

The Hunt

By ReadWorks

Beeeeep beeeeeep beeeeeep. Aidan's alarm clock rang out with a deafening screech. It was 9 a.m. and much too early for Aidan to be awake on a Saturday. As he lazily sat up and reached for the clock to turn it off, he realized what day it was. His birthday! He rubbed his eyes and stumbled out of bed. The smell of blueberry pancakes hit him as he clambered downstairs, which finally woke him up.

"Happy birthday, Aidan!" his parents excitedly greeted him as he sat down at the kitchen table. His mom turned around to grab a steaming plate of golden pancakes from the counter and set it in front of him. "Hold on, they aren't finished just yet," she told him. He thought she was going to get syrup, but she came back holding a bunch of striped candles.

"Candles in pancakes?" he thought as she pushed 13 candles into the top pancake and lit them with a match. Before his parents could say anything else, he quickly made a wish and blew out all the candles—he didn't want the wax to melt into his delicious breakfast.

"Thank you!" he said with his mouth full. His mom and dad laughed as they watched him scarf down the heap of pancakes.

"Well, even though you have plenty planned for tomorrow, I have a surprise for you today," his dad said. They had planned his party for Sunday, since that was when his older sister was able to come back home from university. "Go get dressed. Your surprise will be waiting for you downstairs when you get back," he told his son.

Aidan rushed upstairs and returned back in five short minutes, with his pant leg still tucked into his sock and a tiny bit of toothpaste at the corner of his mouth.

His mother laughed. "Well, aren't you excited," she said with a smile.

On the kitchen table, Aidan noticed a piece of paper neatly folded into a small square. His dad noticed his gaze. "All right, well, open it up," he told him. Aidan picked it up and unfolded it. On it, his dad had written a short note. He read it out loud. "Just like your favorite literary wizard, this spot is marked by a scar."

"You made me a treasure hunt?!" Aidan asked excitedly. His dad nodded, smiling. He knew Aidan would love it; he was always watching crime movies and reading mystery novels.

Aidan started to think. His favorite literary wizard... that would have to be a character in one of his favorite books: *Harry Potter*. "Obviously," he thought. He fell in love with the series as soon as he started the first book just a couple of years ago. He always secretly identified with the odd boy out who discovered he was a wizard at the young age of 11.

After some thinking, he finally remembered the small lightning mark he had carved into a tree in his backyard after finishing the seventh book in the series—the last one. He ran through the fallen red, orange, and brown leaves—Aidan’s favorite thing about fall. There it was: the scar in the clue. He searched around the tree’s base, looking for another piece of paper. He brushed away the leaves and finally found one tucked between two small rocks. He briskly opened it.

“Green is this poet’s color of choice; red is the color of his language; add some white and blue, and you have his flag. Oh, and your mom’s a fan.”

“This is a tough one,” thought Aidan. He knew he was searching for a poet. He didn’t know what green meant, so he started with red. He thought, “Well, red usually signifies love or anger, but a love poet makes more sense. So red, white, and blue are the colors of his or her flag. America?” He tried to think of some American love poets his mom liked, but he remembered none. After a few minutes, Aidan finally thought of the book on his mother’s nightstand: *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* by Pablo Neruda. “And he’s from Chile, so red, white, and blue!”

Aidan ran through the back door and up to his parents’ room to find the next clue. He then remembered his mom once mentioned that Neruda used to write with green ink. “Perfect,” he thought. The book was right on her nightstand. He opened it, and out fell another piece of paper.

“You’re almost there!” his dad called out from downstairs. Aidan peeled open the clue. “For this last clue, remember when your sister was blue and couldn’t find her favorite Boo.” Aidan started to think about the last part, “her favorite Boo.” He thought, “Boo had to be a name, since it was capitalized. Could it be the name of a toy when she was little? No, Melanie only got upset when she lost a book.” He thought for a while longer. “That’s it!” He remembered the time when Melanie lost *To Kill a Mockingbird*, her favorite book, in which Boo Radley, a mysterious neighbor, rescues the main character from a dangerous fight. She always talked about how the book was an American classic, and Harper Lee, the author, was her idol.

He ran outside to the end of his driveway, which is where the book fell out of her backpack one day on her way home from school. He crouched down and looked around for another piece of paper, but there wasn’t one to be found. Aidan was stumped. At last, he looked up, and out of the corner of his eye, he noticed someone watching him from across the street. He stood up and realized it was his sister.

“Surprise!” she yelled with a huge smile on her face.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What does Aidan realize when he wakes up?

- A It's Christmas.
- B It's his birthday.
- C It's Halloween.
- D It's the first day of school.

2. After breakfast, Aidan rushes to get dressed. What motivates Aidan's actions?

- A Aidan wants to get his surprise.
- B Aidan wants to go outside to play.
- C Aidan wants to eat his pancakes.
- D Aidan wants to see his sister.

3. In the story, Aidan turns 13. What evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?

- A Aidan's mom makes him blueberry pancakes.
- B Aidan's father surprises him with a treasure hunt.
- C Aidan finds three clues on the treasure hunt.
- D Aidan's mom puts 13 candles in his pancakes.

4. What do all three clues have in common?

- A trees
- B wizards
- C books
- D poetry

5. What is this story mostly about?

- A Aidan goes on a treasure hunt.
- B Aidan eats blueberry pancakes.
- C Aidan learns about Pablo Neruda.
- D Aidan has a birthday party.

6. Read the following sentences: "Before his parents could say anything else, he quickly made a wish and blew out all the candles—he didn't want the wax to melt into his delicious breakfast. 'Thank you!' he said with his mouth full. His mom and dad laughed as they watched him **scarf** down the heap of pancakes."

As used in this sentence, what does the word "**scarf**" most nearly mean?

- A look at closely
- B yell loudly
- C demand
- D eat greedily

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Aidan's birthday is on Saturday, _____ his party is planned for Sunday.

- A so
- B but
- C first
- D like

8. Why is Aidan's party planned for Sunday?

9. What does Aidan find at the end of his treasure hunt?

10. Explain whether Aidan is likely surprised to find his sister at the end of the story. Support your answer using information from the story.
