

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Retelling & Central Message

Read the short story and answer each question.



The Mask of the Mountain Lion

In the high Andes mountains, the villagers of Tumi held an old belief: when a child showed true courage, the spirit of the mountain lion would grant them strength.

Diego was not brave. He loved drawing and music but froze whenever he had to speak in front of people. His sister, Ana, teased him gently. "One day, you'll roar like a lion," she said.

That day came sooner than expected. During a village celebration, Ana slipped on a loose stone path near the edge of a ridge. Without thinking, Diego ran forward and pulled her back to safety. Everyone gasped—and then cheered.

Later that night, an elder approached Diego. "You acted with courage," she said, handing him a small wooden mask carved like a mountain lion.

"I wasn't trying to be brave," Diego whispered.

"Bravery is not about trying," the elder replied. "It's about acting when it matters."

Diego placed the mask beside his drawings. It didn't roar or shine. But every time he looked at it, he remembered the moment he found the courage he never knew he had.



Name: _____

The Mask of the Mountain Lion

1. What event shows Diego's bravery?

- A. He gives a speech to the village
- B. He saves his sister from falling
- C. He wins a music contest
- D. He climbs the highest mountain

2. What does the mountain lion mask represent in the story?

- A. A gift from his parents
 - B. A toy passed down through generations
 - C. A symbol of courage and bravery
 - D. A reward for being the fastest runner
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3. Fill in the blank:

The villagers believed that a child who showed true _____ would be honored by the spirit of the mountain lion.

4. What is the central message or lesson of this story? What key events help show that lesson?

5. How did Diego's view of himself change by the end of the story?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: O

Lexile Level: 590L-740L

Grade Level: 3rd Grade, Middle of the Year

Genre: Legend

Introducing the Text

"Today's story is a legend about a quiet boy who discovers courage when he least expects it. As we read, we'll focus on how the story's events and character actions help us understand the central message about bravery."

Vocabulary: courage, spirit, carved, celebration, bravery

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be brave?
 2. Have you ever acted quickly to help someone?
 3. What do you think a story with a mountain lion and a mask might be about?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does Diego love to do, and what is he afraid of?
 2. How does he respond when Ana slips near the ridge?
 3. What does the elder give him, and why?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What is the story's central message about bravery?
 2. How does Diego's quick action support that message?
 3. How do symbols (like the mask) help authors show a deeper meaning?
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Activity Idea

Invite students to design their own **symbol of inner strength**, like the mountain lion mask. They can choose an animal or object and draw it on a small paper mask or badge. Underneath, have them write a few sentences explaining how it represents a personal strength or quality they want to grow.

