

THE TRUMPET OF THE SWAN

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THE TRUMPET OF THE SWAN

Synopsis

Sam likes nature and learning about animals. While in the backwoods of Canada, Sam discovers a family of trumpeter swans. After saving their lives he becomes a trusted friend of the family. Louis, one of the baby swans, is unable to make any sort of noise. His father is worried but thinks it might get better. Louis is worried and decides to do something about it. He takes off to find Sam and go to school. A year and a half later he can read and write. He returns home to his family only to find out he still cannot communicate with them because they do not read or write.

This time Louis' father comes up with a plan to help. He flies into a town and steals a trumpet for his son. Louis learns how to play it but feels guilty about the fact it was stolen. He wants to get a job and earn enough money to pay for it. Sam helps him find a job and he is soon famous and earning a good salary. Serena, a girl swan he liked, lands at his pond. With his trumpet he is able to court her and win her acceptance. He takes care of her and they make plans to return to the wilderness to start their own family. Sam becomes a zoo worker and the two of them stay friends in the years to come.

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LESSON 1

Chapters 1 - 5

1. What characteristics did the author give the animals that animals do not have?

2. What did Sam do that convinced the swans that he was their friend?

3. Circle the words that describe the boy.

Mean

Happy

Curious

Absent-minded

4. In this simile from the story, what two things are being compared and what does that mean?

Sam was thrilled at the noise of the swans, which some people say is like the sound of a French horn.

5. Put a check by the event, which happened first?

_____ Sam brought field glasses to watch the swans

_____ The mother swan started to lay eggs

_____ The fox tried to attack the swan.

6. The father swan is worried that he might have a son with a problem. He feels that he will find a way out of the problem what do you do when you find yourself in a very difficult situation?

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LESSON 2

Chapters 6 - 9

1. Louis' father teaches his children how to fly in three steps. What is the middle step?
2. What convinced the first grade teacher to let Louis stay?
3. How long was Louis away at school?
4. Why do you think Louis didn't let his parents know that he was leaving to get help from Sam?
5. Why doesn't Louis' father discover that Louis is gone, why doesn't he go and look for him?
6. How do you think Louis felt when he returned from school and realized that he still couldn't talk to his family even though he could write?

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LESSON 3

Chapters 10 - 14

1. Louis feels he needs a job. What does he need money for?
2. How does Sam help Louis with his money problems?
3. What advice did Mr. Brickley give to the boy who doesn't like birds?
4. What does "malodorous" mean?
"I'm sure we'll all remember this malodorous event for a long time."
5. Why can't Louis fly out to the drowning boy?
6. Since Louis can't fly, how does he help the drowning boy?
7. List two characteristics of Louis and use examples from the story that show examples of the characteristics you chose.

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LESSON 4

Chapters 15 - 17

1. What argument does the boatman use to get Louis a room at the Ritz?
 - A. He will pay extra money for Louis.
 - B. Louis is a celebrity.
 - C. It would be unfair to turn him down.
2. Why did Serena come to the Philadelphia Zoo?
 - A. She heard Louis was there.
 - B. The other birds chased her off the refuge in Montana.
 - C. A storm took her off course.
3. In this simile from the story what is being compared and what does it mean? Some of his notes are like jewels held up to the light.
4. What does "pinioned" mean? "Pinioned is the word for it I believe."
5. Louis likes staying at the Ritz at first but then he gets lonely.
Would you enjoy staying at a hotel like the Ritz? Explain why or why not.
6. Louis finally gets to be with Serena so his hard work seems to have been worthwhile. Do you think you can achieve what you want if you work hard enough? Explain why you think that.

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LESSON 5

Chapters 18 - 21

1. What reasons does the zookeeper give in favor of Louis and Serena staying at the zoo?

- A. They'll never have to build their own nests.
- B. They won't be shot at or get hungry.
- C. They won't have to fly around looking for a home.

2. Circle the words that describe the father of Louis.

Caring

Shy

Old-fashioned

Boastful

3. What does "superficial" mean?

"The doctor said the wound was superficial."

4. Sam comes to the zoo to help Louis. What is the plan Sam comes up with?

5. Sam tells the zookeeper, "We must all follow a dream." What does Sam mean?

6. What is a dream that you would like to follow in your life?

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ANSWER KEY

LESSON 1

1. The author gave the animals the ability to talk and think.
2. Sam convinced the swans he was their friend when he fought off the fox and saved the swan's life.
3. HAPPY and CURIOUS should be circles.
4. The simile compares the swan's voice to a French horn. Since a French horn has a beautiful sound. Explanations may vary. It suggests the swan's voice has a beautiful sound.
5. The first event was the mother starting to lay eggs.
6. Answers will vary.

LESSON 2

1. The middle step of learning to fly was the beating of the wings to gain altitude.
2. The first grade teacher decided to let Louis stay in her class when he spelled catastrophe on the board.
3. Louis was away at school one and a half years.
4. Louis didn't let his parents know he was leaving so that they couldn't stop him from going.
5. Louis' father doesn't go looking for him because he has no idea where he went or in what direction.
6. Answers will vary. Louise probably felt very frustrated when he returned and found that he could still not talk to his family.

LESSON 3

1. Louis needs a job so that he can earn money to pay for the trumpet his father took.
2. Sam helps Louis by getting him a job as a camp bugler.
3. Mr. Brickley tells the boy who doesn't like birds that he doesn't have to like them but he still must treat them with respect.
4. Malodorous means having a bad smell.
5. Louis can't fly to the drowning boy because his flight feathers fell out (molting).
6. Even though Louis can't fly, he quickly swims out to the boy and puts the boy on his back and saves him.

7. Answers will vary.

LESSON 4

1. B

2. C

3. The simile compares his notes to jewels being held up to the light. Jewels held up to the light sparkle and catch the light in many amazing ways. Explanations may vary. It would suggest that his notes are amazing.

4. When a bird is pinioned it means he has had his wing cut or clipped so he can't fly. This is done to keep the birds in a particular place.

5. Answers will vary.

6. Answers will vary.

LESSON 5

1. B

2. CARING and SHY describe the father of Louis.

3. Superficial means on the surface, not deep. Louis' father was not in danger from the wound, it was minor.

4. Sam tells the zookeeper that if he will let the swans go, they will give him babies that need the extra protection of the zoo.

5. Answers may vary. Sam meant that everyone has hi/her own unique plan for his/her life and is happiest when he/she can follow it.

6. Answers will vary.