



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 6

Name: _____

Date: _____

Roots

*They planted me in shallow soil,
in a crack between two stones,
and told me nothing here would grow,
that this ground was mine alone
to prove them wrong, or not at all.*

*The wind came first, and tried to bend me
sideways, flat against the earth,
but every time it pushed me over,
something underneath took root
a little deeper than before.*

*Rain came next, too much at once,
and for a while I thought I'd drown,
until I learned that even flooding
teaches roots which way is down,
which way to reach, which way to hold.*

*Some seasons, nothing seemed to happen.
No new leaves, no visible gain,
just quiet work beneath the surface,
building strength that couldn't be seen,
the kind of growing no one claps for.*

*Now when they walk past this same crack,
they stop, surprised, and wonder how
a thing they wrote off as impossible
grew taller than the stones around it,
grew steady, stubborn, upward, sure.*

*I could tell them it was luck,
or magic, or a better season,
but the truth is simpler and less easy:
I just kept growing roots in secret
long after they stopped watching.*

Circle the Correct Answer

1. Where was the speaker planted, according to the first stanza?

- a) In a large, fertile garden bed
- b) In shallow soil, in a crack between two stones
- c) In a greenhouse

2. What effect did the wind have on the speaker?

- a) It destroyed the speaker completely
- b) Every time it pushed the speaker over, something took root a little deeper
- c) It had no effect at all

3. What does the speaker say about seasons when "nothing seemed to happen"?

- a) Those seasons were wasted and meant nothing
- b) Quiet work was still happening beneath the surface, building unseen strength
- c) The speaker stopped growing entirely during those times

4. What does the speaker say is the real reason for their growth, at the end of the poem?

- a) Luck and a better season
- b) Continuing to grow roots in secret, long after people stopped watching
- c) Someone else's help

True or False

5. The speaker was expected to fail based on where it was planted. _____

6. The rain in the poem is described as gentle and easy to handle. _____

7. By the end of the poem, the speaker has grown taller than the stones around it.

Fill in the Blank

8. The poem says rain taught the roots which way is _____.

9. The poem describes quiet growth as "the kind of growing no one claps _____."

Think and Explain

10. This poem functions as an extended metaphor, using a plant growing in difficult conditions to represent something about human experience. What do you think the poem is really about, beyond a literal plant? Use specific lines from the poem to support your interpretation.

11. Why might the poet choose to write about growth using a plant instead of directly describing a person overcoming a hard time? What does the extended metaphor add that a direct description might not?
