

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Haunting of Miss Cardamon

*by Margaret Mahy*

Sunlight fell like bars of pirate gold where Miss Cardamon walked, but Miss Cardamon did not see it. A spider's web wagged in the wind as Miss Cardamon walked by, but Miss Cardamon wouldn't wag back. Coming out through a narrow crack in the pavement, grass held up green fingers, but Miss Cardamon wouldn't shake hands with it.

She was a woman in a hurry. Her step was firm, her eyes were stern, her back was stiff and straight. She walked in straight lines whenever she could, and the weedy, wandering ways of the world were unknown to her. Even the city sparrows stood at attention when Miss Cardamon walked by.

Miss Cardamon worked at planning the city. She sat in front of her computer and fed it programs she had written. The computer fed the city-building computers with her instructions and built the city the Cardamon way. She was good at four-lane highways and highrise buildings made of concrete and mirror glass, but for some reason she was not very good at parks or playgrounds.

One day, walking down a perfectly straight sidewalk, Miss Cardamon found she was walking behind a very strange, shaggy woman who looked as if she had bark instead of skin. As for her dress, it was all ragged at the bottom, with lots of bright threads hanging down.

"That's a very unfortunate woman," thought Miss Cardamon. "You can tell she doesn't know how to walk in straight lines."

As she walked, this shaggy woman jingled and jangled because she was wearing a lot of bracelets and very long earrings. She was carrying an armful of colored parcels.

As Miss Cardamon watched, the woman dropped her parcels, which scattered in every direction as if they were setting out in the world to seek their fortunes.

"Oh," cried the woman. "My parcels! Could you help me?"

"I'm sorry," said Miss Cardamon. "I'd like to help you, but I only walk in straight lines, and your parcels have gone in every direction."

The shaggy woman turned slowly and looked at Miss Cardamon. "You poor thing," she said, smiling. "Well, luckily for you, I'm here to help you."

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1. Which is the MOST important event in the passage?

- A. The shaggy woman drops her parcels.
  - B. The shaggy woman offers to help Miss Cardamon.
  - C. Miss Cardamon refuses to shake hands with the grass.
  - D. Miss Cardamon refuses to help the shaggy woman.
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2. The MAIN purpose of this passage is to

- A. tell a story.
  - B. explain something.
  - C. persuade the reader to do something.
  - D. describe a person or thing.
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3. The setting in this passage is

- A. an office.
  - B. a city park.
  - C. a city sidewalk.
  - D. a private home.
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4. Which happened FIRST in the passage?

- A. The shaggy woman dropped her parcels.
  - B. Miss Cardamon said she could not help the shaggy woman.
  - C. Miss Cardamon saw that she was walking behind a shaggy woman.
  - D. The sunlight shone like bars of pirate gold.
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5. Which sentence in the passage contains a simile?

- A. Miss Cardamon worked at planning the city.
  - B. Sunlight fell like bars of pirate gold where Miss Cardamon walked.
  - C. She sat in front of her computer and fed it programs she had written.
  - D. Her step was firm, her eyes were stern, her back was stiff and straight.
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6. What happens last in the passage?

- A. The shaggy woman drops her parcels.
  - B. Miss Cardamon works on her computer.
  - C. Miss Cardamon only walks in straight lines.
  - D. The shaggy woman offers to help Miss Cardamon.
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## Fixing Lunch

One evening, Polly's mom reminded her to make her lunch for the next day. "But I don't know what to fix," Polly said.

"That really surprises me, Polly," Mom said, "You ate peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch all summer. You make them every weekend, and sometimes for after school snacks. Why is this such a hard choice for you?"

"They don't taste as good at school. The jelly comes through the bread and they get all sticky. Then my hands get messy. I just don't like it."

Mom thought for a while. "Let's go in the kitchen and figure this one out," she said to Polly.

They went in the kitchen and got out peanut butter, strawberry jelly, and bread. Mom said, "Tell me how you make your sandwiches."

"I get two slices of bread. I spread one with peanut butter and the other with jelly. Then I put them together and cut them in half. When I'm done, I put them in a plastic bag and in my lunch box," Polly reported.

"Good. Now does the jelly come through both slices of bread?" asked Mom.

"Hmm. Let me think. I think that the jelly only comes through the slice I put it on. The peanut butter slice doesn't get sticky," said Polly. "Wait—that gives me an idea!"

Polly set to work on making a sandwich. She got out two slices of bread. She put peanut butter on both slices, then spread jelly on only one slice. Then she put the slices of bread together and cut the sandwich in half.

"What did you do that was different?" Mom asked.

"I put peanut butter on both slices of bread. That might keep the jelly from soaking through." Polly said.

"Great idea, Polly. I think you may have solved the problem," Mom said.

After school the next day, Mom asked Polly how her sandwich had been. "It was great, Mom. No sticky fingers!" Polly reported.

Mom smiled. "I'm glad you solved that problem, Polly. Sometimes you only have to make a little change to make a big difference."

7. When Polly has a problem in the future, what will she most likely do?

- A. She will pity herself and act gloomy.
  - B. She will ask her mother for advice.
  - C. She will be uncertain what to do.
  - D. She will try to solve the problem.
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8. Which word BEST describes Polly's mother?

- A. worried
  - B. excited
  - C. wise
  - D. peaceful
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9. At the end of the passage, Polly feels

- A. proud.
  - B. nervous.
  - C. relieved.
  - D. full.
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10. The passage takes place mostly at

- A. Polly's school.
- B. Polly's home.
- C. her mother's office.
- D. the grocery store.