother!" he said. "I have eaten Eeyore's birthday present!" What could he do now? Then he looked at the jar. "It is a very handsome pot," he said.

Pooh went to see Owl, who was clever at writing. "Would you write 'A Happy Birthday' on this pot for me?" he asked. "My spelling is Wobbly." Owl licked his pencil and wrote some very strange letters. "What does it say?" asked Pooh. "A Very Happy Birthday with love from Pooh," said Owl grandly.

All this time, Piglet was running along with his balloon, holding it tight so that it would not blow away. He wanted to be the first to give a present. He ran so quickly that he did not look where he was going. Suddenly his foot went into a rabbit hole, and he fell flat on his face. BANG!

Piglet lay still, thinking that the whole world had blown up, and then he got up and looked around. On the ground was a small piece of damp rag. It was his balloon! "Oh dear," said Piglet. "I cannot go back now. Perhaps Eeyore does not like balloons so very much." And he went on, rather sadly.

"Many happy returns of the day," said Piglet to Eeyore, and he told him that he had brought a balloon. "I am very sorry," he said, "but I fell down, and I burst it." There was a very long silence. "My balloon?" said Eeyore at last. Piglet nodded, and he gave him the small bit of damp rag.

"What colour was it, when it was a balloon?" asked Eeyore. "Red." "My favourite colour," he said sadly. "How big?" "About as big as me." "My favourite size. Well, well." Then Pooh came splashing across the stream, very pleased with himself. "Here is my present," he said. "It is a Useful Pot, to put things in."

Eeyore stared at the pot carefully. "Why!" he said. "I believe my balloon will just go into that pot!" He picked up the rag with his teeth and put it into the pot. Then he took it out, and put it back in again. "So it does," said Pooh. "And it comes out," said Piglet. "It goes in and out like anything," said Eeyore.

Eeyore was so happy that he did not listen to anyone else. He simply took his balloon out of the pot, and put it back, and took it out again. Pooh was glad that he had thought of a Useful Pot, and Piglet was glad that he had thought of something to put in it. So it was a good birthday after all.

Questions

1. Why was Eeyore gloomy at the start?

A. He had lost his tail
B. Nobody had noticed his birthday
C. He was hungry

2. What happened to Pooh's present on the way?

A. He ate the honey
B. He lost it
C. He gave it away

3. Why did Piglet's balloon burst?

A. A bee stung it
B. He fell down while running with it

C. Eeyore sat on it

4. "Gloomily" tells you that Eeyore spoke --

A. in a cheerful way
B. very quickly
C. in a sad, low way

5. Why was Eeyore happy at the end?

A. Pooh gave him honey
B. Piglet bought a new balloon
C. He could put the balloon in and out of the pot

6. What does this story show about friends?

A. They must always bring perfect gifts
B. A small gift given with love can still make someone happy
C. They should never make mistakes

Words to know

bracken: tall ferns
gloomily: sadly
pathetic: sad and weak
knocker: door hammer
returns: comings back
useful: good to have

Answer key: Eeyore's Birthday

1. B. Nobody had noticed his birthday
2. A. He ate the honey
3. B. He fell down while running with it
4. C. in a sad, low way
5. C. He could put the balloon in and out of the pot
6. B. A small gift given with love can still make someone happy