Name: _____ Date: _____

The Bundle of Sticks

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 228 words

Three brothers lived in a cottage with their father. They could not stop quarrelling.

"That is my chair!" said one. "No, it is mine!" said another. The third just shouted louder than both.

Their father was very tired of the noise. He tried talking, and he tried asking politely. Nothing worked.

One evening he had an idea. "Boys, go and bring me some sticks," he said.

They brought a pile of dry sticks. The father tied them into one tight bundle with string.

"Now," he said to his eldest son. "Break this bundle over your knee."

The eldest pushed and pulled and grunted. He went red in the face. The bundle did not even bend.

The second son took a turn. He pushed with all his might. The bundle stayed whole.

The youngest tried too. He huffed and puffed until he sat down. Not one stick cracked.

The father untied the string. He gave each son one stick. "Now try," he said.

Snap, snap, snap! The sticks broke like dry grass, one by one.

The brothers looked at the pieces. Then they looked at one another.

"One stick is easy to break," said the father. "But sticks tied together are hard to break."

The brothers said not a word. The eldest pulled up a stool for his brother. That night they ate side by side, and nobody quarrelled.

Questions

1. How many brothers were there?

A. Two
B. Four
C. Three

2. What did the father tie together?

A. Some sticks
B. Some sacks
C. Some stools

3. Why could nobody break the bundle?

A. The string was made of iron
B. The sticks were tied together
C. The sons were too young

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

A. Singing
B. Sleeping
C. Arguing

5. What did the father want his sons to see?

A. Sticks are good for fires
B. Stay together and you are stronger
C. Boys should be quiet

Words to know

quarrelling: arguing
bundle: tied bunch
grunted: made a sound
cottage: small house
untied: loosened

Answer key: The Bundle of Sticks

1. C. Three
2. A. Some sticks
3. B. The sticks were tied together
4. C. Arguing
5. B. Stay together and you are stronger