

BRUCE AND THE SPIDER

Warm Up

Look at this picture



Do you know what this insect is called?

What does the spider construct/make to catch its prey?



Bruce and the Spider

by James Baldwin

Vocabulary

foes: enemies

frail: delicate, fragile, weak

cheer: optimism

disheartened: discouraged

For the mentor

rude shed: poorly constructed shelter

patter of the drops: sound of raindrops on the roof

fell short: was not long enough to be attached to the beam

There was once a King of Scotland whose name was Robert Bruce. He needed to be both brave and wise, for the times in which he lived were wild and violent. The King of England was at war with him and had led a great army into Scotland to drive him out of the land.

Battle after battle had been fought. Six times had Bruce led his brave little army against his foes; and six times had his men been beaten. At last, his army was scattered, and he was forced to hide himself in

the woods and in lonely places among the mountains.

One rainy day, Bruce lay on the ground under a rude shed, listening to the patter of the drops on the roof above him. He was tired and sick at heart, and ready to give up all hope. It seemed to him that there was no use for him to try to do anything more.

As he lay thinking, he saw a spider over his head, getting ready to weave her web. He watched her as she toiled slowly and with great care. Six times she tried to throw her frail thread from one beam to another, and six times it fell short.



"Poor thing!" said Bruce: "you, too, know what it is to fail."

But the spider did not lose hope with the sixth failure. With still more care, she got ready to try for

the seventh time. Bruce almost forgot his own troubles as he watched her swing herself out upon the slender line. Would she fail again? No! The thread was carried safely to the beam and fastened there.

"I, too, will try a seventh time!" cried Bruce.

He arose and called his men together. He told them of his plans and sent them out with messages of cheer to his disheartened people. Soon there was an army of brave Scotch-men around him. Another battle was fought, and the King of England was forced to go back into his own country.

I have heard it said, that, after that day, no one by the name of Bruce would ever hurt a spider. The lesson which the little creature had taught the king was never forgotten.

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- A. Choose the correct answer
1. Robert Bruce was the king of:
 - a. France
 - b. England

- c. Scotland
 - d. None of these
- 2. Bruce was a violent man
 - a. hated violence
 - b. was afraid of violence
 - c. lived in violent times
- 3. The King of England:
 - a. wanted to conquer Scotland
 - b. hated Bruce
 - c. saw a spider
 - d. hid in a cave
- 4. The mountains in which Bruce hid:
 - a. were dangerous
 - b. were lonely
 - c. were far away
 - d. were filled with beasts
- 5. Bruce learnt a lesson:
 - a. from the forest
 - b. from his army
 - c. from the King of England
 - d. from a spider

B. Write short answers.

1. Why did Bruce need to be brave and wise?

2. Which country did the king of England want Bruce to leave?
3. How often had Bruce lost the battles?
4. What was the spider trying to do?
5. Where did the king of England go after the last battle?

C. What lesson did Bruce learn from the spider?

D. Match the columns. For example: The description of the word 'shed' is 'rude' in the passage.

Person/thing	Quality
Shed	lonely
Bruce	brave
Army	hopeful
places	rude
Spider	great

E. Use the sentences with the words given under 'Vocabulary' to fill in the blanks.

1. It gives me great ____ when our team wins against the other school teams.

2. I was _____ when I could not score well in spite of all my hard work.
3. The _____ old woman was crossing the road all by herself, so I decided to help her.
4. You can make many _____ easily, but making friends is difficult.

F. Make sentences with the words given under 'Vocabulary'. Your sentences should make the meaning of the word clear.