

“The Mini Problem”

Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

Directions: Read the story. Then answer the questions below.



Lily’s anger could not have been more **palpable**.

She awakened Christmas morning and, along with her brother, ran down to see the gifts under the tree.

In the living room sat a magnificent mini bike. It was red with a pearly white gas tank and side panels. For a brief moment, Lily was filled with what seemed like **insurmountable** excitement. Then, her eyes caught hold of a baby doll sitting on the couch with a huge bow.

She knew. She knew that the mini bike belonged to her brother and that she had been **relegated** to that doll. It was *par for the course*.

Tommy always got cool things: skateboards, gliders, science kits. The mini bike was just the latest cool thing.

Lily always got the boring gifts: a doll with a gown, a doll with a tutu, a doll with a puppy. This doll seemed unusually blah. The doll wore a petticoat. The doll had short, straight black hair.

Tommy had seen that mini-bike in the front window of Moore’s Bike Shop, but hadn’t Lily too? Hadn’t she asked for it with as much **fervor** as her twin brother?

Tommy’s eyes grew wide at the sight of the bike he knew was his – no doll for him. He ran into his parent’s room and jumped excitedly on the bed.

“Thank you, Mama! Thank you, Papa,” he yelled.

Lily **seethed** in the other room. It took a while for anyone to even realize she was missing.

“What’s wrong, Lil?” Papa asked. “Did you see your pretty doll?”

“I saw it,” she said sulkily.

“What’s wrong?” asked Mama.

Silence.

“Oh, Mama, you know Lily is never excited by presents!” her brother laughed. “Come out and watch me ride!”

And so they did.

Questions:

- 1) Why was Lily's anger described as **palpable**?
- A. It was misplaced.
 - B. It was irrational.
 - C. It was very difficult to understand.
 - D. It was so intense it seemed like it could be touched.
- 2) Which is the best antonym for **insurmountable**?
- A. sane
 - B. phony
 - C. unjustified
 - D. conquerable
- 3) Which best describes the act of being **relegated**?
- A. A star athlete is given a coveted award.
 - B. A disobedient dog is put in the garage to sleep.
 - C. A struggling student is given the worst grade in the class.
 - D. The birthday boy is taken to his favorite restaurant.
- 4) What does the expression *par for the course* imply?
- A. that something is to be expected
 - B. that something cannot be undone
 - C. that something is sure to cause anger
 - D. that something was meant to be hurtful
- 5) What is ironic about the title of this passage?
- A. Lily has a big problem.
 - B. Tommy is perfectly happy.
 - C. Lily does not get a mini bike.
 - D. No one realizes there is a problem.
- 6) What could the author have written if she wanted to show Lily improving her situation?
- A. a scene with Lily storming out of the house
 - B. a description of Lily getting to ride the mini bike first
 - C. a paragraph describing Lily pretending to appreciate the doll
 - D. a dialogue with Lily explaining to her family why she was so angry

Questions (continued):

7) Which is the best antonym for **fervor**?

- A. gluttony
- B. indifference
- C. politeness
- D. quiet

8) What might Lily's parents be accused of?

▼ Check all that are correct.

- A. being stingy
- B. not loving Lily
- C. being insensitive
- D. being gender biased

9) In paragraph 6, what is the most like reason the author repeats the word "doll"?

- A. to highlight how extravagant the dolls were
- B. to juxtapose the number of dolls with just one mini bike
- C. to make it clear how monotonous this gift had become for Lily
- D. to make it clear that the doll she got this Christmas was the worst of all

10) Which is the best antonym for **seethed**?

- A. cheered up
- B. calmed down
- C. spoke softly
- D. breathed heavily

What would you do if you were in Lily's position? Explain.
