

Huberta, the Traveler

1. One of South Africa's (and the world's) best-loved animals was a unique hippo named Huberta. Hippos are often very dangerous, aggressive creatures, but not Huberta; she was friendly and sociable but with a mind and personality all her own.
2. Huberta loved to travel! No one knows why she made the decision to begin her solitary journey south, but in November 1928, she left the wilderness of Zululand in South Africa and began her long trek. She happily trudged on over roads and railway tracks and through farms, towns, and gardens. There was an abundance of different plants across the beautiful countryside, so she could select the food she fancied. The many rivers and waterholes allowed her to quench her thirst and provided enjoyment and relaxation as she wallowed in the water.
3. People had begun to notice and talk about her, and she was becoming quite famous. One day, as she was on a sugar plantation happily eating sugar cane, some of the journalists, photographers, and hunters who were following her and reporting her progress decided to nickname her Hubert. However, this name had to be quickly changed later on when it was realized *he* was in fact a *she*!
4. Arriving in Natal after traveling for some time, she settled down in a small dam beside a railway line. This delighted the local train passengers who started throwing fruit out to their new friend. This made her pleasant life even easier and more relaxed, and she became even more famous.
5. The authorities concluded she would be better off in Johannesburg's zoo and ordered for Huberta to be captured and transported to the zoo immediately. Their plan definitely did not meet with Huberta's approval, so capturing this friendly, social animal proved to be far more difficult than they had anticipated. She stormed away in disgust, followed by those trying to capture her and others wanting to observe and record the historic event. What happened next has been described as being similar to a scene from a comic. Photographers scrambled up trees to escape being charged by one very annoyed hippo, and there were others floundering in mud pools. Despite their best efforts, the hippo managed to retain her freedom.
6. Following this disaster, Huberta was declared to be royal game, and everyone was told to leave her alone. However, it was too late. Obviously miffed by these events, she refused to stay around, and once more she resumed her journey south.
7. She wandered on to Durban, where she swam at the beach, walked in the sand, and trekked across the golf course. Their country club was her next destination. She joined partygoers there and even strolled along the verandas of the clubhouse.
8. One day, obviously feeling a bit tired, she chose to sleep on a railway line. An approaching train tried to warn her to move off the track, but when she didn't wake up, they had to gently nudge her off with the train.
9. Sadly, there is no happy ending to this story. Huberta was shot as she relaxed in a river. People everywhere were devastated by this tragedy. Her body was preserved and placed in a museum where it can still be seen today.

Questions

1. The word *solitary* in Paragraph 2 means:

- (a) alone.
- (b) solid.
- (c) special.

2. It is a fact, not an opinion, that Huberta:

- (a) was very friendly.
- (b) traveled south.
- (c) was happy.

3. Huberta was different from other hippos because she:

- (a) liked water.
- (b) ate plants.
- (c) traveled alone.

4. When Huberta left the dam, the train passengers would have felt:

- (a) angry and disappointed.
- (b) unconcerned.
- (c) pleased.

5. The main idea of Paragraph 5 is:

- (a) Huberta chased photographers.
- (b) the authorities didn't succeed in taking Huberta to the zoo.
- (c) Huberta didn't want to go to the zoo.

6. Which event happened last?

- (a) Huberta settled in a dam near a railway line.
- (b) Train passengers threw fruit to Huberta.
- (c) The authorities decided to send Huberta to a zoo.

7. Huberta left the dam near the railway because:

- (a) the trains made too much noise.
- (b) there were too many people.
- (c) people had tried to capture and move her.

8. You could conclude that Huberta was:

- (a) aggressive.
- (b) big.
- (c) not shy of people.

9. Journalists and photographers followed Huberta because:

- (a) the public was interested and wanted to know what she was doing.
- (b) they wanted to stay close to her because they liked her.
- (c) they liked the interesting things she was doing.

10. The text could best be summarized as a true story about the travels of a hippo in South Africa, and which tells:

- (a) about her appearance and how she moved.
- (b) about her personality and why people were so interested in her.
- (c) how and why she traveled so far.

11. The text was written to give:

- (a) a recount.
- (b) information.
- (c) an opinion.

12. Huberta is described as a unique hippo because she:

- (a) looked different.
- (b) behaved differently.
- (c) was enormous.

13. You can conclude from the text that hippos eat:

- (a) other animals.
- (b) fish.
- (c) plants and fruit.

14. The pronoun *it* in Paragraph 9 refers to:

- (a) the museum.
- (b) her body.
- (c) the tragedy.

Something Extra

- ★ Draw the most interesting scene from the passage, and write a newspaper report about it.
- ★ How is Huberta different from other hippos?

THE GHOST OF MOUNT FUJI

1. Long ago in a bleak region of Japan, there lived a gigantic woodsman named Visu. He shared his abode with his spouse and offspring.
2. One day, an ancient priest visited Visu and chastised him for not praying. Visu justified his actions by remarking how extremely busy he was with his dependents, leaving him little time to pray. His reply made the priest very angry, so he described vividly Visu's rebirth as a toad, mouse, or insect and the horrors to be endured for eternity. This dire prediction frightened Visu so badly, he resolved to pray more diligently.
3. Visu prayed ceaselessly day and night, forsaking all other activities. Soon the meager rice crops withered, and the family began to starve. Finally, his wife, who had never before uttered an unkind word, reprimanded him bitterly for his laziness. She pleaded for him to work instead of constantly mumbling in prayer. At first Visu was taken aback by his wife's comment, then he replied, "Wife, the gods must come first! Do not address me in such a disrespectful manner! From now on, I want nothing at all to do with you!" He grabbed his ax, abandoned his family, and ascended foggy Mount Fuji.
4. Visu found a secluded place but was soon interrupted by the movement of a fox who sped by and disappeared into the bushes. "What a lucky omen this is!" thought Visu, and he pursued the fox as it navigated its way through the woods.
5. He was about to abandon the chase when he entered a clearing where two women were reclined near a brook while playing Go*. Visu was so captivated by the sight that he sat down nearby to watch. The gentle sounds of the babbling brook, the click of the game pieces as they were moved around the board, the unhurried movements of the women's hands, and their lustrous, black hair mesmerized Visu; time passed without notice.
6. His concentration was shattered abruptly when one of the players made an incorrect move. "Wrong move, beautiful lady!" he cried out. Instantaneously, the women transformed into foxes and fled the clearing. Visu tried to pursue them, but his limbs were stiff and his long, snowy beard tangled around his feet. His ax crumbled into sawdust. Laboriously, he made his way home only to find it had disappeared. "Where is my home?" he queried an old woman. "I left home in the afternoon, and this evening, it is gone."
7. "You must be insane!" she replied. "Visu vanished three centuries ago! His wife and descendants are buried. If you are Visu, as you claim, you deserve to be punished eternally by the gods for neglecting your family!"
8. "I am a pitiful creature indeed to have prayed constantly while my family starved," wailed Visu sorrowfully. "Heed my last words: 'If you pray, you must work, too!'"
9. With that parting remark, a repentant Visu retreated to the mountain, where his ghostly spirit still haunts Mount Fuji each night as the moon rises.

* Go is an ancient board game for two players consisting of playing pieces called stones and a grid of 19 x 19 lines. The object is to control as large a portion of the board as possible. One game may take minutes or many days.

Questions

1. The word *chastised* in Paragraph 2 can be replaced with:

- (a) scolded.
- (b) chased.
- (c) challenged.

2. From the information in Paragraph 2, we can conclude that according to Visu's religion, he believed in:

- (a) yoga.
- (b) reincarnation.
- (c) fasting.

3. Which paragraph relates the event which changed Visu from a hard-working woodsman to a man who did not work at all?

- (a) Paragraph 3
- (b) Paragraph 1
- (c) Paragraph 2

4. What was Visu's initial reaction after his wife reprimanded him? He was:

- (a) stunned.
- (b) expecting it.
- (c) indifferent.

5. The main difference between Visu and his wife was that she focused on survival in the present life, but Visu:

- (a) only cared about working on the farm.
- (b) was concerned about what would happen after death.
- (c) only cared about stockpiling supplies for the future.

6. Which statement is an opinion, not a fact?

- (a) Visu is a Japanese woodsman.
- (b) Visu is a father.
- (c) Visu is lazy.

7. The two women playing Go were most likely:

- (a) ghost/spirits.
- (b) people.
- (c) unusual animals.

8. The plural personal pronoun *them* in Paragraph 6 refers to:

- (a) the women.
- (b) the foxes.
- (c) Visu's limbs.

9. After Visu's concentration was disrupted, he realized that:

- (a) much time had passed while watching the game.
- (b) one of the women had finally won the game.
- (c) he was at Mount Fuji.

10. We can conclude that Visu's wife found some way to help herself and her children survive because Visu:

- (a) discovered he had descendants who had already been buried.
- (b) talked to his great-, great-, great-, great-, great-grandchildren.
- (c) read the dates of the deaths of his wife and children on their graves.

11. What caused Visu to not notice how much time had passed?

- (a) the mesmerizing movements of the women and his surroundings
- (b) He was asleep for three hundred years.
- (c) He forgot to wind his watch.

12. We can predict that the old woman will probably:

- (a) heed Visu's advice.
- (b) ignore Visu.
- (c) think Visu is insane.

13. The moral of this folktale can best be summarized by the statement that a godly person should:

- (a) do nothing except pray.
- (b) pray and work hard.
- (c) look after his or her family before anything else.

14. The writer's purpose for retelling this folktale is to relate:

- (a) interesting facts about Mount Fuji.
- (b) an unusual tale.
- (c) how to pray diligently.

SOMETHING EXTRA

★ Locate Mount Fuji on a map of Japan.