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Inside the Beast
A Reading A–Z Level P Leveled Book
Word Count: 656
Quick Check

Inside the Beast

Name ___________________________ Date ____________

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. What does the beast do for Atenga and his people?
   A. gives them advice
   B. keeps away predators
   C. protects their food
   D. all of the above

2. If someone deserves something, they ________.
   A. have earned a right to it
   B. should stay away
   C. can take things from others
   D. must be ready to protect themselves

3. Why did Atenga run away from the beast?
   A. It growled at him.
   B. He was afraid it would eat him.
   C. He didn’t want to get inside it.
   D. His brothers warned him to get away.

4. What did Atenga and his people say they would do to take care of the beast at the end of the story?
   A. keep ice near it
   B. only put fruit into it
   C. stay close and protect it from danger
   D. only put into it what they will take out

5. Why did the wanderer think the beast was sick?
   A. It had a fever.
   B. It moaned loudly.
   C. It wouldn’t move.
   D. It smelled bad.

6. What did the wanderer find in the beast?
   A. hard English muffins
   B. goopy chicken soup
   C. rotted fruit
   D. all of the above

Quick Check continued on following page
Inside the Beast

7. Why did Atenga decide to return to the beast?
   A. He felt guilty he had left the wanderer there alone.
   B. He thought the beast had killed the wanderer.
   C. He needed to put something into the beast.
   D. He had decided he should kill the beast.

8. How did the author describe the beast?
   A. It lit up like silver moonlight.
   B. It had a huge mouth.
   C. The beast roared.
   D. All of the above

9. What is a protector?
   A. someone who runs away from danger
   B. a type of animal that hides in the forest
   C. a person or thing that keeps others safe
   D. a way to keep something away from someone else

10. What did the wanderer do to save the beast?
    A. He got in and removed the old food.
    B. He brought in a doctor to help the beast.
    C. He told the beast of ways it could save itself.
    D. He brought the whole tribe to the beast to cure it.

11. Extended Response: Explain what the “beast” was in this story and how you knew.
**Instructions:** Write the main cause of the story’s problem under the *Cause* heading. Write the effects of the cause under the *Effects* heading.
**Instructions:** Write a vocabulary word from *Inside the Beast* in each Word Box. Write a definition, a synonym, and an antonym for each word in the appropriate boxes. Then use each word in a sentence.

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Instructions: Use the boxes below to draw a sketch of what you visualized after reading each section of the book.
Instructions: For examples #1–5, circle the adjective(s) in each sentence and underline the noun each one describes. For examples #6–10, complete each sentence by writing an adjective in the blank.

1. I started to scrape orange gunk from the beast’s insides.
2. The gunk was old fruit that had rotted.
3. There were hard English muffins, a jug of sour milk, and more old fruit.
4. I found cherry tomatoes covered with black mold.
5. I found a chunk of steak coated with thick, fuzzy ooze.

6. We place _________________________ food in its mouth.

7. Its _________________________ mouth opened and closed quickly.

8. The beast protects the food from the _________________________ heat.

9. Without the beast’s _________________________ powers, their food would go bad.

10. The _________________________ stench filled my nose and mouth.
Ahead of me, the great beast roared from the pit. It seemed to be in pain. Its huge mouth opened and closed quickly again and again. A **stench** came from within.

“Atenga, what is that thing?” I asked my guide.

“It feeds the group, Wanderer of the Wastes. It is our **protector**, the Great Ice Beast Egdirf, from the frozen north.”

I stepped forward toward the edge of the pit. Below, the skin of the creature lit up like silver moonlight dancing on black water. The guide hung back, fear in his eyes.

The beast roared again, its stench and pain filling the air.

“What do you do with it?” I asked the guide.

He replied, “We feed it, and in return it feeds us. We place food inside its mouth. The beast will protect what is placed inside it from the desert heat. We then feed from it like fleas from a dog. When we’re done, we leave the **leftovers** for the beast.”

“Well, something has made it sick,” I said. “I can tell from the stench that it’s ill.”
“Wanderer, what are we to do?” Atenga cried. “Without the protector we will waste away to nothing.”

I turned to him, my jaw set. “Someone’s got to get in there and remove the cause of the illness.”

Atenga turned and ran. This probably wasn’t the first time the beast had been ill. I almost left my guide and his brothers to their fate. Without the ice beast’s powers, their stores of fresh food would go bad in the desert heat. The beast would soon infect all that it protected. The food would be covered in blooming black mold.

But . . .

I sighed. The ice beast did not deserve to be eaten alive from the inside. Its only crime had been to protect food for Atenga and his brothers.
“All right, I’m coming in there,” I said to the beast.

Its mouth opened wide and all became still and quiet.

“What have they done to you now?” I asked.

The stench filled my nose and mouth as I reached inside the beast’s jaws. My eyes began to tear. I started to scrape orange gunk from the beast’s insides. The gunk was old fruit that had rotted and oozed over everything.

Next, I found what someone might have made for breakfast once. It was hard English muffins, a jug of sour milk, and more old fruit. I found someone’s leftover lunch, too. It was goopy chicken soup, a dried quesadilla, and many fruit cups. I removed it all from hidden corners. The worst was yet to come.
Atenga met me as I came out of the pit. He had a **hangdog** look on his face that made me feel better. I was tired from the hard work.

“Came back, did you?” I said.

“Yes, it was our beast. We should not have let you go in alone,” Atenga replied.

“So, are you going to let it get sick again?” I asked. I gave him the evil eye, shaking goo from my left hand.

“No, we will take better care of the beast,” Atenga said.

I wiped the goo on a tree. “What are you going to do?”

“We will put in the beast only what we can take out. We will not fill the beast with leftovers that won’t be eaten. Those who do not follow the rules will receive no food from the beast, but must feed it all the same.”
Glossary

deserve (v.) to have a right to something; to do something worthy of a good or bad consequence (p. 6)

hangdog (adj.) sad or guilty (p. 10)

leftovers (n.) food that was not eaten in a meal and was saved and served again (p. 4)

mold (n.) a type of fungus that causes the breakdown of other living things (p. 6)

oozed (v.) to have a liquid slowly flow (p. 7)

protector (n.) something that keeps others from harm (p. 3)

remove (v.) to take away from (p. 5)

rotted (v.) to have broken down through the action of a fungus or bacteria (p. 7)

stench (n.) a really gross smell (p. 3)