

Name: _____

The Most Wonderful Answer of All

by Neal Levin

Once there was a magical fairy who had the gift of granting wishes. Every half moon she granted one wish to one elf.

Lately, however, it was hard to decide whose wish to grant. It wasn't that there were so many elves who deserved to have a wish come true. It was that there were so many who didn't deserve it at all.

So on the night of the next half moon she devised a plan to find a worthy elf. She folded her wings and donned a tattered cloak. She put on thin stockings and worn boots and covered her face with a veil. Then she hobbled through the forest using a crooked tree branch as a cane.

Soon she smelled hot peppermint tea and saw an elf cupping a mug in his hands.

"Good day, good friend. I seem to have lost my way," she said in a raspy voice.

"Could you please help me get home?"

"Why me?" The elf blew steam from his mug. "There are lots of other elves around."

"Okay," said the beggar. "I'll find someone else."

She soon came upon a second elf polishing stones.

"Good day, good friend." The beggar sighed. "I'm a little bit lost. I don't suppose you could help guide me home?"

"Why now?" said the elf. "I'm busy. Can't you see?"

"Never mind." The beggar shook her head.

The third elf she came upon was napping under a mushroom. The beggar tapped his shoulder with her cane. "Good day, good friend. I seem to be lost. Could



you help me find my way home?"

"Why bother?" The elf yawned. "I'd rather take a nap." He rolled over and went back to sleep.

The beggar sighed. Then she sat down to think.



Soon she heard a trumpet toot. She looked up to find an elf riding a pony. He wore a paper crown and a purple cape like a prince.

"Silly elf," the beggar muttered. "He thinks he's someone special."

"What's troubling you, my friend?" he asked.

The beggar adjusted her veil and said, "Oh, dear prince, no one seems to care about my problems. I've asked three elves to help me get home. The first said, 'Why me?' The second said 'Why now?' The third said 'Why bother?' Would you help me?" The prince paused and then said, "Why not?"

The beggar's eyes lit up. "That's the most wonderful answer of all!"

"But there's something you should know," the prince said, as he helped the beggar up on his pony. "I'm not really a prince. I'm an ordinary elf with extraordinary dreams. That's why I dress this way."

"Well, there's something you should know, too. I'm not really a lost and lonely beggar. I'm really a magical fairy."

The elf turned around, and sure enough, a fairy was sitting behind him. Her cane had become a magic wand and she waved it over his head.

"You are a prince," she said. "In more ways than one."

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1. Why has it become difficult for the fairy to grant wishes?

- a. There are so many elves who deserve to have a wish granted.
- b. There are no elves who deserve to have a wish granted.
- c. She broke her magic wand.
- d. She lost her magic wand.

2. What does the fairy decide to do about her problem?

3. What three questions do the first three elves ask? What do all these questions have in common?

4. When the fairy meets the last elf, what does she believe about him at first? How does he turn out to be different from the other elves?

5. Which lesson does this fable teach?

- a. Always show appreciation for a gift.
- b. Never give up during hard times.
- c. Being kind has its rewards.
- d. Being yourself is the best thing you can be.

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Fill in the missing letters to form a vocabulary word from the story. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. w _ _ r _ _ _ y

hint: good; righteous; deserving of praise

2. d _ _ _ n e _ _

hint: put on a piece of clothing

3. t a _ _ _ e _ _ e d

hint: torn and old

4. h o _ _ _ l _ _ d

hint: stumbled along

5. p o _ _ i _ _ _ i n _ _

hint: making the surface of something shiny and smooth by rubbing it

6. m _ _ _ h _ _ o _ _ m

hint: a type of fungus

7. e _ _ t _ _ _ o _ _ _ i n _ _ r _ _

hint: incredible; unbelievable

8. _ _ e _ _ l

hint: a piece of cloth that hides the face

ANSWER KEY

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1. Why has it become difficult for the fairy to grant wishes? **b**
 - a. There are so many elves who deserve to have a wish granted.
 - b. There are no elves who deserve to have a wish granted.**
 - c. She broke her magic wand.
 - d. She lost her magic wand.



2. What does the fairy decide to do about her problem?

The fairy decides to disguise herself as a beggar and pretend she is lost. She wants to see if any of the elves prove themselves worthy by helping her.

3. What three questions do the first three elves ask? What do all these questions have in common?

The elves ask: "Why me?", "Why now?", and "Why bother?". All these questions show the elves are unwilling to help the beggar. They are selfish.

4. When the fairy meets the last elf, what does she believe about him at first? How does he turn out to be different from the other elves?

The fairy thinks the last elf will be self-centered like the first three elves. He turns out to be the only elf willing to help her.

5. Which lesson does this fable teach? **c**
 - a. Always show appreciation for a gift.
 - b. Never give up during hard times.
 - c. Being kind has its rewards.**
 - d. Being yourself is the best thing you can be.

ANSWER KEY

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Fill in the missing letters to form a vocabulary word from the story. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. w o r t h y worthy
hint: good; righteous; deserving of praise
2. d o n n e d donned
hint: put on a piece of clothing
3. t a t t e r e d tattered
hint: torn and old
4. h o b b l e d hobbled
hint: stumbled along
5. p o l i s h i n g polishing
hint: making the surface of something shiny and smooth by rubbing it
6. m u s h r o o m mushroom
hint: a type of fungus
7. e x t r a o r d i n a r y extraordinary
hint: incredible; unbelievable
8. v e i l veil
hint: a piece of cloth that hides the face