

Clara and Phillip the Turtle

By Alden Wicker



It's a hot summer's day, and Clara is outside on her back porch drinking lemonade. Her mom is in the backyard cutting the grass with a lawn mower. The lawn mower is loud, and Clara wishes her mom would play with her instead. But her mom says because it's been sunny and then rainy and then sunny again, the grass has had everything it needs to grow. Now it is very long and has to be cut.

Suddenly, the lawn mower turns off. Clara's mom looks upset. Clara wonders what is wrong. Her mom bends over and picks something up out of the grass, and walks over to the porch.

Clara's mom has a turtle in her hand! The turtle is small, and as Clara looks closer, she sees that that one leg is at an odd angle. "I think I broke its leg," Clara's mom says. "I'm really very sorry. Will you help me nurse it back to health?"

Clara feels bad for the little turtle. Turtles move slowly, so it probably could not run away when it saw the lawn mower coming. And Clara's mom could not see the turtle in the long grass! It was a mistake, but Clara and her mom will make it right. Clara names the turtle Phillip.

Clara and her mom take Phillip the turtle to the veterinarian. The vet takes an x-ray of Phillip's leg, and confirms that it is broken. Phillip the turtle gets a little splint and bandage for his broken leg. The vet tells Clara that Phillip needs plants to eat and water to drink, plus a place to live. Clara and her mom buy a small tank at the pet store on the way home for the turtle to recuperate in.

At home, Clara takes good care of Phillip the turtle. She puts water and rocks in the tank. She brings him fruit and leaves to eat, and keeps his water bowl clean. Phillip seems to be in a better mood.

After eight weeks, Clara and her mom take Phillip back to the vet, who says that his leg is healed. Clara is both happy and sad. Happy because Phillip is better, but sad because she has to let him go now. When Clara gets home, she kisses Phillip's shell, says goodbye, and lets him go in the backyard. Clara will always remember Phillip.

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. What does Clara take care of?

- A** a bird
- B** a snake
- C** a turtle

2. A problem in this story is that Phillip's leg is broken. What is the solution?

- A** Clara's mom cuts the grass with a lawn mower.
- B** Clara sits on her back porch and drinks lemonade.
- C** Clara takes care of Phillip until his leg is healed.

3. Clara takes good care of Phillip the turtle.

What information from the story supports this statement?

- A** The vet says that Phillip needs plants to eat and water to drink, plus a place to live.
- B** Clara brings Phillip fruit and leaves to eat, and keeps his water bowl clean.
- C** Clara wishes her mom would play with her instead of cutting the grass.

4. How was Phillip's leg probably broken?

- A** It was caught on a piece of glass in the backyard.
- B** It was run over by the lawn mower.
- C** It was hit by a car driving down the street.

5. What is a theme of this story?

- A** A mistake can be fixed.
- B** Pets are a lot of trouble.
- C** Children should spend a lot of time outdoors.

6. Read this sentence from the passage: "Clara's mom has a turtle in her **hand!**"

Why does the author use an exclamation point after the word "**hand**"?

- A** to show that Clara does not know what is happening
- B** to show that what is happening is exciting
- C** to show that Clara's mom is asking a question

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Phillip's leg is healed _____ Clara takes care of him.

- A** after
- B** before
- C** so

8. What do Clara and her mom buy at the pet store for Phillip?

9. Why is Clara sad at the end of the story?

10. Read the last sentence of the story: "Clara will always remember Phillip." Why will Clara always remember Phillip? Support your answer with information from the story.

Teacher Guide & Answers**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 760**1.** What does Clara take care of?

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8. What do Clara and her mom buy at the pet store for Phillip?

Suggested answer: A tank. ("A small tank" is also acceptable.)

9. Why is Clara sad at the end of the story?

Suggested answer: Clara is sad because she has to let Phillip go.

10. Read the last sentence of the story: "Clara will always remember Phillip." Why will Clara always remember Phillip? Support your answer with information from the story.

Suggested answer: Answers may vary, as long as they are supported by the story. For example, students may respond that Clara will remember Phillip because she liked him a lot. The good care she takes of him and the goodbye kiss she gives him are proof of her affection for him.