



MARK FOR REVIEW?



YES



NO

The Cafeteria Crime

I slithered quietly on my stomach through the bushes to get closer to the sounds that were emanating from the side of the school. It might be hard to believe, but I was actually here in the bushes on assignment—for the school paper. Our cafeteria had been having problems with food coming up missing, so our paper decided to do an investigative piece about the missing food.

Jason, the paper's editor, had sat down with me to discuss how to approach the puzzle of the purloined rations. "Do you have any suggestions on how you want to go about solving this mystery?" he asked. "No one seems to have broken in to the cafeteria. No one has seen anything. Everyone is pretty much stumped."

"I think the best way is to stake out the place, but since I have classes during the day I'm thinking that evenings or weekends would be best."

"Evening is probably a good idea," answered Jason, after thinking for a moment. "Whoever it is probably waits until the school is deserted since he or she would want to avoid discovery."

"I'll ask my father if he will lend me his digital camera, the one he uses for work, and maybe I can persuade him to join me since two sets of eyes are better than one."

So that's what I did. Dad was totally cool about lending me his camera even though it was a rather complex piece of equipment with a rather hefty price tag. He also liked the idea of participating in a mystery. On Wednesday night after dinner we put on dark jeans and sweaters, covered our heads with old navy-blue baseball caps (Dad said our red hair would be too easy for people to spot), and made our way through the school campus to the bushes by the cafeteria.

I raised myself onto my elbows to peer through the leaves. I couldn't see anything, but I did hear some noise. It sounded suspiciously like scratching, but I couldn't be sure. I asked my Dad if he heard anything. He nodded then lifted his hands, curling his fingers like claws. He made up and down motions with his hands as though he were a cat scratching at the furniture. I almost burst out laughing! He was taking this assignment, need to be silent and all, even more seriously than I was, but seeing him imitating a cat was almost too much to bear.

I barely controlled my laughter before peeking through the bushes again. I still was not able to see anything at all. I motioned for my dad to come closer, whispering to him, "I think we need to get closer to the building. I can't see anything from here. There's a dumpster over by the wall, so if we move quietly, keeping ourselves low to the ground, we should be able to get behind the dumpster without anyone seeing us."

My father nodded at me. We slowly raised ourselves to a crouch, quietly creeping out of the bushes. Making our way to the dumpster, we hid behind it without—apparently—being seen by anyone. I pulled the camera up to my face, looking through the viewfinder as though it were binoculars. As I heard the scratching sound again, I trained the camera on the area from where I thought the noise was emanating. I frowned, puzzled; still nothing was visible. I did a visual sweep of the side of the building checking the back door, which was closed with the padlock on, and the windows, which were all closed as well.



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Everything else seemed still. I continued to scan the wall, and that's when I saw it -- a small opening in the side of the building about seven feet off the ground. I handed my dad the camera so he could take a look as well. He peered through the lens whispering to me in a muted voice, "It's an air vent. It looks as though the grate has fallen off, but that opening is far too small for anyone to crawl through. I simply can't imagine that could possibly be the way someone is getting inside."

I sat back on my heels, feeling befuddled. After a few moments of pondering I heard another noise. My father passed the camera back to me, just quickly enough for me to be able to manage several rapid shots as the thieves came scurrying through the vent, hot dog buns dangling from their mouths. I almost dropped the camera in surprise. My father let out a roar of laughter that had the burglars scampering up into the trees.

"Squirrels!" I squeaked when I had regained my composure. "Squirrels have been stealing the cafeteria food. This is NOT going to make an investigative piece at all. I wanted to catch the villains in the act, to write a story about real crime!"

"It is a real crime," my father replied with a grin splitting his face. "You have caught the culprits, even if they weren't of the human variety; so on the contrary, this will make a great story. You'll have everyone in school laughing about how funny this is." I thought about it. He was right. This might not be the award winning investigative piece I had hoped it would be, but it certainly would be entertaining.

"You're right," I said. "Things may not have turned out the way I thought they would, but this will make a great story." I smiled, already trying to think up an eye-catching, humorous headline.

How would the story be affected if the phrase, "I slithered quietly on my stomach through the bushes," were changed to "I walked carefully through bushes"?

- A. It would decrease some of the suspense.
- B. It would increase some of the humor.
- C. It would decrease some of the realism.
- D. It would increase some of the tension.

CSO: RLA.O.9.1.04 – DOK: 2

Students will use various pre-reading skills and comprehension strategies for activating prior knowledge or generating questions during reading and post reading, literary experience, information and/or performing a task.

Rationale:

A: Correct Response

B: It would decrease the humor.

C: It would make the story more real rather than less.

D: It would decrease the tension.



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Read these paragraphs from the passage.

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“You’re right,” I said. “Things may not have turned out the way I thought they would, but this will make a great story.” I smiled, already trying to think up an eye-catching, humorous headline.

What do the paragraphs suggest about the narrator?

- A. He is disappointed but will write the article anyway because his editor has told him he must write the article.
- B. He sees the positive in the unexpected turn of events because he is thinking about a new angle for his article.
- C. He always believes what his father says because he knows his father has much more experience in writing articles.
- D. He will embellish the details of the crime to make them more exciting because he wants to bring more readers to the paper.

CSO: RLA.O.9.1.06 – DOK: 3

Students will formulate supportable predictions, generalizations, opinions, inferences and conclusions based upon text.

Rationale:

A: He is smiling and showing excitement rather than showing disappointment.

B: Correct Response: He admits that things did not turn out the way he thought they would, but he is ready to write the article about what happened in the most exciting way possible.

C: There is no evidence that the father has experience writing articles.

D: There is no evidence that he will do anything but write the article the way it happened.