

The Fire on the Mountain

LISTEN to your child read this story aloud.

In the city of Addis Ababa lived Haptom Hasel. He was so rich that he was often bored. One night he called his servant, Arha. "How much cold can a man stand?" asked Haptom. "Can a man stand all night on the highest mountain in the coldest wind without a blanket or fire and not die?"

"I don't know," said Arha, "but wouldn't that be very foolish?"

"Perhaps, but what if there was a prize for doing it?"

"I am sure a brave man could do this, but I won't bet against you since I am a servant and I have nothing to bet."

"Well, I'll bet with you anyway. If you can stand among the rocks for an entire night without food or water or blankets or fire and not die, I will give you ten acres of farmland with a house and cattle."

Arha was so excited he agreed. The next morning he went to see Hallu, the wisest man he knew. Hallu said, "Tonight when you go to the mountain, I will build a fire here in the valley. All night long stare at it and think of its warmth. Your thoughts will keep you warm."

So that night Arha went to the top of the mountain. The servants of Haptom watched him to make sure he did not cheat. It was bitter cold and Arha was miserable. All night long he stood and stared at the fire in the valley.

The next morning he went to see Haptom. "You are a strong fellow," said

Haptom.

"How did you do this thing?"

"I looked at a fire in the valley," said Arha.

"Thinking of the fire made me warm."

"Then you have cheated," said Haptom.

"You used fire to live through

the night. I will not give you the land."

Arha was very sad. He went to see Hallu, who promised to help his friend. Hallu held a feast at his house. He invited Haptom. It was a grand party, but Hallu would not serve the food. "Hallu, we are hungry. Why do you not feed us?" asked Haptom.

"Can you smell the food?" asked Hallu.

"Yes, we can smell it, but that smell does not make us full."

"It is the same as the distant fire that you can see, but not feel. If Arha was warmed by the fire in the valley, then you are fed by the smell of my food."

The people of the party all agreed. Haptom was ashamed and he gave the house, the cattle, and the ten acres of land to Arha.



Rewritten by Mary Rose
(Originally from *The Fire on the Mountain*
by Harold Courlander and Wolf Lastou)

Dear Parents,

An important reading skill is that of comparing and contrasting elements within a given text. There are two different ways that a reader is expected to compare and contrast. Sometimes, we ask students to go beyond the text and to make comparisons based on their own life experiences. But most state assessments focus on another version of this skill. These tests do not ask the child to make comparisons from his or her own background knowledge. Instead, they expect the child to recognize when the author has used compare and contrast in a piece of writing. Both forms of the skill are valuable. In this assignment we focus on the kinds of comparisons that are built into a text by the author.

Skill

Recognizing Compare and Contrast

We completed this assignment together.

(Child's Signature)

(Parent's Signature)

The Questions

Together write simple answers to the following questions.

Comparing Characters:

- How are Haptom and Arha different at the beginning of the story?

- How are Haptom and Arha the same at the end of the story?

Comparing Settings:

- What is the setting in which Arha has to pass a test?

- What is the setting in which Haptom has to pass a test?

Comparing Events:

- What happens the night that Arha is being tested?

- What happens the night that Haptom is being tested?