

Excerpt adapted from L. Frank Baum's "The Girl Who Owned a Bear"

Read the excerpt below. Then answer the questions on the next page.

Jane Gladys is at home while her mother and father are out. A strange, bald-headed man stops by with a curious mission. The man is a book agent disgruntled with the girl's father, and he's decided to exact his revenge by giving Jane Gladys a large and mysterious book with her name written in it.

When the door had closed behind the strange man, Jane Gladys sat down and glanced at the book. It had a red cover, and the word "Thingamajigs" was written across the front in big letters. Then she opened it, curiously, and saw her name written in large black letters on the first page.

She turned the page and saw a picture of a clown dressed in green and yellow. The book trembled in her hands, and suddenly the clown jumped out of it and stood upon the floor beside her, becoming instantly as big as any ordinary clown. Next, from the opposite page, a monkey, a donkey, and a leopard all jumped into the room, leaving only blank pages behind. Perhaps you can imagine how startled Jane Gladys was, and how she stared at the creatures who had just leaped out of the book. As the clown turned around to take a look at the room, Jane Gladys laughed in spite of her astonishment.

"Why, the back of you is all white!" cried the girl.

"Quite likely," he returned, in an annoyed tone. "The artist wasn't expected to make the back view of me, for that was against the page of the book."

While pictures from a book coming to life should be enchanting, these creatures all seemed to be in a bad mood. The clown looked sulky and sat down upon a chair so Jane Gladys couldn't see his back. The donkey complained that the artist had drawn his legs all different sizes, which caused him to wobble when he walked. The monkey grumbled about his extremely large ears, and the leopard snarled that he had been drawn with neither teeth nor claws.

Jane Gladys couldn't help but laugh at the sight of the silly-looking animals. Just then, the book slipped from the girl's lap. Before it fell to the floor, she caught a glimpse of a fierce grizzly bear looking at her from one of the pages. The book landed with



a crash, and beside it stood the enormous grizzly. Jane Gladys and all of the creatures shuddered at the sight of the bear, but the leopard remarked enviously, "At least he has claws and teeth."

"And I know how to use them, too," the grizzly responded in a low, growling voice. "If you read in that book, you'll find I'm described as a horrible, cruel, and remorseless grizzly, whose only business in life is to eat up little girls—shoes, dresses, ribbons and all! And then, the author says, I smack my lips and glory in my wickedness."

The clown, monkey, donkey, and leopard weren't the least bit sorry to hear this, for they were all still cross with Jane Gladys for having laughed at them. Jane Gladys, though, was very frightened on hearing this. The bear stood up and balanced himself on his rear legs. He advanced slowly toward Jane Gladys. But before the grizzly reached her, the child had a sudden thought, and cried out:

"Stop! You must not eat me. It would be wrong."

"Why?" asked the bear, in surprise.

"Why, my name's on the front page. I own the book, and you all belong inside of it. So you must go back there!"

The bear hesitated. "Then, of course, I can't eat you," he grumbled. "You are as disappointing as most authors are."

"The fault lies with yourselves," said Jane Gladys, severely. "Why didn't you stay in the book, where you were put?"

There was a swish and a whirr and a rustling of leaves, and an instant later the book lay upon the floor, looking just like any other book, and Jane Gladys's strange companions had disappeared.

This story should teach us to think quickly and clearly upon all occasions; for had Jane Gladys not remembered that her name was in the front of the book, the bear probably would have eaten her.

Answer the following questions about the story adapted from L. Frank Baum’s “The Girl Who Owned a Bear.”

1. Why did the author include the section in italics at the end of the story?

- a. to enhance the plot
- b. to convey the setting
- c. to serve as the moral
- d. to add additional conflict



2. What was the author’s purpose in writing this story? What clues from the text helped you determine this?



3. What words does the author use to create a threatening tone when describing the bear?



4. Read the lines from the story.

*“The fault lies with yourselves,” said Jane Gladys, severely.
 “Why didn’t you stay in the book, where you were put?”*

What tone is conveyed with these words?

- a. sternness
- b. sadness
- c. curiosity
- d. worry

5. Why are the clown, monkey, donkey, and leopard all in a bad mood?



6. According to the author, what characteristic does Jane Gladys possess that saves her?

- a. She is courageous.
- b. She is quick-witted.
- c. She is considerate.
- d. She is humorous.



7. What might Jane Gladys tell her parents about her experience when they return home? Do you think they will believe her?



8. If you were in Jane Gladys’s position, how would you have handled the situation? Give reasons to support your answer.
