

Name: _____

Shelley and the Thistle

By Dan Greco

The garden patch was usually a happy place, but a monstrous thistle had grown. Its spiky leaves cast a dark shadow over the tender lettuce and sweet carrots. It hogged the sunlight and drank up all the water, leaving the



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"It's grown too big," sighed a worm. "It's taking over the whole garden."

"It's too late to do anything about it," squeaked an ant, slinking away.

They thought it would be easier just to let the thistle be, hoping it wouldn't hurt them too much if they stayed out of its way. But as the garden grew drier and



hungrier each day, so did they.

One day, a tiny snail named Shelley crawled up to the thistle. The sun gleamed off her iridescent shell as she looked up at the monstrosity. "This isn't right," she

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said, her voice surprisingly steady.
"We can't let it win."

The others looked at her, scared.
The thistle was huge, and Shelley
was so small. "What can you do?"
asked a nervous ladybug.

Shelley felt a tremor of fear, but
she believed in her heart that they
deserved a healthy garden. "I
may be small, but I can try," she



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Stop! It's not worth it." They
started to walk away, even more
disheartened.

Shelley took a break, and a
breath, and went back at it. The
ants noticed and stopped their
retreat. After a few more minutes
of watching her courage, the ants
began to march, carrying away
tiny bits of earth around the
thistle's roots.

unwavering spirit ignited their
own.

Together, little by little, they
weakened the giant thistle. Finally,
with a collective push, the thistle
toppled over, exposing the
sun-drenched soil beneath. The
garden creatures cheered,
already feeling the warmth and
seeing the promise of healthier
days.

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1. Why did the thistle cause a problem in the garden? How did it affect the animals?

2. What character trait best describes Shelley? Circle the character trait and explain your reasoning on the lines below.

loyal

courageous

timid

adventurous



- c. Shelley took a break, and a breath, and went back at it.
d. The others looked at her, scared.

4. How did Shelley's bravery inspire others?

5. In your opinion, was Shelley braver for starting to destroy the thistle or for continuing after she got hurt? Use details to support your answer.

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Shelley and the Thistle



Complete the crossword puzzle using words from the story.

2

4

1

3									
5									
6									



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Down:

1. The giant, ugly skyscraper in the middle of the quaint town was a _____.
2. constant; steadfast
3. having a rainbow-like color that reflects the light
4. "Be careful not to get pricked by the _____," warned Mom.
9. a trembling or shaking

Across:

5. The lack of rain left the flowers in the garden looking wilted and _____.
6. involving all members of a group
7. Marcella _____ in pain when she got stung by the bee.
8. losing hope, enthusiasm, or courage
10. The patio furniture was _____ after years of being outside in the sun, rain, and snow.

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In the story, "Shelly and the Thistle," Shelly proved that bravery was a strength of hers. Is bravery a strength of yours? Write about a time when you showed bravery.



ANSWER KEY

Shelley and the Thistle

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1. Why did the thistle cause a problem in the garden? How did it affect the animals?

The thistle was hogging sunlight and drinking all the water. It left the other plants wilted. The animals were getting hungry without food to eat from the garden.



continuing after she got hurt? Use details to support your answer.

Answers will vary.

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