Name _____ Date _____

Androcles and the Lion

Myth or legend · 3rd–5th grade

Long ago, in the time of ancient Rome, there was a man named Androcles who was enslaved by a cruel master. One night he escaped and ran far into the desert, where he hid in a cave to rest.

He had barely closed his eyes when a great roar shook the cave. A lion stood in the doorway. Androcles pressed himself against the wall, sure that his life was over. But the lion did not leap. It limped toward him, groaning, and held up one huge paw.

Androcles saw that a long thorn was stuck deep in the lion's paw. The paw was swollen and bleeding. Gently, with shaking hands, he pulled the thorn out and wrapped the paw with a strip of his own cloth. The lion licked his hand like a big, grateful dog.

For many days, the lion shared its cave with Androcles and brought him food. But at last Androcles left the desert, and soldiers soon caught him. As punishment, he was sentenced to face a hungry lion in front of a huge crowd in the arena.

On that day, the crowd roared as Androcles stood alone on the sand. A gate opened, and an enormous lion charged out. Then, just a few steps away, it stopped. It sniffed the air. It walked slowly to Androcles and rubbed its head against him, purring.

It was the same lion. It had been captured too, and it remembered the man who had helped it. The crowd fell silent in amazement. The emperor asked Androcles to explain, and when he heard the story, he set both Androcles and the lion free.

People say that afterward, Androcles walked the streets of Rome with the lion beside him on a rope, and everyone who saw them remembered that kindness can tame even the fiercest heart.

Questions

1. What was wrong with the lion in the cave?

2. How did Androcles feel when the lion first appeared?

3. Why didn't the lion attack Androcles in the arena?

4. What did the emperor do after hearing the story?

5. What is the lesson of the legend?

6. Androcles was terrified, but he still helped the lion. What does that show about him?

7. Has someone ever remembered a kind thing you did?

The lesson in my own words

Answer Key

1. It had a thorn in its paw.
2. Terrified.
3. It remembered that he had helped it.
4. Set Androcles and the lion free.
5. Kindness is remembered.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Answers will vary.

Lesson: Kindness is remembered, and gratitude can be stronger than fear.