

LIVING TOGETHER



The Turkey Fight

I stood and watched the turkeys, chuckling to myself. One of them was trying to impress the others by puffing himself up and making his tail stand on end. He might have looked like the vicious gobbler he wanted to be, except for one thing — his size. Though he was trying to act like a forty-pound granddaddy turkey, he was a mere three-pounder. As he strutted around the turkey pen he looked more like an oversized pigeon than anything else.

Dad came to stand beside me and was soon chuckling, too. As we watched, we saw that the strutting young gobbler was doing more than just trying to make an impression on the others. He was picking a fight. He stepped up to one turkey after the other. At first we thought none of the others was going to fight back. They just turned the other way, ducked his peck, and went to pick grass in another part of the pen.

Then when we thought the strutting one had made a complete round, he met his match. When he approached another young turkey, it whirled around to meet him. Its feathers stood on end and the straight tail became a fan. The turkey gave out a cry that would someday be a gobble, but now it sounded like a gurgling water faucet.

The two young turkeys pranced around each other, and we soon lost track of which one had picked the fight. They did very little harm to each other, considering the show they were putting on. But then one of them reached out and managed to grab hold of the other's little comb. Now the scene changed. Down went the captive's feathers, and the fan tail closed. He no longer pranced, but tried to run. The other turkey hung on for a good half minute. When he did release the unfortunate one, he gave him a good peck as final punishment. The beaten one ran into the range shelter like a whipped puppy, while the other one strutted about even more proudly, trying to find someone else brave enough to fight with him.

"It takes two to fight," Dad said. He pulled out his watch. Talking to me now,

he said, "You'd better go get ready for school. It's past eight o'clock already."

I hurried to the house to change clothes. The school term was almost over and I was glad. When the weather turned warmer and the farm was especially interesting with all its baby animals, school got tiresome. But comforting myself with the thought that in a little more than a week it would all be over, I trotted off to school.

Maybe it was because we boys were tired of school that we had a problem getting along. But we didn't blame the weather or the time of the year, or even ourselves for the trouble. We blamed William. "Wind Willy," we called him, because that's what he was — just plain windy. He was always telling the biggest stories about what he said and what he did, and anyone with common sense knew that he was stretching the truth. And that was one thing we tried not to let him get away with.

This morning was no exception. As soon as he was in school he started blowing again. "Hey, guess what," he said. "We got a letter from my uncle who moved to Missouri last spring. That's sheep country, you know, and they wrote that they

have over a hundred lambs."

I was the first one to tell him I don't believe him. "I wonder," I said. "My parents were out to visit them last fall and if I remember right Dad said they have around forty-five ewes. And you're not going to tell me those forty-five ewes have a hundred lambs. They'd have to average more than two each."

"That's possible," William said. "Most of them get twins and some get triplets."

"But some of them have only one, and some of the lambs die," Roman Byler said, jumping in on the argument. "You can't make me believe that ewes do that well, especially not a big flock of them."

"My uncle has a very good kind of sheep," William said.

"Probably the kind that are guaranteed to always have triplets," I laughed. Then when the others were done laughing, I said, "Bring the letter to school and show it to us, and we'll believe it."

William's face turned red. "I — I can't bring the letter, because it's going to be passed around to the other relatives. But you can still believe it, because it's true." When no one said anything, William added,

Workbook for

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TOGETHER



Working with Words / THE TURKEY FIGHT

Use the words in the box to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

impress
unfortunate
successful

vicious
exceptions
equal

strut
guaranteed
argument

gobble
scornful
herd

captive
advantage
relatives

1. Some children try to _____ others by telling big stories.
2. When a person is caught by someone else, he becomes a _____.
3. When we get something good out of something, we say it was to our _____ to have it.
4. When we look down on someone, we are _____ toward them.
5. When two things cost exactly the same price, we say they are _____ in price.
6. When something is _____ it is evil or dangerous.
7. Our uncles, aunts, and cousins are our _____.
8. To walk in a proud, cocky way is to _____ about.
9. A turkey's cry is called a _____.
10. We have our rules, but we usually make _____ for cases that are different.
11. When someone does well in business, we say he is a _____ businessman.
12. A group of cows is called a _____.
13. _____ means the same as unlucky.
14. When I bought my watch, I got a paper saying if anything went wrong with the watch the first five years, I could get a new one. My watch was _____ for five years.
15. When two people can not agree and tell each other that they do not agree, they are having an _____.

Thinking about the Story / THE TURKEY FIGHT

On the pages given in parentheses find the exact words that answer the following questions. You will not be writing sentences this time, just the words that answer the question.

1. How did the little turkey look as he strutted around the pen? (Page 262)
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2. How did the turkey's cry sound? (Page 263)
-

3. What did the turkey who won give the other one when he finally released him? (Page 263)
-

4. What did anyone with common sense know about William? (Page 264)
-

5. What would forty-five ewes have to do in order to have a hundred lambs? (Page 265)
-

6. Hearing William, what might a person think his dad had? (Page 266)
-

7. What did the other boys call William's dad's herd? (Page 266)
-

8. Why did Teacher Fred say William probably felt unsure of himself? (Page 268)
-

9. What did the boys become when they started arguing with William? (Page 269)
-

10. Who gets credit for avoiding an argument? (Page 270)
-

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Teacher's Edition

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the best herd in James County

7. What did the other boys call William's dad's herd? (Page 266)

skinny, bowlegged cows

8. Why did Teacher Fred say William probably felt unsure of himself? (Page 268)

we didn't include him in many of our games

9. What did the boys become when they started arguing with William? (Page 269)

his equal

10. Who gets credit for avoiding an argument? (Page 270)

the person who manages to remain silent