

Name: _____ Date: _____

Key Vocabulary	
docent	a person who acts as a guide
impregnate	to make pregnant
intervene	to come between in order to stop, settle, or change
sanctuary	a place where someone is protected and/or given shelter
slaughter	the act of killing

Amazing Grace

Molli was 13 years old when she saw firsthand what happens to cows used for milk. Her mom works at The Gentle Barn, a **sanctuary** for some very fortunate animals who were rescued from the factory farming industry. Here's Molli's story:

When I first saw Grace, I saw hurt and fear and anger. I saw someone who had been betrayed and treated with the most tremendous unkindness to the point where not one kind word or action could be taken to heart or understood. Whenever I tell Grace's story to anyone, their mouths drop open in astonishment at how much pain she has been through, both physically and emotionally. It is hard for people to hear about how much pain and suffering could be inflicted on one being, but then they get to see that she seems to feel none of it now. Grace seems happy, and everyone can tell.

Grace spent 12 years being **impregnated** and having her babies taken away each year. She had 10 babies taken away from her after they were born so her milk could be sold for humans to drink. Then at the age of 12, she was bred to a very large bull who crippled her. Grace spent months trying to get up but to no avail. She was about to be sent to **slaughter** when The Gentle Barn **intervened** and brought her home instead. The Gentle Barn staff and volunteers spent months treating her with massage therapy and chiropractic care until she could walk. Healing her body was relatively easy compared to what it would take to heal her heart. Grace had been disrespected by humans for so many years that she had lost all hope. At first we ensured she had a lot of personal space and then slowly we began talking to her, singing to her, petting her and feeding her treats. Eventually she began trusting us and became less angry, but there was still pain in her eyes.



Grace needed someone special to fall in love with, and I really wanted to help. I became her **docent** on Sundays when the barn is open to the public. I stand in front of her, explaining to visitors that she is not ready to be petted. I help guests feed her carrots and tell them her story, which shows how brave and beautiful she is. Gradually, she has softened and found happiness at The Gentle Barn. She knows she is always protected and respected. She trusts me now and has let love in. Come visit The Gentle Barn any Sunday from 10 to 2, and you will find us together, teaching people kindness to animals, each other and the planet! **To learn more, visit gentlebarn.org.**

—Molli

"Amazing Grace" image and story adapted from *Animal Hero Kids: Voices for the Voiceless* by permission of the author, Susan Hargreaves. Photo: The Gentle Barn

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Comprehension Questions: Amazing Grace

1. Why does a **sanctuary** like The Gentle Barn exist?

2. What does Molli do as a **docent** for Grace?

3. Why do you think Molli says, “Grace had been disrespected by humans”?

4. What helped Grace begin to trust humans?

5. Did you know that, just like humans, cows produce milk only after they’ve given birth?
Why do you think humans drink cow’s milk, even though it’s made for baby calves?

Answer Sheet: Amazing Grace

1. Why does a sanctuary like The Gentle Barn exist?

Answer: The Gentle Barn exists to provide animals rescued from the factory farming industry with a safe place to live. (Literal)

2. What does Molli do as a docent for Grace?

Answer: As Grace's docent, Molli explains her story to visitors at the sanctuary. (Literal)

3. Why do you think Molli says, "Grace had been disrespected by humans"?

Possible Answer: Being treated with respect means being treated with care and consideration. As a mother cow, Grace had a strong bond with her calves—and taking them away from her over and over again for 12 years does not demonstrate care and consideration. (Inferential)

4. What allowed Grace to begin to trust humans?

Answer: Grace began to trust humans after those at The Gentle Barn gave her a lot of personal space. Then, they slowly began talking to her, singing to her, petting her, and feeding her treats. Eventually, she began to trust humans and became less angry. (Literal)

5. Did you know that, just like humans, cows produce milk only after they've given birth? Why do you think humans drink cow's milk, even though it's made for baby calves?

Possible Answer: I didn't know that cows produce milk only after they've given birth to a calf. I think humans drink cow's milk because they've been drinking it for a long time and they think it's healthy. (Evaluative)