

DRAMA**44****Stage 3: Comprehension**

Directions: Read the short play below. Then answer the questions on the next page.

The Quiet Kingdom

SETTING: One afternoon in a Princess's bedroom in a castle, not so long ago, in the kingdom of Perth

(Princess lies down in bed as her two ladies-in-waiting stand beside her bed. Sounds of an army marching are heard in the distance. Startled, Princess sits up in bed.)

PRINCESS: Oh, my ladies in waiting, it is much too noisy for me to sleep. Please tell the soldiers to stop marching immediately so that I can nap in peace!

LADY-IN-WAITING #1: I'll do it immediately, my princess. *(She exits. The sound of the marching stops, but now there is the sound of pots and pans being clanged in the cook's kitchen.)*

PRINCESS: Oh, that sound coming from the cook's kitchen is horrible! Go and tell the cook to stop making food immediately or I'll have her put in prison!

LADY-IN-WAITING #2: Yes, my lady, I'll do as you please right now. *(She exits. As the sound of pots and pans stop, the sounds of birds come through the window.)*

PRINCESS: Now, this is just too much! *(She goes to the window and shouts)*

Could you please be quiet, birds! Can't you see that I need my beauty sleep, and I'm trying to take a nap?

(Birds stop chirping, but then the sound of an army marching returns. The door suddenly opens, and the King enters the Princess's bedroom.)

KING: What is all this I hear about you dismissing the troops and telling the cook not to cook?

PRINCESS *(whining)*: Oh, Daddy, I need to take a nap and no one will give me any peace and quiet.

KING: Do you hear that sound? What you hear is the army of the kingdom next door. They have surrounded us because you told our troops to stop marching. And I have nothing to eat for lunch because you told the cook to stop cooking. *(The King moans and groans.)* It is all my fault, because I have always let you do what you want. From now on, you do not give any orders without my permission. Is that clear?

PRINCESS: Yes, sorry about that. But I am trying to take a nap here. . . .

DRAMA**44****Stage 3: Comprehension (continued)**

Directions: Choose or write the answer to each question.

1. What does the Princess want most in this scene?
 - Ⓐ She wants the soldiers to stop marching.
 - Ⓑ She wants quiet so she can sleep.
 - Ⓒ She wants the King to pay attention to her.
 - Ⓓ She wants to enjoy a nice lunch.
2. If you were reading the part of the princess, how should you read her lines?
 - Ⓐ in a kind and thoughtful manner
 - Ⓑ in a frightened and anxious voice
 - Ⓒ in a whiny and spoiled voice
 - Ⓓ in a childish little girl's voice
3. Write an example of stage directions given in this play.

4. Where does this play take place?

5. What has happened outside the castle during this scene?

GENRE: DRAMA
Stage 4: Comprehension**57**

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions on the next page.

The Old Man, His Son, and the Donkey

CHARACTERS:**OLD MAN**
FARMER**TWO WOMEN**
PASSERBY**The Old Man's SON**

Setting: *One day long ago, an old man and his son are walking down a country road. They are leading a donkey, which they plan to sell at the market when they get to town.*

OLD MAN (*as he and his son approach a man walking in the other direction*): Good morning to you, sir.

PASSERBY: Good morning? I must ask you, why are you and your son walking along the road while the donkey carries no burden? That's foolish. (*He walks on, shaking his head.*)

OLD MAN: He's got a point there. Son, climb up on the donkey. You shall ride into town. (*He helps his son climb up and sit on the donkey as he holds the lead rope.*)

TWO WOMEN walk along the road toward the OLD MAN and his SON.

ONE WOMAN (*speaking to her companion, but loudly enough to be overheard*): Can you believe these young people today? Look at that young boy riding on the donkey while his poor old father walks. That is shameful.

As the TWO WOMEN walk past, the OLD MAN looks after them for a moment, thinking. Then he mounts the donkey and rides with his son sitting behind him. They continue on down the road. Before long, they meet a FARMER walking the other way.

FARMER (*stopping on the road in front of the donkey*): Is that your donkey?

OLD MAN: Yes, it is. I plan to sell him at the market today.

FARMER: Well, you don't seem to treat him very well. You would be better off carrying the poor donkey than making him carry both of you. (*The FARMER walks away, shaking his head.*)

OLD MAN (*getting down off the donkey*): That man makes good sense. Come down off there, Son. We'll take his advice and carry the donkey from here into town. Find a nice long pole we can use.

The SON finds a slim log beside the road. He and the OLD MAN tie the donkey's legs to the log and then lift up the donkey. Staggering under the weight, they trudge down the road toward town. But as they enter the town, people all around them roar with laughter at the foolish sight. The OLD MAN turns red in the face.

GENRE: DRAMA**57****Stage 4: Comprehension (continued)**

OLD MAN (*sputtering angrily as he unties the donkey from the pole*): That's it! I've had enough of this. (*He picks up the donkey and throws him in the river.*) I'm going home, and good riddance.

The OLD MAN stalks away out of town as the SON slowly follows. The donkey swims across the river and climbs out on the other side.

Directions: Choose or write the answer to each question.

1. In this play, the old man and his son are
 - (A) using a donkey to plow their field.
 - (B) going to the annual fair.
 - (C) walking to the market in town.
 - (D) putting on a show for the townspeople.
2. Where and when does this play take place?

3. If you were reading the part of the Farmer, how should you read his lines?
 - (A) in a scornful, critical voice
 - (B) in a nervous, frightened voice
 - (C) in a confident, bold voice
 - (D) in a quiet, timid voice
4. Write an example of stage directions given in this play.

5. What lesson can be learned from the events in this play?
 - (A) If you try to please everyone, you end up pleasing no one.
 - (B) All work and no play can make anyone cranky.
 - (C) The grass is always greener on the other side of the river.
 - (D) The thing that people want most is what they cannot have.