

Name: _____ Class: _____

Zebra and Wasp

By Clare Mishica
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Clare Mishica has written for Highlights. In this fable, a zebra finds a wasp trapped in a spider web. As you read, take notes on what the wasp does.

- [1] One sunny morning, Zebra visited the river to get a cool drink. As he dipped his mouth into the water, he heard a tiny voice coming from nearby. "Help me, Zebra!" cried Wasp. "I'm caught in a spider web."

Zebra flicked his ears and peered into a thornbush. He spied Wasp tangled in a web of silver thread. Carefully, Zebra reached into the branches to free her. But the thorns jabbed his lips.

"Ouch!" wailed¹ Zebra. He jerked his head back. "If I save you, I'll hurt myself."

"Please help me," said Wasp. "One day I will return the favor and help you."

- [5] Zebra laughed. "I'm fast and strong. No spider can trap me in its web! Besides, I have a whole herd² of friends. Why would I need help from a little wasp?"

"Please try one more time," Wasp said.

Zebra stared at the little insect. She was struggling to beat her wings. With a sigh, Zebra poked his head into the bush again and knocked at the web. Luckily, it was enough to free Wasp. She tumbled³ to the ground.

"Thank you, thank you!" Wasp cried.

"Try to stay out of trouble," Zebra said to Wasp. "I might not be nearby the next time a spider gets hungry." Then Zebra turned around and galloped back to his herd.

- [10] All day, the herd wandered across the plain. They quietly munched on grass. Zebra stayed with his herd until he noticed some berries. Licking his lips, Zebra went to taste the berries.



"One day I will return the favor and help you." by Benjamin Schipper is used with permission.

1. **Wail (verb):** to cry out in pain
2. a large group of animals
3. to fall suddenly and clumsily

Wasp was resting in the bushes when she saw Zebra walking in her direction. She also spied Lion hiding quietly in the leaves. If Zebra got too close to Lion, Lion would catch him!

Thinking quickly, Wasp zoomed down and stung Lion.

The surprised lion howled. *"Rooooooooaar!"*

Zebra heard the loud cry. In a flash, he whirled around and galloped back to his herd.

- [15] A moment later, Wasp buzzed around Zebra's head. "Try to stay out of trouble," Wasp said with a chuckle.⁴ "I might not be nearby the next time a lion gets hungry."

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4. to laugh quietly

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: What is the theme of the fable?
 - A. It's more important to be smart, than it is to be strong.
 - B. You never know when you might need someone else's help.
 - C. It's a friend's job to make sure you stay out of trouble.
 - D. You should help people because it's the right thing to do.

2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "Carefully, Zebra reached into the branches to free her. But the thorns jabbed his lips." (Paragraph 2)
 - B. "With a sigh, Zebra poked his head into the bush again and knocked at the web. Luckily, it was enough to free Wasp." (Paragraph 7)
 - C. "Zebra heard the loud cry. In a flash, he whirled around and galloped back to his herd." (Paragraph 14)
 - D. "'Try to stay out of trouble,' Wasp said with a chuckle. 'I might not be nearby the next time a lion gets hungry.'" (Paragraph 15)

3. What does Zebra do when Wasp promises to "return the favor" in paragraph 4?
 - A. Zebra realizes how helpful Wasp could be in the future.
 - B. Zebra doesn't think that he will ever need Wasp's help.
 - C. Zebra thanks Wasp for her kind promise.
 - D. Zebra doesn't think that Wasp will keep her promise.

4. Why is it important to the story that Zebra frees Wasp from the spider web?

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. In the fable, Zebra and Wasp help each other. Do you think this makes them friends? Why or why not? Describe a time when you helped a friend in need.

2. In the fable, Zebra helps Wasp after she says she will “return the favor.” Do you think we should only help people who might help us one day? Why or why not? Why should we help other people?