

“Just One Touch”

Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

Directions: Read the story. Then answer the questions below.

I am sitting in a chair next to Momma’s bed. I am watching her get ready for a party.

She opens the beautiful jewelry box on her nightstand.

It is the size of a shoebox. It is wooden. It has colorful stones on top. They are red, green, yellow, and blue. To me, the box looks **magical**. It looks like it has special powers.

“Now, you know you must never touch this box, right?” Momma says. I feel like she knows exactly what I am thinking.

*I just want to touch it. I just want to open it.
I just want to try on all the jewelry inside and dance around the room!*

“Yes, Momma,” I say. “I know.”

What do I know?

I know Momma has always told me not to touch the box. She has said it since I was a little girl.

“You are not old enough to wear my jewelry,” Momma says.

I am almost eleven years old! What is the **big deal**?

I know that when Momma puts on the rings and bracelets from the box, she looks different. She seems to glow.

There is one necklace with a yellow stone like a tiger’s eye. When Momma puts this on, she seems to **float** instead of walk. Her feet do not seem to touch the ground. She moves lightly and gracefully. She moves without effort.

Momma kisses me goodnight. She leaves for the party. I run to the window to wave to her, but she is already gone.

Tonight I am very curious.

Just one touch.

I sit on the edge of Momma’s bed. I place my hand on the nightstand. I pause. I think.



My hand moves up and rests on the jewelry box. The box quickly flips open by itself! Jewels fly into the air. They dance around my head. I feel strange. I fall down to the floor.

I wake up in a place I have never seen before.

Questions:

- 1) Where does most of this story take place?
- A. at a party
 - B. in a pretend place
 - C. outside a window
 - D. in Momma's bedroom
- 2) Who is telling the story?
- A. Momma
 - B. a young girl
 - C. Momma's friend
 - D. a pretend person
- 3) At the beginning of the story, where is the girl sitting?
- A. in a chair
 - B. on the bed
 - C. on the floor
 - D. next to the window
- 4) The jewelry box looks **magical**. What does this mean?
- A. It looks simple.
 - B. It looks expensive.
 - C. It looks like it has special powers.
 - D. It looks like it was made a long time ago.
- 5) What does Momma tell her daughter about the box?
- A. that it is magical
 - B. that she must never touch it
 - C. that the jewels are expensive
 - D. that she can touch it when she is older
- 6) Where is Momma going?
- A. to a play
 - B. to a party
 - C. to a concert
 - D. to a magic show
- 7) What does the jewelry box look like?
- I. It is brown.
 - II. It is wooden.
 - III. It is the size of a shoebox.
- A. I only
 - B. I and II
 - C. II and III
 - D. I, II, and III
- 8) Which word best describes how the girl feels about the jewelry box?
- A. angry
 - B. curious
 - C. in love
 - D. scared

Questions (continued):

9) Momma seems to glow when she puts on

- A. makeup
- B. a necklace
- C. the rings and bracelets
- D. nice shoes and a fancy dress

10) What does the girl seem to be thinking about when she sits on the edge of the bed?

- A. going to a party
- B. how to open the box
- C. dancing around the room
- D. if she should touch the box

11) How old is the girl?

- A. 11
- B. 12
- C. 10
- D. 15

12) What does the reader learn about the box?

- A. It is evil.
- B. It can fly.
- C. It is very heavy.
- D. It has special powers.

13) What does it mean if something is a **big deal**?

- A. It is a heavy thing.
- B. It is very important.
- C. It cannot be forgotten.
- D. It can make a lot of money.

14) At the end of the story, what does the girl mean when she says that Momma seems to **float**?

- A. that Momma is swimming
- B. that Momma looks like a boat
- C. that it is difficult for Momma to move
- D. that Momma moves without much effort

15) How might the end of the story make the reader feel?

- I. unsure about what has happened
 - II. curious about the power of the jewelry box
 - III. wondering what will happen next
- A. I only
 - B. I and II
 - C. II and III
 - D. I, II, and III

Answers and Explanations

1) **D**

At the beginning of the story, the speaker says, "I am sitting in a chair next to Momma's bed." From this we can understand that she is in Momma's bedroom. She does not go anywhere else in the story until the very end, when she says, "I wake up in a place I have never seen before." We can conclude that most of the story takes place in Momma's bedroom. This means **(D)** is correct.

Momma goes to a party, but the story does not take place at the party, so **(A)** is incorrect. At the end, the speaker says, "I wake up in a place I have never seen before." This seems like it could be a pretend place. But most of the story takes place in Momma's bedroom. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Near the end of the story, the speaker says that she runs to a window to watch her mother leave, but the story does not take place outside a window. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

2) **B**

In the middle of the story, the speaker says Momma tells her not to touch the box, and that "she has said it since I was a little girl." Then she says that she is almost eleven years old. From these facts we can understand that the speaker is a young girl who is almost eleven years old. This means **(B)** is correct.

The story does not contain information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

3) **A**

At the beginning, the speaker says, "I am sitting in a chair next to Momma's bed." From this we know that the speaker is in a chair. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The story does not contain information to support answer choices **(B)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

4) **C**

magical (*adjective*): possessing or using supernatural powers.

Near the beginning, the speaker describe Momma's jewelry box. She says, "To me, the box looks magical. It looks like it has special powers." From this we can understand that *magical* means having special powers. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

The speaker describes the box as decorated with different colored stones. It does not sound simple, so **(A)** is incorrect. The story does not say whether or not the box was expensive. This makes **(B)** incorrect. The story does not say whether or not the box was made a long time ago. This makes **(D)** incorrect.

5) **B**

Near the beginning of the story, Momma says to the speaker, "Now, you know you must never touch this box, right?" Therefore **(B)** is correct. The speaker

says the box looks magical, but Momma does not tell her that, so **(A)** is incorrect. Momma does not say the jewels are expensive. This means **(C)** is incorrect. Momma does say, “You are not old enough to wear my jewelry,” but she does not say that the speaker will be able to touch the box when she is older. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

6) **B**

At the beginning the speaker says, “I am watching her get ready for a party.” She is talking about Momma. Therefore **(B)** is correct. The story does not contain information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(C)**, and **(D)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

7) **C**

Near the beginning, the speaker describes the jewelry box. She does not say it is brown. She does say “it is wooden,” but that does not necessarily mean it is brown. It could be painted or stained. This eliminates **option (I)**. The speaker does say that the box “is wooden.” This supports **option (II)**. The speaker also says that the box “is the size of a shoebox.” This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

8) **B**

Near the beginning the speaker says, “*I just want to touch it. I just want to open it.*” Near the end, she says, “Tonight I am very curious.” She wants to touch the jewelry box and to open it so she can look inside. She feels curious about the box. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

Angry means mad. There is no point in the story when the speaker seems mad at the box, so **(A)** is incorrect. *In love* means deeply or passionately enamored with. There is no information in the story that tells us the speaker is in love with the jewelry box. Instead, she is curious about it. This makes **(C)** incorrect. *Scared* means afraid. The speaker is not afraid of the jewelry box, so **(D)** is incorrect.

9) **C**

Near the end of the story, the speaker says, “I know that when Momma puts on the rings and bracelets from the box, she looks different. She seems to glow.” From this we can understand that Momma seems to glow when she puts on the rings and bracelets. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

The story does not say that Momma puts on makeup, so **(A)** is incorrect. The story says that Momma seems to “float” when she puts on a necklace, not that she seems to glow. This makes **(B)** incorrect. The story does not say that Momma puts on nice shoes and a fancy dress. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

10) **D**

Near the end of the story, the speaker says, “Tonight I am very curious. *Just one touch.* I sit on the edge of Momma’s bed. I place my hand on the nightstand. I pause. I think.” From this we can understand that the speaker is curious about touching the box. She puts her hand on the nightstand, where the box is. She pauses to think, and then her hand “moves up and rests on

the jewelry box.” From this we can understand that she is thinking about if she should touch the box or not. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

Momma is going to a party, but the speaker is not thinking about going to a party, so **(A)** is incorrect. The speaker is not thinking about how to open the box, but whether or not she should. This means **(B)** is incorrect. At the beginning of the story, the speaker is thinking about dancing around the room, but that is not when she is sitting on the bed. She is sitting on the bed near the end. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

11)**C**

In the middle of the story, the speaker says, “I am almost eleven years old!” *Almost* means close to, but not quite. From this we can understand that the speaker is close to eleven years old, but she is not eleven yet. The age before eleven is ten. Therefore she must be ten years old, so **(C)** is correct.

The speaker is almost eleven, but she is not eleven yet. This means **(A)** is incorrect. Twelve is older than eleven, so **(B)** is incorrect. Fifteen is much older than eleven, so **(D)** is incorrect.

12)**D**

At the beginning, the speaker says, “The box looks magical. It looks like it has special powers.” At the end, after she finally touches it, “the box quickly flips open by itself! Jewels fly into the air.” She says, “They dance around my head. I feel strange. I fall down to the floor. I wake up in a place I have never seen before.” From this we can understand that touching the box has caused strange things to happen, including the speaker waking up in a new place. We can conclude that the box has special powers. This means **(D)** is correct.

The story does not contain information to support answer choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

13)**B**

big deal (*noun*) (*slang*): something of great importance or consequence.

Near the middle of the story, Momma tells the speaker that she is not old enough to wear her jewelry. Then the speaker says, “I am almost eleven years old! What is the big deal?” From this, we can understand that the speaker believes she is already old enough. She does not think it is very important to wait until she is older. But Momma thinks it is a big deal. Momma thinks it is important for her to wait. From this we can understand that big deal means something very important. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

The “big deal” here refers to the speaker not being old enough to wear Momma’s jewelry. It does not refer to a physical thing, so it cannot be heavy. This makes **(A)** incorrect. The speaker could one day forget the fact that Momma thought she was not old enough to wear the jewelry. This means **(C)** is incorrect. Not being old enough to wear Momma’s jewelry is not a thing that cannot make a lot of money. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

14)D

float (*verb*): to move easily or lightly.

Near the end of the story, the speaker says, “There is one necklace with a yellow stone like a tiger’s eye. When Momma puts this on, she seems to float instead of walk. Her feet do not seem to touch the ground. She moves lightly and gracefully. She moves without effort.” From this we can understand that in this context, to *float* is to move lightly and gracefully, without effort. She does not mean that Momma’s feet actually do not touch the ground. She says that they “do not seem to touch the ground.” Here, to float means to seem to move without much effort. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

People do float in water, but Momma here is not in water, so she cannot be swimming. That is a different meaning of *float*. This means **(A)** is incorrect. Boats do float, but nothing in the story suggests that Momma looks like a boat here. That is also a different meaning of *float*. This makes **(B)** incorrect. If Momma moves lightly and gracefully, without effort, it is easy for her to move. It is not difficult. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

15)D

At the end of the story, the girl touches the jewelry box. Then “the box quickly flips open by itself! Jewels fly into the air.” She says, “They dance around my head. I feel strange. I fall down to the floor. I wake up in a place I have never seen before.” The speaker does not tell us exactly what has happened or where she is. This could make the reader feel unsure about what has happened. This supports **option (I)**. Near the end of the story, the speaker says that tonight she is “very curious” about the jewelry box. Then, she touches it and feels like she wakes up in a new place. She does not say what the power of the jewelry box is. This could make the reader feel curious about the power of the box, too. This supports **option (II)**. The story ends in a place that leaves the reader full of questions. It is hard to predict where the speaker is or what will happen. It is reasonable to believe that this could leave the reader wondering what will happen next. This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(D)** is correct.