

# Such is Life

Level 6

Although alive, the little newborn creature was obviously ailing. Standing close by, ever vigilant, its mother strongly rebuffed our cautious approaches; this was Red Ruth's first calf.

Dad was an old hand and knew of the risks. He'd noted Red Ruth's swollen teats which made it impossible for her firstborn to latch on to feed. As instructed, Theo and I fetched a couple of buckets of oaten hay from the barn so Red Ruth could be enticed into the cattle race where we would be able to help both mother and offspring.



We headed off slowly on our quad bikes, Dad dropping small piles of sweet hay at intervals, enticing Red Ruth to follow. Her calf was just a bag of bones covered with a tan coat; she would not survive much longer without nourishment. With a strange and wobbly gait, front hooves curled behind and trotting on its forelimb pads, the plucky calf managed to keep beside its mother, much to our relief.

Red Ruth wasn't too amenable to entering the cattle race, but with perseverance we finally accomplished the task, Dad securing her head in the cattle crush. He had to milk her a while before the teats were small enough for her calf to feed. Eventually, the calf was suckling hungrily, a creamy froth collecting around its mouth. Suddenly, "Try some!" said Dad as he deftly squirted jets of warm milk at us. The brief respite was plenty of fun. Finally, with teamwork and effort, we accomplished our mission. However, we were quite aware that our commitment would be to daily ongoing assistance until the calf was able to latch on to Mother's milk by itself.

When dad asked me, "Charlotte, what would you like to call her?" I had no hesitation. "Squirt!" was my reply. Jack and Dad laughed in agreement.



# Questions

Such is Life – Level 6

1. Briefly describe the main problem.

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2. What does the word 'amenable' mean?

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3. What does the word 'gait' mean?

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4. Which statements are correct? Write 'True' or 'False' next to each.

- Dad used hay as a strategy to get Red Ruth to follow. \_\_\_\_\_
- The experience was all work and no fun. \_\_\_\_\_
- The calf was unable to walk. \_\_\_\_\_
- Red Ruth was a good mother to her calf. \_\_\_\_\_

5. What do you think the purpose of the 'cattle crush' was?

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6. The calf had fed, so why would ongoing assistance still be needed?

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7. Why do you think the text is called "Such is Life"?

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# Answers

Such is Life – Level 6

1. Briefly describe the main problem.

The calf was malnourished because it couldn't feed from its mother due to her swollen teats.

2. What does the word 'amenable' mean?

'Amenable' means open to a suggestion.

3. What does the word 'gait' mean?

'Gait' means manner of walking.

4. Which statements are correct? Write 'True' or 'False' next to each.

- Dad used hay as a strategy to get Red Ruth to follow. **True**
- The experience was all work and no fun. **False**
- The calf was unable to walk. **False**
- Red Ruth was a good mother to her calf. **True**

5. What do you think the purpose of the 'cattle crush' was?

The cattle crush kept Red Ruth still and allowed Dad to safely milk her.

6. The calf had fed, so why would ongoing assistance still be needed?

The calf still needed help latching on to her mother's teat.

7. Why do you think the text is called "Such is Life"?

Answers may vary.

The text is called 'Such is Life' because Red Ruth and her calf faced a challenge, and because life is full of challenges that we must overcome.

