

## THE HARMONICA

### W.M. AKERS

Lola's brother is in a band. They practice in the garage every day after school. They make so much noise that Lola can't do her homework. She bangs on the garage door. She shouts, "Be quiet!" But they don't even hear her. Lola can't stand it anymore. She needs to go for a walk.

The woods behind Lola's house are peaceful. Just a hundred feet from her house, her brother's noise fades away. There is a little stream just behind her backyard. On weekends, she and her friends make paper boats to race in the stream. They like to pretend they are pirates, racing on the sea. Next to the stream, she sees a squirrel eating a nut.

"Hello Mr. Squirrel!" she says. The squirrel is scared, and runs away.

Lola hears a bird singing. It sounds like a happy bird. She wonders what kind of bird it is. It is red, with a fuzzy head. Maybe it's a robin? She will have to remember to look it up in the encyclopedia when she gets home. Lola tries to sing along with the bird. She doesn't know the words to his song.

Something shiny beside the stream catches Lola's eye. She jumps over the stream and picks it up. It is a little metal rectangle with holes on its sides. Something is printed on the metal. It is so dirty that she can't make it out. She wipes the grime off with her sleeve. It says, "Old-Fashioned Blues Harmonica." Lola has heard her brother's friends talk about harmonicas. They are a very simple musical instrument. Anyone can play a song on a harmonica, even without a band.

Lola rinses the harmonica off in the stream. With the dirt gone, it looks as good as new. She dries it on her sleeve. Lola puts the instrument to her mouth and blows. It makes a high-pitched, whistling noise. She moves her mouth and blows again. Now the sound is deeper. She covers the back of it with her hand. Now when she blows, it sounds different. She blows harder and softer. She moves her hands and her mouth. Pretty soon, she is playing a song. It may not sound as good as the bird's but the robin doesn't seem to mind.

That night, Lola shows the harmonica to her brother.

"Cool!" he says. "My music teacher taught me how to play the harmonica a little. Do you want me to show you?"

"Sure!" says Lola.

The next time her brother has band practice, Lola plays along. Now that she has an instrument of her own, the noise doesn't sound so bad.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Where does Lola find the harmonica?

- A** by the stream
- B** in the garage
- C** in the stream

2. What event caused Lola to want to leave the house?

- A** Lola finished her homework.
- B** The band was too loud.
- C** She wanted to play with her friends in the woods.

3. At what point in the story does Lola find the harmonica?

- A** at the beginning of the story
- B** in the middle of the story
- C** at the end of the story

4. Lola enjoys being in the woods behind her house. What evidence from the story supports this conclusion?

- A** Lola and her friends pretend to be pirates when they are playing in the woods.
- B** The woods are a hundred feet from Lola's house.
- C** Lola rinses the harmonica off in the stream in the woods.

5. Read the following sentences:

"The woods behind Lola's house are peaceful. Just a hundred feet from her house, her brother's noise **fades** away."

What does the word **fade** mean in this sentence?

- A to sound bad
- B to become less strong
- C to become stronger

6. What is this story mostly about?

- A how bands practice
- B how Lola makes paper boats
- C how Lola found her harmonica

7. Lola cleaned up the harmonica \_\_\_\_\_ she found it by the stream.

- A before
- B after
- C but

8. Complete the sentence below.

Lola can't do her homework because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

9. What does Lola's brother do when Lola shows him her harmonica?

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10. Read the last two sentences of the story:

"The next time her brother has band practice, Lola plays along. Now that she has an instrument of her own, the noise doesn't sound so bad."

Why might Lola think that the noise doesn't sound so bad anymore?

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## Teacher Guide &amp; Answers

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 600

**Passage Summary:** The story begins, "Lola's brother is in a band. They practice in the garage every day after school. They make so much noise that Lola can't do her homework. She bangs on the garage door. She shouts, 'Be quiet!' But they don't even hear her. Lola can't stand it anymore. She needs to go for a walk."

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7. Lola cleaned up the harmonica \_\_\_\_\_ she found it by the stream.

- A before
- B **after**
- C but

8. Complete the sentence below.

Lola can't do her homework because \_\_\_\_\_.

**Suggested answer:**

- her brother's band makes so much noise.
- her brother's band won't stop making noise.

9. What does Lola's brother do when Lola shows him her harmonica?

**Suggested answer:** Lola's brother offers to teach Lola how to play the harmonica.

10. Read the last two sentences of the story:

"The next time her brother has band practice, Lola plays along. Now that she has an instrument of her own, the noise doesn't sound so bad."

Why might Lola think that the noise doesn't sound so bad anymore?

**Suggested answer:** Lola might think that the noise doesn't sound so bad because now she can enjoy playing her harmonica along with the band. She is playing herself so she is creating some of the noise.