

Spider®

THEME

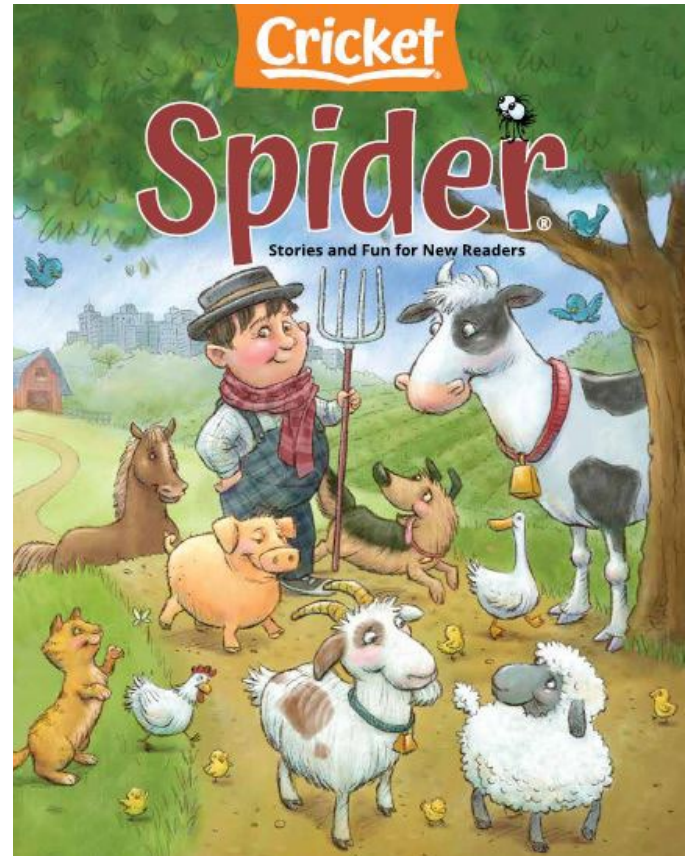
Clever characters play all kinds of tricks in the stories included in this teacher guide. Use these texts to teach language arts lessons and to engage students in a variety of creative activities.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What happens when characters play tricks on other characters?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact.
- Students will analyze the structure of texts.
- Students will read with accuracy, expression, and fluency.
- Students will conduct short research projects.
- Students will retell a story in comic-strip form.
- Students will perform reader's theater.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

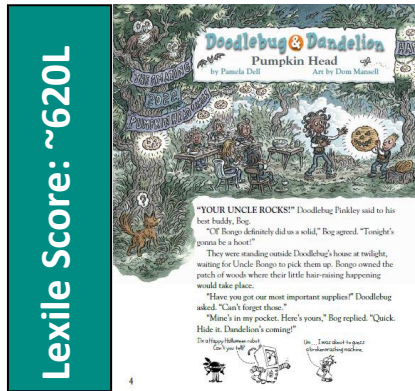
- **Doodlebug & Dandelion**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~620L
- **The Tax Collector's Cow**
Fable, ~740L
- **Zoey Wants a Pig**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~570L

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Doodlebug & Dandelion

pp. 4–8, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Use this story about a scary-fun Halloween party to teach students to recognize character traits.



RESOURCES

- Analyze Traits

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact.
- Students will conduct short research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- hair-raising (p. 4)** very frightening or exciting
- eerie (p. 6)** strange and mysterious
- ghostly (p. 7)** pale and scary, like a ghost

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What happens when characters play tricks on other characters?

You might begin this warm-up activity by placing a rubber bat or spider somewhere in your classroom to trick students. After students react, ask them to describe friendly tricks or pranks they have played on friends or family. Discuss the different effects created by a good, harmless prank and a mean, inappropriate prank. Finally, tell students to decide whether the trick in this story is friendly or mean.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Have students work in groups of three to write sentences using the vocabulary words, with each group member taking on a different word. Have groups review their sentences and confirm that the words are used correctly. Invite students to share their sentences. Then tell students to look for these words and other words used to describe things that are scary or weird as they read the story.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

- What are the important supplies Doodlebug mentions on page 4?
- What does Bog mean when he says the party will be “a hoot”?
- How does Dandelion’s attitude about the party change in the story?
- How do Doodlebug and Bog trick the kids at the party?
- Is the trick friendly or mean? Explain your ideas.

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Character Traits

INSTRUCT: Remind students that characters have traits, or qualities, just like real people. Offer examples of words that describe traits, such as *shy*, *imaginative*, *bossy*, *selfish*, and *trustworthy*. Explain that readers can determine a character’s traits by paying attention to

- A character’s words, thoughts, actions, and feelings
- What other characters say or think about a character
- The narrator’s statements about the character

Read aloud the paragraph on page 6 that begins, “We really made some . . .” Then display these words: *creative*, *boring*, *shy*. Ask students which word they would use to describe Bog and Doodlebug. Have students identify story details to support their answers.

ASSESS: Distribute a copy of the *Analyze Traits* worksheet to each student. Have students work in pairs to complete the worksheet.

EXTEND

Science After conducting research in books and using online resources, have students create posters that use timelines, words, and pictures to explain the life cycle of a pumpkin—from seed to orange sphere.

Analyze Traits

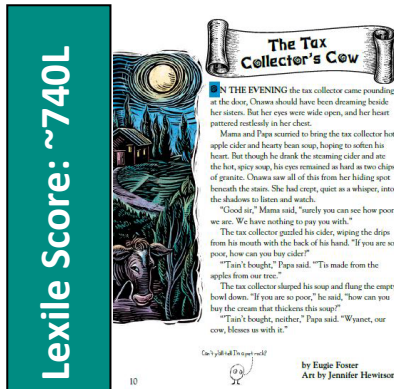
Use the chart below to record character traits for three story characters. Cite evidence from the story that helped you determine these traits. As characters may show more than one trait, be sure to record your findings thoroughly.

Character	Trait	Evidence from the Story

The Tax Collector's Cow

pp. 10–16, Fable

Give students practice in analyzing the stages of plot using this story about a tax collector who takes a family's cow.



The Tax Collector's Cow

IN THE EVENING the tax collector came pounding at the door. Onawa should have been dreaming beside her sisters. But her eyes were wide open, and her heart pounded restlessly in her chest.

Mama and Papa scurried to bring the tax collector hot apple cider and hearty bean soup, hoping to soften his heart. But though he drank the steaming cider and ate the hot, spicy soup, his eyes remained as hard as two chips of granite. Onawa saw all of this from her hiding spot beneath the stairs. She had crept, quiet as a whisper, into the darkness to listen and watch.

"Good sir," Mama said, "surely you can see how poor we are. We have nothing to pay you with."

The tax collector quaffed his cider, wiping the drips from his mouth with the back of his hand. "If you are so poor, how can you buy cider?"

"Tain't bought," Papa said. "I'm made from the apples from our tree."

The tax collector sharpened his soap and flung the empty bowl down. "If you are so poor," he said, "how can you buy the cream that thickens this soup?"

"Tain't bought, neither," Papa said. "Wanter, our cow, blesses us with it."

by Eugie Foster
Art by Jennifer Hewitson

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What happens when characters play tricks on other characters?

Have students preview the title of the story and the illustrations. Then have them work in pairs to make predictions about something that will happen in the story and about the trick played in the story. Invite students to share their predictions with the class. Revisit predictions after students have read the story.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud. Ask volunteers to explain the meanings of familiar words. Acknowledge correct meanings and then read the definitions aloud. Have students work in small groups to quickly find pairs of words with related meaning. Then challenge students to make up sentences "on the spot" using these words. Remind students to look and listen for these words in the story.

RESOURCES

- Stages of Plot

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a fable.
- Students will analyze the structure of texts.
- Students will retell a story in comic strip form.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **scurried** (p. 10) moved quickly and with short steps
- **guzzled** (p. 10) drank quickly
- **slurped** (p. 10) drank noisily
- **foolish** (p. 13) not having good sense
- **darted** (p. 13) ran or moved quickly or suddenly
- **daft** (p. 14) crazy

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Find two examples of similes in the second paragraph. What do these similes reveal about the characters they describe?
2. Why is the cow important to the family?
3. What are the tax collector's main traits or characteristics?
4. Why did the girls pretend the cow was a pig, a donkey, and a lion?
5. Describe something you learn about each sister.
6. Was the trick the girls played on the tax collector fair? Explain.
7. What lesson or moral does this tale teach?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Stages of Plot

INSTRUCT: Remind students that the series of events in a story is called the plot. Continue by reminding them that the events in a story focus on a character's problem and how the problem is solved. Work with students to create a list of the important events in this story. Have students work in pairs to decide if anything is missing from the list, or if any events could be combined. Then distribute the *Stages of Plot* worksheet to all students and go over the different plot stages. Have students fill in the conflict section. Then have pairs discuss which events to include in the Rising Action box. Discuss ideas as a class.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to continue to fill out the plot diagram. Then bring the class together to review the responses.

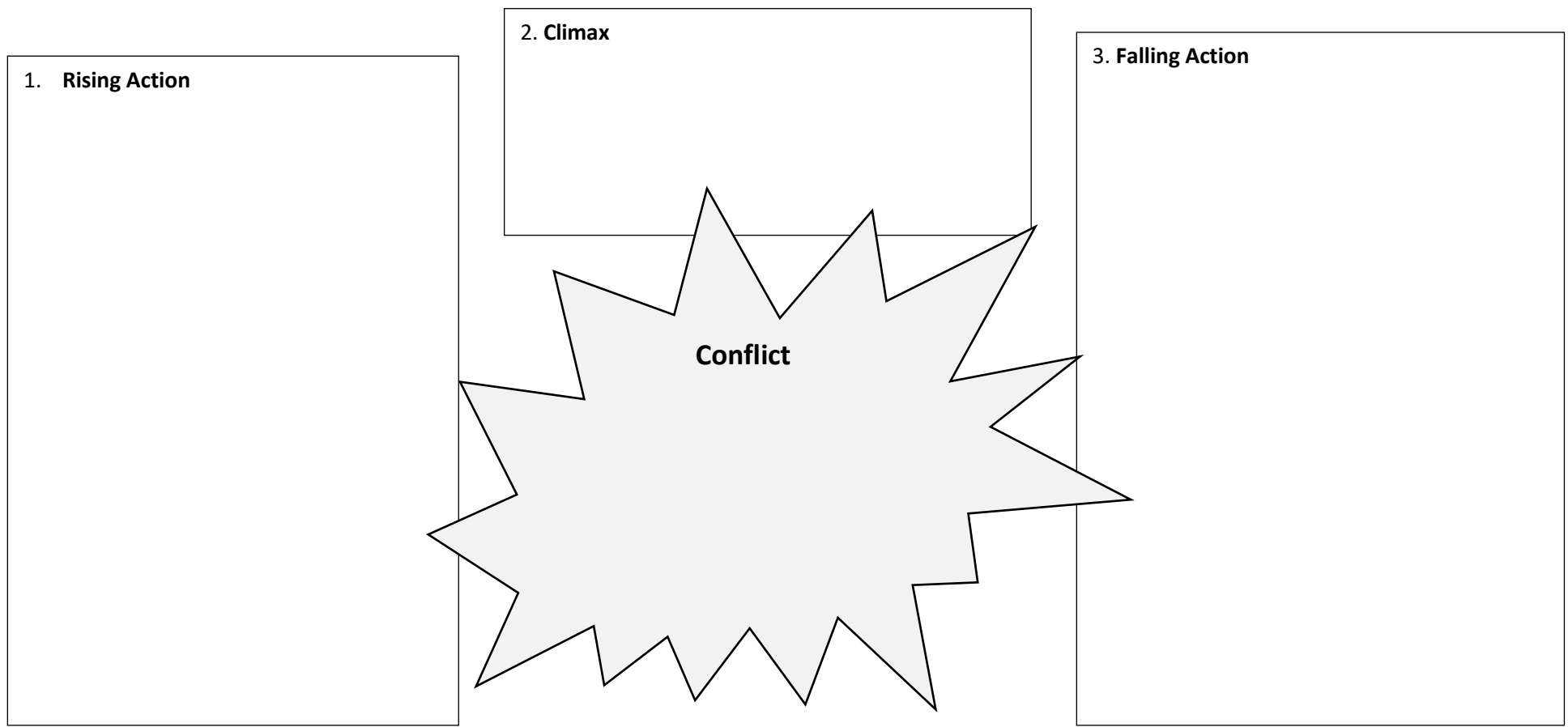
EXTEND

Art/Language Arts Have students retell the story, or a scene from the story, in comic-strip form. Remind students to use dialogue, captions, and pictures to convey the story. Students can begin by drawing rough sketches and drafting the dialogue and captions they will use in their strips. Post final comic strips in the classroom.

Stages of Plot

In the chart below, note events from “The Tax Collector’s Cow” to outline the story’s plot.

- **Conflict:** The main problem in the story.
- **Rising Action:** Story events make the conflict more complicated.
- **Climax:** A character makes an important choice or takes an action, and the outcome of the conflict is clear.
- **Resolution:** The final events at the end of the story tie up loose ends.

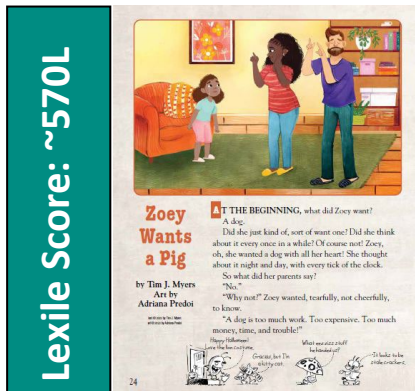


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Zoey Wants a Pig

pp. 24–30, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Use this story about a girl who desperately wants a pet, and the Reader’s Theater adaptation of the story, to give students the opportunity to engage in Reader’s Theater.



RESOURCES

- Reader’s Theater Script

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will read with accuracy, expression, and fluency.
- Students will perform reader’s theater.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **nosing** (p. 25) searching for something by smelling
- **dangled** (p. 27) hung something down loosely so it can swing freely
- **ferocious** (p. 27) very fierce or violent

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What happens when characters play tricks on other characters?

Explain that sometimes people play tricks when they want something. For example, a sister might say to her brother, “Look at that beautiful bird in the window,” and then sneak his cookie away while he is looking for the bird. Read aloud Aesop’s fable “The Fox and the Crow,” available on the internet. Discuss who is playing a trick in this story (Fox) and how Fox tricks Crow (by flattering her). Finally, tell students to think about whether the main character in this story is playing a trick.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them. Finally, remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the story.

1. Some people think lions are _____ animals, but I think they’re cute.
2. My dog is _____ under the breakfast table for crumbs.
3. I _____ a piece of yarn in front of my cat and she hit it with her paw.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. What details on page 24 show how strongly Zoey wants a dog?
2. What happens every time Zoey goes on a field trip?
3. Are Zoey’s ideas about what she would do with different pets realistic? Give two examples to support your answer.
4. Does Zoey get a pet in the story? How do you know?
5. Did Zoey play a trick on her parents to get a dog by asking for all kinds of inappropriate animals for pets? Explain.

SKILL FOCUS: Reader’s Theater

INSTRUCT: Distribute the *Reader’s Theater Script* to students. Divide the class into groups and assign roles in each group. Have students highlight their parts and underline the stage directions they need to follow. Provide time for groups to rehearse. Display and review these tips for performing reader’s theater:

1. Read clearly in a strong, loud voice.
2. Use facial expressions to help show your character’s feelings.
3. Use body movement and gestures to help show your character’s attitude.
4. Change the tone of your voice so it matches your words.
5. Try to look up and let the audience see your face when you speak.

ASSESS: Have each group perform for the class. Have students use the performance tips to evaluate their own performances.

EXTEND

Speaking & Listening Have your class perform the play for another class at your school. Brainstorm simple props students can create to make the play more visually interesting for an audience.

Zoey Wants a Pig

By Tim J. Myers

adapted for reader's theater by Cricket Media

Roles

- Narrator 1
- Narrator 2
- Narrator 3
- Mom
- Dad
- Zoey

NARRATOR 1: At the beginning, what did Zoey want?

NARRATOR 2: A dog.

NARRATOR 3: Did she just kind of, sort of want one? Did she think about it every once in a while?

NARRATOR 1: Of course not!

NARRATOR 2: Zoey, oh, she wanted a dog with all her heart! She thought about it night and day, with every tick of the clock.

NARRATOR 3: So, what did her parents say?

MOM AND DAD: No!

ZOEY: (*crying*) Why not?

DAD: A dog is too much work.

MOM: Too expensive.

DAD: Too much money, time, and trouble!

* * * * *

NARRATOR 2: One day, her teacher, Mr. Spooner, took the class on a field trip to a farm. When she got home, she told her mom—

ZOEY: (*smiling*) I want a pig.

MOM: A pig?! Why do you want a pig?

ZOEY: (*excited*) Because a pig has a cute twirly tail and a sweet snouty face, and it could snuggle with me in bed . . .

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MOM: But a pig would smell bad, and oink all the time, and go nosing under the rugs, and eat like—well, you know.

DAD: You can't have a pig!

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NARRATOR 3: A month later, Mr. Spooner took the class to a pond. When Zoey got home, she told her dad—

ZOEY: (*smiling*) I want a goose.

DAD: A goose?! Why do you want a goose?

ZOEY: (*excited*) Because a goose has big, soft feathers, so it looks very huggable. And when it walks, it looks like it's dancing the Hokey Pokey . . .

DAD: But geese are noisy and squawky, and shed feathers all over the place! And sometimes they get angry and hiss at people! And they leave goose doo everywhere!

MOM: You can't have a goose!

* * * * *

NARRATOR 1: A month later, Mr. Spooner took the class to a ranch. When Zoey got home, she told her dad—

ZOEY: (*smiling*) I want a cow.

DAD: A cow?! Why do you want a cow?

ZOEY: (*excited*) Because a cow has big, sweet eyes, and it's friendly and slow, and I can feed it grass and ride it to the mall . . .

DAD: But a cow is huge, and moos really loud, and has to be milked! It's too big for our yard, and we'd have to clean up all the cow pies. Yuck!

MOM: You can't have a cow!

* * * * *

NARRATOR 2: A month later, Mr. Spooner took the class to a wildlife rehabilitation center. When Zoey got home, she told her mom—

ZOEY: (*smiling*) I want a mountain lion.

MOM: A mountain lion?! Why do you want a mountain lion?

ZOEY: (*excited*) Because a mountain lion is so pretty, all sandy colored with golden eyes. And it could play with me, like if I dangled the garden hose in front of it. And we could climb trees together . . .

MOM: But a mountain lion is ferocious and hunts for its food! It might attack people's pets in the neighborhood! And what would the mail carrier say?

DAD: You can't have a mountain lion!

* * * * *

NARRATOR 3: A month later, Mr. Spooner took the class to an aquarium. When Zoey got home, she told her dad—

ZOEY: (*smiling*) I want a dolphin.

DAD: A dolphin?! Why do you want a dolphin?

ZOEY: (*excited*) Because a dolphin is all smiley and jumpy, and loves to play, and I could feed it fish sticks and talk to it in that whistly, clicky language they have . . .

DAD: But a dolphin needs water, lots of water—a lot more than in your wading pool! And it eats tons of fish and has fish breath all the time.

MOM: You can't have a dolphin!

* * * * *

NARRATOR 1: A month later, Mr. Spooner took the class to a natural history museum. When Zoey got home, she told her mom and dad—

ZOEY: (*smiling*) I want a dinosaur.

MOM: A dinosaur?! But Zoey, the dinosaurs all died out millions of years ago!

ZOEY: I know that, sillies! What I want is a big dinosaur *skeleton* for the backyard.

DAD: A dinosaur skeleton?! Why?

ZOEY: Because I could play on it like a playground, and count the bones, and pretend I'm talking to it. And it could be my best friend . . .

MOM: But a dinosaur skeleton would fill our whole yard, and we could never mow the grass!

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DAD: And it would freak out the neighbors, and dogs would sneak in to steal the bones.

MOM: You can't have a dinosaur!

* * * * *

NARRATOR 2: So, Zoey started to cry. She tried not to, but she couldn't help it. Big fat tears squeezed out of her eyes and flooded down her cheeks.

NARRATOR 3: She knew she shouldn't shout, but she couldn't help that either. So, she opened her mouth and a very, very loud sentence came out.

ZOEY: (*shouting*) I WANT A DINOSAUR!!! (*quietly*) I'm sorry.

DAD: Oh, Zoey!

MOM: You're exasperating!

DAD: First you wanted a pig

MOM: then a goose

DAD: then a cow

MOM: then a mountain lion

DAD: then a dolphin

MOM: and now you want a dinosaur!

NARRATOR 1: Then they said something that, to Zoey's ears, sounded sweet as music.

DAD: Why can't you just have a normal pet like a dog?!

MOM: (*nodding*)

ZOEY: (*surprised expression*)

NARRATOR 2: There it was. They said it, and they couldn't unsay it. It came out of their mouths and hung right there in the air.

NARRATOR 3: For a moment, no one said anything. Zoey could hear her own heart beating.

NARRATOR 1: Then her mom looked at her dad, and her dad looked at her mom.

MOM AND DAD: (*turning to look at each other*)

ZOEY: (*smiling and jumping up and down*)