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ABC ALARM 2

A Complete Alphabet Story

Table of contents:

Each letter is followed by its own story

Letter E

Letter H

Letter X

Letter Y

Letter P and O

Letter K

Letter U

Letter W

Letter J

Letter R and S

Letter V

Letter G

Letter T

Letter B

Letter C

Letter F

Letter Q

Letter D

Letter L

Letter Z

Letter N

Letter M

Letter i

Letter R and S

Please go to Book 1

F

As they raced into the courtyard, Jacob speedily turned the corner and also entered the courtyard from the direction of the vegetable shop.

He turned to the two, saying, "Hello, I'm searching for Nikita. Do you know where she is?"

"She wanted to help copy letters in the back." Sophia answered. "Go take a look over there. We're just coming back, we got the letter C from the computer shop."

They gave the letter to Gabi. She was surprised, and said, "But it looks in very good condition in comparison to the others. Where did you find it?"

"We found it in the corner computer shop at the end of the street." Said Johann, "But how he came to have it, we didn't even think to ask. Unfortunately, we completely forgot too."

"Ya, that doesn't matter anymore, now," Gabi said. "The main thing is that now he's back home with the rest of the letters."

"Please bring me to the others." Said **C**, "so I can see for myself, how they are."

Gabi raised her eyebrows. Pleased, she said, "Oh, you're even speaking already! Then you're ok. That's great for you. Come on, over there they'll be delighted to get more company." As they walked over, they observed Jacob, who

was waving wildly with his hands, as he was talking to Nikita.

"I want to give you a new friend." Gabi said, and gave her grandma the letter.

"Oh, thank-you," she said. "We'll take care of it from here."

At the same moment Nikita jumped up, and said, "We have to go. We have to speak immediately with Sophia and Johann. Gabi, do you know where they are?"

"They are probably still up front by my table," answered Gabi, "yes look, there they are." She said, as she caught Sophia's eye, she quickly raised her right hand and signaled her to wait for them.

Now, all five of them stood at the front table. Jacob was visibly distressed that Nikita wanted to have the letter from him and its talking had also shaken him up. "Listen," he said, "Paul was just in our vegetable shop with the letter **F**. Proudly he told me that he was going to take it down to the meadow by the brook and set it on fire. I begged him not to do it, that he should leave the letter with me. But he just laughed at me. He said the word fire started with **F**, so he could also start a fire with it. Then he ran away."

Nikita said to the group, "we have to do something immediately. Come on every one, let's all race down to the brook. Then maybe if we're so many people, he'll be afraid of us, and won't burn the letter. Come on!"

"Go on now," said Johann. "I'll find a bucket quickly. That way we can then get water from the river, just in case." The other three ran quickly straight away to the meadow where the brook was. Time, it was all about minutes or even seconds.

“Gabi, do you have a bucket I could use?” Asked Johann, “It will take too long if I have to go up to our flat. Please look for one.”

“Oh, Yeah, I forgot completely,” said Gabi, “there’s one in the rear.” No. That wasn’t true. There wasn’t any bucket there. She looked puzzled. “Now, where can that bucket be? Funny it was here the whole time.” But after a few steps further to the rear of the tent, there it stood. Quickly she took it to Johann, who ran after the others. He ran full throttle, so fast that his tongue hung on the ground, when he finally arrived by the others. They were already at their destination.

In front of them, in the meadow, Paul was busy trying to ignite a pile of old wood crates. The wind blew again and again, putting out the newly lit matches. But all at once, a spark jumped over and began to burn. From far away it was clearly visible and they could see that the letter **F** was at the top of the pile.

Sophia broke away from the group and ran to Paul.

He looked at her as she stood next to him. “You don’t have to say anything. Jacob brought you. I have to burn this old wood today; it has been approved by the fire department. I love the glow of the flames. How it moves, the different colors always reaching up to the sky. I’m also burning the letter **F** in my fire, so it will take longer. I won’t give it to you. It’s done now. You can all go home again, or if you want, you can stay and watch it will burn beautifully.” In the meantime all the others arrived and had heard what Paul said. Everyone started to talk at once to Paul, trying to stop him. Johann lifted his hand for quiet.

Then he let Sophia speak. "Paul, please," she said, "comes with us to the courtyard. Children and adults are sitting there doing nothing other than copying the shapes of letters. The letters were injured, now they need our help to get well."

The small flame of the fire had gained strength, increased recognizably into a real fire.

Paul didn't listen to Sophia, but brought her attention to the flames, "Look, how it burns."

Sophia looked in the small fire. The flames went up, she saw the letter stood at the top" Paul, please, give us the letter. The **ABCs** must be complete. We need them to read and write with."

Paul didn't let her continue to talk, "no stop it." He said, "because we have a farm, we get a permit to burn things and it says it has to be done today."

With a lot of feeling, Sophia said, "but not the letter. We can still quickly take it out of the flames."

"No, no way. It stays." Said Paul, "It belongs to me, I want to see how it changes its shape and melts."

They all stood in a circle around the fire, looked into the still small flames. Fear spread through them. Fear the flames would climb up to the letter, melt it or even destroy it. Danger! Danger! How could they change Paul's mind?

Suddenly Johann had an idea. "Look, Paul," he said, "It's really simple, we'll quickly gather a lot of wood. Would you accept it as a trade for the letter and give it to us?"

“Look, Paul,” Nikita said, “The four of us ran all the way here, to try and save the letter. The problem is the **ABCs** won’t be complete if one of the letters is missing. We would have to relearn to read and write, because of the missing letter, the words would change in the future. I don’t know whether future stories will be as beautiful, exciting or interesting as they are now. Do you remember the nice Aunt Lotte in kinder garden and her story reading hours? Huh? Did you forget? Sometimes the stories were so exciting, we could hardly wait to hear the end of it and we held our breaths. Man Paul, don’t do this!”

Thinking, Paul looked at Nikita, and then he looked at each of them one after another. Lastly he looked in his fire. “Well, since you have been making so much effort to save the letters but hurry up, I won’t take it out of the flames until you bring enough wood for a bonfire.”

Quickly they all scattered, rushing around the lawn looking for small branches or other burnable things.

Paul remained standing in front of his fire. He couldn’t understand why the others were so interested in this letter. Ya, well, maybe a few people sat there in the courtyard and copied letters, so what? Why? Well, then so no one could read or write any more. That would be ok too. No more story books. Everyone could talk to each other; think up the most amazing stories. But, right now, he decided he didn’t want to be the big bad evil buddy, especially to Nikita, who he already knew since kindergarten. Then they could have the stupid thing. Already the others had started to arrive with small branches and leaves.

Each of them looked first at the flaming fire. Was the letter still alive? Perhaps it was already charred at the bottom. Johann threw his small sticks carefully into the fire.

Afterwards Jacob threw his in too. It was clear to all that putting several layers of sticks on the heap had to be done carefully, or they would move the other sticks and cause the letter to fall into the flames. It was really too dangerous for the letter, they had to take it out of the fire soon!

Nikita was very successful. "Look, how much I've found. Man, hopefully the letter doesn't take in too much charred wood smell or smolders slowly from underneath. If the letter got badly charred or smelled charred it may never return to the display in the bookstore. The Terrible smell wouldn't go away." Fear spread through all of them. Two of them had already thrown wood on the fire, but the letter was still on top.

Sophia also had her arms still full of wood." Oh," she said, "I have seen a long stick back there. Johann let's run back there and get it."

Wumm, she dropped the wood out of her arms right on the spot where she was standing. Johann looked in her direction. At her words, He ran quickly to get the stick with Sophia right after him.

Nikita let her sticks drop on the meadow too. "I'll wait until they come back." She said.

Paul simply couldn't understand why they were going to so much effort about getting this stupid letter. But, oh well, it was ok by him because now he had a much larger fire. Oh yeah, there was that **F** again, yes, they should have it.

Jacob and Nikita exchanged careful concerned glances; they understood each other without words. Time was short, in the last minutes, the wood had had more time to gain fire power and the fire had spread from stick to stick to other areas. It