Kindness Comes Back

Compare two tales about a kindness returned.

4.RL.9 "Compare and contrast the authors' approaches to similar themes, topics, and patterns of events in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the kind act in each tale, circle how it is repaid, and write "start" or "later" beside each trap to compare the order of events.

The Mouse and the Crane

1. In an ancient Greek fable told by Aesop, a lion caught a mouse beneath his paw. The mouse begged to go free and promised to help someday. The lion laughed but let him run. Later, hunters trapped the lion in a rope net. The mouse heard his roars and chewed the knots until the lion escaped. Though tiny, the mouse had returned a kindness to the mighty lion.

2. In a Japanese folktale called "The Grateful Crane," a traveler found a crane caught in a hunter's trap. He opened the trap, and the bird flew away. That evening, a young woman knocked on his door during a snowstorm. The traveler offered her a place by the fire. She asked to weave cloth to thank him, but she made one request: he must never watch her work.

3. Behind a closed door, the woman wove a lovely cloth. The traveler noticed that she grew thinner each day. Curious, he peeked through a crack. Inside, he saw the crane pulling feathers from its own body and weaving them into the cloth. She told him she was the bird he had saved. Because he had broken his promise, she spread her wings and flew away.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In both tales, how does someone repay a kind act? What is different about the gifts they give?

2. How does each storyteller use a trap at a different point in the tale?

3. How does a promise or request shape what happens in each tale?

4. How are the endings different, even though both tales show a kindness being returned?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a new storyteller retells the Japanese tale so the traveler keeps his promise. In four sentences, tell how the crane thanks him and compare your new ending with the endings of both tales.

ANSWER KEY

Kindness Comes Back

GRADE 4 · 4.RL.9

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the kind act in each tale, circle how it is repaid, and write “start” or “later” beside each trap to compare the order of events. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In both tales, how does someone repay a kind act? What is different about the gifts they give?	**The mouse repays the lion by freeing him from a net. The crane repays the traveler by weaving him cloth.**
2	How does each storyteller use a trap at a different point in the tale?	**The crane is trapped at the start, giving the traveler a chance to help her. The lion is trapped later, giving the mouse a chance to repay him.**
3	How does a promise or request shape what happens in each tale?	**The mouse promises to help the lion and keeps that promise. The woman asks the traveler not to watch her weave, but he looks, so she leaves.**
4	How are the endings different, even though both tales show a kindness being returned?	**The Greek tale ends with the lion free because the mouse helped him. The Japanese tale ends with the crane flying away because the traveler broke his promise.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The traveler never peeked, and the crane thanked him by guiding him safely through a snowstorm. In my ending, the crane flies away because she is ready to go home, not because he broke a promise. Like the Greek mouse, my crane helps the one who helped her. Unlike the Greek lion, my traveler is not caught in a trap.

Accept other accurate comparisons supported by both tales. For the open task, look for a new ending in which the traveler keeps his promise and a comparison with each original ending.