

Use details from the story to make decisions about the characters.

Comprehension Worksheet

My friend, Jacques went into a baker's shop one day to buy a little cake which he had fancied in passing. He intended it for a child whose appetite was gone, and who could be coaxed to eat only by amusing him. He thought that such a pretty loaf might tempt even the sick. While he waited for his change, a little boy six or eight years old, in poor but perfectly clean clothes, entered the baker's shop.

"Ma'am," said he to the baker's wife, "Mother sent me for a loaf of bread." The woman took from the shelf a four-pound loaf, the best one she could find, and put it into the arms of the little boy.

My friend Jacques then first observed the thin and thoughtful face of the little fellow. It contrasted strongly with the round, open countenance of the large loaf, of which he was taking the greatest care.

"Have you any money?" said the baker's wife.
The little boy's eyes grew sad.

"No, ma'am," said he, hugging the loaf closer to his thin blouse; "but mother told me to say that she would come and speak to you about it tomorrow."

"Run along," said the good woman; "carry your bread home, child."

"Thank you, ma'am," said the poor little fellow.

My friend Jacques came forward for his money. He had put his purchase into his pocket, and was about to go, when he found the child with the big loaf, whom he had supposed to be half-way home, standing stock-still behind him.

"What are you doing there?" said the baker's wife to the child, whom she also had thought to be fairly off. "Don't you like the bread?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am!" said the child.

"Well, then, carry it to your mother, my little friend. If you wait any longer, she will think you are playing by the way, and you will get a scolding." The child did not seem to hear. Something else absorbed his attention. The baker's wife went up to him and gave him a friendly tap on the shoulder. "What are you thinking about?" said she.

"Ma'am," said the little boy, "what is that that sings?"

"There is no singing," said she.

"Yes!" cried the little fellow. "Hear it! Queek, queek, queek, queek!"

My friend and the woman both listened, but they could hear nothing, unless it was the song of the crickets, frequent guests in bakers houses.

"It is a little bird," said the dear little fellow; "or perhaps the bread sings when it bakes, as apples do?"

P. J. Stahl

Read the rest of this story in the Reading section in the website. Search for P.J. Stahl.

Name _____

Making inferences

1. a. What do you think the little boy was hearing?

b. How do you know that?

2. How did the boy look?

3. Who else was in the bakery with the little boy?

4. Why were they there?

5. Do you think the baker's wife knew the boy and his mother? Quote a line to support your answer.

6. What sort of person was Jacques?

7. What sort of person was the little boy?
