

Pictures in Her Head

by Annette Logan



- 1 For as long as she could remember, Ruth had loved color.
- 2 From the time she was old enough to hold a crayon, Ruth had begged her mother for more and more colors. She would fill pages with bold scribbles. Her favorite crayons—purple and gold—had gotten so much use that they were nothing but stubs.
- 3 Later, Ruth learned to use chalk and watercolors. When she was very young, the pictures Ruth made didn't really look the way she had imagined. However, she kept practicing over and over again until the finished product looked more like what she pictured in her mind.

- 4 Ruth never ran out of ideas. Her head was full of pictures—beautiful red boats floating down blue rivers and brightly clothed clowns entertaining people in the park. At times, she felt as though she'd never have enough time to draw all the pictures she could see in her mind's eye.
- 5 Ruth's family never took her pictures very seriously. Her older brothers made fun of her "silly scribbles." Her younger sister, Molly, would plead with Ruth to stop drawing and play with her or read her a story. Ruth's parents wanted her to spend more time on her math or history or writing.
- 6 So Ruth tried to please everyone. She played softball with her brothers. She took Molly to the library and read her sister's favorite books to her. She spent even more time studying after school.
- 7 Ruth often wished she could spend all her time creating pictures. However, she always made sure to do her chores around the house and to study hard in school. One year, she won the school's spelling bee. This made her parents very happy, but Ruth was happiest when she was drawing.
- 8 One day, Ruth's mother took her to a new shopping center. It was in what had once been a run-down part of town. However, the people who lived there had worked hard to make their neighborhood beautiful once again. They had cleaned up the streets, turned empty lots into parks, and fixed up the buildings.
- 9 There were pots and boxes of brilliant flowers on every windowsill. The parks had beds of colorful pansies, geraniums, and petunias. The rows and rows of color thrilled Ruth. She was amazed at the different shades of red, purple, and yellow that met her eyes.
- 10 All of a sudden, Ruth stopped and stared. In front of her was a building with one whole side covered with a huge, colorful picture. The picture had scenes of life in New Orleans. A steamboat chugged down the river. The houses in Jackson Square showed off their fancy, iron railings. Children played. Dock workers hauled cargo. The best thing of all was the color. Every color in the rainbow was there—and more. Ruth thought it was the most amazing thing she had ever seen.
- 11 After that day, Ruth drew pictures like the one she had seen on the building. She realized that she could put many scenes into one picture. That way, she could show people all the pictures that she thought of in her head—all at once.
- 12 Ruth used every color in the rainbow. She painted women in purple dresses, spotted dogs with ruffled pink collars, and horses wearing fancy golden plumes like those they wore in the circus.
- 13 One day after school, Ruth was using sidewalk chalk to draw on the walk in front of her house. She was drawing a picture of her friend Megan's birthday party. In the center of the drawing was a huge pink cake with purple candles on it. The cake was surrounded by presents of all different sizes and shapes. Ruth had just started to draw Megan blowing out the candles on her cake. The chalk colors weren't as bright as she liked, but she could pretend that the sidewalk was the side of a building. Ruth was so busy with her drawing that she never saw a woman watching her.
- 14 "My dear," said the woman finally, "that is a wonderful picture! You have a great deal of talent."
- 15 Ruth blushed. "Thank you," she said politely. "But I just like to draw pictures."
- 16 "Where did you get the idea to put so many pictures into one big picture?" asked the woman.
- 17 Ruth told her about the building wall she had seen. "Someday, I'd like to paint a picture on a wall like that," admitted Ruth.
- 18 The woman smiled and asked to meet Ruth's mother. The woman explained that she was in charge of finding artists to paint some neighborhood buildings. She told Ruth's mother that the picture Ruth had been working on really impressed her.
- 19 "Ruth, would you like to draw the design for a wall on one of our buildings? We'd provide you with all the colors you want. If you'd like, you can even do some of the painting on the wall yourself."
- 20 Ruth could hardly believe her ears. Her mother was just as excited. Maybe now her brothers wouldn't call her artwork "silly scribbles."
- 21 Best of all, other people would finally be able to see the colorful pictures that Ruth saw every day in her head.

COMPREHENSION

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

- 1 This story is about a girl who
 - a uses up crayons.
 - b plays softball.
 - c loves to create pictures.
- 2 Ruth begged her mom for more colors because she
 - a loved to use a variety of colors.
 - b was bored with the colors she had.
 - c kept losing her crayon box.
- 3 The pictures in Ruth's mind were probably things
 - a she'd seen or read about or imagined.
 - b that weren't colorful.
 - c her parents told her to draw.

- 4 Ruth's family didn't pay much attention to her drawings because they
 - a didn't like color.
 - b wanted her to do other things.
 - c were too busy making their own pictures.
- 5 The woman probably asked Ruth to design a drawing because
 - a Ruth's mother wanted her to.
 - b she thought Ruth would do a good job.
 - c she didn't care what the wall looked like.

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 quick drawing (2)
- 2 amusing; joking with (4)
- 3 beg; ask (5)
- 4 very bright; striking; colorful (9)
- 5 tall feathers (12)
- 6 sketch or outline (19)
- 7 supply; give (19)

C A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning will depend on how it is used.

The *fly* buzzed around the room.

The bird will *fly* to its nest.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look back at the paragraph. Which meaning does the word have there? Write *a* or *b*.

8 **pages** (2)

- a calls out
- b sheets of paper

9 **bee** (7)

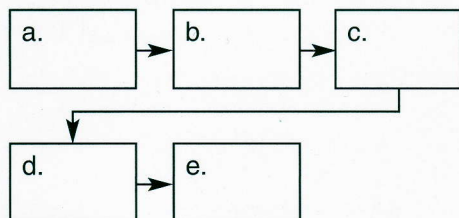
- a contest; competition
- b insect that makes honey

10 **walk** (13)

- a paved path
- b move along on foot

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 Ruth used the purple and gold crayons so much they became stubs.
- 2 Ruth played softball and won the spelling bee.
- 3 Ruth painted a picture of a birthday party on the sidewalk.
- 4 A woman saw Ruth's sidewalk drawing and asked her to design a picture for a wall.
- 5 Ruth saw the picture of Jackson Square on the side of a building.

- E** 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.

- 6 Ruth's sister was the (smaller, smallest) of all the children.
- 7 Ruth studied (harder, hardest) than her brother Paul.

- 8 The neighborhood looked (cleaner, cleanest) than it had before.
- 9 Ruth's pictures got (bigger, biggest) as she got older.
- 10 "That is the (finer, finest) picture I've seen in a long time," said the woman.

- F** A sentence with just one subject and one verb is called a simple sentence. A sentence that is made from two simple sentences is called a compound sentence.

Simple: Ruth loved color.

Simple: Ruth enjoyed drawing pictures.

Compound: Ruth loved color, *and* she enjoyed drawing pictures.

You join two simple sentences with a comma followed by the word *and*, *or*, or *but*.

Read each sentence. If it is a simple sentence, write *Simple*. If it is a compound sentence, write *Compound*.

- 11 Ruth liked to use many different colors.
- 12 Ruth took her sister to the library.
- 13 Ruth liked to play softball, but she would rather paint pictures.
- 14 Ruth is drawing a boat, but she is not finished.
- 15 Ruth could draw the design with pencils, or she could use watercolors.