

Name _____

Date _____

The Animal That Lost Its Guts

Read the story carefully. Then answer the questions.

At the aquarium, a sign announced: MEET THE ANIMAL THAT LOST ITS GUTS. Ari expected a tale about a cowardly shark. Elliana expected a lionfish that had forgotten how to be brave. Their guide, Dr. Finn, pointed into a tank. On the sandy bottom lay something shaped like a lumpy cucumber wearing a very old sock.

"That is not an animal," Ari said. "That is a pickle waiting for retirement." The pickle slowly crawled away. Dr. Finn explained that it was a sea cucumber, a relative of sea stars and sea urchins. It moved with small, water-filled tube feet. Water pressure extended the feet, almost like a tiny hydraulic machine. Ari bowed. "My apologies, Professor Pickle."

Then came the strangest fact. A sea cucumber takes in water through an opening at its rear. The water travels to branching organs called respiratory trees, which pull oxygen from it. In other words, many sea cucumbers breathe through their bottoms. Elliana stared at the tank. Ari whispered, "I am never complaining about a stuffy nose again."

The rear entrance can also become an underwater hotel. A thin pearlfish may wait for the sea cucumber to open for a breath, then swim inside for shelter. Sometimes the guest causes no harm. Other pearlfish behave like terrible hotel visitors and nibble the host's organs. Dr. Finn said one sea cucumber may shelter several pearlfish. Ari imagined a sign: ROOMS AVAILABLE. NO LUGGAGE. ABSOLUTELY NO ORGAN NIBBLING.

Elliana finally asked about the title. Dr. Finn explained that some sea cucumbers defend themselves by pushing out internal organs. The messy distraction may surprise a predator long enough for the sea cucumber to escape. It can later regrow the missing parts. The children fell silent. Even Ari's eyebrows seemed shocked.

"So it throws its insides at danger and grows new ones?" Elliana asked. Dr. Finn nodded. Ari said, "That is the boldest thing I have ever heard. If my backpack spills, I sit down and panic." The animal had not lost its courage at all. It had literally lost its guts on purpose.

Professor Pickle continued its slow march across the sand, looking about as worried as a sleepy potato. Elliana decided that sea cucumbers were proof that an animal did not need teeth, claws, or speed to be astonishing. Ari saluted the tank. "Brave, brilliant, and deeply weird," he said. "But I am not staying at its hotel."

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Circle the best answer.

Questions 1-10

1. What is the main idea of the story?

- A. Aquariums should replace fish with vegetables.
- B. Sea cucumbers have several surprising ways to live and survive.
- C. Ari wants to open an underwater hotel.
- D. Pearlfish are the bravest animals in the sea.

6. In the story, the word 'hydraulic' relates to -

- A. a system that uses liquid pressure.
- B. an animal that grows new organs.
- C. a hotel beneath the ocean.
- D. a predator with sharp teeth.

2. What did Ari first expect the title to describe?

- A. A cowardly shark
- B. A sleepy potato
- C. A sea star with no arms
- D. A fish carrying luggage

7. What causes the sea cucumber to push out organs?

- A. It needs room for a larger meal.
- B. It is trying to move faster.
- C. It may be defending itself from danger.
- D. It wants to feed the pearlfish.

3. How do a sea cucumber's tube feet extend?

- A. Air fills them like balloons.
- B. Muscles pull them with strings.
- C. Water pressure pushes them outward.
- D. Pearlfish carry them forward.

8. Which detail shows that Ari is humorous?

- A. He listens to Dr. Finn.
- B. He calls the animal Professor Pickle.
- C. He looks into the tank.
- D. He learns about respiratory trees.

4. What do the respiratory trees do?

- A. Pull oxygen from water
- B. Grind food into pieces
- C. Warn pearlfish to leave
- D. Regrow the tube feet

9. Why is the title deceptive?

- A. The sea cucumber is not actually an animal.
- B. The sea cucumber loses its courage, not its organs.
- C. The children never see a sea cucumber.
- D. 'Lost its guts' sounds like fear, but the animal expels organs.

5. Why might a pearlfish enter a sea cucumber?

- A. To teach it how to swim
- B. To find shelter
- C. To borrow its tube feet
- D. To help it breathe

10. What is the author's main purpose?

- A. To entertain while teaching unusual sea cucumber facts
- B. To persuade readers to keep pearlfish as pets
- C. To explain how to build a water-pressure machine
- D. To warn readers never to visit an aquarium

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Lesson 12 Answers

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1. B

6. A

2. A

7. C

3. C

8. B

4. A

9. D

5. B

10. A

All animal facts were checked before publication.