

5 THE GAS PUMP

by Paddy Salmon

He was hit from behind. He never had a chance.

He spun and fell in the dust. His wife and children screamed soundlessly from inside the car. The liquid from the red-and-green gas pump continued to gush, spilling dark pools about his twitching body for a little while longer, until his hand relaxed on the hose and he died.

When he woke up, however, he was doing the screaming, not his wife. She tried to calm him down; he had had nightmares before. She brought him a cup of coffee. He was still shaking.

"It was so clear, so horribly clear. We were at a gas station, somewhere in the desert. I remember these two red-and-green pumps. I can even remember the sign, 'A-2-Z GAS FOR EXTRA MILEAGE', and then these two guys..."

"Hold on a minute, Stan. Just calm down. You're frightening the kids. It was just another of your stupid dreams. I'm going to get you some sleeping pills before we set off this morning. Boy, you need a vacation all right!"

"Yeah, but let me finish, Martha. There were these two guys working at the gas station. The one in charge had a moustache. He had little eyes, and he looked mean. The other was just a boy. Dirty blue overalls, blond hair, big ears. He was the one carrying the hammer. The other one was coming at me with a knife... I... I... never had a chance. They were coming at me and you were all sitting in the car... and then..."



They were driving on the desert highway. The needle had been on empty for 10 miles.

Then he saw the sign. "A-2-Z GAS FOR EXTRA MILEAGE", and beneath it were two red-and-green gas pumps.



T H E G A S P U M P

Name: _____

Class: _____

GLOBAL COMPREHENSION

A. THE CHARACTERS IN THE STORY

1. Main character's name: _____

2. His family:

a. _____

b. Number of children: _____ Which detail from the story supports your answer? _____

3. THE OTHER CHARACTERS: NAME, AGE, APPEARANCE, JOB

a. _____

b. _____

B. ANALYSE THE TWO PARTS OF THE STORY

1. FIRST PART

a. Where: _____

Which details from the story support your answer?

b. When: _____

Which details from the story support your answer?

c. The day is special in the family's life: yes no

Explain: _____

d. What the main character does when he wakes up:

2. SECOND PART

a. Where: _____

b. When: _____ Explain with a detail:

c. What the main character is doing:

first: _____

then: _____

DETAILED COMPREHENSION

A. ANALYSE THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY

1. THE MAIN CHARACTER

a. What he is doing: _____

b. What three things happen to him: _____

2. HIS FAMILY

a. Where they are: _____

b. What they are doing: _____

3. THE ACCIDENT

a. It has a terrible effect on his family: yes no

Explain: _____

b. Where it takes place: _____

Which words from the story support your answer?

c. What he sees: _____

d. Who works there: _____

e. What they do to the main character: _____

f. What happens next is clear: yes no

Explain with details from the story: _____

g. This is surprising: yes no

Explain: _____
