Name: _____ Date: _____

The Whisper in the Vent

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 259 words

Nia lay in bed, listening carefully. The apartment was dark and silent. The heater went tick, tick, tick.

Then she heard a whisper. “Nia,” it murmured, very softly. “Ni-a.”

Nia sat up suddenly. Her heart went thump. The whisper was coming from the heating vent.

She tiptoed to the vent. It was a metal square near the floor. She pressed her ear against it.

“Nia,” whispered the vent again. “Are you there?” Nia ran straight to her dad.

Dad woke up and rubbed his eyes. “A whisper in the vent?” he said. “Let us investigate together.”

They went back to her room. Dad took the cover off the vent. Inside was a long, thin string.

The string went up into the dark. At the bottom hung a little paper cup. Dad held the cup.

He tugged the string, just once. Somebody tugged it back! Dad grinned and took Nia's hand.

“Let us go up,” said Dad. They climbed one flight of stairs. Dad knocked on the door above.

A boy opened it, holding a paper cup. “Hi, I am Theo,” he said. “I just moved in.”

“I did not know anyone,” said Theo. “So I made a phone. I wanted to say hello.”

Nia let out a big breath, then laughed. “You scared me!” she said. “But it is a very good phone.”

Theo's mother said they could use the telephone every evening. Nia and Theo said good night through the cups.

Now, whenever the heater goes tick, Nia smiles. She remembers who is waiting on the other end.

Questions

1. What does Nia hear?

A. A bell
B. A whisper
C. A song

2. Who does Nia tell?

A. Her cat
B. Nobody

C. Her dad

3. Who made the phone?

A. Theo
B. Dad
C. Nia

4. Why did Theo make the phone?

A. He wanted to scare Nia
B. He was new and wanted a friend
C. He was bored

5. What does tugged mean?

A. Dropped
B. Hid
C. Pulled

Words to know

vent: an opening for air
tugged: pulled
whisper: a very quiet voice
tiptoed: walked on toes

Answer key: The Whisper in the Vent

1. B. A whisper
2. C. Her dad
3. A. Theo
4. B. He was new and wanted a friend
5. C. Pulled