

Name: _____

Singing Cousin

By Kelly Hashway

Nikki cringed as her aunt's gray SUV pulled into the driveway. Her cousin Bella was coming to visit for three days, and Nikki was afraid Bella would embarrass her in front of her friends. Bella wasn't like most kids their age. She wore strange outfits that never matched, and she was always singing. But the worst part was that Bella didn't think she was different at all.



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the yard.

"Is this your cousin?" Mandy extended her hand to Bella. "I'm Mandy, Nikki's best friend."

Bella sang an old song Nikki's mom sometimes listened to. It was about a girl named Mandy. Nikki felt her cheeks burning with embarrassment.

"That's funny," Mandy said with a smile. "You want to go to the park and ride bikes?"

Nikki shook her head. "We can't. I have a lot planned. Maybe we can go in a few days."

"But I'll be gone in a few days," Bella sang.

"Then let's go now," Mandy said.

Bella nodded.

Nikki was outnumbered. "Okay, but only for a little while."

Bella borrowed Nikki's older sister's bike, and the three rode to the park. Bella sang the whole way. Each song was crazier than the next. She sang about everything from trees, to stop signs, to telephone poles.

Mandy slowed down to join Nikki who was lagging behind. "Your cousin is so funny. She can make up songs about anything."

"Yeah, sorry. I tried to warn you, but—"

"Warn me?" Mandy wrinkled her forehead. "Why? Bella's great."

"You think so?"

"Yeah." Mandy smiled. "Come on, let's sing along with her."

"How?" Nikki asked.



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1. How did Nikki feel about her cousin at the beginning of this story?
 - a. She was afraid of her cousin.
 - b. She loved being around her cousin.
 - c. She was embarrassed of her cousin's behavior.
 - d. She believed her cousin was the best singer in the world.
2. How long was Bella planning to stay with Nikki?



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4. What does Bella want to do when she grows up?

5. Besides her singing, what else does Nikki think is unusual about Bella?
 - a. She always has strange hair styles.
 - b. Her clothes never match.
 - c. She has an unusual voice.
 - d. She never stops dancing.
6. Which word best describes Bella?
 - a. bashful
 - b. introverted
 - c. outgoing
 - d. athletic

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Match each vocabulary word on the left with the definition on the right.



- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. _____ embarrass | a. clothes worn together |
| 2. _____ outfits | b. falling behind |



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- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 5. _____ telephone poles | e. to cause someone to feel awkward or ashamed |
| 6. _____ lagging | f. outvoted; situation in which more people favor one thing than another |
| 7. _____ sneakers | g. making quick, short movements up and down |
| 8. _____ cousin | h. tall, thin, wooden posts for holding up wires outdoors |

Now try this: Write a sentence using each of the vocabulary words above.

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In the story, "Singing Cousin," Nikki's cousin Bella is always singing. She sings made-up songs about things around her. In the story, she sang about trees, stop signs, telephone poles, and the people she was with.

In the space below, make up words to a song about an everyday object that is near you right now.



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ANSWER KEY

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6. Which word best describes Bella?
- a. bashful
 - b. introverted
 - c. outgoing**
 - d. athletic

ANSWER KEY

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8. c. cousin

h. tall, thin, wooden posts for holding up wires outdoors

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