Name: _____ Date: _____

The Stag and His Reflection

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 233 words

A stag came to the pond at noon to drink. The water was perfectly calm and clear.

He bent his head. There was his reflection, looking back from the water.

"What beautiful horns!" said the stag. "They spread like the branches of a tree. No other stag has horns so grand."

Then he looked down at his legs. They looked like four thin, dry twigs.

"What a shame," he sighed. "Such silly, skinny legs. I wish I could hide them somewhere."

Suddenly a hungry lion crept out of the tall grass. He licked his lips and sprang at the stag.

The stag leaped away. His thin legs carried him faster and faster.

The lion ran and ran, but he fell farther behind. The open field was easy for those quick legs.

Then the stag came to a thick wood. He dashed quickly in among the trees.

His great horns caught in the branches. He stopped suddenly. He was stuck!

He pulled and twisted and backed up carefully. At last the horns came free.

Out he bounded on his quick legs, very frightened. He never stopped until the wood was far behind him.

The lion stood at the edge of the trees, puffing. He gave up and walked slowly home.

At last the stag stopped beside a quiet stream. He looked down at his thin legs. "Thank you," he said, and he meant it.

Questions

1. What did the stag like best about himself?

A. His horns
B. His legs
C. His tail

2. What caught on the branches in the wood?

A. His legs
B. His horns
C. His tail

3. Why did the stag thank his legs at the end?

A. They were fine to look at
B. They carried him away from the lion
C. They kept him dry

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

A. A picture of him in the water
B. A loud noise
C. A lion

5. What does this fable show?

A. The useful thing is not always the grand one
B. Stags should not drink
C. Lions are slow

Words to know

stag: male deer
reflection: picture in water
twigs: thin sticks
sprang: jumped fast
bounded: leaped along
thick: packed close

Answer key: The Stag and His Reflection

1. A. His horns
2. B. His horns
3. B. They carried him away from the lion
4. A. A picture of him in the water
5. A. The useful thing is not always the grand one