



Life Under A Bridge

Dear Mum,

Trip, trap. Trip, trap. That's all I hear. Day in, day out - it's trip, trap, trip, trap. I know you told me not to build a home under such a busy bridge, but I thought it would be a great chance to finally make friends with the locals. After all, if they have to come past, I could grab them for a chat.

I went a bit "Big Bad Troll" today, Mum. There's a family of goats who live in one of the fields next to me. They have three kids who are always winding me up. Whenever they cross the bridge, they stamp their hooves so hard that I can barely hear myself think. They're always back and forth, heading to the hill to eat the grass and get fat. It's about time they got their own home, if you ask me.

Anyway, back to today. The first one trotted over with the usual trip, trap noise. I tried to bite my tongue and watch my pot of broth, but he must have ran across the bridge two or three times. So, I snapped. I raced out from under my bridge and threatened to gobble him up. I know it wasn't big or clever but I was just so frustrated. I'm sure you would have handled it differently but you can understand why I did it, can't you?

The little blighter argued that I should let him go because his brother was even bigger and tastier than him. That shows you just how trustworthy they are: he sacrificed his own brother to get away.

Sure enough, a short while later, the noise was back. This time it was louder - the brother was definitely bigger. Again, I tried to ignore it and move on with my day. I couldn't concentrate on my book, he was that loud.

Obviously, I'm embarrassed to say I charged out there again and threatened to gobble down the billy-goat. I told him was going to grind his bones and munch his skin. Grandfather would be so angry at me, after he finally persuaded people to trust us trolls. But they'd wound me up so much!

This goat was no better than his brother. He told me that he was terrified of me but was just trying to find somewhere to eat. He said that his older brother was even bigger and tastier than him, and

that I'd be much better off waiting around to munch on his bones instead. The traitor!

I was never really going to eat them, I just wanted to scare them. So, I left the second billy-goat alone as well. I know the third brother will be along soon and I'll probably try the same trick on him. What's the worst that can happen?

Please write back to let me know how you and dad are getting on. I bet you don't have to worry about goats on your bridge!

Speak to you soon,

Your loving son

INFERENCE FOCUS

1. What impression do you get of the troll in the first paragraph?
2. Find three pieces of evidence that the troll likes to blame other people.
3. Why did the troll let the two brothers go?
4. Why does the troll think the goats should get their own home?
5. How do you know the troll feels bad about what it did?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

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| E | Why is the troll asking rhetorical questions? What impact does this have on you as a reader? |
| S | What was the troll doing when the first goat crossed the bridge? |
| V | Find and copy a word that tells you how the troll approached the second goat. |
| R | Who has the letter been written to? |
| S | Summarise why the troll reacted the way he did to the goats. |

Answers:

1. He wants to make friends
2. They are always winding him up, they stamp their hooves so hard he can barely think, they are always heading back and forth, he asks his mum to understand why he did it - accept any other evidence from the text that shows the troll passing the blame
3. He wasn't really going to eat them, he just wanted to scare them into stopping what they were doing
4. It would stop them crossing his bridge
5. It talks about being embarrassed and how their grandfather would be so angry.

E: The questions encourage the reader to ask themselves the same thing - it is also a good way for the author to show what the character is thinking.

S: Cooking broth

V: Charged

R: The troll's mum

S: The goats had been annoying him for a long time and he had finally had enough of the noise of they were creating. Accept answers that cover these general points.