

Reading Comprehension: The Serpent and the Eagle

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read the fable and answer the questions that follow

An Eagle swooped down upon a Serpent and seized it in his talons with the intention⁵ of carrying it off and devouring⁶ it. But the Serpent was too quick for him and had its coils round him in a moment; and then there ensued a life-and-death struggle between the two. A countryman, who was a witness of the encounter, came to the assistance of the eagle, and succeeded in freeing him from the Serpent and enabling him to escape. In revenge, the Serpent spat some of his poison into the man's drinking-horn. Heated with his exertions⁷, the man was about to slake his thirst with a draught⁸ from the horn, when the Eagle knocked it out of his hand, and spilled its contents upon the ground.



1. Why did the Eagle swoop down on the Serpent?

The Eagle swooped down on the Serpent to eat it.

2. Why did the Eagle knock the drink out of the countryman's hand?

The Eagle knew the Serpent had poisoned the drink. The Eagle wanted to save the countryman's life as a thank you for the countryman's help.

3. How did the countryman help the Eagle?

The countryman freed the Eagle from the Serpent and helped him escape.

4. What did the Serpent do to punish the countryman?

The Serpent put poison in the countryman's drink.

5. What does the picture show?

The picture accompanies the beginning of the fable. It shows the Eagle with the Serpent around him as they fought.

⁵intention: goal ⁶devouring: swallowing ⁷exertions: hard work ⁸draught: drink