

# Sockaroni

By Stacey Ivansen





- 1 Ana hated to clean her bedroom. It wasn't that she was lazy because she certainly wasn't. As a matter of fact, she usually put a great deal of effort into avoiding that particular job. One time she did all the other chores in the house so she wouldn't have time to clean her room. Another time she drew red dots on herself and told everyone she had measles. She stayed in bed for a whole Saturday.
- 2 Nothing her parents did or said made any difference. They tried sweet talking, pleading, threatening, yelling, and even bribing Ana, but they might as well have been talking to the wall. Finally at the end of their rope, her parents sighed deeply and said, "Close your door so no one can see that hideous mess."
- 3 The beginning of Ana's change almost went by unnoticed. It started when Ana saw two of her dirty socks in the hallway. Now that may not seem like such a big deal, but the only area of Ana's house that wasn't as neat as a pin was her bedroom. There wasn't even as much as a dust bunny anywhere else in the house. Ana picked up the socks and put them in the laundry. The rest of the day went by normally, so she didn't think about the socks again.
- 4 A week later things really started getting weird. At breakfast, Ana found a pair of her dirty socks inside a new box of cereal. "Yuck," said Ana. "I think I'll have toast and eggs instead." Ana's grandma fixed eggs, and Ana finished just in time to race to the school bus stop. On the bus, there were eight dirty socks on Ana's seat. *What in the world?* Ana wondered. Then when she opened her backpack to stuff those socks inside, she saw that there already were five dirty socks in there. "How did those get in there?" she mumbled.
- 5 Curtis, who always sat across the aisle from Ana, said, "What are you mumbling about, Ana?"
- 6 "Oh, nothing," Ana replied absently. "I just seem to be a dirty sock magnet today."
- 7 At school things got even worse. There were socks in her locker and in her desk. When Ana tried to play *Hot Cross Buns* on her trumpet in band class, the sound that came out was horrible. It sounded more like *Flat Cross Buns*. When she blew into her trumpet more forcefully, another dirty sock came flying out! *Yuck!* Ana thought. *If I tell anybody about this, they'll think I have a screw loose!*
- 8 However, the dirty sock dilemma went on and on. Ana even saw one of her dirty socks on a television commercial after school. Ana jumped up, turned off the television, and decided it was time to do her homework. Wouldn't you know that when she opened her math book, there was a dirty sock in there?
- 9 Ana groaned, "I think I need a nap." She went into her room and dozed for about thirty minutes. Unfortunately, all her dreams were about dirty socks of every color, size, and shape. She even thought she could smell the socks in her dreams.
- 10 Ana's family didn't seem to notice anything strange, so Ana decided to help them with supper. They were having meatloaf, macaroni and cheese, mixed vegetables, and custard for desert. Tonight Ana was in charge of making the meatloaf. Her father was making the custard, and her grandmother, who was the best cook in the world, was making her famous macaroni and cheese.
- 11 Finally it was time to sit down to dinner. Everything smelled so delicious. All the food was passed around, and everyone helped themselves. Ana's parents were asking her and her brother about what happened at school that day. Ana didn't want to tell them about the dirty socks, so she let her brother do most of the talking. Then Ana looked down at her plate for the first time since the meal had started, and she could not believe her eyes. What she thought was elbow macaroni was, in fact, sock-shaped macaroni—sockaroni! Ana yelled and cried, "All right! Enough is enough!" She jumped up from the table and raced up to her bedroom.
- 12 Her parents came up to see what was wrong. They were amazed to see Ana cleaning up her room. When her father asked Ana what had gotten into her, Ana simply replied, "I just thought maybe it was time to start taking care of my room." Ana's parents were so pleased they didn't ask any more questions but left Ana to her work.
- 13 When Ana went to bed that night, her room had never been tidier. She had pleasant and wonderful dreams about everything under the sun—except dirty socks. From that day on there has never been so much as a single dust bunny in Ana's bedroom.

## COMPREHENSION

**A** Choose the best ending for each sentence.  
Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 1 This story is mainly about
  - a sockaroni and cheese.
  - b a girl who changes her mind about cleaning her bedroom.
  - c a girl who makes meatloaf for dinner.
- 2 Ana started seeing socks everywhere because
  - a she refused to clean her room.
  - b she was dropping them all over the house.
  - c her brother was playing a trick on her.
- 3 Ana decided to have eggs and toast for breakfast because she
  - a found dirty socks in a box of cereal.
  - b wanted something warm for breakfast.
  - c hated cereal.

- 4 Ana's behavior in the beginning of the story showed that she
  - a was lazy.
  - b did not like to help around the house.
  - c did not like to clean her bedroom.
- 5 Now that Ana has cleaned up her room, she probably
  - a will see socks everywhere again.
  - b won't see socks everywhere anymore.
  - c won't watch television anymore.

## LEARN ABOUT WORDS

**B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 use of physical energy (1)
- 2 begging (2)
- 3 without thinking (6)
- 4 problem (8)
- 5 slept lightly (9)
- 6 well-known (10)
- 7 neater; more in order (13)

**C** **too** = also

**two** = the number after *one*

Words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings are called homophones. *Too* and *two* are homophones.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homophone. Which of the two words fits in the blank in the sentence? Write the word.

**8 hole** (1)

The \_\_\_\_\_ class will go on a field trip on Wednesday.

**9 pear** (4)

A \_\_\_\_\_ is a good fruit to pack in a lunch.

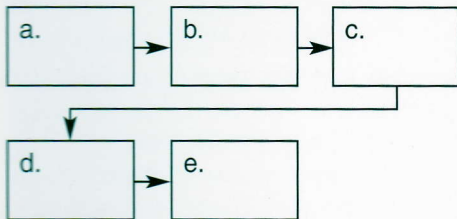
**10 ate** (4)

Spiders have \_\_\_\_\_ legs.



## THINK ABOUT IT

- D** Look at the story map below. Complete the story map by writing the letter that tells in what order each event happened.



- 1 Ana cleaned her room.
  - 2 Ana didn't want to clean her room.
  - 3 Ana found a pair of dirty socks in her cereal box.
  - 4 Ana noticed the macaroni was in the shape of a sock.
  - 5 Ana helped her family make dinner.
- E** A writer chooses words carefully to help the reader understand the story.

Nat *picked* at his lunch.

This tells you Nat didn't like his lunch.

Nat *devoured* his lunch.

This tells you Nat liked his lunch a lot.

Nat *ate* his lunch.

This doesn't tell you whether Nat liked his lunch or not.

Read each question. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 6 Which sentence tells you that Ana looked quickly?
  - a Ana stared at the dirty sock.
  - b Ana glanced at the dirty sock.
  - c Ana saw the dirty sock.
- 7 Which sentence tells you that Ana was upset?
  - a Ana stormed out of the kitchen.
  - b Ana walked out of the kitchen.
  - c Ana strolled out of the kitchen.

- 8 Which sentence tells you that Ana was hard to understand?

- a Ana spoke to Curtis.
- b Ana yelled to Curtis.
- c Ana mumbled to Curtis.

- 9 Which sentence tells you that Ana enjoyed her dinner?

- a Ana ate her dinner.
- b Ana devoured her dinner.
- c Ana picked at her dinner.

- 10 Which sentence tells you that Ana was tired?

- a Ana went to bed.
- b Ana climbed into bed.
- c Ana collapsed into bed.

- F** Wendy took a *long* trip.

When you describe something, you use an adjective. *Long* is an adjective.

Al's trip was *longer* than hers.

When you compare two things, you usually add *-er* to an adjective. *Longer* compares two trips.

Jim's trip was *longest* of all.

When you compare three or more things, you usually add *-est* to an adjective.

*Longest* compares three or more trips.

Read the sentences. Which word in parentheses ( ) fits each sentence?

Write the word.

- 11 Ana's room was (dirtier, dirtiest) than her brother's room.
- 12 Ana thought she played the trumpet (louder, loudest) of all.
- 13 Ana is (younger, youngest) than her brother.
- 14 A dream about dirty socks was the (stranger, strangest) dream Ana ever had.
- 15 The (simpler, simplest) way for Ana to fix her problem was to clean her room.