**Lesson 7: Allusion**



Name Date

When a writer refers to a well-known character, place, or situation, it is called an **allusion**. Writers often allude to other works of literature, as well as to music, history, and art. Writers hope to draw on their readers’ understanding of the well-known reference in order to deepen the impact of their work or to make an experience seem more universal.

**DIRECTIONS: *Read the following passage and try to identify the allusions it contains. Then answer the questions that follow.***

* 1. Mrs. McFuddy was my own personal Wicked Witch of the West.
  2. I had to cut through her yard to get to school. Well, I guess I didn’t have to cut through her yard, but it sure made the trip a lot faster.
  3. She was always waiting for me by the window. As soon as she caught a glimpse of me, she would rush onto the front porch. “Sar-ah!” she would shout in that shrill voice of hers. “Sarah Geller, I see you!”
  4. I kept my head down and ran, the echo of her voice chasing me out of the yard.
  5. I don’t know why Mrs. McFuddy hated me. It’s not like I stole the roses from her prize-winning rose bushes—well, I’d only stolen them once, last summer when Tommy Caravelli dared me. But I only took the white ones and I pricked myself on the thorns anyway.
  6. And for some reason I just had to take the short-cut. It was a game, to see if I could make it across the lawn before Mrs. McFuddy could throw on her bath robe and make it to the front porch to yell at me.

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* 1. I was going to miss the diversion now that junior high school was over. Just one more day of school—graduation day. After that, I’d be attending high school, which was in the other direction. I wouldn’t have to cut across Mrs. McFuddy’s lawn anymore.
  2. I guess I was kind of looking forward to seeing her that morning when I cut across her lawn in my white graduation gown, but she wasn’t in the window. I was almost all the way to the sidewalk, but there was no sign of her. Something was wrong. It was then that I noticed the rose bushes.
  3. All of the flowers on Mrs. McFuddy’s prize-winning rose bushes were gone. Who could have taken them? Was it Tommy Caravelli? Maybe his twin brother Joseph...
  4. I was so lost in thought that I didn’t see Mrs. McFuddy until I almost bumped into her.



Name Date

1. “Mrs. McFuddy!” I gasped.
2. She wasn’t in her bathrobe. She was wearing a trim, blue suit.
3. “I didn’t do it,” I started.
4. “Didn’t do what?”
5. “The flowers,” I sputtered. “I didn’t cut your flowers...”
6. “I know,” Mrs. McFuddy said. “I cut them. Here,” she said, producing a bouquet from behind her back. “Congratulations.”
7. Identify the allusion in this passage.
8. What do you think the author’s purpose was in making this allusion? How does it add to the story?
9. Think of someone you know and use a comical allusion to describe this person. Your allusion can refer to any well-known character from mythology, literature, history, or cinema.

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