

PLOT**45****Stage 3: Comprehension**

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

The Cell Phone

There it was, my older sister Cassie's bright pink cell phone, lying right on the top of her backpack. Mom called for us to come downstairs, and before I had time to think about it, I slipped my sister's cell phone inside my backpack. I told myself that it wouldn't hurt to have the phone for one short day.

At school, I felt so grown up. *I had a cell phone, and I could call anybody if I wanted to!*

After math, everyone in our class went outside, and I took the phone with me. I stood by myself and started to dial, but I stopped when I realized that there wasn't anyone I could call. Everyone I knew was at school!

"If the teacher sees you with that, you're going to get into trouble," Ana said.

"Only if it rings," I said. It was a school rule that cell phones could not be on during the day.

Then, suddenly, the phone rang. I almost jumped out of my skin, and I dropped the phone. I picked it up and said shyly, "Hello?"

It was my sister, who was yelling, "Bernice, I knew you had my phone! Turn it off immediately and put it in a safe place. I don't want you touching it, and you'd better not lose it!" Then the bell rang, and before I could figure out what to do, I had to go back to the classroom.

Back at my desk, I studied the phone and tried to figure out how to turn it off. I pressed several buttons, but nothing happened. Finally, I stuffed it into my backpack and wrapped my scarf around it, hoping the fabric would stifle the noise if it did ring.

For the rest of the day, I was terrified that the phone was going to ring. By the end of school, I was a nervous wreck. I didn't relax until I got home and handed the phone to Cassie.

"Sorry I took your phone," I said. "I thought it would be fun, but I was miserable all day."

She said, "Cell phones are not toys, they are for emergencies!"

Just then, before I could apologize any further, the phone rang.

PLOT**45****Stage 3: Comprehension (continued)**

Directions: Choose or write the answer to each question.

1. What happens first in the story?

- Ⓐ Bernice goes downstairs to have breakfast.
- Ⓑ Bernice and Cassie take a bus to school.
- Ⓒ Cassie finds out that Bernice has her phone.
- Ⓓ Bernice slips her sister's cell phone into her backpack.

2. Why does Bernice feel "grown up" when she gets to school?

3. What is the main problem in this story?

4. How is the problem finally solved?

- Ⓐ Bernice stuffs the phone inside her clothes.
- Ⓑ Bernice goes home and returns the cell phone to her sister.
- Ⓒ Bernice hides the cell phone in her backpack.
- Ⓓ Bernice turns off the phone.

5. How does Bernice's being at school affect the plot?

- Ⓐ She has to ask the teacher how to turn off the cell phone.
- Ⓑ When the phone rings, Bernice does not want to answer it.
- Ⓒ She gets very nervous because if the phone rings, she will get into trouble.
- Ⓓ Bernice can't call anyone on the phone because all her friends are at school.

GENRE: PLOT**58****Stage 4: Comprehension**

Directions: Read the passage. Then fill in the plot chart on the next page.

The Accident

532 . . . 534 . . . James was trying to hop all the way down the block and down the stairs to his family's apartment. 536 . . . Would it be cheating to hold onto the railing? Somehow he thought it would. 538 . . . OOF! James fell with a huge thud.

The basement door flew open and James's father rushed out, a paintbrush in his fist, to find James sprawled at his feet. He helped his son inside. James's mother, who was standing on a crate wearing a Spanish lace mantilla on her head and a shawl, shrieked. James's forehead was smeared with crimson.

"It's just red paint," said his father.

But it was too late. Nora was so upset that she slipped from the box. Luckily, her husband's easel broke her fall, but the painting was destroyed. James's mother frowned as she examined the disaster.

"It's not your fault, Nora," said her husband.

"It's my fault," said James, "hopping around like a baby."

"Maybe it's my fault," sighed James's father. "I'm no good as an artist. Everyone knows I'm just a janitor."

"But you are a good artist!" cried his wife. "You just never had the opportunity to go to art school."

Father sighed again. "Being surrounded by so much excitement here in the city has gotten to me. Seeing that exhibit of folk artists last month made me feel I had a chance."

"You do," said his wife. "But maybe you should paint our real world—the world of New Orleans in the twenty-first century. Paint me the way I really look, today, instead of painting me dressed up in the costume of a Spanish lady from some forgotten time. That folk art exhibit showed real people the way we actually are. That's why you liked it so much."

James's father stared at the ruined painting and then chuckled. "Maybe losing this painting wasn't such a tragedy after all," he said. "Maybe I should try painting something a little different."

GENRE: PLOT

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Stage 4: Comprehension (continued)

Directions: Fill in the plot chart with details from the story.

1. Exposition:

2. Rising Action:

3. Climax:

4. Falling Action:

5. Resolution: