

Read the story “Puny Pelican.” Then answer Numbers 1 through 10.

Puny Pelican

Lucy handed Mom an oven mitt so she could pull the bubbling pizza out of the oven. “I like it when you have to work late,” Lucy told her.

“What an unkind thing to say,” Mom said. She pretended to be sad. Mom cut the pizza and put it on the table. “Come and get it!” she called to the far corners of the house.

“I mean, I feel bad that you have to work,” explained Lucy. “But I’m glad because we get pizza on those nights.”

“Oh, is that what you meant?” Mom smiled and gave Lucy a hug. They sat down, and Lucy’s brothers, Sam and Eddie, joined them.

Lucy gave Mom the first piece of pizza. She served her brothers next, then hunted for the slice that had the most olives.

“Why were you late, anyway?” asked Lucy.

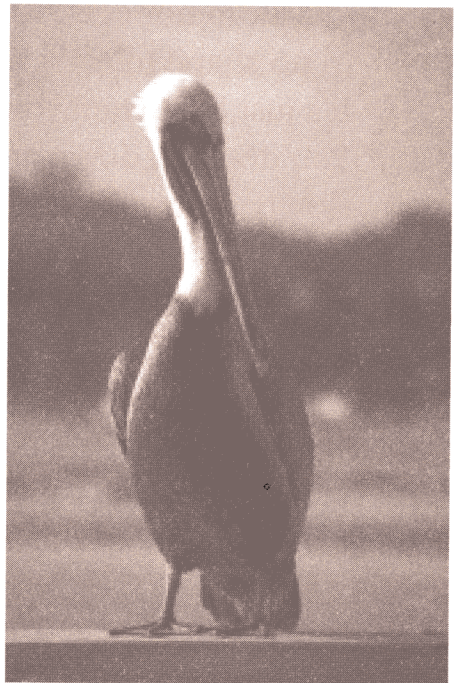
“Oh, just as I was about to leave, a brown pelican was brought to the center,” said Mom. Mrs. Chavez worked at a wildlife care center outside of Orlando.

“What was wrong with it?” asked Sam.

“It was dazed and confused,” said Mom. “It was also very thin. It didn’t look like it had eaten in a long time.”

“Maybe it was small because it was a baby,” suggested Eddie.

“No, it was an adult male. A healthy male weighs about eight or nine pounds. This one barely weighed five.”



Lucy's expression was puzzled. "Aren't pelicans supposed to migrate south for the winter?" she asked.

"Yes, they are," said Mom. "This pelican should be taking a siesta in Mexico right now. Instead, he probably got lost and drifted upriver."

"Who brought the pelican in?" asked Sam.

"A police officer," said Mom. "The officer said the bird led her on quite a chase. She had to climb a rooftop to rescue the poor thing. At first she thought the bird was a blue heron. When she got close enough, she saw it was a brown pelican."

"Did you show the bird to Dr. Malfi?" asked Lucy. Dr. Malfi was a veterinarian and family friend who worked at the wildlife care center.

"I sure did," said Mom. "Dr. Malfi said the bird's thin condition wasn't the only thing wrong with it. He ran a blood test and could tell that something else was going on. He's not sure what."

"What do pelicans eat?" asked Eddie with a mouth full of pizza.

Lucy made a face. "Fish," she said, turning up her nose.

Mom nodded. "That's true. They do eat fish, but this bird is in no shape to eat a whole fish. We have to start it off slowly. It's just like when you've been sick and you start to feel better. You don't sit down and eat a whole hamburger. You start slowly with soup and fruit juice."

"So, what will the sick pelican eat?" asked Lucy.

"You won't like the answer," warned Mom. "Especially while you're enjoying your pizza."

"Tell us, tell us!" cried Lucy, Sam, and Eddie.

"Fish shakes," said Mom. "Until the bird is healthier, we'll feed him fish shakes."

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1 What do you think the word puny means in the title of this story?

- A. baby
- B. new
- C. small
- D. female

2 Lucy does NOT seem to care much for

- A. olives.
- B. fish.
- C. pizza.
- D. birds.

3 Based on this story, how are sick pelicans and sick people ALIKE?

- A. They need plenty of sleep.
- B. They often lose their way.
- C. They need a special diet.
- D. They are confused.

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4 Read this sentence from the story.

Lucy’s face was puzzled.

What does this sentence mean?

- A. Lucy was sad.
- B. Lucy was hungry.
- C. Lucy was busy.
- D. Lucy was confused.

5 Describe Lucy’s mom’s job. Use information and details provided in the story to help you write your answer.

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6 Who rescued the sick pelican?

- A. a police officer
- B. Dr. Malfi
- C. a firefighter
- D. Lucy's mom

7 How did Dr. Malfi know the pelican was not just thin but also sick?

- A. He weighed the pelican.
- B. He studied the pelican's blood.
- C. He looked at the pelican's eyes.
- D. He tried to feed the pelican.

8 What will the wildlife center feed the sick pelican?

- A. fish soup
- B. live fish
- C. fish shakes
- D. fish juice

9 Information in this passage suggests that the family probably eats pizza on the nights Mom works late because

- A. Lucy can make pizza by herself.
- B. pizza is quick and easy to prepare.
- C. Mom can get free pizza at work.
- D. It is Sam and Eddie's favorite meal.

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- 10
- How is the pelican in this story different from healthy brown pelicans? Use information and details provided in the story to help you write your answer.
- Writing Tip: Read the parts of the story that tell you about regular pelicans. Then look at the parts of the story that tell about the sick pelican. Compare your findings to help you write a complete answer.