

## ◀ INDEPENDENT PRACTICE: Reading the Passage

Read the passage. As you read, answer the guided reading questions on your own paper.

### The Halter

Denise and Holly lived next door to Green Glen Riding Stables. The stables were owned and run by the Westing family. Holly had been riding at Green Glen since she was nine years old. Denise had a fear and distrust of horses that Holly simply could not understand, especially since they lived so close to the stables.

"Horses are intelligent creatures and usually know when you mean them no harm," Holly had told Denise more than once. But Denise insisted that horses were a bad combination of *big* and *easily startled*. Even though her sister trusted horses, Denise wasn't going to change her mind about them.

One weekend, Holly asked Denise to travel with her and Mr. and Mrs. Westing to a horseback riding show in the neighboring county. Holly was going to ride Jupiter, her favorite horse. She was surprised when Denise agreed to go with them. Holly hoped that the experience would ease Denise's distrust of the beautiful creatures.

Then, just hours before the show, something terrible happened. Jupiter tripped and damaged a front leg. The vet declared the horse too lame to run for several weeks. Of course, that meant Jupiter wouldn't be able to participate in the show. Holly walked off with Mrs. Westing. Denise could tell that her sister was trying hard not to cry. Jupiter was Holly's favorite, and so she was worried about him. Even though Denise felt indifferent about the horse, she did feel at least a little sympathetic for Holly.

Denise watched Mr. Westing walk Jupiter to the stable. Noticing her, Mr. Westing asked Denise to keep an eye on the horse while he went to find another one for Holly to ride. "I've left the top part of the door to his stall open in case he wants to look around outside," Mr. Westing said.

Great, thought Denise. She pictured Jupiter **lunging** at her through the open half of the door. But before she imagined any other possible dangers, she said, "Sure, Mr. Westing." She didn't want to let their neighbor down when he needed her. After all, how bad could watching over Jupiter really be? The horse was tied up.

### Guided Reading:

1. *What do you predict that this passage will be about? Remember to use the passage title and illustration as clues.*

2. *Using what you have read so far, predict how Denise would react if she had to be near a horse at the horseback riding show.*

3. *Briefly describe something that has happened to you that you could apply to make this prediction. The experience does not need to be related to horses.*



Not long after Mr. Westing had gone, Denise heard a few loud thumps inside the stable. More than a little concerned, she went into the stable and found Jupiter's head sticking out of his stall. A hook on the wall had caught Jupiter's halter. The halter was wrapped around his neck and had him tied to the stall. The horse was stuck that way, his neck twisted painfully! What was she going to do to help this poor creature?

Denise thought fast. Slowly she approached the frightened horse. "Whoa, Jupe. Sooooo," she said and made a clucking noise. She liked to think of herself as a reasonable person. But here she was singing softly to a horse—and she felt ridiculous. She also felt scared. She couldn't believe this was happening to her. Jupiter was trembling. And she had no idea how to soothe him.

To release the halter, Denise had to make the animal move forward. That would loosen the reins on his head. As she neared, Jupiter tried to rear back. He succeeded only in snorting at the terrified girl. Denise backed away from the stall. Then she turned and saw Mr. Westing riding toward her on a white mare. "Mr. Westing!" she yelled. "Help me! Jupiter's stuck."

Mr. Westing trotted the mare over to Denise. Then he got off the mare and led her to the stall behind Jupiter's. When he approached Jupiter, the horse got excited and lunged forward a few inches, loosening the reins. Quickly, Mr. Westing whipped the halter ring over the hook, and Jupiter was free at last.

The horse dropped his head and nuzzled Denise as if to say thank you. Then he backed up into his stall, swishing through the straw spread out on the floor. Snorting twice, he thrust his head into the water trough for a long drink.

Denise stood still, watching Jupiter until he finally withdrew his head from the trough. She tried to imagine what the horse was feeling right now.

Mr. Westing interrupted her thoughts. "Thanks for looking after Jupiter. You probably saved his life."

"I tried to help out the best I could," replied Denise. Suddenly she felt lighter, as if a weight had been lifted from her. A trace of a smile settled on her face. The smile got bigger when she saw Holly walking toward her and Jupiter.

#### Guided Reading:

4. Look at your answers to Guided Reading questions 1 and 2. Were your predictions correct? For any prediction that was not correct, explain how it was wrong.

**◀ INDEPENDENT PRACTICE: Checking Comprehension**

Circle the best answer for items 1–4. For item 5, write your answer in complete sentences on the lines provided.

- The seventh paragraph ends with “What was she going to do to help this poor creature?” The answer to this sentence is important to the plot of this passage. Which of the following is the best support for what happens soon after this?
  - “Denise watched Mr. Westing walk Jupiter to the stable.”
  - “She pictured Jupiter lunging at her through the open half of the door.”
  - “Denise heard a few loud thumps inside the stable.”
  - “The horse was stuck that way, his neck twisted painfully!”
- Imagine that, near the end of the passage, a student predicts that Denise’s distrust of horses will “ease,” as Holly had hoped for early on. Which of the following is the best support for this prediction?
  - “The horse dropped his head and nuzzled Denise as if to say thank you.”
  - “Denise thought fast. Slowly she approached the frightened horse.”
  - “But here she was singing softly to a horse—and she felt ridiculous.”
  - “After all, how bad could watching over Jupiter really be? The horse was tied up.”
- Which of the following is the best prediction of what Denise will say to Holly to explain her sudden feeling that a weight had been lifted from her?
  - “Holly, I’m so happy I don’t have to watch over Jupiter any longer.”
  - “Holly, the fear I had of horses is mostly gone.”
  - “Holly, we don’t have to stay at this riding show much longer.”
  - “Holly, I was able to save Jupiter’s life.”
- What will Denise probably do the next time she is around a horse?
  - She will try to unwrap a halter from around the horse’s neck.
  - She will want to keep her distance from the horse.
  - She will approach the horse and talk to it.
  - She will want to ride the horse in a show.
- Describe something you have read or heard about that helped you make a prediction while reading this passage. Be sure to mention what the prediction was that you made.  
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