

#### 4. *Owls In the Family* (Excerpt)

by Farley Mowat

**A** <sup>1</sup>Mother and Dad and I were having dinner. <sup>2</sup>The dining room windows were open because it had been such a hot day. <sup>3</sup>All of a sudden there was a great *swoooooosh* of wings—and there, on the window sill, sat Wol. <sup>4</sup>Before any of us had time to move, he gave a leap and landed on the floor beside my chair. <sup>5</sup>And he hadn't come empty-handed. <sup>6</sup>Clutched in his talons was an enormous skunk. <sup>7</sup>The skunk was dead, but that didn't help matters much because, before he died, he had managed to soak himself and Wol with his own special brand of perfume.

**B** <sup>8</sup>“Hoo-hoohoohoo-HOO!” Wol said proudly.

**C** <sup>9</sup>Which probably meant: “Mind if I join you? <sup>10</sup>I've brought my supper with me.”

**D** <sup>11</sup>Nobody stopped to answer. <sup>12</sup>We three people were already stampeding through the door of the dining room, coughing and choking. <sup>13</sup>Wol had to eat his dinner by himself.

**E** <sup>14</sup>It was two weeks before we could use the dining room again, and when Mother sent the rug and drapes to the cleaners, the man who owned the shop phoned her right back and wanted to know if she was trying to ruin him.



**F** <sup>15</sup>Wol didn't smell so sweet either, but he couldn't understand why he was so unpopular all of a sudden. <sup>16</sup>His feelings must have been hurt by the way everybody kept trying to avoid him. <sup>17</sup>After two or three days, when even I wouldn't go near him, or let him come near me, he became very unhappy. <sup>18</sup>Then an idea must have come into his funny head. <sup>19</sup>He must have decided we were mad at him because he hadn't shared his skunk with us! <sup>20</sup>So one day he went down to the riverbank and caught a second skunk, and brought it home for us.

**G** <sup>21</sup>By this time he was so soaked in skunk oil that you could smell him a block away. <sup>22</sup>Some of our neighbors complained about it, and so finally my father had to give Wol a bath in about a gallon of tomato juice. <sup>23</sup>Tomato juice is the only thing that will wash away the smell of skunk.

**H** <sup>24</sup>Poor Wol! <sup>25</sup>By the time Dad was through with him he looked like a rag mop that had been dipped in ketchup. <sup>26</sup>But he got the idea, and he never again brought his skunks home to us.

**DIRECTIONS:** Choose or write the best answer to each of the following questions using the evidence presented in the passage. When required, list specific sentence numbers or paragraph letters from the story to support the answer.

1. Why did the cleaner think Mother was trying to ruin him?

---



---



---



---

Give the number of the sentence that best supports the answer. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following sentences best describes the family's reaction to Wol's arrival with the skunk?

- A. They were thrilled.
- B. They were angry with Wol.
- C. They thought it was funny.
- D. They were surprised.

List the numbers of the 3 sentences that best support the answer.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which of the following explains why the family was unable to use the dining room for two weeks?

- A. Wol's supper was still lying there.
- B. The room still smelled of skunk.
- C. It was too hot to eat in there.
- D. Mother wanted to wait for the rug and drapes.

4. In sentence 3, why is it more effective for the author to use *swooooosh* to describe Wol's arrival than to simply say he flew in the window?

---



---



---

5. Which of the following is the most likely reason that Wol never brought a skunk home again?

- A. He didn't want the neighbors to get mad at him.
- B. He decided to bring home squirrels instead.
- C. He didn't want another tomato juice bath.
- D. He didn't want to mess up the house.

Give the number of the sentence that best supports the answer. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Based on his behavior, it can be concluded that Wol:

- A. did not like getting dirty.
- B. wanted to please the family.
- C. was afraid of people.
- D. did not like to share.

List the numbers of the 3 sentences that best support the answer.

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

7. In paragraph F, the narrator presents Wol's point of view in human terms. Give one example of how the narrator thought Wol was feeling.

---



---



---



---

Give the number of the sentence that best supports your example.

\_\_\_\_\_

# Answers

## 4. Owls in the Family (p. 16)

1. Why did the cleaner think Mother was trying to ruin him? (inference)

**The smell was so strong the cleaner probably thought it would drive away customers.**

1 best evidence sentence: **14**

2. Which of the following sentences best describes the family's reaction to Wol's arrival with the skunk? (inference)

- A. They were thrilled.
- B. They were angry with Wol.
- C. They thought it was funny.
- D. They were surprised.**

3 best evidence sentences: **4, 11, 12**

Explanation: Sentence 4 mentions that they didn't have time to move before he landed with the skunk. After that, they ran from the room. There is no evidence for choices A, B, or C.

3. Which of the following explains why the family was unable to use the dining room for two weeks? (inference, cause/effect)

- A. Wol's supper was still lying there.
- B. The room still smelled of skunk.**
- C. It was too hot to eat in there.
- D. Mother wanted to wait for the rug and drapes.

Explanation: We know from sentence 12 that the smell was quite strong, so **B** is the best answer. Common sense dictates they would remove the dead skunk, so A is incorrect. There is no evidence for C or D.

4. In sentence 3, why is it more effective for the author to use *swooooosh* to describe Wol's arrival than to simply say he flew in the window? (figurative language)

**The word sounds like a bird flying.**

You can almost hear his wings and feel the rush of air as he flies in the window.

5. Which of the following is the most likely reason that Wol never brought a skunk home again? (cause/effect)

- A. He didn't want the neighbors to get mad at him.
- B. He decided to bring home squirrels instead.
- C. He didn't want another tomato juice bath.**
- D. He didn't want to mess up the house.

1 best evidence sentence: **26**

Explanation: It was right after the tomato juice bath that Wol stopped bringing his skunks home. There is no evidence for A, B, or D.

6. Based on his behavior, it can be concluded that Wol: (conclusion)

- A. did not like getting dirty.
- B. wanted to please the family.**
- C. was afraid of people.
- D. did not like to share.

3 best evidence sentences: **19, 20, 26**

Explanation: There is no evidence for A, especially since it was the humans who decided to clean him up. C is contradicted by the fact that Wol wanted to be with people (4, 17). D is contradicted by the fact that Wol brought home his skunks twice (6, 20).

7. In paragraph F, the narrator presents Wol's point of view in human terms. Give one example of how the narrator thought Wol was feeling. (point of view, reading for detail)

**In sentence 15, the narrator suggested Wol *felt unpopular*. In sentence 16, he said Wol's *feelings were probably hurt*. In sentence 19, he said Wol *thought we were mad at him for not sharing his skunk*.**

1 best evidence sentence: **15, 16, or 19**