

5RL 5 Overall Structure in Drama (conflict/climax)

"The Birthday Party"

Maria woke early on Saturday morning. She looked around her bedroom, stretched, and yawned. As she began to crawl out of bed, she remembered what today was... the birthday party! Maria quickly changed out of her pajamas and into jeans and a tee shirt. She yanked a comb through her tangled hair a few times and then headed downstairs.

Even though it wasn't Maria's birthday party, but her little brother's, she was still excited. Jacob was turning five today, and her parents had planned a great party. There was going to be a balloon man! This was the part Maria was most excited about. She had been to a friend's party a few months ago where they had a balloon man. He had made Maria a balloon shaped like a dinosaur, and she had kept it up until a few weeks ago when the air had started to go out of it.

"Mom!" Maria called. "What time is the party again?"

"Oh, your brother's friends won't be here for a few hours. Maybe you can help me in the kitchen while you wait."

Maria walked into the kitchen and began helping her mother frost the cupcakes. She kept looking at the clock while they worked. Then, the phone rang.

"Hello?" Maria's mother answered. "Um-hm. Oh, I see. Well, I guess there is nothing we can do about that." She hung up the phone.

"What's going on?" Maria asked her mother.

"Well, that was the balloon man. His son was in an accident, and he has to go to the hospital. He's not going to be able to make the party."

"Nooo!" cried Maria. "He was supposed to come! What will we do at the party without him?"

Maria's mother sat down at the kitchen table and thought. Finally, she got up and went into the garage. Maria could hear her parent's voices through the door, but she couldn't tell what they were saying. Tears began to well up in her eyes as she thought of how boring the party would be without the balloon man.

Finally, Maria's mother came back into the kitchen.

"I told your father about the balloon man not being able to make the party, and he had a great idea. He's going to be the balloon man instead!"

Maria was shocked. Did her father know anything about balloons? Would he know how

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to twist and tie them into strange animals? And what would he wear? The balloon man wore a clown costume, and Maria was pretty sure her father didn't have one. She began to smile as she imagined him dressed up in rainbow colors with a bright red wig on his head.

"Well, does Dad know anything about balloons?" Maria asked.

"You'll just have to wait and see," Maria's mother smiled.

Maria helped her mother finish in the kitchen, and then she went upstairs to get dressed. When she came downstairs, she found many of her little brother's friends sitting on the couch. Suddenly, her father burst out of the downstairs bathroom. He was wearing a clown costume!

"The balloon man is here!" he yelled out.

All of the little kids started to scream. Maria watched in disbelief as her father pulled a packet of balloons out of his pocket and started taking animal requests from the children. Her father knew how to make balloon animals! After he had finished making them for the children at the party, he came over to Maria.

"Dad, I had no idea!" Maria said.

He smiled at her. "And what animal would you like, Maria?" he asked.

"A dinosaur, please," she smiled back at him.

After he had finished making it for her, he gave her a hug. "It's a great party after all, isn't it?"

Maria looked around at all of the children, laughing and eating cupcakes.

"Yes, Dad, it is."

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1) from "The Birthday Party"

Which of the following events is part of the climax of the story?

- A) Maria helps her mother frost cupcakes in the kitchen.
 - B) Maria's dad makes her a balloon animal.
 - C) Maria's dad walks out the bathroom dressed as the balloon man.
 - D) Maria's mother answers the telephone.
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2) from "The Birthday Party"

Which quotation is part of the resolution of the story?

- A) "Maria looked around at all of the children, laughing and eating cupcakes."
 - B) "She yanked a comb through her tangled hair a few times...."
 - C) "Finally, Maria's mother came back into the kitchen."
 - D) "She kept looking at the clock while they worked."
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3) from "The Birthday Party"

What is the main conflict of this story?

- A) whether Maria will get to go to the birthday party
 - B) what will happen after the balloon man cancels
 - C) whether Maria's brother will have fun at his party
 - D) what will happen when the party gets canceled
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"George Washington and His Hatchet"

by James Baldwin

from Fifty Famous People

(an American folktale)

When George Washington was quite a little boy, his father gave him a hatchet. It was bright and new, and George took great delight in going about and chopping things with it.

He ran into the garden, and there he saw a tree which seemed to say to him, "Come and cut me down!"

George had often seen his father's men chop down the great trees in the forest, and he thought that it would be fine sport to see this tree fall with a crash to the ground. So he set to work with his little hatchet, and, as the tree was a very small one, it did not take long to lay it low.

Soon after that, his father came home.

"Who has been cutting my fine young cherry tree?" he cried. "It was the only tree of its kind in this country, and it cost me a great deal of money."

He was very angry when he came into the house.

"If I only knew who killed that cherry tree," he cried, "I would—yes, I would"—

"Father!" cried little George. "I will tell you the truth about it. I chopped the tree down with my hatchet."

His father forgot his anger.

"George," he said, and he took the little fellow in his arms, "George, I am glad that you told me about it. I would rather lose a dozen cherry trees than that you should tell one falsehood."

Baldwin, James. "George Washington and His Hatchet." Fifty Famous Stories Retold. New York: American Book Company, 1896.

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4) from "George Washington and His Hatchet"

What is the main conflict?

- A) George chopped down his father's cherry tree.
 - B) George lied to his father.
 - C) George stole a hatchet.
 - D) George ate all the cherries from the cherry tree.
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