

Moment of Truth



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**For my students and colleagues at Sunset High School in Dallas, TX.
Your words of encouragement will never be forgotten.**

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A Note from the Senior Editor/Writer

If someone who's on the way to your house calls and says, 'I'm lost,' the first question you ask is, 'Where are you?' To describe the final destination over and over without reference to a starting point is futile. Likewise, when students are lost, you have to start where they are and then make the connection between where they are and where you want them to be. I can teach any kid just about anything if I start with reference to where the student is and what he or she already knows – real life.

In theory, this is why I started writing short stories for reluctant, often struggling readers in my reading class at Sunset High School in Dallas, TX. To “keep it real,” however, I must admit that I began writing these stories for my students because they wouldn’t do the work I left with the substitute. (*Can I get a witness?*) In frustration, one day I came up with a different kind of lesson plan for my next absence: I wrote a story about a teenage mother who ran away from home and left the baby with her parents. I infused my students’ names, familiar settings, and, of course, plenty of drama. I was careful to write so that the text was at most of the students’ independent reading levels, and I wrote a few open-ended comprehension questions for them to answer on their own paper. When I got back to school the next day, the substitute left a note saying that the students were “great.” My first thought was that they had all skipped. Then I felt the folder that contained the students’ work. It was pretty thick. My second thought was they must have all copied from each other. But when I began to read their answers, I realized that they had all done their own work. No two answers were the same. I immediately repented for my ill thoughts and decided that it must have been a one-time quirky thing. Imagine my surprise (and dismay) when my students asked, “Miss, when are you gonna be absent again so we can read another one of your stories?” As it turned out, I missed several days that year and wrote many stories for my students. I had to make extra copies, though, because the stories kept growing feet and walking out of the room with the kids.

Before long, teachers and students all over the campus were asking about these short stories. Neighboring teachers borrowed copies for their kids to read. The on-campus suspension teacher began assigning the stories to kids who wouldn't read *anything*. I knew, then, that I was onto something.

When I left the Dallas Independent School District, I began selling the short stories independently. Shortly thereafter, I began my career as a faith-based novelist. The

short stories continued to circulate (with permission, via the Internet) for the next ten years. Finally, a former Sunset High School colleague (Karen Bradford) cornered me and gave me an ultimatum: *Either you package and sell these short stories or I will. You can sue me later.* Thanks to her “prompting” and the encouragement of countless teachers across the country who regularly send me emails about how they are able to meet state curriculum requirements while discussing the things that really matter to kids, you now hold this book in your hands.

Don't let this kit disappear into your sea of white binders. Rather, let it stand out as a springboard for powerful reading, purposeful writing, and critical thinking in your classroom.

Michelle Stimpson
July, 2008

Teaching Guide

*“If we simply assign reading instead of teaching students how to read,
we’ll get poor reading.”*

-Kelly Gallagher, 2004

In this section, you will find ideas for teaching and assessing comprehension. Feel free to add your own favorite strategies or adapt the ones provided so that your students can get the most out of their reading. A few notes to help you along the way:

- Don’t feel pressured to do them all with one story, and don’t feel pressure to introduce, read, and wrap-up a story in one class setting.
- Your goal is to get your students into the habit of metacognition; thinking about what they’re thinking as they read. This takes time, but it certainly pays off in the end.
- Poor readers don’t know that good readers do things in their heads to *make* text make sense because mental processes are invisible (Tovani, 2000). By giving students ideas about what to do before reading, during reading, and after reading, we explicate the reading process so that it is no longer a mystery.
- Let students know that they will be expected to demonstrate comprehension through writing. Though the writing may not be a formal paper, the connection between reading and writing must be established. Students who know that they will be expected to formulate a written response to reading read with a clearer sense of purpose (Allington & Cunningham, 1999).

Literary Selections

Before Reading

- Watch the video preview and have students make a prediction (written or verbal) about the story's plot. Be sure to discuss literary elements (exposition, rising action, etc.) as you discuss their predictions.
- Have students "agree" or "disagree" with the six statements in the corresponding Anticipation-Reaction Guide. Discuss students' responses out loud, challenging students to give evidence (from their own lives, reading, statistics, etc.) in support of their responses. This provides an opportunity for discussion, engagement, and investment (Head, M.H., & Readence, J.E., 1992).
- Have students view the vocabulary guide before reading. In this manner, students can familiarize themselves with new vocabulary before reading the story. Students should keep the vocabulary guides handy as they read.

OR

Before Reading - Post the vocabulary words and have students copy them on their own paper.

During Reading - Students can then write their own definitions for the words they already know and then (as they read) write definitions they uncover within context of reading.

After Reading - Show students the vocabulary guide and have them compare/contrast their definitions with those in the guide. Be sure to have students justify their responses with reference to text if there are discrepancies.

Literary Selections

During Reading

- Play a portion of the audio tape and have kids follow along. Then, stop playing the audio (you decide when) and have the kids finish reading on their own.
- **Stop-and-Talk.** Pair up students. Either listen to the audio aloud or read aloud as students listen. At certain points in the story, stop and have students take turns answering very specific questions with their partner. Then, have students share some of their answers out loud. Be sure to have students reference the text in support of their answers, and always have a quick review (either by the teacher or a student) of what just happened in the story before jumping back into the text. Sample questions below are from “It Happened on a Friday.”

After paragraph 19: How are Jacob and Stephanie similar/different?

How would you characterize Jacob/Stephanie? Why?

Would you want to be friends with Jacob/Stephanie?

Why or why not?

After paragraph 63: Give 5 words to describe how Stephanie is feeling.

Have you ever done something you regretted?

What does “the straw that broke the camel’s back” mean?

After paragraph 92: How did Jacob’s lie make the situation worse?

Do you think Jacob should be charged with sexual assault?

Should Jacob’s mom stick by him?

Literary Selections

After Reading

- Students can compare/contrast their predictions with what actually happened in the story.
- Have students complete the Anticipation-Reaction Guide, deciding whether or not they still agree/disagree with the statements. If students have changed their thoughts, have them articulate why their response changed.
- If students did not listen to the story read aloud, play the audio version aloud for a re-read to increase comprehension. This time, have students Think-Pair-Share at different points in the story, with different questions.
- If students listened to the story first, have them re-read aloud with a partner – each partner reading a few paragraphs at a time. This encourages a repeated reading which, in turn, helps with fluency (Homan, S., Klesius, J., & Hite, C., 1993).
- Ask students open-ended questions and require them to use text evidence in their responses. Examples: How did Jacob/Stephanie change from the beginning to the end of this story? What is one conflict Jacob/Stephanie faced in this story? What lesson did Jacob/Stephanie learn in this story?
- Consider having students write a letter from one character to another.
- Have a Talk Show. Assign roles and have students participate in a talk show featuring main characters and “experts” who can shed light on the issues addressed in the short story. One student (or the teacher) can be the talk show host. Audience members should formulate questions they would like to ask during the show.
- Writing: Consider creating writing prompts based on literary themes present in the stories. Also consider having students create diary entries for different characters.
- Administer and score the multiple-choice assessment. Consider having students cite the paragraphs where they found (or inferred) the answers. Review the answers with students and have students point out textual reference in the discussion.

Informational Selections

Before Reading

- Have students “agree” or “disagree” with the six statements in corresponding Anticipation-Reaction Guide. Discuss students’ responses out loud, challenging students to give evidence (from their own lives, reading, statistics, etc.) in support of their responses. This provides an opportunity for discussion, engagement, and investment (Head, M.H., & Readence, J.E., 1992).
- Preview the non-fiction selection with students. Be sure to think aloud as you discuss elements of the text’s structure. Note boldface headings and any other distinctions that could help a reader navigate through the text.
- Have students view the vocabulary guide before reading. In this manner, students can familiarize themselves with new vocabulary before reading the story. Students should keep the vocabulary guides handy as they read.

OR

Before Reading - Post the vocabulary words and have students copy them on their own paper.

During Reading - Students can then write their own definitions for the words they already know and then (as they read) write definitions they uncover within context of reading.

After Reading - Show students the vocabulary guide and have them compare/contrast their definitions with those in the guide. Be sure to have students justify their responses with reference to text if there are discrepancies.

Informational Selections

During Reading

- As a class or in small groups, complete a Two-column Note Chart (see page 14) to keep track of the main ideas (left side) and details (right side) presented in the passages. Main ideas for each paragraph or section should be presented in a single sentence. Details may be recorded in short phrases or in bulleted points.
- Stop-and-Talk (see directions on page 9).
- Generating questions during reading increases comprehension (Rosenshine, Meister, & Chapman, 1996). Have students create questions based on the information presented in the non-fiction selections. Require students to create both basic and complex questions. Here are a few questions stems to consider:

1. *Who? What? When? Where? Why?* questions based on facts.
2. Describe _____.
3. What is a characteristic of _____.
4. Define _____.
5. How is ____ like ____?
6. How is ____ different from ____?
7. What would happen if _____?
8. Could this have happened if _____?
9. Is there a better solution to _____?
10. What do you think about _____?

Informational Selections

After Reading

- At the bottom of the Two-column Note Chart, students should record a summary in paragraph format. The summary should include information from the main ideas column and some information from the details column when necessary.
- Have students complete the Anticipation-Reaction Guide, deciding whether or not they still agree/disagree with the statements. If students have changed their thoughts, have them articulate why their response changed.
- Discuss connections with the literary selection. Example (from “A Night to Remember”): If Lydia had followed the information presented in the related expository selection, could she have avoided the situation with Joe?
- Writing: Consider having students produce multi-genre products to express comprehension. Examples might include: brochures, flyers, posters, how-to articles, reader’s theater scripts, or public service announcements.
- Administer and score the multiple-choice assessment. Consider having students cite the paragraphs where they found (or inferred) the answers. Review the answers with students and have students point out textual reference in the discussion.

Two-Column Note Chart

Name : _____ Topic / Title : _____

Main Ideas	Details
Summary: 	

Teaching Guide References

- Allington, Richard & Cunningham, Patricia. *Classrooms That Work: They Can All Read and Write*. New York: Longman, 1999.
- Gallagher, Kelly. 2004. *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts*. Portland, Maine.
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- Tovani, Cris. 2000. *I Read It But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse.

It Happened on a Friday

Anticipation-Reaction Guide
“It Happened on a Friday”

Before Reading		Statement	After Reading	
Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree
		Girls who wear tight, short, revealing clothes should not expect to be treated with respect.		
		Athletes are treated differently at school.		
		You should “stick up” for a family member whether they are right or wrong.		
		People who have been convicted of crimes against children should not be allowed to live near elementary schools.		
		A 17-year-old can probably talk a 14-year-old into doing something illegal.		

**Vocabulary Guide
“It Happened on a Friday”**

1. rivals	<i>RI vulz</i>	A person or group who is competing against another for the same goal	
	Synonyms Competitors, adversaries	Antonym allies	
	Example When it came to winning Jasmine’s heart, Juan and Carlos were rivals.		
2. invincible	<i>In VIN si bul</i>	Unable to be defeated	
	Synonyms Unstoppable, unyielding	Antonyms Conquerable	
	Example The army was invincible; no one could defeat them in battle.		
3. irony	<i>I run ee</i>	Using words in a way that conveys the opposite of their actual meaning	
	Synonyms Sarcasm, satire	Antonyms	
	Example Jenna was using irony when she told Megan she was “beautiful in her prom dress” even though she actually thought the dress made her look short and fat.		
4. formidable	<i>FOR mi duh buhl</i>	Causing fear or dread	
	Synonyms Fearful, frightful, threatening	Antonyms pleasant	
	Example The six-foot tall, 250 pound senior was a formidable opponent in the wrestling ring for the five-foot, 125 pound freshman.		
5. rummaged	<i>RUM idgd</i>	To search through by moving items around or looking through the contents	
	Synonyms Searched, fumbled	Antonyms	
	Example I rummaged through the silverware drawer to find a spoon.		
6. studious	<i>STOO dee us</i>	Spending a great deal of time carefully studying	
	Synonyms Scholarly, academic, intellectual	Antonyms	
	Example Hannah was studious; always completing her homework on time and getting straight A’s.		

7. swiveled	SWI vuhl	To turn or pivot as if on a central point	
	Synonyms Pivot, spin, rotate	Antonyms	
	Example Jack swiveled around in his seat to hand the paper to the girl sitting behind him.		
8. lamented	LUH ment ed	To feel sadness or regret for	
	Synonyms bemoaned	Antonyms celebrated	
	Example Daniel lamented after being kicked off the football team for failing grades.		
9. vowing	VOW ing	Promising	
	Synonyms Promising, pledging	Antonyms	
	Example Alana avoided being grounded for two weeks by vowing she would never take the car without her parents' permission again.		
10. silhouette	Sil oo ET	Outline or general shape of something	
	Synonyms Contour, profile, outline	Antonyms	
	Example The silhouette of the woman dancing in her living room could be seen on her curtains.		
11. vixen	VIK suhn	A well-developed, sexy woman	
	Synonyms	Antonyms	
	Example Darice looked like a vixen in her tight red sequined dress and four inch red leather high heels.		
12. cinched	SIN chud	Gathered in	
	Synonyms	Antonyms	
	Example Beth cinched her dress with a belt to make herself look thinner.		
13. audacity	AWE da si tee	Boldness or daring without concern for others	
	Synonyms Boldness, daring, nerve	Antonyms Prudence, caution	
	Example Alana had the audacity to take the keys to the car without her parents' permission even though she had promised she never would do so again.		

14. moseyed	MO seed	Walk or shuffle leisurely
	Synonyms Saunter, shuffle, amble	Antonyms Run, race
	Example Hector moseyed up to the beautiful Brianna trying to look cool even though he had butterflies in his stomach.	
15. stern	STURN	Hard or severe
	Synonyms Harsh, severe, unfeeling	Antonyms Warm, lenient
	Example Mrs. Acosta gave the boy a stern look when he threw a pencil at the chalkboard during class.	
16. infractions	In FRAK shuns	Act of breaking a law or rule
	Synonyms Violations, infringements	Antonyms
	Example The principal gave Jose detention for his infractions.	
17. forthright	FORTH rite	Being completely open and honest
	Synonyms Honest, open, straightforward	Antonyms Deceitful, sneaky, dishonest
	Example Sheila's parents wished she would be more forthright about where she was going after school instead of constantly lying about her whereabouts.	
18. interpretation	In tur pre TAY shun	A way someone explains or understands another's behavior
	Synonyms Reading, explication	Antonyms
	Example According to her sister's interpretation, the only reason Joel asked Maria out was because she had a car.	
19. summoned	SUHM und	Called for a person's presence
	Synonyms Called, beckoned	Antonyms
	Example Cory was summoned to the principal's office after he threw his math book in the cafeteria's trash can.	
20. regretted	Ri GRET ted	To feel or express sorrow for
	Synonyms Grieved, lamented,	Antonyms Celebrated
	Example Samantha later regretted breaking up with Darius.	
21. dwell	DWELL	To focus one's attention on something and for a long time
	Synonyms Mope, worry, fret	Antonyms forget
	Example Oscar tried not dwell on the fact that he failed his math test.	

22. protocol	<i>PROH tuh kawl</i>	Code of correct conduct
	Synonyms Code, behavior	Antonyms
	Example As a matter of protocol, all students were required to wear uniforms.	
23. abrupt	<i>Uh BRUPT</i>	Happening quickly and without warning
	Synonyms Sudden, quick, hurried	Antonyms Expected, gradual
	Example The coach's abrupt resignation in the middle of the season shocked the players.	
24. signify	<i>SIG ni fie</i>	To be a sign of
	Synonyms Represent, imply	Antonyms
	Example High school graduates toss their caps in the air to signify their freedom from high school.	
25. harassment	<i>Hu RASS ment</i>	Behavior that is threatening or offensive to other people
	Synonyms Badgering	Antonyms
	Example Nathan could no longer stand his brother's harassment because he earned higher grades than Chase.	

It Happened on a Friday

1 Jacob could hardly sleep on Thursday nights because Football Fridays were crazy at Northway High School, and this Friday was the craziest of all. They were playing South High School, their cross-town rivals who also happened to be the defending state champions. Since there was no game last week, Jacob was so pumped that he even dreamed about football the night before. As a defensive end, he always had to be on point. No one lined up across from Jacob Caldon without feeling the pain. He was six feet, 250 pounds of pure defense. He was invincible and untouchable. He was, after all, Jacob Caldon – co-captain of the football team that was about to put Northway back on the map.

2 The irony in all of this, however, was that no one in Jacob’s small family seemed to notice his importance. “Jacob, make sure Rebecca gets to school on time,” his mother would warn as she walked out the door. In addition to making sure that he walked his little sister to school, Jacob had a million chores to complete around the house. He was responsible for the trash, the yard, the dog, and often cooking the food. This was because his Mom was single and worked full-time as an administrative assistant while going to school part-time to earn a degree. Jacob could flatten the most formidable opponent, but one word from his Mom could make Jacob feel one inch tall. Jacob was a good son, and he looked forward to the day he could sign a fat football contract and take care of his mother financially since his father hadn’t been man enough to do the job.

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3 Stephanie rummaged through the pile of laundry on the couch to no avail. Nothing but socks, towels, and undergarments. Despite their mother’s warnings, Stephanie’s older sister, Ashley, never kept up with the laundry. Once again, Stephanie had no clean clothes to wear to school. But with her mother already gone to work and Ashley gone to drill team practice, Stephanie didn’t have anyone to listen to her complaints.

4 Stephanie walked from the living room to her sister’s bedroom and pushed back the closet door. Ashley, a senior, was a drama queen/fashion goddess/girly girl. All Ashley seemed to talk about was drill team, friendship problems, and boys. Stephanie, on the other hand, was a studious sophomore who had skipped the third grade and was already well on her way to earning a full scholarship to Texas A&M, where she would study psychology and figure out what the heck was wrong with people like Ashley.

5 Reluctantly, Stephanie stuffed herself into a pair of her sister's jeans. She zipped them up and quickly swiveled around to get a view of her backside in the mirror atop Ashley's dresser. "Ugh!" Stephanie sighed and fussed to herself. "I could have just painted these things on my body."

6 The jeans fit so tightly that Stephanie could hardly breathe. And the way her behind stuck out in the back was almost disgusting. "I've got to lose weight," Stephanie lamented, silently vowing to skip dessert over the weekend. She knew, however, that it wouldn't do any good. She had been cursed with her mother's body, which she tried to hide with baggy pants and oversized shirts.

7 Most girls would have killed to walk a mile in Stephanie's body and hear all the "Oohs!" and "Dangs!" that followed a girl with a perfect silhouette. Even Ashley was jealous of Stephanie's body and often voiced her belief that God had wasted His talents by giving that body to her little sister.

8 "If it was me, I'd flaunt it 'til the day I die," Ashley had said more than once.

9 Stephanie would usually reply, "If it was you, you would have ruined it already."

10 That was mean, but it was true. Ashley ate like a pig and never exercised, not to mention the way she disrespected her body by wearing hoochie clothes like the very jeans Stephanie was forced to wear that Friday morning.

11 Stephanie searched through Ashley's closet again for a decent shirt to cover up the curves which made her look like some kind of music video vixen. After several minutes, she gave up. There just wasn't a shirt in Ashley's closet that didn't push dress-code. Stephanie quickly rushed back to her own room, found the least dirty shirt in the hamper, and pulled it over her head. In an instant, Stephanie gathered her hair back into a ponytail, dabbed Vaseline on her lips, slid on a pair of shoes, and headed out the door.

12 Stephanie met up with her neighbor, Johnna Miles, and they walked to the bus stop together.

13 "What's on your shirt?" Johnna asked.

14 "Where?"

15 "Here – on the back," Johnna said as she pulled up the bottom of Stephanie's shirt.

16 Stephanie managed to see the bright green spot that Johnna had pointed out. “I can’t stand my sister! She didn’t wash the clothes, and I had to find the only shirt that didn’t smell. But it’s got a stain on it!”

17 Johnna laughed. “Well, at least it’s at the bottom. Just tuck it in.”

18 “Easier said than done,” Stephanie said under her breath.

19 When she reached the campus, Stephanie rushed into the restroom. She tried tying a knot on the side of the shirt. She tried folding it up. She even tried turning it inside out, but nothing worked. Stephanie would have to tuck the shirt in or else go around looking like a dirty bum all day. “This is just great,” Stephanie said as she unzipped the too-tight jeans to add another layer of definition to her frame. She stood in the mirror and checked herself out again. It was bad – really bad.

f

20 Jacob and a few of his teammates – Camron, Isaias, and Kendrick – always met up near the band hall before school. It was a great place to girl-watch. Jacob was standing against the wall exchanging old “yo Momma” jokes with Kendrick when Camron gave Jacob a sharp jab in the ribs. Jacob looked at Camron, whose eyes were focused on an object to the left. Quickly, Jacob followed Camron’s line of sight, landing on a perfect Coke-bottle shape. Seriously, her body was like *Ka-dow!*

21 “Dang!” Isaias could barely contain himself.

22 “Who is that?” Camron asked.

21 As she neared them, Jacob noticed her face. She was pretty, with long black hair and lips that seemed to speak to him: “*Hello, Jacob.*” Or was it just his imagination?

22 The side view was even more heavenly. The way this girl’s waist cinched in was unbelievable. He had only seen bodies like this dancing next to Lil’ Wayne on stage. Jacob wondered where this girl had been all his life. Seriously, he thought he had seen everyone at school. More importantly, why hadn’t *she* seen *him*? He was, after all, Jacob Caldon, and he knew that every girl in school, regardless of race, background, or economic status, wanted to be with him.

23 “That’s an umbrella, ella, ella behind,” Kendrick said.

24 “That ain’t real,” Camron finally decided as the mystery girl walked past them.

25 “Yes, it is,” Jacob said.

26 Camron challenged him, “Bet.”

27 “What? You think she’s got some implants?” Jacob asked.

28 “She’s got somethin’ ‘cause it is biologically and mathematically impossible to be that fine in this present world,” Camron joked.

29 “I say it’s real,” Kendrick agreed.

30 Jacob suggested, “I say we find out.” Slowly, Jacob pulled his back from the wall and, in a moment’s time, the four friends followed the girl, laughing and building up nerve all the while.

31 As Stephanie rounded the corner to get to her class, she suddenly felt someone grab her behind and squeeze it. She stopped in her tracks and spun back around the corner to see who had the audacity to touch her. The boys were running away, so she didn’t see their faces. But she did hear the boy wearing the number 76 yell, “It’s real, fool!” as he slapped hands with number 29.

f

32 Miss McCall was trying her best to teach polynomials, but no one was listening.

33 “Miss McCall,” the vice principal’s voice interrupted the wannabe lesson.

34 “Yes.”

35 “Could you please send Jacob Caldon to the office?”

36 Jacob stood and announced, “I’m out.”

37 He moseyed into the main entrance area and stuck his head into the office of Mrs. Holloway, Vice Principal Kerry’s secretary. “Jacob, have a seat outside. Mr. Kerry will be with you shortly.”

38 Jacob plopped himself down on one of the seats. He hadn’t really given much thought to why he was in the office. Jacob was a pretty good student who didn’t get in any serious trouble – at least nothing detention couldn’t handle.

39 Then, Jacob saw Kendrick enter the office. “Hey, what are you in for?” Jacob asked.

40 Kendrick shrugged. “I don’t know. What about you?”

41 Mrs. Holloway broke into their conversation. “Kendrick, Mr. Kerry will see you now.”

42 Jacob waited quietly, and after five minutes, Mr. Kerry came out to escort Jacob to the interior office, where Mrs. Richards, the building principal, was waiting. Mr. Kerry and Mrs. Richards sat across from Jacob with stern expressions.

43 Mr. Kerry began, “Jacob, I received a report this morning that you sexually assaulted a young lady in the hallway.”

44 Jacob snarled his face in disbelief. “What?”

45 “Sexual harassment and sexual assault are serious infractions. I want you to know that we take this report seriously and that you need to be very forthright in this discussion,” Mrs. Richards advised.

46 “I haven’t done anything. Who said I assaulted somebody?” Jacob wondered aloud.

47 “Did you ... touch anyone this morning?” Mr. Kerry asked.

48 Suddenly, Jacob remembered. He remembered that fine girl in the hallway, the one with the umbrella bottom stuffed into those revealing jeans. He didn’t even know her name. Come to think of it, she probably didn’t know his name, either. That’s why they had called in Kendrick. They didn’t have any proof. It was her word against theirs, and there was no way Jacob was going to confess to something they couldn’t prove – especially not today. He couldn’t afford to get in any trouble today, not with the biggest game of the season coming up in just a matter of hours.

49 “I didn’t do anything to anybody,” Jacob said.

50 “So, you’re saying that you did not touch anyone this morning?” Mrs. Richards asked

51 “No,” Jacob said.

52 “No, you didn’t touch anyone, or no, that’s not what you’re saying?”

53 Jacob lied, “I’m saying I didn’t touch anybody.”

54 Then he observed Mrs. Richards making notes on a pad of paper, and Jacob realized he needed to leave himself some room for interpretation. “I mean, if I touched somebody ... like on accident ... I ... I just know I didn’t assault anybody. I mean, I have a lot of homegirls and stuff.”

55 Mr. Kerry was looking down now, rolling his lips between his teeth, and Jacob knew that it was time to stop talking.

56 “Can I go back to class now?” Jacob asked.

57 Mrs. Richards jotted down a few more notes, and then, without another word, she filled out a pass for Jacob to return to class. Jacob stopped off at the restroom to compose himself. He had to stay calm and remember: it was some skank’s word against his.

f

58 When the sophomores were dismissed to go in the pep rally, Stephanie begged Mrs. Davis to let her stay in the computer lab so that she could work on an important paper. “I wish all my students were as conscientious as you are, Stephanie,” Mrs. Davis said. With that, Mrs. Davis left the room and allowed Stephanie some time alone on the computer. Stephanie quickly opened a blank page and began to document everything that happened on Friday morning, just as Mrs. Richards had commanded her to do.

59 “Stephanie,” Mrs. Richards had said, “if we find out that you made this story up, there will be consequences.” According to Mrs. Richards, number 76 denied touching Stephanie’s behind.

60 “Can’t you pull the videotape or something?” Stephanie defended herself.

61 Mrs. Richards nodded, “Only if I have just cause. Can you write up a description of what happened and get it to me by the end of the day?”

62 Stephanie agreed to write follow-up documentation before 3:30. But as she watched her words fill the empty screen, Stephanie had second thoughts about the whole thing. She had to admit that her day had started off badly, and that the hallway incident was simply the straw that broke the camel’s back. When she went to the principal’s office to report that number 76 on the football team had groped her behind, Stephanie hoped that the principal would give the boy detention so that he would think twice about touching another girl’s body. But when Mrs. Richards summoned Stephanie back into the office to double-check the story after the boy denied it, Stephanie could tell that this was more serious than she’d imagined. Mrs. Richards called it a “sexual assault.”

63 Now, as Stephanie finished her written account of the incident and printed it, she regretted everything about this Friday. But Stephanie couldn’t dwell on that now. Somebody was going down, and it wasn’t going to be her. She might regret the way she’d handled things, but the fact still remained: the boy had no right to put his hands on her. Stephanie resolved to do what she had to do. If the law defined what happened as a sexual assault, so be it. Stephanie didn’t write the laws. She only wrote the facts.

f

64 Friday night’s game was a bust. Jacob wasn’t in his zone. He missed three key tackles, enabling South to take the lead early in the first quarter. South was up 14-0 at halftime, and things got worse from there. When the smoke cleared, South won 21-10, and the bus ride home

was excruciating. Once again, Northway had been defeated. Jacob knew that there was no “I” in team, but he couldn’t help thinking the loss was his fault. If only he hadn’t been focused on the problem with that girl.

f

65 Jacob knew immediately that something was different when he walked toward his second period class Monday morning. Mr. Meyerhaul, Jacob’s science teacher, met Jacob at the doorway and instructed him to go to the office.

66 “Let me just put my stuff down,” Jacob said.

67 Mr. Meyerhaul stopped him. “No, Jacob, I think you ought to take your things with you.”

68 Jacob wondered how much worse his life could get. They lost to South, he was accused of sexual assault, and now he was going back to the office to lie again. He had to lie. Otherwise, he might get suspended, which would mean he couldn’t play football, which would mean that he would never be able to buy his Mom her dream house.

69 In an instant, Jacob’s life went from bad to worse. The very woman on his mind – his mother – was sitting in the office with bloodshot eyes.

70 “Mom?”

71 Miss Caldon couldn’t look at Jacob directly. She looked toward the ground and barely managed to whisper, “I can’t believe you’ve done this to me.”

72 “Mom, it’s just a ...,” Jacob’s voice trailed off as he searched for the right words.

73 “They’re calling it an assault, Jacob.”

74 Jacob sat down next to his mother and buried his face in his hands. He could not have imagined this scene in his worst nightmare.

75 Miss Caldon struggled to keep her voice down. “I saw the tape, Jacob. I cannot believe you would do something like this. I raised you to have respect for women. How would you like it if someone grabbed Rebecca’s behind the way you grabbed that girl’s?”

76 Busted.

77 Jacob confessed, “It was a joke, okay? Camron said –”

78 “Do you see Camron in here right now?” Miss Caldon cut him off. “I don’t see anyone here except *you* right now.”

79 Mrs. Holloway motioned for Jacob and Miss Caldon to come to the inner office. Once inside, Jacob nearly fainted. There was Mr. Kelly, Mrs. Richards, and Officer Williams waiting to speak to Jacob and his mother. Everyone was seated, and, finally, Officer Williams spoke. “Before we say anything, I need to advise you and your mother of your rights. Anything you say can and will be used against you, and you don’t have to say anything without an attorney present.”

80 “What is this?” Miss Caldon interrupted. “Is...is my son being charged with a crime?”

81 Right or wrong, Jacob was glad to know that his Mom was on his side.

82 “Miss Caldon,” Mrs. Richards informed Jacob’s mother, “as I told you earlier, Jacob denied having groped the young lady’s behind. So, I had the young lady write up the incident, which gave me just cause for reviewing the videotape. And any time we have to access videotape, we are required to document the reason and, as a matter of protocol, we are required to notify our campus officers.”

83 “Okay, so what’s next?” Miss Caldon asked.

84 Mr. Kelly proceeded, “Well, the bigger problem with this situation is that Jacob is seventeen, and the young lady he touched is fourteen years old.”

85 “She’s fourteen?” Jacob asked in disbelief.

86 Mr. Kelly nodded and continued, “Because of the age difference, Jacob is classified as an adult, and the victim is classified as a child.”

87 Miss Caldon was confused. “So, what are you saying?”

88 “We’re saying that if we can prove that Jacob touched her inappropriately, he may be charged with fondling a child or indecency with a minor.”

89 “That’s ridiculous!” Jacob yelled.

90 “Wait a minute,” Miss Caldon said, hardly able to process the emotions flowing through her body. “Isn’t this something the school can handle with *school* consequences?”

91 “I’m afraid not, Miss Caldon,” Mrs. Richards replied. “This is out of our hands at this point. It’s the State versus Jacob, now.”

92 Miss Caldon rose to her feet and declared, “We’re not saying another word without a lawyer.”

Eleven months later...

93 Jacob finished packing the last box and said goodbye to his bedroom for the last time. He joined his mother and younger sister at the car and stuffed the final cardboard box into the back seat.

94 “I don’t want to move, Mommy,” Rebecca whined again.

95 Miss Caldon rubbed Rebecca’s back for a moment. “I know, Sweetie, but we have to.”

96 Jacob couldn’t bear to witness this exchange. It was all his fault. It was bad enough his mother had to spend her hard-earned money on the only attorney they could afford. Jacob pleaded guilty and avoided serving time, but he had to undergo expensive counseling. He was not allowed to return to Northway High School. Rather than endure the embarrassment of going to an alternative school and trying to explain to football scouts why he wasn’t playing any more, Jacob quietly dropped out of school and took the GED exam. After all he had been through, he was thankful to be a free man. But, as a condition of his plea, Jacob had to register as a sex offender, which meant he would no longer be able to live within two thousand feet of a school. Hence, the reason for the family’s abrupt move.

97 As Jacob snapped his seatbelt, the tears flowed from his eyes. He had given up on acting macho several months ago when Miss Caldon told him that she would have to quit going to school and get a second job in order to pay for his attorney. Since then, Jacob had cried more days than he cared to remember. Now, as they pulled out of the driveway, Jacob shed yet another tear. He could only hope that this move would signify a new beginning for him, and he could only pray that the fateful Friday would not haunt him forever.

f

98 Stephanie packed the last of her belongings and settled them into her father’s car. She couldn’t believe how much her life had changed in the past eleven months. Once people found out that she was the reason Jacob Caldon was kicked out of school, they never let her forget it. From the time she got on the bus until the time she got home from school, Stephanie was constantly harassed about being a snitch, a goody-two-shoes, and making the entire football team lose focus. She had even received notes in her locker threatening to beat her up and give her something to complain about “for real.”

99 When she could take the harassment no more, Stephanie made a call to her father. Though she hated to move five hundred miles from her Mom, Stephanie had to escape the madness of Northway High School and start a new life. She, too, wanted to leave the past in the past.

Multiple Choice Assessment
“It Happened on a Friday”

1. The author of this selection probably wants readers to---
 - A. enjoy reading a story about high school students
 - B. consider the consequences of their actions
 - C. understand how vicious the legal system can be
 - D. learn about why some students drop out of high school

2. Why does the author choose to conclude the selection with scenes that take place eleven months after the incident?
 - A. To provide a clear conclusion to the story
 - B. To show why Jacob’s mother was upset when she visited the school
 - C. To illustrate the devastating effects of the incident on both of the main characters
 - D. To provide an opportunity to write a sequel to the story

3. How does Jacob’s home life compare to his experiences as a football player?
 - A. On the football field Jacob is confident and well-known while at home he is often overlooked.
 - B. At home Jacob is in charge while on the football field he must take orders from his coach.
 - C. On the football field Jacob is mediocre while at home he is praised for his hard work and responsibility.
 - D. At home and on the football field Jacob is aggressive and hard working.

4. What is significant about the football game taking place on the Friday night described at the beginning of the selection?
 - A. Northway High School is defending its state championship.
 - B. Northway High School skipped a game.
 - C. Northway High School is playing against their rival team.
 - D. Northway High School must play the game without Jacob.

5. Which of the following is NOT a reason why Jacob lies about touching Stephanie?
 - A. Jacob wants to be able to play in Friday’s football game.
 - B. Jacob wants to avoid getting suspended from school.
 - C. Jacob believes that the administrators have no proof against him.
 - D. Jacob knows his mother will be mad at him for inappropriately touching a girl.

6. What is Stephanie's motivation for asking to stay in the computer lab during the pep rally?
- A. She wants to finish writing an important paper.
 - B. She does not want to see Jacob and the other football players.
 - C. She wants to work on a project with her computer teacher, Mrs. Davis.
 - D. She needs to write her statement about the incident for the principal by the end of the school day.
7. Which of the following lines expresses a theme of the selection?
- A. *Jacob could flatten the most formidable opponent, but one word from his mom could make Jacob feel one inch tall.*
 - B. *She, too, wanted to leave the past in the past.*
 - C. *If the law defined what happened as a sexual assault, so be it.*
 - D. *Jacob wondered how much worse his life could get.*
8. Read the following dictionary entry
- dwell** \dwell\ v. 1.to live or stay as a permanent resident; reside. 2.to live or continue in a given condition or state 3.to linger over, emphasize, or ponder in thought, speech, or writing (often fol. by *on* or *upon*) 4.(of a moving tool or machine part) to be motionless for a certain interval during operation.
- Which definition best matches the meaning of the word *dwell* as it is used in paragraph 63 of the story?
- A. Definition 1
 - B. Definition 2
 - C. Definition 3
 - D. Definition 4
9. How is the principal able to identify the boy who inappropriately touched Stephanie?
- A. Through Stephanie's written statement about the incident
 - B. By watching the surveillance videotape of the incident
 - C. By asking Kendrick which boy touched Stephanie
 - D. By matching the jersey numbers to the players
10. Jacob's comment to Kendrick and Camron in line 30 can be described as---
- A. A challenge
 - B. A joke
 - C. A criticism
 - D. A threat

11. Paragraphs 5-11 are mainly about—
- A. Stephanie’s sister Ashley
 - B. Why Stephanie is late for school on Friday
 - C. Stephanie’s feelings about her body
 - D. Ashley not keeping up with the family’s laundry
12. Why does Jacob’s mother tell the principal that her son will not “say another word without a lawyer” in paragraph 92?
- A. She knows that the principal is lying about Jacob’s involvement in the sexual assault incident.
 - B. She is angry with the police officer for reading Jacob his rights.
 - C. She is afraid she will be arrested.
 - D. She realizes how serious the charges against Jacob are.
13. Why does Jacob’s family move at the end of the selection?
- A. To escape the embarrassment Jacob feels about sexually assaulting Stephanie
 - B. For Jacob to attend college on a football scholarship
 - C. Jacob is a registered sex offender and he cannot live within 2,000 feet of a school
 - D. The Caldon family is angry with the school for forcing Jacob to drop out and abandon his hopes of playing professional football.
14. Which of the following statements best describes Jacob during his second visit to the principal’s office?
- A. Frustrated
 - B. Fearful
 - C. Confused
 - D. Dishonest
15. From the tone of the final section of the story (paragraphs 93-99), the reader can tell that—
- A. Neither person “won”
 - B. The youngest children suffered the most
 - C. Jacob still holds negative feelings towards Stephanie for “snitching” on him
 - D. Parents can make everything better for their children

Multiple Choice Assessment Answers
“It Happened on a Friday”

1. B
2. C
3. A
4. C
5. D
6. D
7. B
8. C
9. B
10. A
11. C
12. D
13. C
14. B
15. A

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