

Robert the Bruce and the Spider Worksheet

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1) King Bruce of Scotland flung himself down,
In a lonely mood to think;
'Tis true he was a monarch, and wore a crown,
But his heart was beginning to sink.

2) For he had been trying to do a great deed,
To make his people glad;
He had tried and tried, but could not succeed,
And so he became quite sad.

3) He flung himself into a deep despair,
He was grieved as man could be;
And after a while, as he pondered there,
"I'll give it up!" cried he.

4) Now, just at that moment, a spider dropped
With its silken cobweb clew,
And the king, in the midst of his thinking stopped
To see what the spider would do.

5) 'Twas a long way up to the ceiling dome,
And it hung by a rope so fine,
That how it would get to its cobweb home
King Bruce could not divine.

6) It soon began to cling and crawl
Straight up with strong endeavor;
But down it came with a slipping sprawl,
As near to the ground as ever.

7) Up, up it ran, nor a second did stay,
To make the least complaint,
Till it fell still lower; and there it lay
A little dizzy and faint.

8) Its head grew steady — again it went,
And travelled a half-yard higher;
'Twas a delicate thread it had to tread,
And a road where its feet would tire.

9) Again it fell, and swung below;
But up it quickly mounted,
Till up and down, now fast, now slow,
Nine brave attempts were counted.

10) "Sure," said the king, "that foolish thing
Will strive no more to climb,
When it toils so hard to reach and cling,
And tumbles every time."

11) But up the insect went once more;
Ah me ! 'tis an anxious minute;
He's only a foot from his cobweb door —
O, say ! will he lose or win it?

12) Steadily, steadily, inch by inch,
Higher and higher he got,
And a bold little run, at the very last pinch,
Put him into the wished-for spot.

13) "Bravo, bravo!" the king cried out;
"All honor to those who try!
The spider up there defied despair;
He conquered, and why should not I."

14) Thus Bruce of Scotland braced his mind;
And gossips tell the tale,
Then he tried once more, as he tried before,
And that time did not fail.

15) Pay goodly heed, all you who read,
And beware of saying, "I can't!"
'Tis a cowardly word, and apt to lead
To idleness, folly, and want.

Vocabulary

In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

1: flung, mood, 'Tis, monarch
3: despair, grieved, pondered.
4: clew, midst
5: 'Twas, dome, divine
6: endeavor, sprawel
7: complaint
8: delicate, tread

9: mounted
10: strive, toils
11: anxious
13: Bravo, defied
14: braced, gossips
15: heed, idleness, want

Word Pictures Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, perhaps, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

1: flung himself down, lonely mood, heart ... sink
4: silken cobweb
5: rope so fine, cobweb home
6: cling and crawl, slipping sprawel
7: dizzy and faint
8: delicate thread

9: up and down, fast now slow
10: reach and cling
11: anxious minute
12: inch by inch, bold little run, last pinch
14: gossips tell the tale
15: you who read, cowardly word

Mechanics Verbally discuss

Who is the speaker?

What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character?

Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone?

Does the poem have a setting?

Is the poem about a particular event? Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?

Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly?

What point of view or perspective is the speaker?

How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time?

Comprehension Questions Verbally discuss

1: Who is this poem about? Where is this person from? How was he feeling? How do you know?

2: What had this person been trying to do? What was the result?

3: Why was this person in "deep despair" and "grieved"? What did this person do? Was a decision made?

4: What dropped down on this person? How did this person respond to it?

5: Did you notice the use of the term 'Twas? Why do you think the author used it? What was a long way? What was so fine?

6: Describe what this creature did. Do you think the author did a good job at description?

7: How long did the creature stay? Did it complain? What was the result of this climb? What did the creature do? How did the creature "feel"?

8: What happened to its head? Explain what that means. What did the creature do next? Describe the road.

9: What happened in this stanza? How many attempts were made?

10: How did the person watching the creature respond? Why did this person arrive at that assessment?

11: What is happening in this stanza? Do you think the author did a good job at description? Why?

12: Explain and discuss: "Steadily, steadily, inch by inch." What did the creature do?

13: How did the person that was watching the creature respond? What should be given "to those who try"? What did the creature do? Do you agree with the person's decision in the last line? Why?

14: What, exactly, does it mean to brace one's mind? Why would this be important? Who tells the tale? Is this a fanciful way of saying "historians"? Why do you think the term "gossips" was used by the author? Was it a good choice of words? Why? What did the person in the poem do?

15: What does the author warn the reader to do in the first and second line? Do you agree? Why? Why is this a "cowardly word"? Why could this "word" lead to "idleness, folly, and want"? Do you agree? Why?

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

What Does the Bible Say?

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for the message of this poem.

What does the Bible have to say about perseverance? Give Biblical examples of those demonstrating perseverance. Give historical examples, past and present, of those role modelling perseverance. What is the opposite of perseverance? Give Biblical examples and historical examples of same.

The Author/Poet

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

The author's name for this poem is Eliza Cook (1817-1889). She was born in London. In 1837 she began to contribute to periodicals. By 1840, the first collection of her poems was published. Eliza Cook became the editor of "Eliza Cook's Journal" in 1849.

Geography

Locate Scotland, London, and England on a globe, map and atlas.

Compare/contrast the weather of Scotland and/or England with your own for one week.

Make a meal from either Scotland or England for your family.

Activities

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each stanza. (Note: that will be fifteen different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the poem and the author's name which will be your book's cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the event discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses that relate to it. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the historical event this poem reported.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, "interview" various individuals connected with this poem (e.g., Robert the Bruce, the spider, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents' permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author's view of the impact of *Robert the Bruce and the Spider*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about Eliza Cook and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.