Determine the Theme

Grade 5 Reading Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the answer.

READ THIS FIRST

First Notes

The day my violin came home,
I lifted it from its case like something made of glass.
Its wood was the color of dark honey.
I tucked it under my chin the way my teacher showed me.
I drew the bow across the strings.
It screeched like a rusty gate.

My sister covered her ears.
The cat left the room.
I put the violin back in its case
and told myself I would never be a musician.

My teacher, Mrs. Adeyemi, only smiled.
"Every musician starts with ugly notes," she said.
"The beautiful ones are hiding behind them.
You just have to play enough to find them."

So I practiced every afternoon at four o'clock.
Fifteen minutes, then twenty, then thirty.
I played the same three notes until my fingers ached.
Some days the notes still squeaked.
Some days I wanted to hide the case under my bed.

Mrs. Adeyemi never told me I was good yet.
She only said, "Again."
So I played it again.
And again.
And again.

But slowly, something changed.
The screech softened into a scratch.
The scratch smoothed into a hum.
One rainy evening, I played a whole song,
and the cat curled up on my bed to listen.

At the spring concert, I sat in the back row
with the other new players.
My hands shook as the lights came up.
I missed one note in the middle of the song.
I wanted to stop.
Instead, I remembered all those afternoons at four o'clock,
and I kept playing.

When the song ended, the room filled with clapping.
I looked out and saw my sister,
the one who had covered her ears.
She was clapping the loudest of all.

Now, when I hear a new player screech and squeak,
I do not cover my ears.
I hear the beautiful notes hiding behind the ugly ones,
waiting for enough afternoons to find them.

I think about everything I have learned to do,
like riding a bike, reading chapter books and swimming a whole lap.
Each one began with something ugly or clumsy.
Each one grew better, one afternoon at a time.
The violin just taught me to notice.

1. Which theme best fits this poem?
   Violins are the hardest instruments to learn.
   Skills that start out clumsy grow strong with steady practice.
   Real talent shows itself on the very first try.
   Concerts are more fun when people clap loudly.

2. How did the speaker feel after playing for the first time?
   proud, because the first notes sounded lovely
   annoyed, because the cat would not leave the room
   discouraged, sure they could never be a musician
   excited, because the concert was the next day

3. What does Mrs. Adeyemi mean by "The beautiful ones are hiding behind them"?
   The best songs are kept secret from new players.
   Good notes will come after many rough ones.
   Some notes are too quiet for anyone to hear.
   Beautiful music is only played behind a curtain.

4. Which line best shows the speaker responding to the challenge?
   I sat in the back row with the other new players.
   It screeched like a rusty gate.
   My sister covered her ears.
   So I practiced every afternoon at four o'clock.

5. What does the change from "screech" to "scratch" to "hum" show?
   The violin was getting older and quieter.
   The speaker moved to a different room.
   The cat was learning to like loud sounds.
   The speaker's playing slowly improved.

6. What did the speaker do after missing a note at the concert?
   left the stage before the song ended
   stopped and started the song again
   kept playing by remembering all the practice
   asked Mrs. Adeyemi to finish the song

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Answer Key - Grade 5 Reading Worksheet

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