

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

Just in Case

As Latray and Keith watched a movie in the living room of their house, a light snow floated down from the sky. Within an hour, the snowfall grew heavy, and the winds became fast-moving gales. The blizzard sure had come quickly. Latray's first thought was his grandmother, who lived with the family. She was resting in the downstairs bedroom, and Latray worried about her medicine that his parents had gone to pick up at the grocery store.

Latray tapped on his grandmother's door and asked, "Are you feeling all right, Grandma?" Before she could answer, the power flickered off and on, and then gave out. Keith called from the living room, sounding scared.

"It's all right," Latray called back, his mind racing to remember where the flashlights and candles were in the house. He then opened his grandmother's door. "Grandma, the power's out, so I'm putting another blanket on you." She thanked him, and Latray set to work.

After adjusting to the darkness, Latray moved back toward the kitchen to check the phone: no service. Keith was in the kitchen, too, saying he was hungry.

"We need to conserve energy, so don't open the refrigerator," Latray said. Keith nodded, looking nervous. "It's all right—just go sit with Grandma, and I'll find supplies," Latray added.

Although Latray appeared calm on the outside, his mind raced with worry. What if his parents were stuck in the snowstorm and Grandma's pill box wasn't full for tonight? What if the power stayed off for days and they had no supplies? He scrambled through drawers and cabinets and finally found one flashlight and a few candles. After collecting himself, he joined Keith and Grandma in her bedroom, where they passed the time by telling stories.

Even though Latray laughed at the stories, he worried because the power had been off for over an hour, and his parents still were not home. Once he found Grandma's pill box and realized she had her evening medication, he helped her take it. Just then, Latray heard the power kick back on, and the phone chimed. The message from his parents said they were safe and on their way. Latray calmed down and decided, starting tomorrow, he would put together an emergency kit just in case.

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Project Needs

Jayla needed an “A” on the upcoming science project in order to participate on the school’s Academic Decathlon team. Unfortunately, her partner on the project, Brayson, never raised his hand in science class. If he spoke to friends, it was usually about basketball. Jayla worried she would have to do most of the work to get the grade she needed to keep a high percentage.

Jayla spotted Brayson at the corner table near the windows that stretched from floor to ceiling. Dusk was already approaching, so Jayla knew they had to work efficiently to be home for dinner. Surprised, Jayla noticed Brayson already had a stack of books.

“Hi, Jayla,” he said. “I thought I’d get some books about different ideas for the project. I need a high grade to be able to keep playing basketball.”

“I need an ‘A,’ too,” she said as she sat down across from Brayson. She eyed the titles, noticing most of the books had to do with black holes. “Black holes, yeah?”

“I hope you don’t mind. I was reading before you came and learned that they can form when a star dies. The gravitational pull becomes so intense that the black hole pulls everything into its center, or point of singularity.”

“Whoa, you’re getting ahead of me, Brayson,” Jayla said. “I had no idea you were so into science because you don’t say much in class.”

“I know—I guess I’m a bit timid,” Brayson said, gazing down at the books.

“I shouldn’t assume things about people. Hey, wouldn’t it be great to make a model of a black hole and show what scientists speculate would happen to objects if they got pulled into the gravitational force of a black hole?”

“That sounds really good! I read that if a star passes a black hole it could be totally destroyed,” Brayson said.

As they worked, Jayla regretted her earlier thoughts about Brayson now that she realized she was wrong about his working habits.

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Maddie and the Homeless Pets

Maddie lives in New Bern, a city near the coast in North Carolina. She likes living in New Bern except when a hurricane moves up the coast. Then she worries about what might happen to her home and family. Maddie knows that the torrential rain of a hurricane often causes flooding.

On one day in September, Maddie's school is closed for safety reasons because of an ominous weather forecast that a hurricane is on the way. Almost ten inches of rain fall on North Carolina. The power is out for hours, but Maddie's family feels lucky. Their home is on high ground and isn't flooded. When the power is restored the next day, Maddie turns on the television for news of the storm. She hears that many dogs and cats were separated from their families and were found wandering around loose after the storm.

The reporter says, "Volunteers and the Humane Society have opened an emergency shelter for lost pets at the county fairgrounds. Anyone who had to leave a home and needs a safe place for a pet can bring it to the shelter to stay for now. The people at the shelter need help from the community and are requesting donations of pet food."

Because Maddie really cares about animals, she wonders what she can do to help. Maybe she should open a lemonade stand. Then she remembers she did that once. She sold a total of ten glasses of lemonade and made \$2.50. It would not be enough to buy much food for the animals.

Next, Maddie considers asking her parents for money. Lately she has heard them talking about saving on expenses. Mom lost her job arranging flowers at the floral shop when it went out of business, and Dad's company cut his hours last week. Asking them for money is definitely not a good idea.

Finally, Maddie gets a good idea. Almost everyone likes pets and must feel sorry for the homeless ones. If she can convince her classmates to donate food, she might collect enough. Because she is artistic, Maddie decides to make a poster. At the top, it says "Help the Pets." She adds a newspaper article about the emergency shelter. Then she draws pictures of cats and dogs. She also gives some examples of kinds of pet food the shelter needs. In the garage, Maddie finds a big cardboard box, which she decorates with pictures of animals.

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In the morning, Maddie takes her poster and cardboard box to school. She asks her teacher, Ms. Jones, if she can put them in the hall near the door to the room. Ms. Jones says, "This is a great poster and great idea!" She helps Maddie find a place that will be most visible. Ms. Jones also suggests that Maddie make a card to deliver with the food so that all the students who collaborate to help the shelter can sign their names. Finally, Maddie ties three colorful balloons to the box to attract attention to the display.

After the first day, there are only four cans of cat and dog food in the box. On the next day, there are more cans and several bags of food. Maddie already needs to find another box to hold all the contributions.

On Saturday, Maddie's dad drives her to the shelter and helps her carry the boxes inside. The people at the shelter are delighted. Their supplies are unusually low because there are so many homeless pets. They invite Maddie to visit with the pets. She even gets to hold a kitten on her lap for a few minutes.

Driving home, Maddie has a new thought. Maybe she could find a permanent animal shelter that takes care of pets all the time and needs donations. It would be fun to have another food drive, especially if everyone pitches in to help.