

Friday Guided Reading

- 1) What are some different ways that people act when they want something? What is the best way to get what you want?
- 2) Compare this poem to a real-life situation. Was there ever a time you wanted to do something even though you knew you shouldn't?
- 3) What did you think of the poem? Give reasons for your answer.

Choose one of the tasks below to complete. You only need to do one!

Task options:

- Write a diary entry from the perspective of the fly at the end of the fifth stanza. The fly has declined the spider's offer and has left. Write a diary entry at this point. What causes the fly to return to the spider?
- Write a diary entry from the perspective of the spider at the end of the poem? How is the spider feeling now he has managed to capture the fly?
- Re-write the poem as a story from the perspective of the fly. How would the fly tell the story?
- Write a list of questions you would like to ask the spider, the fly or the author in an interview.
- Write an alternative ending to the poem.

The Spider and the Fly by Mary Howitt

"Will you walk into my parlour?" said the spider to the fly;
"Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy.
The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
And I have many pretty things to show when you are there."
"O no, no," said the little fly, "to ask me is in vain,
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again."

"I'm sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?" said the spider to the fly.
"There are pretty curtains drawn around, the sheets are fine and thin,
And if you like to rest awhile, I'll snugly tuck you in."

“O no, no,” said the little fly, “for I’ve often heard it said,
They *never, never wake* again, who sleep upon *your* bed.”

Said the cunning spider to the fly, “Dear friend, what shall I do,
To prove the warm affection I’ve always felt for you?
I have within my pantry good store of all that’s nice;
I’m sure you’re very welcome; will you please to take a slice?”
“O no, no,” said the little fly, “kind sir, that cannot be;
I’ve heard what’s in your pantry, and I do not wish to see.”

“Sweet creature!” said the spider, “You’re witty and you’re wise!
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are your eyes!
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,
If you’ll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself.”
“I thank you, gentle sir,” she said, “for what you’re pleased to say,
And bidding you good-morning *now*, I’ll call *another* day.”

The spider turned him round about, and went into his den,
For well he knew the silly fly would soon be back again:
So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready to dine upon the fly.
Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing
“Come hither, hither, pretty fly, with the pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple; there’s a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead.”

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little fly,
Hearing his wily flattering words, came slowly flitting by.
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue;
Thinking only of her crested head — *poor foolish thing!* At last,
Up jumped the cunning spider, and fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour; but she ne’er came out again!

And now, dear little children, who may this story read,
To idle, silly, flattering words, I pray you ne’er give heed;
Unto an evil counsellor close heart, and ear, and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale of the Spider and the Fly.

