Name: _____ Date: _____

Free Throw Friday

Reading level 8 (4th grade) · 325 words

On Monday, Dani stood at the free-throw line in the school gym and bounced the ball three times. Her coach had said that a free throw is worth one point, and that every point counts in a game. She lifted the ball, took her shot, and missed.

She missed again on Tuesday, because her arms felt tired and the hoop looked very far away. Coach Omar pointed up. "The hoop is ten feet high," he said. "It was ten feet high in 1891, when the very first players used a peach basket." Dani laughed and tried once more.

On Wednesday she made two shots, and on Thursday she made three, then four, and on the last try she missed. Her friend Marcus kept count on his fingers, and he never stopped smiling. "Every miss is practice," he told her, "so keep going, and keep counting."

On Friday morning the gym was packed, because the school was playing its biggest game of the year. Each team had five players on the court, and the whole class had come to cheer. Dani sat on the bench and tapped her foot while she waited for her turn.

With seconds left, the score was tied, and Coach Omar sent Dani in. The referee blew the whistle, and Dani walked to the free-throw line for one shot. The gym went quiet. Dani walked to the line, and her heart was thumping in her ears.

She bounced the ball three times, just like on Monday. She breathed in, bent her knees and lifted the ball high. It rose in a long curve, tapped the rim, bounced once, and dropped through the net. One point, and the crowd cheered.

The whole gym exploded with noise, because Dani's team had won by that one point. They carried her around the court, but Dani pointed at Marcus and Coach Omar. "All of those misses were practice," she said, "and practice was the best part."

Questions

1. How many points is a free throw worth?

A. Two
B. One
C. Three

2. How high is the hoop?

A. Twenty feet
B. Five feet
C. Ten feet

3. Who kept count on his fingers?

A. Marcus
B. Coach Omar
C. The referee

4. Why did Dani say the misses were practice?

A. She did not care
B. They were the referee's fault
C. They helped her get better

5. How did the gym feel before her shots?

A. Loud and silly
B. Quiet and tense
C. Empty and cold

6. What does "tied" mean in the story?

A. The same score
B. Very tight
C. Late

Words to know

gym: a room for sports
hoop: the ring a ball goes through
referee: the game judge
practice: time spent getting better
rim: the edge of the hoop
tied: the same score

Answer key: Free Throw Friday

1. B. One
2. C. Ten feet
3. A. Marcus
4. C. They helped her get better
5. B. Quiet and tense
6. A. The same score