“The Spider and the Fly”

By Mary Howitt

**The Spider and the Fly (Mary Howitt)**

"Will you walk into my parlor?"
Said a spider to a fly;
'Tis the prettiest little parlor
That ever you did spy.
The way into my parlor
Is up a winding stair,
And I have many pretty things
To show when you are there."
"Oh, 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
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."
"Oh, 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.
"Oh, 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 parlor 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 thread
In a little corner sly,
And set his table ready
To dine upon the fly.

He went 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-
Thought only of her brilliant eyes,
And green and purple hue;
Thought 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 parlor-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 learn a lesson from this tale
Of the spider and the fly.

1 A parlor is room for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ guests.

 A feeding

 B bathing

 C entertaining

 D eating

2 What does the fly mean when she says, “to ask me is in vain”?

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3 To be weary is to be…

 A sick

 B tired

 C angry

 D scared

4 What does the spider mean when he tells the fly that she has ***gauzy*** wings?

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5 The text says that the spider wove a subtle thread. What does that tell you about the web? What does that tell you about the spider?

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6 Why does the spider repeatedly tell the fly that she is pretty?

 A he wants the fly to think he likes her

 B he wants the fly to cook his dinner

 C he wants to buy her new food

 D the fly doesn’t think she is pretty

7 “Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her *fast*.”

What does *fast* mean is this sentence?

A quickly

 B slowly

 C carefully

 D tightly

8 “He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den, within his little parlor-

 she ne’er came out again!”

 What happened to the fly?

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9 What lesson did Mary Howitt want readers to learn from reading “The Spider and the Fly”?

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The Spider was very determined in his quest to capture the Fly. Name four attempts he made in trying to catch the fly. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

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The text refers to the Spider as “cunning.” What does cunning mean? How does being cunning help the Spider catch the Fly?

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