

# Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Theme & Summary

Read the short story and answer each question.



## The Charm of Shadows

### Part 1 - The Fearful Beginning

Tyler had always loved the outdoors, but this was different. This wasn't a weekend hike or a leisurely walk through the woods—this was the **Grand Ridge**, one of the tallest mountains in the region. His school's outdoor club was heading to the top, and for weeks, Tyler had been secretly terrified. He wasn't like the other kids. They looked forward to the challenge; Tyler just wanted to stay in his warm bed. At the base of the mountain, his instructor, Ms. Rodriguez, gathered everyone around. "Remember, the climb isn't just about reaching the top. It's about overcoming the fear of the climb itself." Tyler swallowed hard. He could feel the knot in his stomach tightening.

### Part 2 - The Challenge

As they began the hike, the climb was steeper than Tyler had imagined. His legs burned, and the wind picked up, biting at his face. Every step seemed harder than the last, but with each moment of struggle, he noticed something. The more he focused on his feet and his breathing, the less the fear seemed to matter. Halfway up, a sudden gust of wind sent his friend Emily stumbling. Without thinking, Tyler rushed forward, steadying her with a firm grip on her arm. "Thanks, Tyler," Emily said, smiling nervously. Tyler didn't respond. He just nodded, focusing on his next step.

### Part 3 - The Summit

The final stretch was the hardest. Tyler's hands were cold, his feet sore, and every part of his body begged him to stop. But as he neared the summit, something in him shifted. His fear of failing, of not being able to make it, was replaced with something else: determination. When Tyler reached the top, he didn't feel the triumph he expected. Instead, he felt peace. He had overcome the fear inside himself, and that was enough. Looking out over the mountain range, Tyler knew this climb would stay with him long after the hike was over. It wasn't about the view—it was about what he had learned about himself along the way.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Charm of Shadows

1. What is the main theme of the story?

- A. Overcoming fear
- B. The beauty of nature
- C. Teamwork on a hike
- D. Reaching your destination

2. How does Tyler's attitude toward the climb change throughout the story?

- A. He goes from being terrified to feeling peaceful at the top
- B. He feels frustrated the entire time
- C. He never truly enjoys the climb
- D. He wants to give up halfway through

3. Fill in the blank:

By the end of the story, Tyler has learned that overcoming fear is about \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Use one detail from the text to explain why Tyler feels at peace when he reaches the summit.

---

---

---

5. What can you infer about Tyler's character based on how he reacts to Emily's stumble? Use evidence from the text.

---

---

---



# Parent and Teacher Guide

---

**Guide Reading Level:** T

**Lexile Level:** 900L-1050L

**Grade Level:** 5th Grade, Beginning of the Year

**Genre:** Fantasy (Magical Realism)

---

## Introducing the Text

*“Today we’re reading a story about a magical charm and a girl named Lily who must make a choice. As we read, we’ll focus on how Lily reacts to the charm and how her thoughts and decisions help shape the theme. We’ll also practice quoting accurately and using text evidence to support our answers.”*

**Vocabulary:** charm, temptation, controlling, shimmer, decision

---

## Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What would you do if someone offered you something magical?
  2. What makes a decision difficult?
  3. How do you know if something is good or bad for you?
- 

## During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What does the charm do to Lily when she touches it?
  2. Why does Ethan offer her the charm?
  3. How does Lily’s reaction to the charm show her character?
- 

## After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How does Lily’s decision show she is in control of her choices?
  2. What is the lesson Lily learns from this experience?
  3. How would you summarize the message of the story?
- 

## Activity Idea

Have students write a letter to Lily as if they were a friend advising her on whether or not to take the charm. In the letter, they must include at least one quote from the story and explain their reasoning for supporting Lily’s decision.

