

## An Understanding

By ReadWorks

The car bumped along the gravelly asphalt road, and Michaela's seat belt pressed into her stomach uncomfortably. Outside, the scenery had been green and leafy for hours. At first, it had been exciting and beautiful—Michaela had never seen so many trees and so much underbrush before. But after five hours stuck in a car with her younger twin brothers and nothing to look at but a bunch of plants, Michaela was ready to scream. Suddenly the idea of a whole entire week in the middle of a forest, hiking and looking at waterfalls with just her family, did not seem like a fun prospect. Why couldn't they just go to the beach like all of her friends' families?

"And all was well," the British voice from the *Harry Potter* book on tape said.

"I never knew Harry Potter was so *moral*," Michaela's mom said, turning around in her seat to smile at Michaela, Zack, and Steve. "Did you guys like it?"

"It was good," Michaela said, staring out the window.

Both Zack and Steve had (thankfully) fallen asleep, one head leaning on the other. The best part about being a twin, Michaela thought (and she would know, having watched her little brothers for five straight years), was that you always had a shoulder rest that was at the exact height you needed.

"Sadly, there are no more audiobooks," her mom said, turning back to the front.

"That's a tragedy," Michaela's dad said, as he pulled the car into a rest stop. "I have to stretch my legs. Michaela, do you want a chocolate bar?"

Michaela jumped out of the car and followed her dad to the gas station store. There was the only car at the rest stop. Stretching, Michaela leaned back to look up at the tops of the trees.

"Pretty, huh?" her dad said.

"Yeah, it's okay," Michaela shrugged.

Her dad smiled. "Ah, are we at that age yet?"

"What age?"

"When you stop talking to Mom and me. They warned me about this!" He picked her up by her armpits and swirled her around like he used to do when she was a kid.

"Dad, stop!" she shrieked.

“No one is around, I promise,” he said, setting her down gently. He playfully punched her arm. “Will that be a Reese’s peanut butter cup for the lady?”

She smiled and nodded.

He went in to buy the candy, and Michaela leaned up against the brick gas station and stretched her legs. She looked back at the car: it seemed that Zack and Steve were awake and pulling each other’s hair. Their mom had gotten out of the car, and she was trying to stop them from the open door.

“What hooligans,” her dad said, letting the gas station door close behind him.

“They’re so annoying,” Michaela said.

“Yeah, but they’re cute at least, right?” her dad said, throwing his arm around her shoulders and steering her back to the car.

“Kind of,” Michaela grumbled, taking the candy out of the plastic shopping bag her dad was holding.

“I know they’re hard to handle. But just try to ignore them... We’ll let Mom deal with them on this trip, huh? Either way, you’ll get used to them,” he said, and laughed. “I got used to Mom!”

“What’s that?” Michaela’s mom asked.

“Nothing, honey!” her dad said, grinning. Michaela held back a giggle and climbed into the car, feeling a teeny bit better about this week-long trip to the middle of nowhere.

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

1. How long has Michaela been in the car with her family?

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2. How does Michaela feel about spending a week in the forest with her family at the beginning of the story?

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3. Read these sentences from the story.

"Her dad smiled. 'Ah, are we at that age yet?'

"'What age?'

"'When you stop talking to Mom and me. They warned me about this!' He picked her up by her armpits and swirled her around like he used to do when she was a kid.'

"'Dad, stop!' she shrieked.

"'No one is around, I promise,' he said, setting her down gently. He playfully punched her arm. 'Will that be a Reese's peanut butter cup for the lady?'"

Based on this evidence, how can Michaela's dad best be described?

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4. Who makes Michaela feel "a tiny bit better" about the trip?

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5. What is the main idea of this story?

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6. Read the sentences and answer the question.

"Outside, the scenery had been green and leafy for hours. At first, it had been exciting and beautiful—Michaela had never seen so many trees and so much underbrush before."

What does the word "scenery" most nearly mean as used in this text?

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7. What word or phrase best completes the sentence?

Michaela has been stuck in a car with her younger twin brothers for five hours with nothing to look at but a bunch of plants. \_\_\_\_\_, she is ready to scream.

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8. Michaela’s dad says he knows that the twins can be hard to handle. How does he tell Michaela to respond to the twins?

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9. What causes Michaela to hold back a giggle at the end of the story?

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10. Why does Michaela feel better about the family trip at the end of the story? Support your answer using evidence from the text.

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