

FAT GIRL

“You better run fat girl,” shouted a rude freshman from the window of the yellow school bus.

“Fat Girl”

Before You Read: Vocabulary

Match the vocabulary word with the definition.

1. abashed____

2. euphoria__

3. ephemeral____

4. ensue____

5. equipped____

6. respite_____

7. cryptic_____

8. plethora ____

9. faux pas_____

10. contrite_____

11. condone_____

12. melancholy_____

13. trepidation_____

A. prepared

B. not easily understood; having a secret meaning

C. a social mistake

D. a feeling of overwhelming joy

E. remorseful (to feel bad about doing something)

F. to overlook

G. to occur as a result of something

H. an overabundance (having more than enough of something)

I. sad

J. a break (example: a break from working)

K. fear

L. short-lived

M. embarrassed

Write a sentence with each word.

Before You Read: Reflection

- Have you or any of your friends ever been ridiculed in public?
- Have you ever witnessed one of your classmates being ridiculed in public?
- Can you think of an instance in a story, a movie, or a television show in which one of the characters was ridiculed?

Write about 1-2 paragraphs in which you describe one of the above situations.

- What would you do if you were being publicly ridiculed?
- What would you do if one of your friends were publicly ridiculed?

Write about 1-2 paragraphs in which you describe one of the above situations.

While You Read: Literary Terms

Major Character – the main characters in the story

Minor Character – characters that have a much smaller role than the major characters (They are not who the story is about. These characters are usually one-dimensional, and they are not as developed as the main characters.)

Protagonist – the main character in the story (one of the major characters)

Antagonist – the character who opposes the main character

Fat Girl

“You better run fat girl,” shouted a rude freshman from the window of the yellow school bus.

Isabel Clarke was running to catch up with the bus as it began to pull away. When she made it to the steps of the bus, she was sweaty and embarrassed. Isabel willed herself not to cry as she walked down the narrow aisle of the school bus.

Isabel was completely **abashed**; she held her face down as the bus erupted in laughter. She wished that she could make herself disappear.

The ride to school was the longest of her life. People were still giggling as they got off the bus and headed into Ocean Drive High School.

Isabel met up with her best friends Kristen Ito and Eric Achebe in the cafeteria. The three of them had been best friends since third grade, and they called themselves the United Nations. They all originated from different countries. Isabel, who was born in Brazil, was adopted when she was three. Eric’s parents emigrated from Nigeria, and Kristen’s grandparents emigrated from Japan.

“Why so glum, chum?” asked Kristen as Isabel sat down beside her at the cafeteria table. Kristen was eating a sausage biscuit and a doughnut. That girl seemed to always be eating, and she never gained weight. She was a size zero on her heaviest day.

“Nothing,” she said. “I am just tired. I stayed up all night studying for my AP Chemistry exam.”

“I know when there is something wrong with you,” said Eric with his soft musical Nigerian accent. “And it is more than an AP Chemistry exam.”

“Yeah, you are a beast in chemistry,” said Kristen, who had no trace of Japan in her voice.

“I don’t wanna talk about it,” she said as her eyes began to water. She tried to look away, but it was too late. Eric had seen her sad brown eyes.

“I am just tired of being fat,” she said. Then she told them what had happened on the bus earlier that morning.

By the time she finished telling the story, Kristen was in tears.

Eric put his arms around her and said, “It will be all right; we love you.”

“Yeah, we love you,” echoed Kristen.

The bell rang. As Eric gathered his books to leave for his first period class, he gave Isabel a hug. “It will be all right, darling; I will fix this for you.”

“Thanks Eric,” said Isabel as she headed to her AP Chemistry class.

When she got to Chemistry class, she squeezed herself into the desk and waited for Ms. Rogers to begin class.

“All right guys, clear your desks,” she said cheerfully. “This test will probably take the whole class period.” Mrs. Rogers was a thin black woman with black-rimmed glasses and a mass of amazingly rambunctious kinky hair.

The class began to groan.

“Wait a minute,” said Ms. Rogers. “Nobody held a gun to your head and made you sign up for AP Chemistry. Don’t be getting mad with me.”

The class giggled at Mrs. Rogers’ sarcastic humor as she passed out the tests.

Isabel was able to forget about her worries as she balanced equations on her chemistry test. Isabel loved chemistry. Finally, the world made sense.

She finished her test with about 10 minutes to spare; then she looked over her answers. She glanced around the room. Poor Nelson, whose glasses were bigger than he was, was sitting in the back of the room literally sweating as he feverishly worked out the equations.

Just as Isabel was about to check over her work for the third time, the bell rang.

As Isabel handed Mrs. Rogers her test, she smiled because she knew she had aced that test.

“You are smiling too hard,” Mrs. Rogers joked. “I knew this test was too easy.”

“Please stop smiling, Isabel,” said nervous Nelson. But at that moment Isabel couldn’t have stopped smiling even if she wanted to.

However, Isabel’s **euphoria** was **ephemeral**. As soon as she walked out of into the hall, she realized that she was back in the cruel, cruel world of high school. And she remembered that the bus ride home from school was going to be horrible.

In Isabelle’s second period class, Mr. Jenkins was giving a boring lecture on the Cold War. All Isabel could think about was the war that would **ensue** when she got on the bus later that afternoon; the war that she was not **equipped** to fight.

After second period, Isabel headed to the cafeteria to meet Eric for lunch. They were only sophomores, so they didn’t have off-campus privileges. To make matters worse, Kristen had a different lunch period than the two of them. Regardless, they tried to make the best of their 30-minute **respite**.

When she found Eric, he was already gulping down his second bowl of chili. “Eric, why are you eating all of that chili?” asked Isabel as she sat down beside him. “I wouldn’t want to be in your afternoon classes.”

“Chili is a wonderful thing,” he said **cryptically**. “It solves a **plethora** of problems.”

“Okay, I’ll let you sit here with your problem solver while I go get some lunch.”

When Isabel came back to the table with her lunch, Eric raised an eyebrow.

“You know that is not good for you at all,” he said, eyeing Isabel’s French fries and chocolate cake.

“Eric I really don’t...”

Before Isabel could finish her sentence, Eric realized his **faux pas**.

“I probably could have picked a better time to say that,” said Eric **contritely**. Eric had a bad habit of sticking his foot directly in his mouth. But his true friends knew his heart was in the right place, so they were easily able to **condone** it.

Before they knew it, the bell rang; the oasis in their day, lunch, was over. Isabel headed to her third period chorus class, where she was able to drown out her sorrows in song. During her fourth period anatomy class, she was in a **melancholy** haze. She was filled with such **trepidation** that she could not focus on the endocrine system. She could only think of the cruel laughter that would taunt her on the bus.

When the final bell rang, Isabel rushed to the bus. She was trying to be the first person there; she was hoping that no one would notice her. When she there, there were only two or three students on the bus. They were too busy fidgeting with their smart phones to pay her any attention.

Isabel breathed a momentary sigh of relief as she sat down in the very back of the bus. She opened up her anatomy book and tried to review the day’s lesson.

A few minutes later, she heard a familiar Nigerian voice.

“Is this seat taken?”

“Why are you riding this bus?”

“I told you I was going to fix the problem?”

“But Eric, you can’t fix this problem,” she said. “You need...”

Before she could finish her sentence, the rude freshmen with the sagging pants walked on the bus.

He wanted to pick up where he left off. “Hey, where that big girl at...”

As soon as he got the words out of his mouth, Eric let one rip.

“Oh, no, did everybody hear that?” Eric pretended to be hurt and **abashed** as the bus erupted into laughter. “I knew I shouldn’t have eaten that chili for lunch.” He held his stomach and let another one rip.

After the third one, the bus driver demanded that he get off of the bus.

They were about two miles away from Isabel’s house.

Eric got off of the bus, and Isabel followed him.

“Eric, you are the best friend ever,” said Isabel, when they were safely off of the bus.

“I told you I would fix the problem.”

Isabel laughed. “You almost killed me during the process, but you definitely fixed the problem.”

“I almost killed myself, too,” said Eric. “What a horrible smell.”

The sound of laughter and friendship trailed behind them as they walked together to Isabelle’s house.

After You Read: Reading Comprehension, Literary Analysis, Creative Writing and Research

Reading Comprehension

1. Why do Isabel and her friends call themselves the United Nations?
2. Why does Eric eat a lot of chili at lunch?
3. Why does Eric “let one rip” on the bus?
4. Who are the major characters in the story? Who are the minor characters?
5. Who is the protagonist in the story? Who is the antagonist in the story?

Literary Analysis

6. What do Isabel, Eric, and, Kristen have in common? What impact does this have on their friendship?
7. Choose one of the major characters in the story, and choose an adjective to describe him or her. Write 1-2 paragraphs in which you explain why you chose that particular adjective. Use specific examples from the text.
8. Choose one of the minor characters and write 1-2 paragraphs about him or her. What purpose does he or she serve in the story?

Creative Writing

9. Choose one of the minor characters, and write the story from his or her perspective.

Research

10. Isabel, Eric, and Kristen call themselves the United Nations because they (or their families) come from different countries. Research one of the following countries and write 2-4 paragraphs about your findings: Brazil, Nigeria, or Japan.

“Fat Girl”-Answer Key

Before You Read: Vocabulary

Match the vocabulary word with the definition.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
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| 2. euphoria_D__ | B. not easily understood; having a secret meaning |
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| 11. condone__F__ | K. from working) |
| 12. melancholy__I__ | L. fear |
| 13. trepidation_L__ | M. short-lived |
| | N. embarrassed |

Write a sentence with each word.
(Answers will vary.)

After You Read: Reading Comprehension, Literary Analysis, Creative Writing and Research

Reading Comprehension

1. Why do Isabel and her friends call themselves the United Nations?
They all originate from different countries: Brazil, Nigeria, and Japan.
2. Why does Eric eat a lot of chili at lunch?
He eats a lot of chili so he will be able to “let one rip” on the bus later on that afternoon.
3. Why does Eric “let one rip” on the bus?
He does this to divert the attention away from Isabel, so she won’t get picked on.
4. Who are the major characters in the story? Who are the minor characters?
Major characters: Isabel, Eric.
Minor characters: Kristen, Mrs. Rogers, Nervous Nelson, the rude freshman on the bus who calls Isabel fat
5. Who is the protagonist in the story? Who is the antagonist in the story?
Isabel is the protagonist and the rude freshman who ridicules her is the antagonist. Students may also say that all of the people on the bus are the antagonist because they laugh at Isabel, and they do not try to help her.

Literary Analysis

6. What do Isabel, Eric, and, Kristen have in common? What impact does this have on their friendship?
Isabel, Eric, and Kristen all originate (either them or their families) from different countries. They are all relatively new to this country, And though they come from different ethnic groups, they can all relate to being a minority, to being different. There isolation bonds them.
7. Choose one of the characters in the story, and choose an adjective to describe him or her? Write 1-2 paragraphs in which you explain why you chose that particular adjective. Use specific examples from the text.
(Answers will vary.)
8. Choose one of the minor characters and write 1-2 paragraphs about him or her. What purpose does he or she serve in the story?
(Answers will vary.)

Creative Writing

9. Choose one of the minor characters, and write the story from his or her perspective.

(Answers will vary.)

Research

10. Isabel, Eric, Kristen call themselves the United Nations because they (or their families) come from different countries. Research one of the following countries and write 2-4 paragraphs about your findings: Brazil, Nigeria, or Japan.

(Answers will vary.)

More high interest stories by **Scottsa**:

["Leap Day"](#) This is a story about a high school student who gets her wish of being beautiful. However, it does not turn out the way that she planned. **(Includes Answer Key)**

[The Faux Girlz](#)-This is a story about a high school student who is excited about attending Marine Biology Camp; however, she is nervous because people will find out about her prosthetic leg. . **(Includes Answer Key)**

["Song of the South"](#) - This story is about a teenager (Dallas) who receives a Chevy-S 10 from his grandfather (Paw Paw). Shortly afterwards, Paw Paw dies. Dallas is devastated, and he refuses to drive the truck again. . **(Includes Answer Key)**

["Do You Want Fries with That?"](#)- This is a short story about a teenager who is forced to work side-by-side with her dad at a fast food restaurant after he loses his job.

["A Beautiful Storm"](#) (A story about teen domestic violence) Sydney does not know what to do when her best guy friend Eric shakes his girlfriend. Should she end their friendship even though he seems perfect in every other way? . **(Includes Answer Key)**

[The Meanest English Teacher Ever](#)- This is a story about students who find their mean English teacher's online dating profile. They decide to play a trick on her.