



A Book's True Value

The Price of Accountability

The gentle hum of crickets and the soft rustle of leaves filled the air as I plodded up the road to my neighbor Mr. Crawford's house, rehearsing my request in my mind. The peacefulness of the moment was interrupted by the pounding of my own heartbeat, as nervousness overtook me. I hoped, oh how I hoped Mr. Crawford would say yes!

As I approached the log cabin, I saw Mr. Crawford sitting on the porch, a book in his hand. Taking a deep breath, I mustered up the courage to interrupt him.

"Mr. Crawford, " I began, my voice barely a whisper. "I was wondering if...if I could borrow your book on George Washington? I've heard so much about him, and I just want to learn more. I promise I'll take great care of it!"

Mr. Crawford's face lit up with a warm smile. "Of course, Abraham," he replied. "I'm glad you're interested."

The book was like a magnet, pulling me in with an irresistible force. Unable to wait a moment more, I began to read as I made my way to my family's cabin, my feet stumbling over the uneven ground. As soon as I arrived home, I hurried through my chores, eager to return to the book's captivating pages.

I sat by the fire, the flickering flames casting dancing shadows on the walls. The story of George Washington consumed me, so **engrossed** was I that I could barely stand to put the book down, even for dinner. I read well into the night, my candle burning low. When I couldn't keep my eyes open any longer, I carefully tucked the book into a crack between logs near the window, believing it would be safe.

The next morning, I woke to the sound of rain pattering against the window. A chill ran down my spine as I remembered the book. With dread, I pulled it from its hiding place. The pages were damp, the ink beginning to blur. A wave of despair washed over me as I realized the book was ruined.

Glossary

Engrossed: to be completely focused on something; in a world of your own.

Transgression: breaking a law or rule.

Grave: Serious or important

Ordeal: A difficult or painful experience





The Lincoln Loop



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"Oh no," I muttered to myself. "What have I done?"

Butterflies filled my stomach as I approached Mr. Crawford's house. I knew I had to face the consequences of my actions. My palms were sweaty, and my voice trembled as I confessed my **transgression**.

"I'm so sorry, Mr. Crawford," I stammered. "I accidentally left the book by the window, and it got wet."

Mr. Crawford listened patiently, his expression **grave**. "I understand, Abraham," he said. "But this book was very expensive. It won't be easy to replace it."

My heart sank. I knew I couldn't afford such a large expense. "I'm so sorry," I whispered. "I'll do anything to make it right."

I felt sick to my stomach. I had always been very proud of how responsible I was with my treasured books, but now I felt like a failure. How could I have been so careless? I had let Mr. Crawford down, and I was just plain disappointed in myself.

Mr. Crawford stared down at me. "Well," he said at last. "I suppose I could let you work it off. But I'm not going to let you off easy!"

For three days, I labored in his cornfield, my arms aching from pulling cobs and tossing them into the wagon. Each day was a backbreaking **ordeal**, but I kept going. Finally, I stood before Mr. Crawford, my head held high.

"Thank you," I said, meeting his gaze.

He smiled. "Your honesty and hard work impress me." He handed me the book, now warped but still readable. "You earned it."

As I held the book, a sense of accomplishment washed over me. The experience had been tough, but I knew I'd made the right choice. Mistakes happen to everyone, but I was proud of myself for owning up to mine and taking responsibility. It's a lesson I'll carry with me forever.



Readers are Leaders!

Abraham Lincoln, an enthusiastic reader, is a perfect example of how a love of learning can transform someone's life. Based on a true experience, this text shows just how far Lincoln would go to get his hands on a book. Completely obsessed with reading, Lincoln devoured books like some kids devour candy! He was always sneaking away to read just one more chapter, much to his father's dismay. Lincoln spent less than one year of his life total going to school; however, his appetite for reading transformed him into a lifelong learner who read a variety of books--poetry, fiction stories, nonfiction books about religion, science, and law, and more! This determination to learn ultimately paved the way for his extraordinary accomplishments later in life.