



The Earthquake

It was just another ordinary Tuesday. Damien and Alfie- who had been best friends since nursery- were sat slumped in their chairs at the back of Mr Arnold's tedious Geography lesson. Both boys were dressed in their navy blue school uniforms. Damien, who was the older of the boys by two months, was always dressed smartly and had excelled in all subjects since he could remember. Alfie, however, found school difficult: he would often get in trouble for being rude to the teacher; always refused to finish his work; and his school uniform was another matter entirely! This school uniform- which would often remain relaxing at home- had not seen an iron since the start of September and you could almost always guarantee that he would have a rip or two in his trousers from climbing into someone's garden or scaling the school walls! Every so often, Mr Arnold would try to get Alfie to behave but he just didn't like school. The only subject he liked was Geography and even then it had to be on earthquakes and volcanos.

After another lesson, where Alfie had managed to remain in class and Damien had answered almost every question correctly, the boys made their way outside into the vast, colourful playground and waited to be given their team. It was the middle of summer and the weather forecast hadn't been wrong; it was another scorching hot day. All morning, the glistening rays of the sun had danced down on to the playground. There wasn't a cloud in sight.

"I bet he picks you first," joked Alfie knowing that Damien would almost certainly be picked last.

"They only pick you because they're scared of you, Alfie," retorted Damien, slightly hurt that he was being targeted by his supposed best friend.

A huge smile of satisfaction spread across Alfie's face when he heard his name picked before Damien's. It was the fifth day in a row now. Damien- who was used to this by now- covered his annoyance well and pretended that it hadn't affected him.

It was almost the end of break when Alfie realised that he had scored all of his teams goals. Just as the bell rang, thick grey clouds consumed the sky and blocked out any of the sunlight.

"Quickly boys, get inside before it starts to rain," roared Mr Arnold as he tried to quickly sip the last of his cold coffee.

But it was too late: the heavens had opened and a downpour of rain slashed down through the sky hitting the boys from every angle.

"Race you slow coach," teased Alfie as he got ready into a sprint position.



Before Alfie had time to set himself, he fell to the floor.
“HaHa!” roared Damien, until he realised what had happened.

He had fallen for a reason. The whole ground beneath their feet was shaking. Damien found it difficult to stand and realised that they were in the middle of an earthquake. The blood drained from his face and everything in front of him seemed to slow down to an unrecognisable blur. His heart was racing at a million-miles-an-hour and he stood frozen to the spot.

“Hurry boys, get over here,” shouted Mr Arnold as he tried to keep his balance and keep his nerves calm.

Alfie knew exactly what was happening: he’d experienced this before. Quickly, he dashed over to the teacher being careful to keep away from the school building that was beginning to sway violently. Underneath their feet, the school playground was beginning to crack and crumble with every new vibration. Immediately, Alfie looked around for his friend but he wasn’t there. His heart sunk into the depths of his chest. Despite regularly teasing him, he was still his best friend. What would he do without him?

Then, out of the corner of his eye, he spotted him, stood frozen to the spot near to the reception area. Just as he was about to get ready to sprint over to him the shaking stopped.

“Damien, you big lemon. Get over here!” shouted Alfie, “It’s not safe over there!”

Damien didn’t say anything; it was like he was in his own little bubble. The howling wind had picked up, the rain continued to pour down and ominous clouds continued to dominate the sky. With every passing minute, the clouds grew darker and darker and the once distant rumble of thunder edged ever closer to the school. Damien knew what to do – he had to get inside! It was the only way he could be safe. As quickly as he could, he darted towards the school reception.

“Nooooooooooooooooo!” screamed Alfie at the top of his voice. “Get away from there!”

Just as Damien barged through the front doors of the school, the earthquake started again. This time the ground shook even more violently, the school building began to collapse as the foundations gave way underneath and a large crack sliced through the football pitch. Alfie, who was consumed with fear and adrenaline, sprinted over to his friend, knowing that it wouldn’t be safe inside the school building. But it was too late. Just as he arrived at the door, the ground shook even more violently than before. The school windows shattered into millions of tiny fragments and the ceiling of the reception area collapsed on top of Damien.

“AHHHH!”

“Where are you? Where are you hurt?” squeaked Alfie, realising his friend could be in serious trouble.

Silence. Nothing. Not a sound apart from the continual shattering of glass coming from the windows above. A whirlwind of thoughts rushed through his mind. What had happened to him? Why did he go inside? Tears welled up in Alfie’s eyes and he knew that this could be his worst nightmare. He collapsed to his knees, smashed his fist into the ground and let out an almighty scream.



“HELP!HELP!HELP!” cried a muffled voice.

Alfie jumped to his feet and raced into the building, without a second thought. Like an uncontrollable bull, he charged into the reception area and began to quickly manoeuvre through the fallen debris from on top of his friend. His heart steadied and his face lit up, when he realised that his friend was underneath the rubble but he was still moving. Damien didn't say a word. His face was covered in plaster and open wounds and his school uniform was now more of a ruby red than a navy blue. As carefully as he could, he lifted his friend up and carried him to one side. He didn't seem too badly injured apart from a cut just below his knee on his left leg. Alfie knew that the earthquake might not be over so he wrapped his jumper tightly around Damien's leg, placed him over his shoulder and carried him outside to safety. Would anyone ever believe they'd been through such a devastating event? .



Questions

1. What impression does the author give about the two boys in the first paragraph? Why? (3 mark)

2. Why is Damien hurt by Alfie's comment in the second paragraph? (2 marks)

3. "...thick grey clouds consumed the sky and blocked out any of the sunlight..."

a) What is the name of the literary device being used with the term 'consumed'? (1 mark)

b) Why is this an effective description? (1 mark)

4. In the fourth paragraph, select two examples which shows the reader that Damien was feeling anxious and confused? (2 marks)



Questions

5. How might Alfie know what was happening and how to react? Why? (2 marks)

6. What does it mean by the phrase: '...it was like he was in his own little bubble...' (1 mark)

7. How is the weather mimicking the action in the fifth paragraph?

8. How do Alfie's emotions contrast between the last two paragraphs? Why?

9. Place these events in the correct order (1-7).

Alfie carried Damien out to safety.

The weather got worse and the thunder came closer.

Alfie teased Damien about being picked for the team.

Alfie and Damien are sat in the back of class.

Mr Arnold told the boys to hurry up.

Alfie started to cry, thinking Damien was seriously injured.

Alfie sprinted over to help Damien.

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Answers

1. What impression does the author give about the two boys in the first paragraph? Why? (3 mark)

Damien and Alfie are very different despite being best friends.

Children to refer to at least two of the following aspects to justify their reasons:

- Damien was always dressed smartly whereas Alfie rarely wore his uniform and was often ripped;**
- Damien excelled in all subjects whereas Alfie found school difficult and didn't put much effort into his work, often not finishing it.**
- Damien works hard in all lessons whereas Alfie only likes geography.**

2. Why is Damien hurt by Alfie's comment in the second paragraph? (2 marks)

Alfie is teasing Damien by making sarcastic remarks about being selected when he knows that Damien will be one of the last selected. He is hurt because his friend is highlighting his weaknesses and he wouldn't expect this from a friend.

3. "...thick grey clouds consumed the sky and blocked out any of the sunlight..."

a) What is the name of the literary device being used with the term 'consumed'? (1 mark)

Personification

b) Why is this an effective description? (1 mark)

It is effective as it suggests the clouds are taking over the sky in a commanding manner which links to the feeling of vulnerability which soon the main characters will be feeling due to the earthquake.

4. In the fourth paragraph, select two examples which shows the reader that Damien was feeling anxious and confused? (2 marks)

- Blood drained from his face

- Everything felt like it was a blur

- His heart was racing

- He was frozen to the spot

- He was frozen to the spot



Answers

5. How might Alfie know what was happening and how to react? Why? (2 marks)

He'd experienced an earthquake before so he knew how to keep himself safe.

6. What does it mean by the phrase: '...it was like he was in his own little bubble...' (1 mark)

He was in his own world, he was distracted and not concentrating to what was happening.

7. How is the weather mimicking the action in the fifth paragraph?

The weather has got worse and become more violent as the earthquake has got worse. At the beginning of the story, the weather is pleasant whereas now it is the opposite to reflect that the situation is scarier and dangerous. The wind had increased, the rain was heavier, the clouds were darkening and the thunder was getting closer. This all shows that the setting is more threatening to the safety of the characters.

8. How do Alfie's emotions contrast between the last two paragraphs? Why?

Alfie was terrified to start with as he doesn't know where Damien is or if he is still alive. Tears start to well up in his eyes showing that he is upset and he is frustrated with the events that have occurred as he smashes his fist into the ground and screams. However, by the last paragraph he is feeling more hopeful as he hears Damien shouting for help and finds his body in the rubble. Although he is still worried about his friend due to his injuries, he is able to pick him up and take him to a safer place so he will feel relieved.

9. Place these events in the correct order (1-7).

Alfie carried Damien out to safety.

7

The weather got worse and the thunder came closer.

4

Alfie teased Damien about being picked for the team.

2

Alfie and Damien are sat in the back of class.

1

Mr Arnold told the boys to hurry up.

3

Alfie started to cry, thinking Damien was seriously injured.

5

Alfie sprinted over to help Damien.

6

