



Read the fable carefully. Then answer each question below in a full sentence.

Think about what the character learned and what lesson the fable is teaching.

The Pond Rescue



The afternoon sun warmed Willow Creek Park, and Maya was enjoying her book under a big oak tree. Birds chirped happily, and distant laughter echoed through the air. It was a perfect day, until a sudden, loud wail cut through the peace. Maya looked up to see a small boy, no older than five, standing at the edge of the park's large pond, his face streaked with tears.

Next to him, an adult tried to comfort him, but the boy pointed frantically at something in the water. Maya squinted and saw a bright red toy sailboat, bobbing far out, carried by a gentle breeze. It was clearly the boy's beloved toy, now just out of reach, drifting further away. Maya's heart went out to the little boy; his sadness was so clear.

A shiver ran down Maya's spine. The pond water looked dark and surprisingly deep near the middle. She remembered a time last autumn when she had slipped near the muddy bank, and the cold water had soaked her shoes. A wave of hesitation washed over her.

"Maybe someone else will help," she thought, looking around at the few other people, who seemed busy.



But then, the boy let out another heartbroken sob, his small hand reaching towards the distant boat. Maya saw the pure despair in his eyes. She knew she couldn't just sit there. Taking a deep breath, she walked towards the pond's edge. The first touch of the water on her bare feet was shockingly cold, making her gasp. It felt like tiny ice needles pricking her skin.



With each step, the water rose higher, past her ankles, then her calves. The bottom was soft and squishy, and she had to concentrate to keep her balance. The red boat seemed to mock her, still just out of reach. Her legs started to feel numb from the cold, but she focused on the little boy's face, now watching her with wide, hopeful eyes. She pushed through the discomfort, her determination growing with every slow, careful stride, until her fingers finally brushed against the smooth plastic of the toy boat.

Clutching the boat tightly, Maya carefully waded back to the bank. The little boy's tears instantly stopped, replaced by a huge, joyful smile when she handed him his red sailboat. "Thank you!" he mumbled, clutching his toy. Maya felt a warmth spread through her, far stronger than the cold of the pond. She realized that even a small act of bravery, pushing past her own fear, could bring such immense happiness.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1) Who is the main character and where does she find herself?

(2) What problem did Maya face in the park?



(3) What does "determination" mean in the context of Maya's actions in the pond?

(4) Was Maya's choice to enter the pond and retrieve the boat a good one? Use a detail from the story to support your answer.

(5) What lesson does this story teach about bravery? How could this lesson help you in real life?

