

"The Gift - An Earth Day Story"

by Kim Moon

Meredith held the worm up in front of her grandmother. "Ick!," she laughed, "he is so slimy." Mimi nodded as Meredith returned the earthworm to the soil and kept digging the hole for the flower she was planting. "Did you know that even the smallest earthworm is very important to us?" "Important? How could a tiny, slimy thing like that be important?" Mimi smiled and said, "I thought you would be surprised at that. Earthworms make their tunnels all over the place underground. Every tunnel that they make leaves space for air to flow under there. That is called aerating the soil, and it helps plants grow. That helps the plants, and us, because we enjoy the plants." Meredith thought for a minute and then laughed, "They are still slimy." They finished planting the flowers and Mimi went inside while Meredith and her grandfather worked on their birdhouses in Pawpaw's workshop.

"Pawpaw, can I ask you a question?" "Sure, Meredith, you know that you can. Are you worried about something?" "Well, it's just that Mimi's birthday is coming up soon and I can't think of anything that I could get her. Daddy said that he would give me some money, but then it really wouldn't be a present from me. Besides, I can't think of anything she would want." Pawpaw thought for a minute. "You know, you give Mimi a present every time you come over here and help her plant flowers..." Meredith frowned. "That's not the same, though. I want to do something to surprise her." "Well," Pawpaw said, "have you heard her say anything that she wished she had?" Meredith thought for a minute and then smiled. She leaned over and whispered in her grandfather's ear. "That is a great idea! She will love that! We will go next week and pick it out!"

The next week, Meredith and her grandfather went to the nursery and picked out a special tree for Mimi. They took it back to the house and planted it in the yard, next to the driveway. Meredith tied a big blue bow around the tree, because blue was Mimi's favorite color. "Perfect!" Pawpaw said. They went inside and got Mimi and tied a blindfold over her eyes so that she would be surprised after they led her outside. When they took off the blindfold Mimi gasped. "A pear tree, I have been wishing I had a pear tree! Meredith, you picked the perfect present for my birthday. Thank you." Meredith and Mimi hugged. "Pawpaw helped me plant it and I am going to help you take care of it." Meredith felt good, because she had given her grandmother the best present of all -- something that would grow that they could take care of -- together!

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

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Reading Comprehension Questions by Linda Owens

DIRECTIONS: Read the questions based on the story you just read and circle the correct answer.

1. How do earthworms help plants to grow?

- a. They eat the leaves off in the fall.
- b. They aerate the soil and give air to the plants.
- c. They cut the roots down.
- d. They eat the weeds in our gardens.

2. Where did Meredith and her Pawpaw go to get the gift?

- a. the dress shop
- b. the candy store
- c. the plant nursery
- d. the book store

3. What did Meredith get her Mimi for her birthday?

- a. a box of candy
- b. a necklace
- c. a new dress
- d. a pear tree

4. Who planted the pear tree?

- a. Mimi
- b. Meredith
- c. Pawpaw
- d. both b and c

5. Where was the pear tree planted?

- a. in the back yard
- b. in the neighbor's yard
- c. next to the driveway
- d. on the porch

6. Which of the following IS true?

- a. Meredith and Mimi bought Pawpaw a tie.
- b. Meredith and Mimi enjoyed planting flowers together.
- c. Meredith and PawPaw bought a ring for Mimi.
- d. Meredith got a new bike for her birthday