

Happy Birthday

“Mary!”

Mary heard her mother’s voice and walked to the top of the stairs.

“One minute,” she said. She pulled her hair back and ran down the stairs. Mary walked past her mother, who was looking around impatiently. Mary knew that she would be late if she did not hurry, but she did not care. It was her birthday today.

Ten minutes later, Mary opened the car door and smiled over at her mother who said, “Now do not forget, you will go home with Cindy today.” Mary tried to hide her disappointment. She had really hoped to have a party today, but her mother had to work late tonight. She promised Mary that they could have a party next week, but there was just something special about having a party on your birthday.

“I won’t forget,” Mary replied. She got out of the car and waved goodbye. It did not seem like her mother was very concerned. Mary walked quietly over to the school door and walked inside. She hoped her friends would remember that she was eight today.

“Hi Mary. Happy birthday,” Julie said.

Mary smiled brightly and took out her pencils. “Julie, can you come to my party next week?”

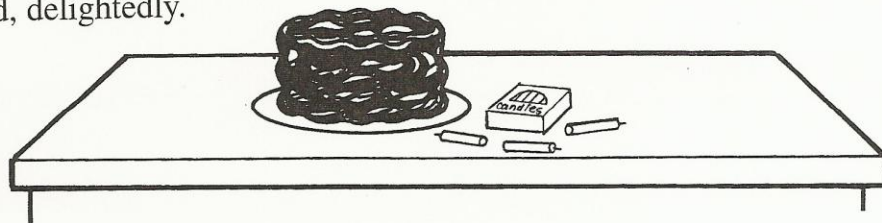
Julie frowned and put her hand on Mary’s shoulder. “I am sorry Mary, but I can’t.”

The rest of the day did not go much better. All of her friends said they could not go to her party next week. By the end of the day, Mary was fighting back tears on the way to Cindy’s house. Cindy tried to cheer her up, but it was no use. Her big day was turning out to be awful. She could not wait until it was time to go home.

Evening came and Cindy’s mother drove Mary home. Mary got out of the car and walked slowly to the porch, dragging her backpack behind her. When she opened the door, the house was dark. Her mom was not even home yet! Her shoulders slumped, and she turned to ask Cindy’s mom to wait.

“Surprise!”

Mary spun around and all the lights in the house went on. Her heart was soaring as she looked around. Her mother and all of her friends were there! The coffee table in the living room was filled high with presents. Gleefully, she ran into the kitchen. Her mother had prepared her favorite meal, lasagna and breadsticks. Atop the counter sat a big chocolate cake that made Mary lick her lips in anticipation. The bubbly voices of her friends filled the room. Mary stood next to her mom and grabbed her hand. “Thank you!” Mary said, delightedly.



Happy Birthday *(cont.)*

Reading Comprehension Questions

After reading the story, answer the questions. Circle the correct answer.

1. At the beginning of the story, why was Mary's mother acting unconcerned about Mary's birthday?
 - a. She did not care about Mary.
 - b. She forgot that it was Mary's birthday.
 - c. She did not want Mary to know about the surprise party.
 - d. She was trying to give Mary a hint about the surprise party.
2. What made Mary lick her lips "in anticipation"?
 - a. The chocolate cake
 - b. The lasagna and breadsticks
 - c. The thought of a birthday party
 - d. The toast she ate in the morning
3. What is the mood of this story?
 - a. First it is sad, then it ends up happy.
 - b. First it is happy, then it ends up sad.
 - c. The whole story is happy.
 - d. The whole story is sad.
4. Why did Mary's shoulders slump when she arrived at home?
 - a. She was always a lazy person.
 - b. She was excited about the surprise party.
 - c. She was sad because she thought that her mom was not home.
 - d. Her backpack was very heavy.
5. In the last paragraph, what does it mean that Mary's friends' voices were "bubbly"?
 - a. Their voices sounded like they were floating.
 - b. Their voices sounded very happy.
 - c. They were talking about blowing bubbles.
 - d. Their voices were making bubbles.