

## UNIT TWO

### Chapters 3 and 4

#### COMPREHENSION SKILL QUESTIONS

##### Vocabulary in Context

1. In the following sentence, what does the word *colliding* mean?

Shoving the money deep into his pocket, Roylin rushed from the apartment, nearly colliding with Tuttle, who was mopping the hallway.

“Boy, watch your step,” the little man growled as Roylin raced past him.

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| a. crashing into | c. avoiding |
| b. seeing        | d. helping  |

2. In the following excerpt, what does the word *sinister* mean?

“. . . I carefully slipped Mr. Miller’s wallet into a plastic bag to preserve your fingerprints. You in big trouble, boy.” Tuttle’s cackling laughter grew more sinister.

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| a. gentle        | c. pleasant-sounding |
| b. evil-sounding | d. silly             |

##### Supporting Details

3. The following words were said by

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|----------------------|-----------------|
| a. Roylin Bailey.    | c. Mrs. Bailey. |
| b. Amberlynn Bailey. | d. Tuttle.      |

“What’re you going in there for? He got no sense, old as he is. He just sits in the chair. I think he’s demented. Wonder why he don’t die. What good is a demented old man like him, anyway?”

4. The following words were said by

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| a. Cooper Hodden.    | c. Mrs. Bailey. |
| b. Amberlynn Bailey. | d. Tuttle.      |

“He woke up and found the money missin’ from his wallet . . . and then he had the fatal seizure . . . so in a way, Roylin, you are guilty of murder. You see, if you are committin’ a crime against someone, and they die as a result, well, that’s murder.”

5. The following words were said by

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|----------------------|-----------------|
| a. Roylin Bailey.    | c. Mrs. Bailey. |
| b. Amberlynn Bailey. | d. Tuttle.      |

“Where you been? You were supposed to be here right after school to baby-sit your brothers, remember? Now, I’m gonna be late for work!”

##### Main Idea

6. The main idea of the selection on the next page is that

- fearing the consequences of dealing drugs, Roylin would rather ask Mr. Miller for the money he needs.
- some people in Roylin’s neighborhood make money quickly and easily by dealing drugs.
- going to prison had a very negative impact on Roylin’s father.

Guys in the neighborhood made easy money selling dope, but Roylin knew which direction that street was going—straight down. He never wanted to be the one standing before the judge, wearing steel bracelets. Roylin's father did time twice, and each time he came out meaner and more useless than before. Roylin wanted no part of that. There was only one way to get the money he needed—he had to ask his neighbor, Ambrose Miller.

7. The main idea of the following selection is that
- Mr. Miller used to take care of Roylin when he was very young.
  - Roylin no longer has time to visit with Mr. Miller because of Roylin's many responsibilities.
  - although Roylin doesn't see his old friend Mr. Miller much anymore, he knows he can count on him.

When Roylin was small, he and Mr. Miller were very close. Mr. Miller had a collection of tiny race cars, and he would always bring them out so Roylin could play. As a boy, Roylin spent many afternoons pushing the cars through the little living room and hallway in Mr. Miller's apartment. Since he started working, Roylin did not visit the old man as much, but he knew if there was anyone he could turn to in a tight spot, it was Mr. Miller.

8. The main idea of the following selection is that
- throughout his life, Roylin has always been able to laugh off his own bad behavior.
  - for the first time in his life, Roylin feels very guilty for doing something bad.
  - Roylin makes fun of people who are overweight or have skin problems.

For the first time in his life he felt an overwhelming sense of guilt. He had done bad things before—he had stolen small items from the dollar store; he had taunted kids at Bluford, like girls who weighed too much and kids with skin problems. Not long ago, he had even teased Hakeem about his stuttering. In the past, Roylin could laugh off his behavior. But now everything was different.

#### D. Conclusions

9. From the following excerpt, you can infer that
- The clerk knows Roylin stole the money to buy the bracelet.
  - Buying the necklace has made Roylin feel better than he has ever felt before.
  - Although he knows better, Roylin feels as though everyone knows what he did to get the money to buy the necklace.

Once in the mall, Roylin dashed into the jewelry store and bought the necklace with fifty dollars of his own money and the two hundred and fifty from Mr. Miller's wallet.

"Well, you are certainly going to make somebody happy," the salesclerk said cheerfully. "I bet you worked long and hard for the money."

Roylin had been smiling, but now his smile faded. Why did the clerk say that? Was it sarcasm? Did she suspect something? Roylin snatched up the box and hurried from the store. He felt entirely different than he had ever felt in his life. As he left the mall, he felt certain that people were watching him, judging him.

10. From the following excerpt, you can infer that Roylin is probably
- planning to share Mr. Miller's tiny cars with his own little brothers.
  - feeling seriously guilty about having taken Mr. Miller's money.
  - expecting to confront his father about how he abused the family.

Roylin finally fell asleep thinking of Korie, but he dreamed about Mr. Miller.

In his dream, he was a small boy again, nine or ten, and he was in Mr. Miller's apartment. The two of them were playing with the tiny cars. Roylin felt so safe and happy there. Mr. Miller was like an ever-patient doting grandfather one minute and like a little boy the next. . . . Roylin always looked forward to escaping from his yelling, cursing, hitting father to this oasis of peace and fun.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Miller," Roylin cried out in his dream.

### SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Describe exactly what Roylin does to get the money he needs for Korie's gift. How does he feel once he gets the money?

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2. What is Tuttle's general attitude towards Mr. Miller?

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3. What does Tuttle want to do with Mr. Miller's body? What is Roylin's response to Tuttle's plan?

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4. What is the one thought that allows Roylin to calm his anxiety about what happened to Mr. Miller?

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5. How does Roylin treat his classmates following the weekend when he helps Tuttle? Why?

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Imagine you were in Roylin's position. What would you have done if you had found Mr. Miller asleep in his chair, his money-filled wallet on the table next to him? Explain your answer and compare/contrast your behavior with Roylin's actions.
2. Do you believe Korie truly likes Roylin, or do you think she is she just using him to get what she wants? Find examples in the book to prove your opinion.
3. When Roylin cries following his dream about Mr. Miller, we are told that Roylin has not cried since he was five years old. Why do you think he hasn't cried in such a long time? Do you think boys should try not to cry even when they are hurting either on the inside or out? Or is crying all right, even good for you sometimes? Explain.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Pretend that you are Roylin. Write an entry in Roylin's diary the night after he helped Tuttle carry out his plan in the basement. What kinds of emotions do you think Roylin is feeling about what he's done, about himself in general, and about his past leading up to this moment? Try to "get inside" Roylin's head and express what he's feeling.
2. Roylin saw Mr. Miller's apartment as "an oasis of peace and fun" apart from the reality of his father's abuse. Write about a place that you consider especially safe and comforting. Make sure you describe how the place looks, smells, and feels. When you have provided the sensory details about your special place, explain what role this place has played in your life.
3. At some point, most people have justified doing something wrong by convincing themselves that what they were doing really isn't that bad. Roylin does this when he's stealing from Mr. Miller. Write about a time when you knowingly did something wrong and found excuses to make your actions seem okay. What did you do? What excuses did you use to justify your actions?