Name: _____ Date: _____

The Oak and the Reed

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 230 words

A magnificent oak stood by the bank of a river. It was the tallest tree for miles around.

By the water grew a patch of thin green reeds. They were no thicker than a finger.

"Look at you," said the oak. "You are weak and little. Every breeze makes you nod and bow."

"I stand up straight," said the oak. "I bow to nobody, not even the weather."

The reeds only swayed and said nothing. They did not mind at all.

One afternoon the sky turned dark. The wind began to hum, and then to howl.

The reeds bent low and lay flat on the water. The wind went right over them.

The oak held out his arms. "Come on, then!" he roared. "I am not afraid of you!"

The wind pushed, and the oak pushed back. Branches creaked, and leaves flew everywhere.

The storm blew harder, and harder still. Then, with a great crack, the oak fell.

By morning the storm was gone. The sun shone brightly on the wet grass.

The reeds stood up again, one by one. They shook the water from their tops. They were as green as ever.

The oak lay among them, completely surprised. "How can this be?" he said. "You are weak, and I am powerful."

"When the wind pushed us, we bent," said the reeds. "When it pushed you, you would not."

Questions

1. Where did the reeds grow?

A. On a hill
B. In a barn
C. At the water's edge

2. What did the reeds do when the wind came?

A. They stood stiff
B. They bent low
C. They flew away

3. Why were the reeds fine after the storm?

A. They did not fight the wind
B. They were hidden in a cave

C. They were bigger than the oak

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

A. Rocked gently
B. Hid
C. Sang

5. What does this fable show?

A. Oaks are strong in wind
B. It is wise to bend
C. Reeds are tall

Words to know

oak: big hard tree
reeds: tall water grass
swayed: rocked gently
howl: moan loudly
creaked: made a squeak
bow: bend down

Answer key: The Oak and the Reed

1. C. At the water's edge
2. B. They bent low
3. A. They did not fight the wind
4. A. Rocked gently
5. B. It is wise to bend