

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Delilah's Dilemma

Meet Delilah. She is a dog. She lives in a nice house with two **guardians** who take care of her, two other dogs (Ernie and Tucker), and a cat named Pippi. They all have warm beds to sleep in, a big backyard to play in, and delicious food to eat, and they get treats and lots of love. But there is one thing that troubles Delilah and puts her in a **dilemma**: fireworks.

Tonight there will be explosions that make bright lights in the sky and loud booming and banging noises. Delilah's guardians call them "fireworks," and she heard them say that some humans enjoy fireworks and use them for celebrations. But they **terrify** Delilah because she doesn't know when the next one is coming. They're so **unpredictable**! She doesn't understand why anyone would think they're fun.

To Delilah, fireworks look and sound **dangerous**, and sometimes she even feels like her *life* is in danger. She tries to hide under the bed or other furniture, but nowhere feels safe. She wants to run away to **escape** the scary lights and sounds, but running away from home can be even more dangerous. This is Delilah's dilemma.

She can hide or run away, but neither option would stop the terrifying sights and sounds. She doesn't know what to do.

BOOM! BANG! POP, POP, POP!

"Oh, no! Are those fireworks already?!" exclaims Delilah. I didn't know when they'd start, and I don't know what's going to happen. I just want this to be over. Where's the closest hiding spot? The bed is too far away, and the dining table is too open underneath. Oh, I know! The couch!"

Delilah runs as fast as she can and slides under the couch like a baseball player sliding in to home plate, almost crashing into Pippi.

"Pippi, what are you doing under the couch?" Delilah asks.

"I heard loud noises and got scared, so I ran to this hiding spot," says Pippi.

"Oh, yeah—I forgot you're scared of fireworks and you hide from them, too. Why don't Ernie and Tucker hide?" asks Delilah.

Ernie, who's lying on top of the couch Delilah and Pippi are hiding under, replies, "I don't hide from



fireworks, but that doesn't mean they don't bother me. They hurt my ears and give me a headache."

"I'm sorry," says Delilah. "I didn't realize that fireworks cause you pain. What do you two think about running away to escape from them?"

"Where I used to live, I was forced to stay outside all the time. Then I was rescued, our guardians adopted me, and they brought me to live inside this wonderful home—and I can tell you it's a lot scarier out there than it is in here," says Pippi.

"I agree with Pippi," says Ernie. "Last year, our guardians took me to the vet the day after a big fireworks show, and I met other animals who had run away from home to escape the fireworks and got into terrible accidents. One dog broke his leg trying to jump over the fence surrounding his yard, and another dog cut herself on glass while she was smashing through a window. There was a cat who had to have surgery after a car hit her because she was frantically running away from the fireworks. And there was a guardian who came in looking for his dog, who had run away after becoming scared by the fireworks. I hope they found each other."

POP, POP! BOOM! POP!

Tucker comes running full speed down the hallway and slides on the slick floor as he rounds the corner, almost colliding with the couch where the other three are gathered.

"BARK, BARK, BARK! I think someone is trying to break into our house," Tucker exclaims. "Did you hear that noise? It sounded like someone was trying to break the door down!"

Ernie sticks his head under a couch pillow. "Can you please stop barking? My ears already hurt from the fireworks, and your barking is making my headache worse. No one is trying to break into our house. It's just fireworks."

"Sorry," whispers Tucker, "but I'm on high alert! Loud noises make me feel **anxious** because they sound threatening, so I bark to warn our guardians that danger could be near. Where are they, anyway?"

"Well, Pippi and I feel scared," says Delilah, "and your barking isn't helping. Plus, you're making Ernie's headache worse."

"Sorry," Tucker replies. "I hear loud noises and I bark. I can't help it, just like you and Pippi can't help feeling scared and Ernie can't help it that his ears and head hurt from loud noises."

"Well, I was thinking about running away to escape the fireworks, but Pippi and Ernie think that's a bad idea," Delilah says.

She looks at Tucker and asks, "What do you think? Will you go with me so I don't have to go alone?"

"I must agree with Pippi and Ernie," Tucker responds. "If we run away, who's going to protect our house

and our guardians? They would be very worried about us if we just disappeared! Besides, if you think the fireworks are scary here, you would be even more scared out there because the sounds are louder and the lights are brighter.”

Delilah becomes lost in thought.

“Hmm. Tucker, Ernie, and Pippi all have good points. If I ran away, I would be in danger of becoming injured or lost—and it *would* be even scarier outside than it is in here. I wouldn’t have the protection of my house, and my guardians would worry about me. But if I stay here, I’m still going to be scared. Hiding under the furniture only helps for a short time, and then I feel scared again. How do I solve my dilemma?” she wonders to herself.

“We’re home!” announce their guardians as they walk in the front door. “We’re sorry we didn’t get back before the fireworks started.”

They talk to each other across the room as they put their shopping bags down.

“I can’t believe how many people showed up last week to ask the town officials to stop using fireworks. Turns out we’re not the only ones who don’t enjoy them!”

“Hopefully next year they’ll switch to a laser show, which wouldn’t be noisy or scary or create pollution.”

They both turn to their furry friends, and one says, “Until then, we brought you all some new calming treats to try and new toys to play with!”

The guardians walk around the house and close all the curtains and blinds, and they turn the TV to a channel playing soothing music.

“We know this won’t fix the problem, but it will help. Tonight, we’re going to stay home with the four of you and try to make you feel safe during the loud, scary noises.”

Fireworks boom in the distance, and the animals’ guardians grab the remote and turn the volume up a bit. They walk over to Delilah, who comes out from under the couch to greet them, and they wrap her in a hug.

Delilah smiles. “I feel better already.”



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## Comprehension Questions: 'Delilah's Dilemma'

1. Why can't Delilah solve her dilemma on her own? Who does she need help from and why?

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2. Using information from "The Dark Side of Fireworks" and "Delilah's Dilemma," what are three things that could help Delilah with her dilemma?

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3. Why did Delilah feel scared? Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt scared? Explain any similarities between your feelings and Delilah's feelings.

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4. What would it take for Delilah's dilemma to be solved completely?

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# Key Vocabulary

<b>guardian</b>	someone who takes care of someone else
<b>dilemma</b>	when you must choose between two or more things, none of which seem better than the others
<b>terrify</b>	to scare someone very much or fill them with great fear
<b>unpredictable</b>	something that happens unexpectedly and can't be planned on
<b>dangerous</b>	likely to cause harm, not safe
<b>escape</b>	a way of getting away from something that could harm you
<b>anxious</b>	afraid of or nervous about what could happen

# Answer Key: ‘Delilah’s Dilemma’

Please note that students must read “The Dark Side of Fireworks” to answer question 2.

## 1. Why can’t Delilah solve her dilemma on her own? Who does she need help from and why?

**Possible answer:** Delilah can’t solve her dilemma on her own because she has no control over her surroundings. She needs help from her guardians because they have more control over her surroundings. (Inferential)

## 2. Using information from “The Dark Side of Fireworks” and “Delilah’s Dilemma,” what are three things that could help Delilah with her dilemma?

**Answer:** (1) It would help Delilah if her guardians stayed home instead of going to watch fireworks. (2) It would help Delilah if her guardians gave her treats and toys to take her mind off the scary noises. (3) Closing the blinds and curtains and turning the TV on to drown out the noise from the fireworks would help Delilah. (Literal)

## 3. Why did Delilah feel scared? Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt scared? Explain any similarities between your feelings and Delilah’s feelings.

**Answer:** Delilah felt scared because she didn’t know whether the loud noises were dangerous or when they were going to happen next. She felt like her life was in danger. (Literal)

(The remaining answers are inferential and will vary depending on students’ experiences.)

## 4. What would it take for Delilah’s dilemma to be solved completely?

**Possible answer:** The only way for Delilah’s dilemma to be solved completely would be for everyone to stop setting off fireworks. (Inferential)