

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Grade 5: Lesson 17 Students will read a section of *Why the Dog Hates the Cat* to learn that characters are impacted by their circumstances and these circumstances also change how characters interact with one another.

Why the Dog Hates the Cat

From A Chinese Wonderbook by Norman Hinsdale Pitman

Section 2:

When the door was shut, the old woman hurriedly kindled a fire, boiled some water, and then dropped in the golden beetle, repeating these words again and again:

“Dumplings, dumplings, come to me,
I am thin as thin can be.
Dumplings, dumplings, smoking hot,
Dumplings, dumplings, fill the pot.”

Would those three minutes never pass? Could the monk have told the truth? Her old head was nearly wild with excitement as clouds of steam rose from the kettle. Off came the lid! She could wait no longer. Wonder of wonders! There before her unbelieving eyes was a pot, full to the brim of pork dumplings, dancing up and down in the bubbling water, the best, the most delicious dumplings she had ever tasted. She ate and ate till there was no room left in her greedy stomach, and then she gave the cat and the dog a feast that left them full to bursting!

“Good fortune has come at last,” whispered Blackfoot, the dog, to Tabby, the cat, as they lay down to sun themselves outside.

Mrs. Wang fairly danced for joy at the thought of her son's return and of how she would be able to feed him.

“Poor boy, how surprised he will be at our fortune—and it's all on account of his goodness to his old mother.”

When Ming-li came, with a dark cloud overhanging his head, the widow saw plainly that disappointment was written there.

“Come, come, lad!” she cried cheerily, “clear up your face and smile, for the gods have been good to us and I shall soon show you how richly we have been rewarded.” So saying, she dropped the golden beetle into the boiling water and stirred up the fire.

Thinking his mother had gone stark mad, Ming-li stared solemnly at her. Blackfoot licked his hand comfortingly, as if to say, “Cheer up, master, fortune has turned in our favor.” Tabby leaped upon a bench, purring like a sawmill.

Ming-li did not have long to wait. Almost in the twinkling of an eye he heard his mother crying out,

"Sit down at the table, son, and eat these dumplings while they are smoking hot."

Could he have heard correctly? Did his ears deceive him? No, there on the table was a huge platter full of the delicious pork dumplings he liked better than anything else in all the world, except, of course, his mother.

"Eat and ask no questions," said the Widow Wang. "When you are satisfied I will tell you everything."

Very soon the young man's chopsticks were twinkling like a little star in the song. He ate long and happily, while his good mother watched him, her heart overflowing with joy at seeing him at last able to satisfy his hunger. But still the old woman could hardly wait for him to finish, she was so anxious to tell him her wonderful secret.

"Here, son!" she cried at last, as he began to pause between mouthfuls, "look at my treasure!" And she held out to him the golden beetle. "This little thing comes with a secret worth thousands to us."

Ming-li fingered the trinket idly, still doubting his senses, and waiting impatiently for the secret of his delicious dinner. "But, mother, what has this beetle to do with the dumplings, these wonderful pork dumplings, the finest I ever ate?"

"Beetle indeed! Listen and you shall hear a tale that will open your eyes."

She then told him what had happened, and ended by setting all of the left-over dumplings upon the floor for Blackfoot and Tabby, a thing her son had never seen her do before, for they had been miserably poor and had had to save every scrap for the next meal.

Now began a long period of perfect happiness. Mother, son, dog and cat—all enjoyed themselves to their hearts' content. All manner of new foods such as they had never tasted were called forth from the pot by the wonderful little beetle. Bird-nest soup, shark's fins, and a hundred other delicacies were theirs for the asking, and soon Ming-li regained all his strength, but, I fear, at the same time grew somewhat lazy, for it was no longer necessary for him to work. As for the two animals, they became fat and sleek and their hair grew long and glossy.

But alas! The little family became so proud of their good fortune that they began to ask friends and relatives to dinner in order to show off their good meals.

Independent Practice:

Imagine that you are Ming-li. Retell the events in the story from *your* point of view. Start at the beginning of the story as you leave to look for work, and end where our text ended today. Remember, you, your mother, your cat, and your dog are all living a wonderful life full of good food from the magic of the golden beetle. And now, you and your mother have decided to share your wonderful food with friends and family members. Will you share the secret of the golden beetle, too?

Make sure to include thoughts, feelings, and actions from Ming-li's point of view. You might even see things differently than the way the narrator portrayed it. Include good, descriptive words to help your reader see the story you are telling. Also, add some dialogue to make your story more interesting to read.

Keep up with your narrative story and make sure you have it for lesson two! I can't wait to see what you come up with!

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