

Based on Curtain Call Caper by Christy Barritt and Kathy Applebee

CHAPTER 1, exercise 2

Read the passage about Gabby St. Claire and answer the questions.

Back in the present, Becca leaned toward me. “I don’t get why this is such a big deal, anyway. It’s not like we lowly seventh graders will get cast in big parts or anything. The high school kids will get those.”

She was probably right, but Mrs. Baker, a new eighth grade English teacher at Oceanside and the director of *Oklahoma*, would have to let some middle schoolers in since rehearsals were on the stage at our aging school.

I glanced around the auditorium to size up the competition. The Diva (our private nickname for Donabell Bullock) sat ramrod straight in her seat, like a queen on her throne surveying her dominion. She was surrounded by her Devotees (the fawning members of her social sphere). They took up nearly two rows, if you counted the other seventh graders who sat close enough to the group to overhear anything meant to be overheard but respectfully far enough away from the Diva to acknowledge they were just wannabees.

I craned further when I didn’t catch sight of Mitch D’cava, her BF. The two of them were usually Siamese twins. Mitch wasn’t just the hottest guy in seventh grade. He was everything I’d want in a boyfriend: attentive, funny, devoted, but not like the groveling, toadying Devotees. No, his was the genuine devotion of a gentlemen, like Captain Von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* or Ashley Wilkes in *Gone with the Wind*.

The eighth graders had staked out the front and center and were engaged in a number of separate, hushed conversations. One of them was center stage singing “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning” accompanied on the piano by Madame Cherise, the ancient French teacher.

Madame Cherise’s cat eyeglasses were a throwback to the fifties and her pudgy upper arms were a sharp contrast to her thin, flexible fingers that tapped on the piano keys in front of her. She’d probably been a music teacher in another life, back before the piano or French was invented.

“Where’s Mrs. Baker?” I asked.

Mrs. Baker looked about twenty-eight or thirty and had seemed friendly but firm when I’d seen her in the halls or cafeteria. Her brown hair fell to her shoulders, framing a face without makeup, which wasn’t unusual for female teachers, especially the married ones.

Becca replied in her best imitation of Madame Cherise’s exaggerated French accent, “Ms. Baker has been unavoidably detained.”

I stifled my laughter.

WHO IS ?

1. Wearing cat eyeglasses from the fifties, has pudgy upper arms, thin, flexible fingers, old and speaks with a French accent? Madame Cherise
2. Acts like a queen on her throne with stiff posture Donalbell Bullock
3. Has brown shoulder length hair, is about 28 or 30, friendly wears no makeup Mrs. Baker
4. A funny, devoted, hot 7th grade gentleman Mitch D'Cava

INFER

5. What does "*The two of them were usually Siamese twins.*" mean? Inseparable

CONTEXT CLUES/ROOT WORDS

6. What is a Devotee? A devoted person; a person who is very interested in and enthusiastic about someone or something.

PREDICT

7. Why is Mrs. Baker late to auditions?

