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The Cobbler's Song

Once there was a poor cobbler who lived in the basement of a large house in Paris. The cobbler had to work hard all day to make enough money to support his family. But he was happy and he sang all day as he mended shoes.

On the floor above him lived a rich man. His rooms were large and sunny. He wore fine clothes and had plenty of good things to eat. Even so, he was never happy. All night long he lay awake thinking about his money—how could he protect the money he already had? How could he get more? Often, the sun rose before he fell asleep.

The poor cobbler always got up before sunrise and went to work. As he hammered, he sang. His song floated up to the rich man's apartment and woke him.

"Drat!" cried the rich man. "I can't sleep at night for thinking of my money and I can't sleep in the daytime because of that silly cobbler and his singing. I must find a way to stop him."

The rich man sat down and thought the matter over.

"If the cobbler had something to worry about," he said to himself, "then he would not sing all day. What worries men most? Why, money to be sure! Some men worry because they have so little. The cobbler has little enough, to be sure. Still, that does not seem to worry him. He is the happiest man I know."

“Other men worry because they have too much money. That is my trouble. I wonder if the cobbler would worry more if he had more money. Hmm. It’s not a bad idea.

“Anyway, it can’t hurt to try!”

A few minutes later, the rich man entered the cobbler’s home. “What can I do for you?” asked the cobbler.

“Here,” said the rich man. “I have brought you a present.” He gave the poor man a purse.

The cobbler opened it and saw it was full of gold pieces. “I can’t take this!” said the cobbler. “I have not earned it.”

“You have earned it,” said the rich man. “You have earned it by your singing. I give it to you because you are the happiest man I know.”

Then, the rich man left.

The cobbler turned the gold pieces out on his table and began to count them. He had counted to fifty-two when he looked up and saw a man passing by the window. He quickly hid the gold under his apron and went into the bedroom to count it where no one could see him.

He piled the coins up on the bed. How golden they were! How bright! He had never seen so much money before. He looked at the money until everything in the room seemed golden and bright. Then, he counted it.

“One hundred pieces of gold! How rich I am! But where shall I hide it?”

First, he hid it under the covers of the bed. Then, he sat down and looked at the bed. “The coins make a lump under the covers,” he said. “Someone else might see them and steal them. I think I will hide the purse under the pillow instead.”

While he was putting it under the pillow, his wife came into the room. “What is the matter with the bed?” she asked.

The angry cobbler glared at her and drove her from the room with angry words—the first cross words he had ever spoken to her.

Dinner time came, but the cobbler could not eat a mouthful. He was afraid somebody would steal his treasure while he was at the table. By supper time he felt even worse.

Not a note did he sing all day long. Not a kind word did he speak to his wife. He went to bed half sick with worry and fear. All night long, he tossed and turned. He did not dare go to sleep, lest he should wake to find his gold gone.

Days passed and the cobbler grew more and more unhappy. He worried about his money all day and all night. He was afraid of other people. He did not even trust his wife. He no longer sang at his work and was grouchy most of the time.

But upstairs the rich man was happy. “That was a good plan,” he said to himself. “Now I can sleep all day without being wakened by the cobbler’s songs.”

For a month, the cobbler worried over his gold. He grew thin and pale and his wife and children were unhappy. At last, he could bear the worry no longer, so he called his wife and told her the whole story.

“Dear husband,” she said, “give the gold back. All the gold in the world is not worth as much to me as one of your songs.”

How happy the cobbler felt when his wife said this! He picked up the purse and ran upstairs to the rich man’s room. Throwing the gold on the table, he cried, “Here is your money. Take it back. I can live without your money, but I cannot live without my songs.”

7. Why did the rich man give the cobbler the purse full of gold pieces?
- A. The rich man said he couldn’t use it because he had too much money already.
 - B. The cobbler begged the rich man for it.
 - C. The cobbler caught the rich man stealing it from someone else.
 - D. The rich man said the cobbler earned it by being the happiest man he knew.
8. What made the cobbler drive his wife from the room with angry words?
-
-

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

9. What did the money cause both men to do?

10. Describe the setting in this selection.

11. What was more important to the cobbler, the rich man's money or his own songs?

12. Write a sentence that tells the lesson or theme of this story.

SAMPLE
for review only

Grammar and Morphology

13. Which of the following words with a prefix can be used to describe the format of an e-book?
- A. multimedia
 - B. uniform
 - C. bilingual
 - D. multilingual

14. Write the correct form of the adjective in the blank.

These instructions are _____ now that you've helped me.

(clear, clearer, clearest)

15. Circle the correct prefix for each letter to add to each root word in the following sentence:

Darren was not quite ready to move from his three-wheeled A cycle to a B cycle yet because he was worried he couldn't balance on just two wheels.

A. *uni- bi- tri- multi-*

B. *uni- bi- tri- multi-*

16. Write the correct form of the adverb in the blank.

The new teacher spoke _____ than the teacher she replaced.
(interestingly, more interestingly, most interestingly)

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

17. Write the correct form of the root word in the blank.

(*friend*) People who live in this town are _____
than people who live in the town where I grew up.

18. Write *more* or *most* in the blank.

My grandmother is _____ elderly than your grandmother.

19. Write the word to replace the underlined meaning in the sentence.
Identify the part of speech.

He stopped planting seeds at the middle of the field to take a break and
drink some water

Word: _____ Part of speech: _____

20. Describe what the word *underestimating* means in the following sentence:

She worried that she was underestimating her ability to finish the project
ahead of time, since she struggled to finish the last project on time.
